

Thomas Stuart Smith was a Scottish painter and philanthropist known for creating what is now called Stirling Smith Museum and Art Gallery , located in Stirling

Thomas Stuart Smith was born in 1815 as the secret illegitimate nephew of Alexander Smith , who had the estate at Glassingall , Dunblane , Scotland

Alexander 's brother , the father , sent Thomas to a school in France whilst he conducted his business in Canada and the East Indies

In 1831 no fees were paid and Thomas thought his father must have died

He returned to England , when he and his uncle learned of each other for the first time

They did not meet , but Alexander advanced sums to him from time to time

Smith started working as a tutor

He later became interested in painting from an Italian master painter whom he met whilst serving as a traveling tutor to a British family

His uncle Alexander supplied funding so that he could travel and paint in Italy starting in 1840

By the end of that decade , Smith was having his work accepted by both the Salon des Beaux Arts in Paris and the Royal Academy in London

His first painting at the Royal Academy was bought by Professor Owen , an acquaintance of Edwin Landseer , who was said to have admired it repeatedly

In 1849 Alexander Smith died intestate

Thomas took possession of the family 's estate in 1857 after vying at great expense with eighteen other aspirants

During the eight years that he had waited in hope of his inheritance , he taught art at the Nottingham School of Design

James Orrock , the collector and watercolourist , was one of his pupils ; he commented on how Smith could paint anything

Smith was known to the Barbizon School of realistic painting , including the animal painters Constant Troyon and John Phillip RA

Having gained the estate , he kept it just six years

He sold it and used the funds to move to London

His legal costs had been high

His new fortune enabled him to create an art collection at a studio in Fitzroy Square that included his own work

He decided to create an Institute in Stirling to house his new collection

He drew up plans for a library , museum , and a reading room and he offered £ 5,000 to the council if they could donate a site within two years

He signed the trust into existence in November 1869 with himself , James Barty , the Provost of Stirling and A

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Cox , a fellow artist , as trustees

He was prevented from seeing his plans fulfilled as he died the next month in Avignon

Smith is known primarily for founding the Smith Institute , which is now called the Stirling Smith Museum and Art Gallery

Smith also has hundreds of paintings in public ownership

Two of Smith 's works that are still thought to be important are portraits he painted of black men

Unlike other depictions at the time , in which black people were included as servants , Smith 's portraits Fella of Kinneil and Pipe of Freedom show his

He also did a smaller painting called The Cuban Cigarette , which has a similar presence

The Pipe of Freedom shows a man lighting a pipe ; behind him a slave sale notice has been partially covered by an abolition notice