



Large
Print

Turner, Constable and the Royal Academy

The Collection Gallery

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“He has been here and fired a gun”

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J.M.W. Turner's 'Helvoetsluys' was first exhibited in 1832 at the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition, where it hung next to John Constable's 'The Opening of Waterloo Bridge'.

During “Varnishing Day”, when artists made last-minute revisions to their works, Turner added a crucial detail to his sea piece.

In response to Constable, whose picture is traversed by swathes of vermilion, Turner applied one small dab of red paint, which he later turned into a buoy floating in the sea.

Constable was so struck by this demonstration of Turner's artistic genius that he is said to have exclaimed: “He has been here and fired a gun.”

The episode was recorded, years later, by fellow Academician Charles Robert Leslie in his 'Autobiographical Recollections', published in 1860.

Both Turner and Constable were graduates of the Royal Academy Schools. This special display celebrates the founding of the Schools 250 years ago.

J.M.W. Turner RA

(1775–1851)

Helvoetsluys ('Helvoetsluys; – the City of Utrecht, 64, going to sea'), 1832

Oil on canvas

Tokyo Fuji Art Museum

Exhibited 1832

John Constable RA

(1776–1837)

The Opening of Waterloo Bridge ('Waterloo Bridge, from Whitehall Stairs, June 18th, 1817'), 1832

Oil on canvas

Tate: Purchased with assistance from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Clore Foundation, the Art Fund, the Friends of the Tate Gallery and others 1987

Exhibited 1832

Charles Robert Leslie RA (1794–1859)

**'Autobiographical Recollections',
1860**

Royal Academy of Arts, London

'Mr. Turner', 2014

Directed by Mike Leigh

Produced by Georgina Lowe

Production: Film4, Focus Features International, Lipsync
Productions, Thin Man Films, Xofa Productions

Distribution: Entertainment One

(Excerpt: 3 minutes 58 seconds)

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Thank you.

Molly Bretton, Access & Communities Manager



InTouch  **at the RA**

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