

# Talbot Rice Gallery



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

## Press Release

For immediate use

### Alice Neel

The Subject and Me

29 July – 8 October 2016

Part of Edinburgh Art Festival 2016

**The University of Edinburgh's Talbot Rice Gallery presents *The Subject and Me*, the first solo exhibition of Alice Neel in Scotland. Free-spirited, Alice Neel (1900-1984) was outspoken and unconventional, living on the peripheries of New York society and the art world and striving to resolve the tragedies, hardships and conflicts of life through her painting. This exhibition features a survey of intimate drawings and a selection of later paintings: candid observations of sexuality, family, childhood, pain and poverty.**



Alice Neel *Hartley and Andrew* 1983.  
Courtesy of the Estate of Alice Neel.

Gallery 1 features a series of paintings produced by Neel in later life. Comprising characteristic portraits, with a sense of psychological and social depth, these works demonstrate Neel's intimate and direct method of painting from life, of which she stated, "I know all the theory of everything but when I paint I don't think of anything except the subject and me."

Gallery 2 presents drawings and watercolours spanning over 50 years of Neel's career. Produced both from life and from memory, these works offer raw, often disturbing visions of the world. Depicting scenes of destructive relationships, images of her children and a self-portrait as a skull, the drawings illustrate how Neel used her work to make some sense of the darkest chapters of her life and the lives of those around her.

Exploration of Neel's biography continues in the upper Gallery with an illustrated timeline, a feature-length documentary by her grandson Andrew Neel and a remarkable portrait of the artist by Robert Mapplethorpe. Taken only weeks before her death from cancer, the stark black and white photograph depicts Neel with closed eyes and open-mouth, a haunting and prescient signifier of her death.

*It's a privilege, you know, to paint and it takes up a lot of time and it means there's a lot of things you don't do. But still, with me, painting was more than a profession, it was also an obsession. I had to paint.*

Alice Neel



Alice Neel in her studio. Courtesy of the Estate of Alice Neel.

Supported by:



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