



Art Appreciation Lecture Series 2015
Meet the Masters: Highlights from the Scottish National Gallery

Constable: The Vale of Dedham

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Lecture summary:

Constable's *Vale of Dedham* in the Scottish National Gallery is a mature masterpiece that sums up Constable's achievement as well as any other single work. The subject is the Stour valley, the deeply beloved landscape that persuaded Constable in his youth to seek a truly 'natural painture'. This lecture will trace the artist's struggles to achieve a new naturalism in landscape, retaining the vitality and freshness of his own vision of nature, while also producing works of a scale and monumentality that could stand comparison with the greatest masters of the past.

Slide list:

1. Constable, *Vale of Dedham*, c1827–28, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh
2. Constable, *Dedham Vale*, 1802, V&A, London
3. Constable, *East Bergholt House*, c1809–10, oil on millboard laid on panel, V&A, London
4. Constable, *West Lodge, East Bergholt*, ?1811, oil on canvas laid on panel, Thomson collection
5. Constable, *The church porch, East Bergholt*, exh 1810, Tate, London
6. Constable, *Schematic sketch of the Stour valley*, 1830, pen, brown ink and wash, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
7. Constable, *Stratford mill*, 1820, National Gallery, London
8. Constable, *Dedham lock and mill*, 1820, V&A, London
9. Constable, *Flatford mill ('Scene on a navigable river')*, 1816–17, Tate, London
10. Constable, *The white horse*, 1819, Frick Collection, New York
11. Constable, *The leaping horse*, full-scale study, c1825, V&A, London
12. John Hoppner, *Sir George Beaumont*, 1803, National Gallery, London
13. Claude, *Landscape with Hagar and the angel*, 1646, National Gallery, London
14. Gainsborough, *Samuel Kilderbee (1725–1813)*, c1758, repainted c1783, AGNSW
15. Gainsborough, *Wooded landscape with pool and distant flock of sheep*, c1753–54, paper mounted on canvas, Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich
16. Constable, *A lane near Dedham*, 1802, Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven
17. Gainsborough, *Cornard Wood, near Sudbury, Suffolk*, 1748, National Gallery, London
18. Constable, *Edge of a wood*, ?exh in 1802, Toronto
19. Constable, *Valley of the Stour with Dedham in the distance*, oil on paper later lined on canvas, c1805–09, V&A, London
20. Constable, *Dedham Vale from Flatford Lane*, c1809–10, oil on paper later laid onto canvas, V&A, London
21. Constable, *Dedham Vale*, 1810, oil on paper laid on board mounted on panel, private collection, New York

22. Constable, *Dedham Vale*, 1810, oil on panel, private collection (on loan to Birmingham)
23. Constable, *Dedham Vale*, 1810, oil on canvas laid on panel, Thomson collection
24. Constable, *Dedham Vale*, 1810, oil on board, private collection, Ohio
25. Constable, *Figures and a donkey on the lane from East Bergholt to Flatford*, 1810, sketch on canvas, Philadelphia Museum of Art
26. Constable, *View on the Stour*, 1810, sketch on canvas, Philadelphia Museum of Art
27. John Glover, *Classical landscape*, c1820, AGNSW
28. John Linnell, *The bird catcher*, 1814, retouched 1859, AGNSW
29. John Linnell, *View of Kensington Gardens, London*, 1812, watercolour over graphite, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
30. Constable, *Boys fishing*, 1813, Anglesea Abbey
31. Constable, Four sketches for *Flatford Mill from the lock*, 1810–11
32. Constable, *Flatford Mill from the lock*, ?1811, Royal Academy
33. Constable, *Flatford Mill from the lock*, ?1811, Thomson collection
34. Constable, *Flatford Mill from the lock*, ?1811, V&A
35. Constable, *Flatford Mill from the lock*, 1811-12 exh 1812, Thomson collection
36. Constable, *Boat-building*, 1814–15 exh RA 1815, V&A
37. Constable, *Cloud studies*, 1821–22
38. Constable, *Sketch for "The haywain"*, c1820, oil on canvas laid to paper, Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven
39. Constable, *'The hay wain'*, full-scale study, c1821, V&A, London
40. Constable, *The hay wain*, 1821, National Gallery, London
41. Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, *An antique rural scene*, 1823–24, AGNSW
42. Peter Paul Rubens, *A view of Het Steen in the early morning*, probably 1636, National Gallery, London
43. Peter Paul Rubens, *Rainbow landscape*, c1636, Wallace Collection, London
44. Constable after Ruisdael, *Landscape with windmills near Haarlem*, 1830, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London
45. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with windmill*, c1650–52, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London
46. Frederick Mackenzie, *Principal room of the original National Gallery*, c1824–34, watercolour, V&A, London
47. Claude, *Landscape with a goatherd and goats*, c1636–37, National Gallery, London
48. Constable after Claude, *Landscape with goatherd and goats*, 1823, AGNSW
49. Constable, *A cornfield*, ?1817, Tate, London
50. Constable, *The cornfield*, 1826, National Gallery, London
51. Constable, *A lane near Flatford*, c1811, oil on paper laid on canvas, Tate, London

Reference:

- Leslie, C R. *Memoirs of the life of John Constable*, Phaidon, London, 1951
- Cormack, Malcolm. *Constable*, Phaidon, Oxford, 1986
- Parris, Leslie and Ian Fleming-Williams, *Constable* (exh cat), Tate Gallery, London, 1991
- Beresford, Richard, *Art Gallery of New South Wales, Catalogue of European paintings, I. British before 1850*, forthcoming

For access to all past lecture notes visit:

<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/members/current-members/member-events/meet-the-masters/>

In 1798 Constable met Joseph Farrington, who had once been a pupil of Richard Wilson. Farrington goes on to teach Constable the techniques of this great Welsh landscape painter. Fortunately in 1799, his father relented on his stance about his son studying art and as he now had his other son, Abram, to assist him, he gave John some money and arranged for him to go London where he enrolled as a probationer at the Royal Academy School. John was very homesick missing the beautiful countryside of his home and was disillusioned with the continuous copying of the old Masters. This second painting of Dedham Vale was well received by the Royal Academy when Constable exhibited it in 1828 under the title of Landscape. September 2015. August 2015. National Galleries of Scotland books Exhibition books Scottish art books Modern and contemporary art books Children's books Magazines and journals The Watson Gordon Lecture Series Education and art history books Gallery guides Colouring books Poetry gift books View all. Toys and games. By re-creating his study of Dedham Vale of 1802, Constable is not only referencing his own personal journey as a "natural" painter but also paying homage to his friend and to a classical landscape tradition that they both admired and found exemplified in Claude's work. The fusion of observation with memory, fired with emotion and filtered through the lens of past art, results in one of Constable's greatest pictures. Related media. Highlights tour | The Vale of Dedham. Important art by John Constable with artwork analysis, influences, achievement, and overall contribution to the arts. 26 years later Constable created a second image of the same view called The Vale of Dedham (1828), although very similar in appearance there are a number of small differences that separate the two, particularly the inclusion of figures in the later painting. oil on canvas - Victoria & Albert Museum, London.