

### INTRODUCTION

Paisley born artist John Knox (1776-1845) was a prominent figure in nineteenth century Scottish landscape painting. Painting at a time of heightened appreciation and fascination with the rural corners of the Scottish landscape, Knox would capture views of some of the most popular destinations with tourists, such as the Trossachs. This placement focused on a painting within the Hunterian Collection, *Mountains and Wooden Bridge in the Trossachs* (fig.1), with part of the research centred on exploring the location given in the title. This will contribute to a wider study of the significance of the Trossachs not only within Knox's oeuvre, but the important status it held within a developing culture of landscape art more widely.

### ALLURE OF THE TROSSACHS

The Trossachs was becoming an increasingly popular destination for both international and domestic tourists alike by the end of the eighteenth century. Better infrastructure was enabling easier access and the influence of literature that fuelled associations of the Scottish countryside with the romantic and sublime was encouraging a surge in tourism.

Knox was capitalising on this increased interest in the wild landscapes of Scotland, whilst also contributing to the romantic allure of such places through his pictorial representation. The Trossachs was a particularly popular painting destination for Knox, where he would frequently go to sketch and observe the landscape before translating his views into painting. (fig.2)



Figure 1. John Knox, *Mountains and Wooden Bridge in the Trossachs*, c.1810-20. Oil on canvas. © The Hunterian, Glasgow.

### CAPTURING VIEWS

Sketches are useful not only as a potential location marker, but also give an idea of Knox's working practice. Knox likely worked directly from sketches he made on his travels, changing the composition slightly to heighten the grandeur and appeal to the romantic imagination. In part, the artist was tasked with taming the wild landscapes to align with fashionable modes of viewing. The infrared image (fig.3) exposes reworking of the composition, showing the process of rearranging certain elements such as the mountains and a tree to create the perfect view.



Figure 2. Attributed to John Knox, *Mountain Landscape with Wooden Bridge over a River*, date unknown. Grey wash over pencil on paper. 10.60 x 18.60cm. © National Galleries, Scotland.

### CONCLUSION

Through an exploration of the location depicted in the painting, it allows for a more fundamental understanding of the preference of certain views in Knox's oeuvre. It offers an understanding of the audiences that Knox was painting for, showing his understanding of the growing popularity of rural areas such as the Trossachs. Pairing the painting with the sketch and the infrared image enables for a better understanding of how Knox grappled with the wild, rugged Scottish landscapes.



Figure 3. Infrared Image of *Mountains and Wooden Bridge in the Trossachs*, c.1810-20. Courtesy of The Hunterian, Glasgow.

### REFERENCES

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