



Newsletter

No 38 Winter 2011

From the Chair

Christmas is nearly upon us again, despite the fact that it seems like no time since our last, snow-postponed AGM. Thankfully the snow has yet to appear this year, so we're keeping our fingers crossed for this year's AGM on 10 December, which you should all have received details of already. We're looking forward to a fascinating tour of the J D Fergusson exhibition (featured in the last issue of the newsletter) from curator Sarah Skinner. The day before, we're lucky enough to be one of the first groups to get a guided tour of the re-opened Scottish National Portrait Gallery from director James Holloway, who tells us more about the re-vamp in this issue. If you are intending to come to either event but have not yet let us know, please do so as soon as possible.

I'm pleased to report that we have another two new members of our committee, Sabine Wieber (University of Glasgow) and Shona Elliott (University of Aberdeen). We have more about Shona below and will be profiling Sabine next issue. Shona has kindly agreed to take over from me as editor of the newsletter, so if you have any material for inclusion in our next issue, please contact her on s.elliott@abdn.ac.uk

Matthew Jarron

New Committee Member: Shona Elliott

Shona has been working with the University of Aberdeen's historic collections for the last five years and she is currently Curator (Documentation and Fine Art) in the University Museums. Her primary responsibilities are curating the University's

collection of nearly 2000 artworks, creating exhibitions of university and loaned art, managing the documentation for the seven museum collections and working with researchers. She has a University of Leicester MA in Museum Studies.

Prior to joining the University, Shona worked at the Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere and The Armitt, Ambleside, undertaking a wide variety of tasks, including installing art exhibitions and cataloguing prints and glass negatives.

Shona's strong interest in art history has grown from working with art collections and studying artistic movements during her undergraduate and postgraduate music degrees at Royal Holloway, University of London. She is particularly interested in early 20th century European art and works by John Constable. Shona has written a thesis about perceived connections between the works of Erik Satie and Cubism, Futurism, Dadaism and Surrealism. She has also recently written a paper about the University of Aberdeen's art collection, which will be published in the new SSAH Journal.

SSAH Research Grants

Don't forget that the society offers research support grants from £50 to £300 to assist with research costs and travel expenses. Applicants must be working at a post-graduate level or above and should either be resident in Scotland or doing research that necessitates travel to Scotland. Please note that we have now introduced two application deadlines during the year on 30 November and 31 May. Next issue we hope to bring you a report from our latest recipient.

SSAH Events

Tour of Jupiter Artland, 11 August 2011

Review by Ellen Graves

On Thursday 11 August 2011, a group of intrepid members of the SSAH braved heavy rain and floods at Jupiter Artland. Though a very wet visit indeed – especially for yours truly who had not worn footgear appropriate to the weather – nonetheless it was well worth it!

A long, beautiful walk up from the bus stop at the foot of the drive, past various works of art which we visited later, got us to The Steadings where we collected our maps and set out on the self-guided tour, usually about an hour and a half, though I think we took a bit longer because of the weather.

First stop, *Suck*, by Anish Kapoor, followed closely by Antony Gormley's sculpture, *Firmament*. *Suck* consists of a hole (about a foot across) with outcurving walls plated in cast iron, surrounded by a 17-foot-high iron cage. We agreed this was thought-provoking but mainly perhaps because of the interplay between the protective cage and the more organic-looking aperture within.



The Gormley was altogether impressive. For those who have experienced his other works, this one is, unlike, say, the *Angel of the North*, airy and full of spaces. It is particularly suited to its location atop a small rise, so that it can be viewed with the sky through its interstices. It was inspired by an old star map and the steel balls and longer steel elements welded together actually form a crouching figure – but the overall effect is of an appropriate interface between viewer and surrounding sky, as its title implies.

Only Connect is a typical Ian Hamilton Finley play on word, image and structure - a bridge

between two milestones inscribed with the famous words from *Howards End*, the novel by E M Forster (not the erudite BBC4 quiz show!). Quietly amusing, for sure, but the next work encountered, *Stone House*, by Andy Goldsworthy, was for this viewer at least, the most impressive piece in the Artland. Here Goldsworthy had earth excavated to the underlying rock ledges and a house, made of locally quarried stone and a slate roof, was built around this excavation. On entering the doorway, the viewer is confronted, not with a space sequestered from the outdoors, but a space which brings the hidden bones of the earth disconcertingly into view underfoot – no level flooring here, rather, risky clambering from boulder to boulder in semi-darkness. After this, Laura Ford's enigmatic *Weeping Girls* seems to continue the mood of mystery – near-life-size weeping figures carved from waxes and cast in bronze, some hidden behind trees and rocks, others ready to view.

After another couple of typically classicising Hamilton Finley works – *Xth Muse* and *Temple of Apollo* – came another very interesting installation by Nathan Coley, *In Memory*. Here a simple unroofed poured concrete rectangular structure surrounds a tended graveyard with gravestones from all 3 of the monotheistic religions, plus others – but with all identifying names scratched out. We surmised these stones to be sequestered from uprooted graveyards, necessitating the removal of names, but for this viewer, such removal had disquieting resonances of anathematising, etc.

Landscape with Gun and Tree is a light-hearted work by Cornelia Parker, supposedly inspired by Gainsborough's famous landscape-portrait *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, where Mr Andrews carries a shotgun. In Parker's work, the gun is nearly the size of the tree!



We then retraced our steps through the 'Victorian Path', clambering over Charles Jencks'

impressive *Life Mounds*, which are familiar territory to those who visit the SNGMA, past the amusing *Signpost to Jupiter* by Peter Liversedge ('Jupiter – 893 million to 964 million kilometres' – continuing the heavenly theme begun with Gormley's work!) and Marc Quinn's *Love Bomb*, a 12-metre-high example of photorealism in the form of a monstrously impressive painted orchid!

On the left was a charming final example of Finley Hamiltoniana, *Beehives* – just what it says on the tin, with the addition of course of inscriptions!

Meanwhile, other members of the group explored works below the *Life Mounds*. By this time your intrepid reviewer was feeling distinctly squelchy about the ankles and our little subgroup was glad to repair to the café near the steadings, where lovely teas are served from a magnificent retro silver caravan!

There is a cumulative depth charge to this site whereby the whole is more than the sum of the parts – impressive though many of the parts are. The subtly recurring themes of the firmament on high, the earth below, enclosure, space, human frailty, reinforce and expand the encounters with individual works. All share a sensitive response to place and location, giving an overall sense of inevitability.

In Lorenzo di'Medici's famous 15th century sculpture garden in Florence, place was subordinate to the statues unearthed from beneath the ground. In this modern version of the sculpture garden, however, place – including the earth beneath and the sky above – and works are equally important, making this a place to visit and revisit, for anyone interested in the interplay between works of art and their location.

Tour of Balmungo House, 10 September 2011

Review by Shona Elliott

Balmungo House, a small country estate situated two miles from St. Andrews, is the former home of the British modernist artist Wilhelmina Barns-Graham (1912-2004). From the artist's death in 2004 to the summer of 2011, the Barns-Graham Charitable Trust undertook an extensive redevelopment project, converting Balmungo House into a creative and administrative space to be used by the Trust, public, artists and writers-in-residence, researchers and educational groups. Manager Helen Scott generously provided tours of the house to two groups of SSAH members on the 10th September. These were the first groups to visit since the redevelopment.

Helen began with an introductory talk about the works and life of Barns-Graham, illustrating the

talk with digital images of the artist's paintings and prints. The tour groups were then led around a variety of rooms in the house; each displaying artworks. The Trust aims to advance knowledge about Barns-Graham's works, and to this end, the walls show works by the artist from the 1940s onwards. A wide variety of styles and mediums are shown, including collages created using hole punches, oil and acrylic works on board and canvas, gouache illustrations, prints and even a painting created from acrylic and volcanic dust (*Lanzarote*, 1992). In addition to viewing Barns-Graham's works on the walls, SSAH members were shown an impressive rug with the pattern of one of her artworks woven into it. This was painstakingly created by Dovecot Studios in Edinburgh.

Amongst the rooms in Balmungo House are a library filled with books owned by Wilhelmina (including many rare exhibition catalogues) and also accommodation and a studio space for artists-in-residence. One of the aims of the Trust is to support and inspire art and art history students and the residency scheme is one of the many ways that this aim is realised. SSAH tour members were fortunate to meet Lorna McIntosh; the artist-in-residence at that time. Her stay at the house was part of the RSA's programme of Residencies for Scotland. Lorna's art is in part inspired by geological land formations; an influence that was often seen in Barns-Graham's work. The studio in which Lorna was working is the original studio space used by Barns-Graham. Wilhelmina established the studio and made Balmungo House her Scottish home after she inherited the property in the 1960s and she divided her time equally between Balmungo and St. Ives, Cornwall. Balmungo's attraction is easy to see. The stone house, which had been in the family since the 19th century, has much charm and Wilhelmina's studio overlooks the peaceful garden where goats used to graze.

Barns-Graham occasionally felt that she was sidelined in comparison with other St. Ives artists. The Barns-Graham Charitable Trust and Balmungo House help re-adjust the balance and highlight the talent of Barns-Graham who produced many fine bold works right up till her death in 2004.

Tour of the University of Aberdeen art collection, 15 October 2011

Review by Matthew Jarron

On a surprisingly sunny afternoon, members were taken on a fascinating tour of some of the University of Aberdeen's impressive art collections. Our

principal guide was art curator (and new committee member) Shona Elliott, who began by showing us an exhibition in the James Mackay Hall entitled Images of North. Intriguingly, the concept of 'north' is one of the University's new strategic themes, and the Museum Collections have been quick to embrace this. Among the striking works on show was a large oil of a Arctic Canadian landscape by James Morrison; a striking image of 19th-century polar explorers by Katharine Aarrestad made of enamel and acrylic on glass, and (a permanent feature of the building) a large sculptural piece by Arthur Watson.

We then moved on to the Linklater Rooms, featuring paintings bequeathed by the writer Eric Linklater (a former student and later Rector), including stylish portraits of Eric and his wife Marjory by Stanley Cursiter (painted as a wedding present), a superb James Cowie entitled *Set Square* (bought by Linklater from Cowie's widow to help support her after her husband's death), and works by the Colourists, Ann Redpath and particularly Robin Phillipson.



SJ Peplow, *Still Life*, 1930, oil on canvas (courtesy of the University of Aberdeen) - one of the artworks displayed in the Linklater Rooms

Outside we stopped to admire two large sculptures, one of a reclining student by Kenny Hunter and the organic abstract work *Case* by Steve Dilworth. Then it was on to the Old Town House, used by the University's Student Recruitment but

also including an exhibition gallery (showing prints by Alasdair Gray at the time of our visit) and on the top floor a meeting room decorated with 18th-century paintings including the recently restored *Ganymede* by James Irvine and some wonderfully characterful portraits, enlivened with fascinating commentary by Mary Pryor from the History of Art department.

With no time to waste we headed on to the University's newly created King's Museum, billed as both the newest university museum in Scotland but also the oldest one, since King's College is known to have had a collection open to the public in 1727 – 80 years before the Hunterian Museum at the University of Glasgow, which has always claimed to be Scotland's oldest museum. The new museum features both permanent and temporary displays, both being deliberately multi-disciplinary in a thought-provoking rather than merely random way. The museum is extremely small –making it all the more obvious that a larger space is required, particularly since the University's flagship museum, the Marischal, is now closed to the public.

Finally we ended our whirlwind tour in the glorious King's Chapel (particularly appropriate as two members of our party had actually been married in it and were delighted to have the chance to return). As well as boasting the most complete medieval interior of any such building in Scotland, the chapel also features a dazzling array of stained glass by Douglas Strachan and a striking large-scale abstract by Callum Innes, perfectly symbolising the mix of old and new that we enjoyed throughout our visit. Sincere thanks are due to Shona for her entertaining commentary and for the complex arrangements she made to enable access to all these buildings for us.

New Acquisitions

William McLaren – an unjustly neglected Fife artist

by Gavin Grant, *Fife Council Libraries, Arts, Museums and Archives*

Kirkcaldy Museum & Art Gallery has a rightly celebrated collection of over 1,000 artworks and is probably best known for holding large groups of works by William McTaggart and S J Peplow.

However, the Gallery also has a wide range of works by many other artists, some of whom were born or lived in the Kingdom of Fife. One with a Fife connection is William McLaren (1923-1987), not a household name perhaps, but a man who produced

an impressive range of works in the mid-20th century. He is probably best known for murals at Hopetoun House, carried out in the 1960s, which show his detailed, precise style which was influenced by the Italian Renaissance. The Gallery in Kirkcaldy was fortunate to receive a recent bequest of McLaren watercolours, prints and oils from Bill McIntyre, a Kirkcaldy music teacher. These works can now be used by the Gallery to help make William McLaren's works better known to the public.

McLaren was actually born in Ferniegair near Hamilton but moved to Cardenden in Fife as a young child. From a young age he showed his artistic skills and as a teenager he painted, on one wall of his council house home, the first of many murals. From 1940 to 1944 he travelled over the Forth Bridge to attend Edinburgh College of Art. He was awarded a number of scholarships which enabled him to travel to France and Italy to further his studies.



William McLaren, *Self Portrait*, watercolour, 1950
(courtesy of Fife Council Museums, Kirkcaldy Museum & Art Gallery)

One of the works acquired by Kirkcaldy Museum & Art Gallery is a watercolour self portrait from 1950 which shows a dapper William McLaren with Florence in the background. He is posed in the manner of the famous Tischbein portrait of Goethe on one of his Italian tours. McLaren's visits to Italy deeply influenced his artistic direction for the rest of his life.

From the late 1940s to his death in 1987 McLaren produced many illustrations for books and magazines, especially the *Radio Times*, which provided a regular source of income. Examples of illustrations in gardening books and novels and the 1953 Coronation issue of the *Radio Times* were acquired by Kirkcaldy Library in 2010.

On a larger scale, William McLaren carried out a number of mural projects. These included the Hopetoun House staircase and Tynninghame House (1967), St Adrian's Church in West Wemyss (1974) and the Hibs Supporters Club in Edinburgh (1970s). From 1963 McLaren lived in a number of flats in Edinburgh which he also covered in stunning *trompe l'oeil* murals.

William McLaren died in 1987 and was buried at Bowhill Cemetery in Fife. His work has become better known in recent years thanks, for example, to an article about him in *The Scots Magazine* in March 1993. More recently a documentary film, *William McLaren – An Artist Out of Time* was made in 2009 by Jim Hickey and Robin Mitchell and has been shown at many venues across Scotland. Last year a number of McLaren's works were shown in Kirkcaldy Museum & Art Gallery's *New Additions* exhibition (just down the road from his home town in Cardenden), alongside works by Anne Redpath and Sir Joseph Noel Paton - a fitting tribute to his talent.

Galleries & Exhibitions

Re-opening of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery

by James Holloway, Director



Contemporary Gallery space at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (© Keith Hunter Photography)

Members of the SSAH will be familiar with the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and its collections. The building, a Ruskinian rebuke to the monotonous conformity of Georgian Edinburgh, was built in red Dumfriesshire sandstone to the design of Sir Robert Rowand Anderson in the 1880s. The building, with its façade punctuated with sculptural portraits of historical celebrities and the internal mural cycles of

some of the great events and characters of Scottish history, proclaims the building's purpose as do few other secular buildings in Scotland. The pageant frieze in the Great Hall, which reaches back in time from that most eminent of all Victorians the historian and proponent of portrait galleries, Thomas Carlyle, must have helped augment the small collection with which the Scottish National Portrait Gallery first opened its doors. Today the collection consists of many thousands of images in a wide variety of media representing almost every Scot of importance or notoriety since the late 16th century.



Alexander Adam Inglis, *Three Figures at the Entrance to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery* (courtesy of Scottish National Portrait Gallery)

The building and its collection have had a mixed life. With the revival of interest in all things Georgian in the 20th century the building was viewed at best with distaste. Neglect (fortunately) preserved much of the internal decoration and original furnishings. There was an idea in the 1970s to close the entrance on Queen Street and make a modern glass one instead on North St Andrew Street. This came to nothing. As late as the early 1990s there were plans to close the building altogether and move

the collection out of Edinburgh. The Trustees of the National Galleries were surprised at the force of public and parliamentary protest. Somehow the Portrait Gallery survived.

The reopening on 1st December this year, after more than two and a half years of closure, marks the start of the renaissance of the Gallery. For the first time in its history the Portrait Gallery now occupies the whole of the building that Rowand Anderson designed for it and for which John Ritchie Findlay, the chief proprietor of the *Scotsman* newspaper, largely paid. At the time of its opening in 1889, with the collection being very small, half of the building was offered to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and their museum. The National Museum of Antiquities was opened in the Portrait Gallery building in July 1891. Later, other institutions as incongruous as the Forestry Commission and the Royal Geographical Society nested alongside. The complicated and fraught early history of the Gallery is told in *A History of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery* written by the former Keeper of the Gallery, Dr Duncan Thomson, and published to mark the reopening.

The amalgamation of the National Museum of Antiquities with the Royal Scottish Museum in 1985 and the resulting closure of their galleries in the Queen Street building ten years later meant that the moment was ripe for the Portrait Gallery to take over the whole of its building – the original intention of John Ritchie Findlay and Rowand Anderson. The architectural firm chosen to effect this was Page\Park. Their brief was to restore Rowand Anderson's building to its original Victorian conformation and introduce those services which the building had always lacked and which modern visitors rightly expect. Lowered ceilings and partition walls were removed; windows unblocked. The originality and grandeur of Anderson's design is now apparent. A building, which many had thought dark and gloomy, is flooded with light. The beautiful parquet floors throughout the gallery have been repaired, sanded and sealed. The original furniture has been retained and the excellent showcases restored and installed. The handsome library of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, which had lost its purpose after the removal of the books themselves to Chambers Street, was moved plank by plank from the far east of the top floor to the west side of the middle floor where it now has a number of functions; in particular serving as the Portrait Gallery's print room and study area. At last the Portrait Gallery has space for educational activities: a small seminar room, studios,

even somewhere for schoolchildren to leave their coats and bags and have lunch.

Well before the building temporarily closed the curatorial staff had started to plan how the portrait collection could best be presented using the new spaces released by the removal of the collection of antiquities. The increase in exhibition space has been most dramatic on the top floor where there are now ten galleries instead of the three before the project started. A decision was taken early on to rotate the collection over a five-year cycle. Each of the seventeen galleries will feature a distinct exhibition which will be on show for anything from three months to five years. Over the five-year cycle the whole presentation will be refreshed allowing many more portraits to be shown. It was also agreed that the curators and education staff, working together, would look at Scotland through the perspective of five key periods in her history. *Reformation, Enlightenment, Empire, Modernity and Contemporary* were chosen as times when Scotland was most actively engaged with the wider world. Within each of these key periods there would be several exhibitions. In the case of *Reformation*, for instance, the main exhibition, to be shown for five years is *Reformation to Revolution* a survey of the struggle for power in the 16th and 17th centuries between a Catholic monarchy and a predominantly Protestant state. Up for two years, and then to be shown in Aberdeen, is the first ever monographic exhibition on one of Scotland's earliest native portrait painters, George Jamesone. Displayed for just one year is an exhibition of the engravings after the German military draftsman, John Slezer. The prints, borrowed from The National Library of Scotland, are supplemented with outstanding 17th century oils from the Portrait Gallery's own collection. Elsewhere there will be exhibitions and displays on the Jacobites, on Allan Ramsay and David Hume, the position of women in the 19th century, sport, the First World War at Sea and many other topics. Modern celebrities have not been forgotten. The Portrait Gallery has always housed Scotland's greatest collection of photography. Now it has a proper gallery in which to hang exhibitions drawn from its collection and others brought in from elsewhere. *Romantic Camera: Scottish Photography and the Modern World* is the first of these exhibitions but there will be two other photography exhibitions (on the Glasgow slums of the 1860s and of Pakistani Scots) in other areas of the Gallery. Many of the visitors enjoyed the old café, though it could get very crowded at times. The new café, with its famous cheese scones and brownies, is back – and bigger

than before. Café visitors can now enjoy their coffee in the company of Robert Louis Stevenson, J M Barrie and Alex Ferguson.

The architects of Scotland have not been forgotten. William Bruce, Robert Adam, David Bryce, John Kinross, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and James Stirling will all be on display. But Sir Robert Rowand Anderson is quite rightly honoured above all, with the central position on the Ambulatory of the Great Hall.

Beholder

Talbot Rice Gallery, University of Edinburgh

By Shawn Coulman

The gallery office currently looks like something of a command centre. Giant lists of artists, 'nominators' and works occupy all of our large notice boards. To give you a sense of how eclectic this all is, the list of artists starts with: Yoko Ono, Karla Black, Giorgio Morandi, Alan Reid, Hamish Fulton, Anthony Schrag, James McIntosh Patrick and continues at great length. The 'nominators' are equally diverse and at a glance includes John Leighton, the Director of the National Galleries of Scotland; several university museum curators; Rhubaba, an artist-run space on Leith Walk, Edinburgh; and other artists such as Rosemarie Trockel, Bruce McLean and Andrew Grassie.



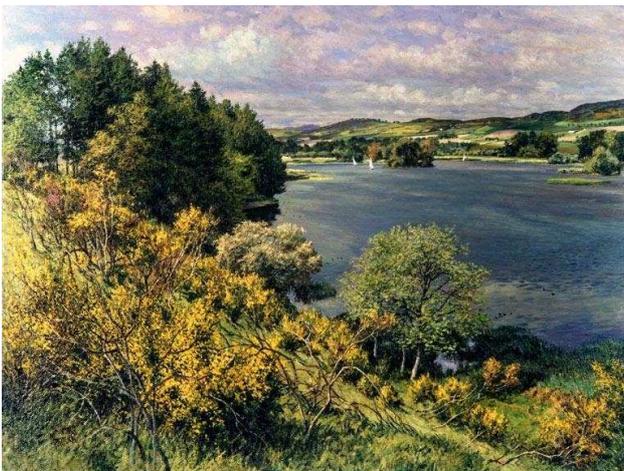
Tsimshian mask representing a sea-wolf
(on loan to the exhibition from the University
of Aberdeen Museums)

These lists are the products of an investigation into the contemporary sense and meaning of beauty in art conducted by Talbot Rice Gallery. Originating from the desire to connect with

David Hume's writings on Aesthetics, the project began in earnest with a letter:

"In 2011 the University of Edinburgh celebrates the tercentenary of David Hume. In this context Talbot Rice Gallery puts beauty in the frame with *Beholder*, an exhibition exploring taste and subjectivity in the visual arts. The premise is simple: we are inviting artists, individuals and organisations across Scotland to nominate a work of art they consider to be beautiful. The works will be displayed in the gallery space, setting up dynamic visual dialogues to form a contemporary portrait of beauty."

Surveying the complete list of nominated works, it is difficult to see anything that represents beauty in a purely classical sense; there are no 'perfectly' proportioned bodies or mythical scenes, at least not in an uncomplicated way. The assembled works reflect both careful consideration and personal preference, in some cases commitments to complex ideas and in other cases a direct affinity with an image or theme.



James McIntosh Patrick, *Balgavies Loch*, oil on canvas, 1962 (on loan to the exhibition from the University of Dundee Museum Services)

Whatever the final impression or interpretation of this exhibition might be, there is a lot at stake. Talbot Rice Gallery is aiming not only to showcase the tastes and ideas of people who have an influence over what we see in art galleries and how we see it, across Scotland and beyond, but is asking everyone to get involved. The letter of invitation that we used to kick-start the project opened with a famous quote from David Hume,

"Beauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty."

If beauty proves to have no fixed or stable form, its integrity may be based upon the fact that it brings people together to openly discuss values and ideas. You don't have to be trained in Art History or be a cosmetic surgeon to have an idea of what beauty might be. Images of the exhibition on Facebook will provide an open invitation for people to share their views and express their own tastes. A series of events throughout the exhibition will encourage active participation and debate about these ideas by our audiences.

One thing is certain, if there is some slackening here of the control usually held over an exhibition, if there is some chance to influence discussion and debate, then it requires you to seize upon it. Talbot Rice Gallery encourages you to get involved, you are, after all, the *Beholder*.

The exhibition runs until 18 February 2012, Tues – Sat, 10am – 5pm. The gallery closes for Christmas on Sat 17 December 2011 and reopens on Wed 4 January 2012.

Features

The Art Collections of Elgin Museum by Janet Trythall, Elgin Museum Volunteer

Elgin Museum is an independent museum owned and managed by The Moray Society and situated at the east end of the High Street in the county town of Moray.

The Museum was purpose-built in 1843, and is housed in a handsome Grade-A listed Italianate building, designed by Thomas Mackenzie. The Front (or main) Gallery is supplied with ample natural light and provides an impressive central open space with a grand staircase to the upper gallery. This area was renovated in 2003, with due regard to the historic colours. It has on occasion been put to use as a stunning venue for weddings.

Our Etta Sharp Collection, donated by the widower of a local woman in 1948, consists of 48 watercolours. Artists represented include John Constable, J M W Turner, Julius Caesar Ibbetson, Thomas Rowlandson, William Daniell, G F Robson, W H Hunt, H B Brabazon, Helen Allingham and George Clausen. A catalogue of the Collection is available. Other art work in the Museum includes

local portraits, landscapes and architectural drawings, charters, needle work and photographic prints and glass plates.



Oil painting by Mary Black from one of the temporary art exhibitions held at the Museum

Although we do not house the Elgin marbles, we do have on display two of John Henning's original horse drawings (on long term loan from the present Lord Elgin) and a set of the miniature plaster casts of the Parthenon frieze that were very popular in the early 19th century.

The art of the Picts is represented by some 36 carved sandstone slabs and fragments, mainly from Kinneddar – a probable monastic carving site near Lossiemouth. One of the carvings shows David rending the jaws of a lion and has parallels with a shrine at St Andrews. We also have two of the six known surviving Burghead bulls, and an early cast of the bull in the British Museum.



Gold rings and jewellery from Clarkly Hill, Burghead (Elgin Museum)

Much of the archaeology on display consists of prehistoric art: we have fine metalwork from the Bronze to the Iron Ages, found locally and well conserved and interpreted. There are two significant archaeological excavations under the aegis of Dr Fraser Hunter of National Museums Scotland continuing in the area. New finds – from Mesolithic to Medieval times – arrive almost daily thanks to the conscientious work of a local metal detectorist at one of the sites.

One of the stimuli to the building of the Museum and its expansion was the accumulation of ethnographic objects and fine ceramics, textiles, sculptures and metalwork brought home by Moray people from their foreign travels in the Orient, South America, Himalayas and the South Seas.

Every summer, in the fine exhibition space on the Mezzanine Floor, we feature displays by local artists. In recent years we have shown the work of quilters, potters, photographers and painters of all genres.

The Museum offers plenty of artistic opportunities for students of all ages. One school recently asked for a selection from our bird collection to be out on tables, and pupils and teachers sketched away for a morning. Regular visitors are the art students from Moray College (UHI) who draw not only objects from our stores or displays, but also the building's architectural features. *The Big Draw* was our most recent art event for families: participants chose a Pictish design from the Museum's displays, copied it to paper with a charcoal crayon and then transferred it to modelling clay.

Our collection of fossils and related archive is Recognised by the Scottish Government as of national significance. Fossils of fish from the Old Red Sandstones and pre-dinosaurian reptiles from the Permian and Triassic sandstones are displayed with sandstone slabs bearing the 250 million year old imprints of passing reptiles' feet and tails. Models of the creatures help bring the rocks to life.

A group, mainly of women associated with the Museum, is completing the publication of a book, *Women of Moray*, which we hope will be launched on Friday 9 March 2012. A conference will take place on Saturday 10 March, with an associated art exhibition in the Museum running through March and April. Several of the women featured were professional artists or accomplished amateurs: Sophia, Lady Dunbar, Constance Gordon Cumming, Emma Black, Isobel Chalmers ("John Aubrey"), Dorothy Brown and Mary Seton Watts.

Elgin Museum is "closed" for the winter from November to March inclusive but visitors are

welcomed by appointment and we hope we will see you soon in Elgin. Please also let us know if you would have an interest in volunteering to help with our collections and their cataloguing and care, or see any opportunities of using our resource for research. Contact curator@elginmuseum.org.uk or 01343 543675.

Art in Healthcare

by Paul Mowat



John Bellany, *Madonna of the Bass Rock*, 1997, watercolour (courtesy of Art in Healthcare)

Recently I was lucky enough to join an organisation which was providing an invaluable service in healthcare institutions in Scotland. From the point of view of an artist, a part-time lecturer at Edinburgh College of Art, and more significantly, a recent visitor to some of the Central Belt's larger hospitals, I could not help being impressed by the immense task being carried out by such a small but extremely dedicated team. There is, throughout the organisation, from the chairman, board members, directors, friends and staff, a wide range of expertise, covering business, finance, law, marketing and the arts, and a real sense of vocation that is heartening in times like these.

Art in Healthcare is a small charity based in Edinburgh that aims to improve the environment and quality of life for patients, healthcare workers and visitors throughout Scotland. This mission is

accomplished by providing works from its extensive collection of mainly Scottish art to all types of healthcare settings, including hospitals, hospices, care homes, GP's surgeries, medical research centres and dental surgeries – clearly, quite a considerable task. In addition, it administers a number of other collections and provides a consultancy service in an area with tremendous development potential.

The benefits of having access to art, and its positive effect on health and wellbeing in a healthcare environment, have been recognised for a long time. Art in Healthcare was formed in 2005 from the remnants of the charity Paintings in Hospitals Scotland, which was founded some fourteen years earlier and whose collection formed the basis of Art in Healthcare's current holdings of over 1300 artworks. Serving the rest of the UK, Paintings in Hospitals, London (PiH) was established in 1959. Its mission is to relieve sickness, anxiety and stress through the provision of art in hospitals, hospices and other healthcare facilities across the UK for the benefit of patients, their visitors and staff.

"A hospital is no place to be sick", the film producer Samuel Goldwyn is reputed to have said. While this is open to conjecture, Goldwyn did have a point in as much as the environment you are confronted with at a time of vulnerability and apprehension can be an important factor in, if not your outcome, at least your state of mind. I have witnessed the difference made to a ward or waiting room by the presence of a painting or print to engage with. Only last week an enthusiastic debate was instigated in an Edinburgh care home I visited, where a lively octogenarian persuaded her much younger care assistant to consider the bold palette and brushwork of a Patrick Proctor still life that Art in Healthcare had placed there. And when you ask patients, residents, nurses and doctors, the answer is always the same: "the art makes a positive difference".

This is not just anecdotal. Evidence of the beneficial influence that art brings to the healthcare environment is reported in hundreds of research papers and evaluated projects conducted in the UK and internationally. In fact, Dr Rosalia Staricoff's review of the medical literature in 2004 cites almost 400 papers demonstrating the beneficial impact of the arts on a wide range of health outcomes. There is, indeed, an argument to suggest that investment in the arts might save the NHS money in the long-term, as some studies demonstrate clear economic savings due to improved health outcomes, shorter recovery time, and higher patient and service user satisfaction levels. One study by Professors Roger Ulrich and

Craig Zimring found some 700 peer-reviewed and robust research studies demonstrating the beneficial impact of the environment on health outcomes. What is truly refreshing about Art in Healthcare is that it is wholly democratic in its outreach, as it covers healthcare settings in primary, secondary and tertiary care, acute and mental health care. The art can have an impact on anyone who enters the facility, whether they be patients, visitors or staff, and artworks can be found in clinics, consultants' offices, treatment rooms, children's wards and recovery rooms, as well as in public spaces and waiting rooms.



Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, *Venetian Red* (detail), 1995, screenprint (courtesy of Art in Healthcare, © the Barns-Graham Charitable Trust)

There is also the strength of the collection itself to consider. One of the exciting things for me as the new collection manager is getting to know the artwork. As a painter this is an added bonus; the collection is one of the largest privately owned bodies of contemporary Scottish art and it contains within it some wonderful paintings. In the twenty years it took to accumulate, previous curators visited artists' studios and scoured the degree shows of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow, looking for new and innovative artists to complement a collection containing some of Scotland's major artists. Included in the collection are works by Alan Davie (current Art in Healthcare patron), John Bellany, Barbara Rae, John Houston, Elizabeth

Blackadder, John Brown, Steven Campbell, Adrian Wiszniewski, Callum Innes, June Redfern, Will Maclean, James Morrison, Bruce McLean and Anish Kapoor.

The range of subject matter, style of work, colour palette and scale is vast with helpful themed searches on the Art in Healthcare website to focus any search. As well as providing the obvious benefits within the healthcare system, the collection has also helped to promote the careers of up-and-coming young Scottish artists, both in the purchase of their work and in hanging them in a public arena alongside more established artists. There are over 700 artists represented in the collection, and works can vary in size from very small drawings to large expansive canvases. Within the collection are oil, acrylic and watercolour paintings, drawings, prints, collages, textiles and photographs, as well as some 3D pieces and site specific projects.

At a cost of £35 per year for a fully insured artwork, Art in Healthcare's rental scheme is an incredibly affordable means of engaging those people unable to access galleries, reaching the vulnerable and marginalised in a way that most private art collections cannot. With approximately 800 artworks in around 60 healthcare facilities across Scotland, it is effectively a cultural outreach programme on an impressive scale. The collection is unique not only due to its size and range but, as it must meet a particular need in a variety of healthcare environments, it is body of work that has been curated with a sensitive eye by Art in Healthcare.

Art in HealthCare has two categories of member: the Guarantor Members, who are the Directors of the company, and the Subscribing Members. The Directors are either appointed by the Full Board (the Nominated Directors) or are elected by the Subscribing Members (the Elected Directors), and the Chairman is elected by the Full Board. People interested in joining the Board may respond to advertisements and subsequently be interviewed by the current Directors. Alan Davie OBE is the Patron of the company, which currently employs four paid members of staff and supports a number of volunteers.

As a small charitable organisation, Art in Healthcare derives its income from a variety of sources. A sizable sum comes from the rental of artwork (£24,608 in 2010), members subscriptions, the sale of prestigious prints (a series of limited edition prints by artists such as Barbara Rae, Alan Davie and John Brown), and one-off projects. Another enormously important source of revenue comes from the very generous donations of

charitable trusts, private individuals, partner organisations and other bodies, which allow Art in Healthcare to continue to develop.

In these troubled times it is all too easy for government bodies, local councils, organisations and trusts to cut funding, especially arts funding. Art in Healthcare, like all successful small charities, has adapted to its environment and is once again in a process of development. As well as maintaining and looking to increase the number of contracts held with healthcare institutions, the organisation is positioning itself as a leader in delivering quality contemporary visual art to healthcare facilities throughout Scotland. This will mean not only administering its own collection, but managing the collections held by other NHS authorities, potentially overseeing an incredibly rich collection of Scottish art covering the entire geography of the country. Art in Healthcare's strength lies in the range of the expertise within, and it already provides consultancy and administrative services for art outwith its own collection.

As I am new to this it is perhaps easy to get a little too excited by what we have here. The collection is special, we are the only art healthcare charity without borders, and we cover the whole of Scotland. If it were possible to manage the combined collections of NHS local authorities, it would provide a unique service to the type of healthcare institutions we already cover and a whole lot more besides. The growing need for care homes where we could bring the art to the people who cannot access it is something that could be addressed, knowing that the wider range of work was accessible.

This new 'super collection' would be an invaluable resource for research, where, with access to one database, a fresh insight into the cultural output of Scotland over the last couple generations of artists could prove invaluable to the creative sector. Most importantly, Art in Healthcare could realise its aims much more effectively, with artwork distributed to more healthcare facilities around the country. With access to such a collection, the fundraising potential is apparent. One-off, large exhibitions could be curated and staged at multiple venues to raise both awareness and funds.

Pablo Picasso said that "art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life". Judging by the reinvigorated residents in the care home I visited recently, who lit up and initiated dialogue and debate when confronted with art, it is pretty clear he knew a thing or two about the power of the image.

More information about Art in Healthcare is available at www.artinhealthcare.org.uk

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