

3 July 2024

EDINBURGH VOLUNTEERS RE-CREATE 18TH CENTURY DRESS

A group of National Trust for Scotland volunteers from across Edinburgh have re-created a dress worn in one of the Allan Ramsay's portraits on display as part of a new exhibition taking place at Georgian House in the capital.

Guided by dress historian Rebecca Olds, the conservation charity's volunteers learned 18th century dress making techniques to interpret the 1760s long sack back gown worn by Katherine Ann Mure in a painting by the renowned Scottish portrait artist, which features in the *Ramsay and Edinburgh Fashion* exhibition.

Volunteers employed the same techniques as those used by the 18th century mantua-making trade (which visitors can learn much more about within the exhibition), such as cutting the bodice lining on the wearer's body and determining seam placements to tailor the fit precisely to the wearer.

Dress historian Rebecca Olds said: "We're delighted with the finished garment that has been re-created by the National Trust for Scotland's volunteers as part of the *Ramsay and Edinburgh Fashion* exhibition at Georgian House in Edinburgh. To our knowledge, it was the first-time the 18th century practice of cutting the linings of a dress directly on the intended wearer has ever been demonstrated in public anywhere in the UK, so we're exceptionally pleased with how it's turned out. I'd like to thank our volunteers for their hard work and dedication in learning and using these period-correct dress making skills to re-create the dress and bring to life the high fashion that Ramsay captured in some of his portraits."

The re-created dress is now featured as part of the exhibition, and visitors are invited to come along and take in the beautiful re-creation. It is a counterpoint to a rare 1760s dress, from Newhailes House near Musselburgh that is also on display.

Ramsay and Edinburgh Fashion showcases the work of one of the finest 18th century painters of female portraits. Scotland's leading independent conservation charity has brought together its fine collection of female portraits by Allan Ramsay for the first time, following a successful display of Sir Henry Raeburn's work last year. Covering a 30-year period of Ramsay's career, the exhibition illustrates his skill at capturing the clothing, accessories and popular trends of the time, while examining both the naturalistic style and imaginary elements found in his paintings.

Ramsay and Edinburgh Fashion opened on 7 June at Georgian House in Edinburgh and runs until 24 November 2024. The exhibition is included in admission to the Georgian House, which is free for National Trust for Scotland members. You can find out more about the exhibition, the Georgian House, and how to book for events at www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/georgian-house.

Events like *Ramsay and Edinburgh Fashion* support the National Trust for Scotland's vision to care for, share and protect Scotland's natural and cultural heritage and contributes to its engagement objectives to provide access and enjoyment for everyone.

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Notes to editors

Images and video are available here:

<https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/0v6469382H>

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022, the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit www.nts.org.uk.

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.