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William Bell Scott's Screen

A Pre-Raphaelite Romance

Emily Learmont

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- The intriguing story behind a beautiful and rarely seen work by a major Scottish Victorian artist,
- William Bell Scott Scott was closely connected to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

"an excellent short book, which focusses in detail on a single work, a newly restored screen by William Bell Scott"— **Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History, Volume 29, 2024-2025, p.128**

William Bell Scott's screen, *The King's Quair*, was commissioned by James Leathart, an important collector of Pre-Raphaelite art. The beautifully decorated folding screen took as its inspiration *The Kingis Quair*, a 15th-century Scots poem attributed to James I of Scotland. Depicting key scenes from the king's 18-year imprisonment in Windsor Castle, it is adorned by exquisite botanical details and gold leaf.

Split into three parts, this book reveals the history of the screen's commission, details the remarkable imagery of the screen itself, and finally situates the screen in its historical context by explaining the fascinating personal relationships that were the backdrop to its creation, including Scott's relationship with the artist and heiress Alice Boyd.

Drawing together the chivalric medieval tale of an imprisoned, love-struck king with the vibrancy of the Pre-Raphaelite social circles in which Scott moved, the reader is given a vivid picture of how this captivating artwork was created. Illustrated with new photography of the screen, this book is a vital new part of the story of British, as well as Scottish art.

Emily Learmont is an artist, art historian and arts educator. She is an AHRC-funded Collaborative Doctoral Partnership candidate at the University of Edinburgh and the National Galleries of Scotland researching the life and work of William Bell Scott.

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