From the Chair

I hope you’re all enjoying the summer. This is always a busy time for us as we prepare the papers for the next Journal, which this year will focus on Scottish connections to and research on the Pre-Raphaelites. It will include, among others, Rossetti’s relationship with animals; the eco-socialism of William Morris; attitudes to the PRB by the Edinburgh Smashers Club; and the Pre-Raphaelite influence on landscape painter George Wilson. We hope to have the journal ready in time for our AGM, which this year will be in the splendidly re-designed Scottish National Portrait Gallery on 8 December – please note the date in your diaries!

Another date to keep free if you can is 17 November, when we will be holding an afternoon conference at George Watson’s College in Edinburgh looking at French artists who worked in Scotland in the late 18th and 19th centuries, and the influence this had on their work – see below for more information.

A new initiative for us is in Continuing Education – the SSAH is organising an evening class at the University of Dundee on Scottish Art in the 20th century, running for six weeks from 16 October. All students signing up for the class, which will comprise a mix of talks and collection visits, will be given student membership of the society. Visit www.dundee.ac.uk/conted/ for further information.

Matthew Jarron

SSAH Research Support Grants

The Scottish Society for Art History promotes scholarship in the history of Scottish art and art located in Scotland. To facilitate this, the SSAH 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. Application deadlines: 30 November and 31 May.

To apply please send via e-mail:

- a cover letter
- current curriculum vitae
- a brief project description (300-500 words) specifying how the grant will be used and how it relates to a broader research agenda
- a budget
- the name and e-mail address of one reference

Address applications to:
SSAH Research Support Grants
c/o Dr Shannon Hunter Hurtado
sculpthurtado@yahoo.co.uk
Project Report by Aaron Thom, PhD Candidate at the University of Aberdeen

Connoisseurs have always stressed that opinions on authorship can only be made after assessing works on art in their original form. Having lived in Scotland my whole life, I wanted to take advantage of seeing local works, and securing funding from the SSAH made my desire bear fruit. Although my research is focused on early Caravaggesque painting in Italy, I am fortunate that Scotland is home to several superlative paintings from the 17th century. The Essence of Beauty: 500 Years of Italian Art at Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery (6 April–12 August 2012) enabled the rare display of many of Glasgow’s artistic gems from the 14th to 19th centuries, accompanied by Peter Humfrey’s monumental catalogue. It allowed me to think that another exhibition could be mounted following its success, perhaps collating Continental works from across the country. The larger galleries in the central belt are fortunate that they are able to display masterpieces and guarantee significant visitor numbers throughout the year; but other locations have impressive canvases that have escaped academic and public consciousness.

My first visit in Scotland was to the Perth Museum and Art Gallery, where I saw the unbelievably skillful Christ displaying his wounds in store. An innovative yet reductive composition, the work comes immeasurably close to Caravaggio’s hand. Scrupulously studied by John Gash in The Burlington Magazine (October 2009), the Perth Christ is by one of Caravaggio’s talented disciples, either Spadarino or Alessandro Turchi. It is significant that this work has received a grant for its imminent restoration. This, coupled with Perth’s newfound fame following it being granted city status, makes me hope the work will be permanently displayed, as well as further evidence being forthcoming on its ascription.

Following Perth, my next trip was to the impeccably curated McManus Gallery in Dundee. On display in their adventurously named room ‘Dundee and the World’, visitors can see two large canvases: The Sacrifice of Isaac and The Lamentation. The Sacrifice has been quite convincingly attributed to Caracciolo in the past, and I noted several stylistic and compositional resonances with his Adam and Eve in private hands. The Lamentation, however, is much harder to place in an artist’s oeuvre. There is no escaping the formal links with Caravaggio’s Entombment in the Vatican, but there are possible ties with an artist in awe of Bolognese Classicism and Neapolitan painting, and it seems to date from around the 1630s.

I am extremely grateful to the SSAH for awarding me a research grant, thereby allowing me to see the above masterpieces and many others in Scotland. I would also like to thank...
Maria Devaney at Perth and Anna Robertson at Dundee for their support.

**Project Report by Dr Samuel Shaw, PhD Candidate at the University of York**

In mid June I visited the James Pryde archives at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh. I was researching an article on British artists and Balzac at the turn of the 20th century, which touches on a series of paintings by Pryde entitled *The Human Comedy*. My research also deals with artistic networks in London in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Having worked for some time on the British artist William Rothenstein (1872-1945), I have become used to trawling through vast amounts of archival resources in search of valuable insights. A keen correspondent, prolific memoirist and general busybody, Rothenstein left behind him a hundred boxes or so of papers: a vast, almost soul-sapping collection of stuff. Turning to his contemporary James Pryde (1866-1941) I never expected to find the same amount of material. Though his paintings received positive critical attention during his lifetime, Pryde moved in smaller social circles, and despite a leading role in the influential International Society, had little appetite for committee meetings. His memoirs, meanwhile, never got further than a self-mocking title: ‘Pryde and Prejudice’. It is nonetheless surprising that Pryde should have left so few traces. Surprising and, of course, intriguing – as the James Pryde Archives held at the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art prove.

The main bulk of Pryde’s archives consists of the papers of his biographer Derek Hudson, who set out after the Second World War to make use of those who knew Pryde personally to construct a portrait of the late Scot. His subsequent struggles reveal more about Pryde than any of the anecdotes that eventually wound up in his brief book. And struggles they were: though many remembered Pryde kindly, it became clear that few people knew him well, or were willing to write about him at length. As such, the Pryde archives reveal very little about Pryde’s working methods, the inspiration behind particular paintings, or his interest in other artists. The series of paintings which drew me to Pryde’s work – his long-running ‘bed series’: a sequence of brooding interiors inspired by Balzac’s *Human Comedy* – remain as mysterious as ever. Such, however, are the challenges of academic research. The Pryde Archives may not have answered all of my questions, but it posed many other, equally intriguing ones. What do we do with artists who left so little behind? How do we go about filling in the gaps without getting caught up in the artist’s own mythology? What makes a good artist’s biography?

**Project Report by Caroline Malloy, PhD Candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison**

I am incredibly grateful to the SSAH for their assistance towards my travels in Scotland to complete the research for my final dissertation chapter. My project, entitled *Producing, Viewing, Living Ireland: the Visual and Material Creation of Irishness at International Exhibitions, 1853-1939*, concludes with a comparison of the Irish Pavilions at the 1938 Glasgow International Exhibition and the 1939 New York World’s Fair. In Glasgow, the Mitchell Library and the Special Collections and Archives at the University of Glasgow maintain a wide variety of source materials, from brochures, to pictorial journals, to the Exhibition treasury records. The UG Special Collections also preserves the two internal Exhibition publications, the *Weekly Bulletin* and the *Bellahouston News*. These resources have allowed me to better build and support my argument that the all-encompassing modernism of architect Thomas Tait’s vision encouraged participating nations, in particular the increasingly traditionalist Irish Free State, to experiment with modern architectural and artistic forms. Local newspapers at the Mitchell confirmed that, for better of worse, it was this surprising modernism that was most significant
to both the organizers and the nearly twelve million exhibition visitors. In Edinburgh, the National Library’s collection supplemented the materials at the Mitchell while, most importantly, the photographic collection at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland provided the only known photograph of the interior of the Irish Pavilion. As I am most interested in the interior murals, this photograph offers the key visual evidence for my chapter. Finally, in Glasgow, I was also fortunate to be able to visit the original Exhibition site at Bellahouston Park, giving me a better, more personal understanding of the exhibition space. I look forward to incorporating my research here into my dissertation and again thank the SSAH for their support.

Upcoming Conferences

Symbolist Landscape in Europe 1880-1910
4-5 October 2012, University of Edinburgh

A two-day international conference will take place on 4 and 5 October 2012 at the National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh. Eight 30-minute papers and a plenary lecture will be given and will include a visit to the exhibition Van Gogh to Kandinsky: Symbolist Landscape in Europe 1880-1910 (14th July – 14th October 2012).

The distinguished group of speakers include Sharon Hirsh (Rosemont College), Patricia Berman (Wellesley College), Michel Draguet (Royal Fine Arts Museums of Belgium) and Dario Gamboni (University of Geneva).

The conference will focus on central issues in Symbolist landscape painting and its role in the wider context of European culture in the period 1880-1910. Symbolism was a current which was richly cross-disciplinary, and the conference papers will consider issues such as the interaction of landscape imagery with contemporary science, psychology, philosophy, spiritualism and music. Major artists of the period will be brought into play, from Whistler and Khnopff to Munch and Redon, as well as less
well-known figures like Elisabeth Sonrel. The speakers include a notable number of leading scholars and curators in the field, and they will be introducing new research and future projects.

The conference coincides with the Scottish leg of the Symbolist Landscape exhibition, a project developed by Richard Thomson (University of Edinburgh) and Rodolphe Rapetti (Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art, Paris) and co-curated by Frances Fowle (National Galleries of Scotland/University of Edinburgh). The exhibition includes 70 landscapes by 54 artists including Van Gogh, Whistler, Monet and Gauguin. The exhibition attracted great numbers at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam (February 2012-June 2012, 400,000 visitors) and will continue on to Helsinki (Ateneum Art Museum, Finnish National Gallery) in November. 

http://www.nationalgalleries.org/whatson/exhibitions/van-gogh-to-kandinsky#.T_6SLfV24SY

Ferdinand Hodler, *Lake Thun and the Stockhorn Mountains*, 1910, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (© NGS)

Redefining European Symbolism, 1880-1910 is a research network funded by the Leverhulme Trust that unites the University of Edinburgh, the National Galleries of Scotland, the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, the Musée d’Orsay and the Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art, Paris and the University of Geneva. It has staged two research seminars (on the Nabis, VGM, November 2010 and Symbolist landscape, INHA, March 2011) and two conferences: on the Nabis, Amsterdam, VGM, October 2011 and on European Symbolism, Musée d’Orsay, April 2012. Its purpose is to connect researchers of Symbolism in the visual arts, thereby consolidating existing knowledge. Our events have attempted to cast a wide net and incorporate as many topics for discussion as possible. Papers have examined the relationship between Symbolism and theatre, urban landscape, nationalism, colonialism, spirituality and even psycho-physiology.

The network has established an online database which provides instant access to event proceedings and important Symbolist research as well as the ability to contact both leading scholars in the field and up-and-coming PhD students. We hope this will develop into a powerful tool in advancing Symbolist research.

Further information, including booking advice, can be found on the website: http://sites.ace.ed.ac.uk/symbolism or by contacting Craig.Landt@ed.ac.uk (0131 651 4248).

Call for papers: a cross-disciplinary conference on Death in modern Scotland, 1855-1955: beliefs, attitudes and practices

1-3 February 2013, New College, University of Edinburgh

'There remains a huge agenda for death research, offering a unique vantage point for the study of Scottish history' (Professor Elaine McFarland of Glasgow Metropolitan University, 2004). Since those words were written, there have been increasing signs of interest, research and publications in death studies in Scotland.

This conference invites those who are researching death from whatever disciplinary perspective to offer papers whose total range will illuminate 100 years of death in modern
Scotland. These 100 years began with the passing of the Registration Act and the Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act in 1855 and end with the opening of Daldowie Crematorium in 1955. Art historical or visual culture papers will be gladly received.

Papers will be particularly welcome on the subjects of:

deat, grief and mourning;
funeral rites and rituals; customs and costume;
demographic and statistical interpretations;
registration of death;
public health and medicine;
death, poverty, gender and social class;
death, urban and rural comparisons;
burial and cremation;
the development of funeral directing services;
thology, liturgy and funeral ministry;
monuments and memorialisation;
issues of architecture and landscape design;
the folklore of death;
gho narratives and beliefs; spiritualism;
death in war-time;
death, grief, mourning;
death in literature and the arts;
death and Scottish law;
vil death; the death penalty;
disasters: air, rail, sea and industrial

Established research and work-in-progress welcomed.

The conference will include talks by four plenary speakers:

- Dr. Elizabeth Cumming (Honorary Fellow, University of Edinburgh): *Phoebe Anna Traquair, angels and changing concepts of the supernatural in fin-de-siècle Scotland*

- Professor Stewart Jay Brown (New College, Edinburgh) ‘Where are our dead?’ *Changing Views of Death and the Afterlife in late 19th and early 20th century Scotland*

- Professor Hilary J. Grainger (College of Fashion, University of the Arts, London), *The architecture of Scottish crematoria*

- Professor Elaine McFarland (Glasgow Caledonian University), *War and Remembrance in modern Scotland*

Abstracts of 200 words maximum should be sent to Rev Dr Peter C. Jupp, Braddan House, High Street, Duddington, Stamford, Lincs PE9 3QE. (peterc.jupp@btinternet.com/ peter.c.jupp@ed.ac.uk) by 15 October 2012.

The conference will be held at New College, with accommodation at the Pollock Halls. Full conference details will be available in September.

SSAH events

**Tour of the Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art 2012, 1 May 2012**

*Review by Benjamin Greenman*

On this afternoon tour of the Glasgow International Festival, a bi-annual event that concentrates a wide variety of exhibitions and events into just a few weeks of the year, we visited three exhibitions. Each in their own way offered a sense of what was distinct to the festival, which brings together both what is characteristic of the city’s art scene and international art. Each also showed an aspect of contemporary art that had a relation to that of the past.

This was very much the case with the first exhibition that we visited, the Dutch artist Folkert de Jong’s *The Immortals* at the Mackintosh Museum, Glasgow School of Art. Within this unique and evocative space, de Jong presented various configurations of brightly-coloured sculpted figures. The title alludes to Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret
McDonald’s close circle of friends. The couple featured as central figures in the gallery sitting together on a platform above the viewer. This exhibition specifically commissioned for the festival was self-consciously art historical in a number of ways – quoting from Picasso’s figure of the guitarist in one instance and employing a death mask that had wide spread appeal amongst Parisian artists at the turn of the 20th century and used here to create McDonald’s semblance. Curator Jenny Brownrigg gave us an insightful tour of the works, discussing the artist’s intentions, working methods and the sources that he drew on to create the sculptures. Alongside the multiple allusions in de Jong’s sculpture, Brownrigg explained the artist’s rapid use of industrial, synthetic materials, which in their artificial durability provided another sense to the exhibition’s title.

The second stop on the tour was the Gallery of Modern Art and another commissioned work, an installation by the Turner-prize nominated artist Karla Black. What was immediately striking was the scale of the work, which rivalled the architecture of the gallery itself. This was an installation that one explored, teasing out the nature of the materials used, which were disparate but mundane in character, as much as its potential meaning. Dominating the central hall was a vast, layered rectangle of compacted sawdust, although initial impressions varied as to what it was. From the ornately decorated ceiling, highlighted for this installation by additional lighting, descended arcs of sellotape and acetate augmented with colour pigment that provided a suggestive, simple ornamentation that echoed the gallery space as a whole.

The last stage of the tour was an exhibition titled Ever Since I Put Your Picture in a Frame at 42 Carlton Place, the inaugural show of Glasgow’s newest gallery. This exhibition dedicated entirely to painting brought together works of recent years and the past century, works by renowned artists such as Walter Sickert and Andre Derain as well as those less favoured or absent from the canon such as Serge Charchoune. This rich and inventive array of works was not presented, however, to serve a thematic idea or be stridently revisionist. Instead, the exhibition sought to explore a subtle proposition about the nature of painting, manifest as much in the singular qualities of the works as the relationship that they established between themselves in the gallery space. Curator Merlin James guided us around the various works and in a sustained discussion of the exhibition offered us not only an insight into the process of selection, the history of individual artists and their works but a thoughtful and lasting sense of the multiple relationships between the works and the significance of the act of painting.

Tour of the exhibition From Van Gogh to Vettriano, Aberdeen Art Gallery, 24 March 2012
Review by Shona Elliott

Earlier this year, Jennifer Melville, Lead Curator (Art) guided SSAH members around the exhibition From Van Gogh to Vettriano. The exhibition displayed works from private collections in the North East of Scotland alongside paintings from the Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums’ own collection.

Jennifer took us through the three exhibition rooms, pausing at many artworks and discussing their significance. The exhibition was ordered chronologically, beginning with Impressionism, Realism and Post-Impressionism in the first room. Here we were shown works by highly regarded artists, including Van Gogh, Southwest of Scotland artists (Hornel etc), Monet, Pissaro, McTaggart and, very appropriately, given the location of the exhibition, Joseph Farquharson. We saw several similarities in taste between works collected by the Art Gallery and works purchased by private collectors. A pen and ink sketch owned by the gallery was shown beside a loaned oil painting of the same view, for example. Jennifer observed that such similarities weren’t surprising given
that many of the collectors grew up seeing pictures in the gallery, which opened in 1885.

The second room provided glimpses into a few 20th century artistic movements, including Cubism, Surrealism and Futurism. Jennifer made interesting comments about the works, including remarking how one could see that C R W Nevinson’s 1913 Bravo, with its robotic soldiers, had an air of hope and optimism about it, with the First World War yet to start. A few works by Scottish Colourists were shown elsewhere in the room and there were three characterful works by Edward Burra. Two Stanley Spencer works were on display, including The Baptism, a work depicting the baptism of Christ in Spencer’s typically vivid and detailed manner.

The third room had the most impact for me, showing many striking artworks, including Vettriano’s famous The Singing Butler, Frank Auerbach’s heavily painted Head of Helen Gillespie and Peter Howson’s large, bold and contentious painting The Last Supper. Howson’s work depicts Jeremy Isaacs as Jesus, accompanied by grotesque looking disciples. We learnt that the uncomplimentary portrayal didn’t go down well and the finished product failed to meet the satisfaction of the National Portrait Gallery in London, who had been potential buyers. Vettriano’s nearby The Singing Butler was clearly a popular work judging by the crowd around it and Jennifer commented that whilst Vettriano isn’t everyone’s taste, the work pulled many members of the public into the gallery.

The tour was particularly interesting because we were informed not only about the artists but also about the sitters and views in the works. We were told that the boy in Lucian Freud’s recently conserved Boy on a Sofa was one of two brothers regularly depicted by the artist, for instance. The accompanying catalogue is worth buying as researchers put significant effort into making it an interesting read, including going to Paris to identify views in Parisian paintings. The exhibition was a good idea, providing an excellent opportunity to see masterpieces normally only seen by a few.
(1876). At least two of these prestigious commissions were won in competition against much better qualified rivals. As William Shillinglaw Crockett wrote, Currie ‘did extraordinarily well for one who, late in life, changed his occupation to carve a livelihood in the service of art.’

Andrew Currie was born into a downwardly mobile Selkirkshire family. His ancestors had been gentlemen farmers. But for families with too many sons there was never enough land to go round, nor money to buy more. Currie’s grandfather was a tenant farmer on land owned by the Duke of Buccleuch. His father William lost his inheritance. Andrew was a precocious child who demonstrated artistic talent. The family talked of sending him to Edinburgh for drawing lessons, but in the event, to his everlasting regret, he did not go. Instead, Currie was apprenticed, not to a mason, the conventional career path for sculptors, but to a millwright in Denholm.

In 1835, on completing his apprenticeship, he obtained a position at HM Dockyard at Chatham in Kent. Before heading south, the youngster showed his work to William Allan, future president of the RSA. The painter advised him that, though his sketches were creditable for a beginner, he should concentrate on sculpture. On his return from England in 1839, Currie set up his millwright’s workshop in Earlston. He continued to carve in his spare time.

‘He was always busy with his knife’, wrote Lillias Cotesworth, who took lessons in clay modeling from Currie in the 1870s. ‘During leisure hours, he shaped many skillful [Grinling] Gibbons-like bits of foliage and lifelike representations of birds, every delicate feather showing...’. He also ‘moulded clever original groups in ... red clay.’ These might include ‘an “auld wife” on the lookout, her hand over her eyes, her garments windswept; a shepherd and his dog; or a classical head copied from some picture.’

Currie showed off his best pieces in the window of his workshop. Lillias’s father William Cotesworth commissioned him to carve a bookshelf for the library at Cowdenknowes house. The bookcase was the beginning. But it was with his next work that Currie made his name. Known as the ‘fairy flower stand,’ the most ambitious of the three wooden pieces he exhibited at the RSA in 1855, it featured graceful blossoms mingling with fairy figures, including the semi-mythical poet-prophet Thomas the Rhymer. The fairy flower stand won much praise, but did not find a buyer. Currie was subsequently forced to dispose of it by raffle, selling 90 shares at a pound apiece. The winner was Lady Polwarth of Mertoun House. According to the current owner, the fairy flower stand is no longer at Mertoun. If anyone knows of its whereabouts, please contact the author at bejaystone@gmail.com.

Having turned professional, Currie needed a studio to allow him to sculpt on a more ambitious scale. Access to potential customers was also essential. He found the solution in Darnick, a village on the outskirts of Melrose. Darnick’s most attractive feature was its proximity to the home of Sir Walter Scott. Following the novelist’s death in 1832, Abbotsford became a mecca for literary pilgrims. Tourists wanted souvenirs to take home. Currie catered to this passing trade. Indeed, according to Lillias Cotesworth, he ‘lived chiefly by selling to tourists busts and bas-reliefs of Sir Walter Scott, Hogg, Burns, etc, and copies in wood or plaster of ornaments from Melrose Abbey.’

Within a couple of years of moving to Darnick, in 1859 Currie won his first large-scale commission in stone, the monument in Selkirk to Mungo Park, the African explorer. Quite a coup for a novice, considering that Currie’s main rival was a fine artist, Alexander Handyside Ritchie, who had trained in Rome. Ritchie also had local form, notably his 1839 statue of Sir Walter Scott which stands outside the court house in Selkirk.
Family connections were crucial to Currie’s success. His aunt had married one of the Park brothers, his mother had been engaged to another. His cousin and childhood chum, Selkirkshire sheriff-clerk, John Lang chaired the selection committee for the monument. Being local was also crucial in getting the nod for his next big commission, the monument to the Ettrick Shepherd, aka James Hogg, the Border poet. Like his subject, Currie was ‘a native of the [Ettrick] Forest.’ As a boy he had attended Yarrow Kirk alongside the Shepherd. Personal knowledge doubtless helped Currie achieve what was universally agreed to be a good likeness. Unveiled in front of a crowd of 2000 at St Mary’s Loch in June 1860, the Ettrick Shepherd is beyond question his masterpiece in stone.

In addition to connections, a successful sculptor also needs patrons. Currie’s best customer was James Hope-Scott, a wealthy English barrister who, by virtue of having married Sir Walter Scott’s grand-daughter Charlotte Lockhart, became laird of Abbotsford. Hope-Scott bought several early wooden pieces by Currie. He also allowed the fairy flower stand to be exhibited at Abbotsford. A prominent Tractarian Hope-Scott was probably at least partly responsible for Currie’s conversion to Catholicism in 1864. He commissioned the convert to carve two large pieces - an altar and the pulpit - for Our Lady & St Andrew’s, the church he built in Galashiels.

How to gauge Currie’s standing as a sculptor? One way is by comparing him to the group who made character statues for the Scott Monument. They included two of the most eminent fine artists of the day, Currie’s contemporary, William Brodie (1815-1881), who is best known for his Greyfriars Bobby, and D W Stevenson (1842-1904), who carved the statue of William Wallace outside the Wallace Monument. Of the 24 statuettes commissioned in 1871 to commemorate the writer’s centenary, Brodie accounted for five, Stevenson three. Evidently they did not consider genre sculpture beneath them.

Being chosen, by a high-powered committee that included both the president of the RSA and the curator of the National Gallery, to contribute pieces for such a prominent landmark was a high honour. Especially for Currie, a passionate Scottophile. ‘He delighted in the Waverley novels,’ wrote Lillias Cotesworth, ‘and immense was his satisfaction when asked to undertake two of the figures for Scott’s monument in Edinburgh. Edie Ochiltree and Old Mortality were those chosen, and he threw his whole soul into the work.’ His research was meticulous. According to the writer, Sir George Douglas, Currie ‘took great pains to make the acquaintance of a descendent of “Edie Ochiltree” for the express purpose of studying the family features.’ The happy result is a visage with an
expression that is, as Cotesworth put it, ‘sly and waggish.’

Currie also competed for the commission to carve the memorial to King Robert the Bruce at Stirling Castle. Here, his rival was the London-based illustrator George Cruikshank, whose design was modeled by the English fine art sculptor John Adams-Acton. When their proposal was deemed too expensive, Currie was asked to step in as a replacement. He agreed, but only on condition that his design, and not that of Cruikshank, would be used. Inaugurated with great fanfare in 1877, the Bruce would be Currie’s last major public work.

His late pieces include the red sandstone armoured figure he made for Sir Frederick Graham that stands outside the front door of Netherby Hall in Cumbria. Known in the family as a Border reiver, it may be intended to represent Sir John of the Bright Sword, an illustrious Graham ancestor. During the late 1870s Currie carved a massive oak over-mantle/fireplace-surround for the mansion of his brother John Lang Currie, a prosperous pastoralist, in the Melbourne beachside suburb of St Kilda. The piece is remarkable in that it features many exotic items that Currie had not himself seen, like aboriginal warriors and kangaroos.

His final work, a marble bust of a little girl holding flowers, now in the collection of the City Museum Edinburgh, is dated 1882. Currie had been a professional sculptor for less than 30 years, but in that time he achieved a considerable body of work. In this, his bicentennial year, he deserves to be celebrated.

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Carving History, Bob Johnstone’s book on the life and work of his great-great grandfather Andrew Currie, will be published in November.

Faces & Places – Digital Interpretation in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery

By Shona Cameron (Online Curator, Scottish National Portrait Gallery & Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art)

With the opening of the redeveloped Scottish National Portrait Gallery on 1 December 2011, it was not just the dramatic architectural interventions or the reinterpretation of the collection which wowed visitors. Faces & Places offered a new and exciting way to investigate the art works, taking the gallery well and truly into the 21st century.

Faces & Places is a digital application that explores portraiture and landscape using the National Galleries of Scotland’s collection as the starting point and comprises sixteen screens in total, in various locations throughout the newly refurbished Portrait Gallery.
Screens in the Ambulatory of the Portrait Gallery

Six screens are situated in the balcony of the Great Hall; four in the café; three in exhibitions exploring specific works of art; a further two showing donor recognition information in the Great Hall; and one in The Robert Mapplethorpe Photography Gallery, which specifically looks at aspects of photography.

Faces & Places emerged through a cross-departmental re-examination of how to interpret portraiture and national identity through the Galleries’ collection in a digital manner. As the title suggests, Faces & Places is broken down into two distinct areas, both of which use themes and activities to give visitors multiple avenues into the collection. ‘Faces’ examines portraiture but offers innovative ways to consider the genre. It tackles aspects of portraiture ranging from posthumous portraits to public and private identities in portraiture, alongside groupings of ‘Famous Faces’. In utilising the entire National Galleries of Scotland’s collection fascinating comparisons and links can be made. Self-portraits by Andy Warhol can be considered alongside those by George Jamesone and Ken Currie, for example.

Complementing it is ‘Places’ which examines the role that place plays in forming a person’s identity. Scotland is often characterised by her landscape and the Portrait Gallery itself holds a collection of landscape works. ‘Places’ features the likes of ‘Cross the Country’, a section that allows the user to explore areas of Scotland through its associated artworks. ‘Journeys’, on the other hand, looks outwards, offering an international view of Scots who travelled the world and highlights the far-reaching influence they had.
Both sections are populated with essays, video and audio which, together, build up a stimulating way to explore often complicated themes within the history of art. Outside these two main sections there are plenty more features to inspire and intrigue. A ‘Learn and Play’ section informs through games; with ‘Six Degrees of Separation’ asking users to connect the likes of Ewan McGregor to Hans Christian Anderson through works in the collection (in doing so exposing the user to eighteen different portraits); or ‘Castaway’ which matches the user with their perfect desert island companion. Throughout the experience ‘Breaking News’ stories may pop up, revealing headlines such as: ‘Mary, Queen of Scots has escaped from Loch Leven Castle’. Such activities engage users with works of art in the collection and tell what can be complex stories in fresh ways.

Further exploration exposes ‘Timelines’ and a ‘History of the Portrait Gallery’ section, which documents the evolution of the world’s first purpose built portrait gallery since it opened in 1889. Additionally, throughout the process it is possible to continue elements of the experience at home through nationalgalleries.org. For example, ‘editing’ your portrait or landscape match in ‘My Face My Place’ and exhibiting it in the online gallery. This also enables people from around the world to interact with the collection and contribute to the user experience. Overall the result is a system that allows open-ended, self-directed exploration of the collection and encourages a broad and far reaching form of interpretation.

The screens that are positioned in the exhibition spaces offer a more targeted experience. At present they feature in Reformation to Revolution, Imagining Power: The Visual Culture of the Jacobite Cause and Modern Scot. Each unit operates a ‘Hot Spot’ feature allowing the exploration in greater depth of one or two artworks on show. For example the full-length portrait of Queen Anne by Willem Wissing and Jan van der Vaardt, is filled with symbolism. The ‘Hot Spot’ feature allows the user to find out more about the artwork, beyond what is written on the accompanying label. It also allows film, audio and artworks from outwith the collection to be included; for example in Queen Anne’s case, a portrait of Charles II’s mistress, Louise de Keroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth, by Sir Peter Lely, is included to highlight the popular hairstyle Anne copied from the Duchess. Furthermore, it features the curator of the exhibition talking about the work in greater detail. This offers another level of interpretation, in parallel to and complementing that on the walls.
The project involved cross-departmental working and it was a positive experience for all those involved. David Taylor, Senior Curator on the project commented: ‘I see my role as being a contributor to a team, in which the transactional relationship of sharing knowledge and experiences helps to create a new tradition, where curators and digital technology providers create an interactive which will allow visitors to experience and respond to the collection in an enjoyably individual and involved way’.

The response to *Faces & Places* from visitors has also been overwhelmingly positive. Comments have included praise for the design and usability alongside the content, which successfully appeals to a range of age groups and satisfies a variety of needs, whether looking for more information on a particular painting or simply wanting to ‘play’.

_Faces & Places _has altered how the National Galleries of Scotland approach digital media within a gallery environment. It supports the original vision of the redevelopment project in creating a Portrait of the Nation and has helped redefine the Scottish National Portrait Gallery for the 21st century.

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**Exhibitions/ Displays and Books**

Image(ing) the Past, University of Dundee, 7 July to 8 September 2012  
By Matthew Jarron

The latest exhibition in the Lamb Gallery at the University of Dundee explores some of the many ways that art has represented, challenged and been inspired by history, mythology and our ideas of the past.

Rather than showing straightforward history painting, the exhibition features artists who explore issues relating to the past in more interesting ways. Some artists – such as Will Maclean – draw on the history of traditional Scottish and Gaelic culture to make us more aware of the impact of its loss. Others, such as Ronald Forbes, draw on classical mythology, while updating Biblical imagery results in very striking works by Edward Burra and Neil Dallas Brown. Archaeological artefacts and excavations provide the starting point for images by Philip Reeves and James Howie. More recent family history and the artists’ own personal past informs fascinating pieces by Jack Knox and Mateusz Fahrenholz.

Will Maclean, _A Highland Woman_, 1991  
(University of Dundee Museum Services, Alan Woods Bequest, © the artist)
All of the works shown in this thought-provoking exhibition come from the University’s own extensive collections of art, and many have not been shown publicly before. They include oil paintings, watercolours, prints and drawings. As the exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Scottish Word & Image Group, several text-based artworks are included from the University's Centre for Artists' Books.

The exhibition will be on show Mon-Fri 09.30-20.30 and Sat 09.30-16.30. Admission is free. For further information call 01382 384310 or email museum@dundee.ac.uk

New Look for the Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow
By Pamela Robertson

Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *The Church of La Llagonne*, pencil and watercolour, 2011
(Margaret Davidson bequest, © The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, 2012)

The Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, has been undergoing a major refurbishment and will relaunch from 15 September with new displays and upgraded services.

The Gallery’s primary painting gallery is being reconfigured to re-present the University’s outstanding collections, including its Old Masters, Whistler and Scottish Art, in a coherent and engaging narrative. An additional 50% of works will be on display. In addition there will be an enlarged Focus Gallery, Conversation Pieces – pairings of related but disparate works; and Art on Paper and Spotlight walls.

The new displays will feature important acquisitions made over the past few years, including works by Elizabeth Blackadder, Pietro da Cortona, Margaret Macdonald, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Marie-Louise Motesiczky and Picasso. The Focus Gallery will present a special display *Hagar and the Angel: A new acquisition by John Runciman*, marking the allocation of this work by H.M. Government’s Acceptance in Lieu scheme. In addition, the front of house reception areas are being overhauled and extensive behind the scenes work carried out to the roof, plant, lighting, and other services.

The Gallery reopens with an ambitious special exhibition, featuring one of the great treasures of The Hunterian: *Rembrandt and the Passion* will showcase The Hunterian’s beautiful *Entombment Sketch*, bequeathed by our founder Dr William Hunter.

Rembrandt, *The Entombment Sketch*, oil on panel
(© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, 2012)

The Hunterian reopens from 15 September 2012. Closed Mondays. Tues – Sat: 10.00 – 17.00; Sun: 11.00 – 16.00; admission free; charge for the Rembrandt exhibition. For further information, visit www.glasgow.ac.uk/hunterian.
Book: Art Researchers’ Guide to Edinburgh

This 68-page booklet describes the major libraries and repositories in Edinburgh with art and design resources. Several institutes are covered: National Galleries Scotland, National Museums of Scotland, Historic Scotland, the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Central Library, Edinburgh Napier University, the National Library of Scotland, Royal Botanical Gardens and the National Records of Scotland.

The booklet provides an overview of each collection of art and design resources, including description of content, access details and a list of facilities. Photographs of the buildings and the items/rooms within accompany the text and maps of Edinburgh are provided. A useful subject index is included, which shows whether each collection has material associated with the subject and shows the types of material held in the collections. The booklet is a very handy guide for art researchers to consult when visiting or preparing to go to Edinburgh.

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