Greetings and I hope you have enjoyed the beautiful sunshine across Scotland! Glasgow has been in the news over the past few months. Tragically, the west wing of Mackintosh’s beloved building at the Glasgow School of Art fell victim to a serious fire on 23 May. 90% of the structure and 70% of the building’s content could be saved thanks to the quick and efficient response by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. But its famous library, the hen-run and a storage space were destroyed. This has left many of us devastated but volunteers from organisations across Scotland immediately pitched in to help with the salvage efforts and I am pleased to report that all surviving collections are now stabilized. Expert conservators will assess them as part of a recovery programme that is scheduled over the next three years. Unfortunately, many valuable books and journal-runs from the library’s special collections perished in the fire and an international appeal is under way to rebuild—at least some- of this unique collection. The SSAH has donated a back run of its journal and if you think you might be able to help, please take a look at the regularly updated ‘Wanted List’ at http://lib.gsa.ac.uk/update-on-fire-affected-library-services/.

On a more positive note, Glasgow just hosted one of the most successful Commonwealth Games and the city was buzzing with energy and excitement. An extensive cultural programme accompanied the games and it was encouraging to see that sports and culture do not have to be odds with one another.

Within the SSAH, I would like to report that so far this year, the society has offered three tours. Dr Donal Bateson, Reader in Numismatics at the University of Glasgow, led a tour through the Hunterian Art Gallery’s Scottish Gold exhibition on 12 April. SSAH committee member and former chair, Matthew Jarron, jumped into his role as curator of the University of Dundee Museum Collections to give an expert tour of A Glimpse of a Great Vision: The D’Arcy Thompson Art Fund Collection at the Tower Foyer & Lamb Galleries, University of Dundee on 07 June. Most recently, SSAH members were treated to behind-the-scenes talks and tours at two National Museums Scotland sites. Also, we had such a great response to featuring Warriston Cemetery, Edinburgh in our last newsletter that we organised an upcoming visit and we are very grateful to Caroline Gerard, member of the Friends of Warriston Group, for generously giving her time to guide us.

Sadly, Dr Robyne E. Calvert had to leave her post as committee secretary to return to her native United States and we currently have a vacancy. I would like to hereby thank Robyne for the great work she has done in the short time she served in this role and we hope to find a replacement for her in our next scheduled committee meeting.

Sabine Wieber
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 £500 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, sculpthurta@yahoo.co.uk

Project Report by Rachel Horsman
Masters student, University of Glasgow

I was lucky enough to receive a grant from the SSAH, enabling me to make research trips to further my study of the work of the celebrated Scottish Colourist S.J. Peploe (1871 - 1935). I am a Masters student at the University of Glasgow and my department, Technical Art History, has initiated a pilot project to study the Colourists in terms of their materials and methods. Collaborating with the Hunterian Art Gallery, we have been allowed unframed access to four paintings in their collection and have conducted a detailed technical examination of each work, supported by art historical research on their context and place in the artist's oeuvre. After first-hand observation, we took paint samples, which were later studied with optical microscopy, scanning electron microscopy combined with energy-dispersive X-ray microanalysis (SEM-EDX), Raman spectroscopy and fluorescent staining.

My painting, Ben More from Iona of 1925, was one of several versions Peploe completed during his regular summer painting trips to Iona. My understanding of the difficulty of working en plein air, especially with this island's changeable climate, was enhanced by reading Peploe's letters to his wife on a visit to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art's archive in Edinburgh. Heading to Edinburgh again, I was further illuminated by talking to Guy Peploe, the artist's grandson, who has written extensively on his grandfather's working practice and took me to see his surviving painting equipment, including a pochade (portable paint box), brushes and palettes.

Travelling to museums in Edinburgh and Kirkcaldy enabled me to study similar views of the mountain, and build a better picture of the artist's technique. Without these visits it would have been more difficult to analyse the paint cross-sections from the Hunterian's Ben More, which showed a complex layer build-up, unexpected from the spontaneous appearance of the work. This research provides the first investigation of the technical aspects of Peploe's paintings, one which was much benefited by SSAH's generous funding.

S.J. Peploe, Ben More from Iona, 1925
© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow 2013
SSAH Events

Tour of A Glimpse of a Great Vision: The D’Arcy Thompson Art Fund Collection, Tower Foyer and Lamb Galleries, University of Dundee
By Claire Robinson, Museum Collections Unit, University of St Andrews

‘[...] the harmony of the world is made manifest in Form and Number, and the heart and soul and all the poetry of Natural Philosophy are embodied in the concept of mathematical beauty’.
D’Arcy Thompson, *On Growth and Form* (1917)

In June, SSAH members enjoyed a visit to an exciting new exhibition - *A Glimpse of a Great Vision*. The Curator, Matthew Jarron, led us on an entertaining tour through the exhibition, which showcases the results of a two-year project by the University of Dundee’s Museum Services to develop a collection of artwork inspired by the pioneering biologist, mathematician and classical scholar, D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson (1860-1948), who was the University’s first Professor of Biology. This project was one of only six in the UK funded by the Art Fund’s RENEW scheme supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

D’Arcy Thompson’s book *On Growth and Form* proposed the ground-breaking argument that biological form can reflect physical and mathematical principles. This landmark work had an immense impact on some of the most important artists of the 20th century, and continues to fascinate and inspire artists today. We had the opportunity to see works by renowned artists such as Henry Moore, Victor Pasmore, William Turnbull and Wilhelmina Barns-Graham. Barns-Graham is unique within the collection as she was the only artist who actually knew D’Arcy, having met him when she was a child in her hometown of St Andrews. Her work *Overflow* (1980), on display in the exhibition, is from a series of mixed media drawings based on wave formations which visualise D’Arcy’s idea that changes in natural form occur because of pressure from external forces.

Further highlights of the exhibition include the original catalogue from Richard Hamilton’s ground-breaking *Growth and Form* exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 1951. Bringing us into the 21st century were paintings, prints, sculpture and video art created by contemporary artists such as Will Maclean, Marion Smith, Gemma Anderson, B.E. Cole, Susan Derges, Alex Flett, Bruce Gernand, Jennie Pedley, Andy Lomas, Lindsay Sekulowicz, Roger Wilson, Mark Wright and Peter Randall Page. Inspired by D’Arcy Thompson’s desire to collect, catalogue and interpret the natural world, Maclean’s *D’Arcy Thompson’s Daybook* (2007) is part of a series of mixed-media box constructions. It contains graphic and three-dimensional elements that represent D’Arcy’s many interests including marine biology, morphology, geometry and classics.

Reflecting the diversity of the collection and its interaction with the modern field of computer art, the exhibition also features the specially commissioned computer art installation entitled *Flowers* (2012 - 2013) by Daniel Brown. This work uses computer code to generate hyper-realistic, never-repeating images of flower blooms. *Flowers* incorporates imagery, patterns and colours from the collections of the D’Arcy Thompson Zoology Museum, University of Dundee, to create flower textures and inspire flower shapes.

This visually impressive and thought-provoking exhibition provided a fascinating exploration of the links between art and science and made for a very enjoyable Saturday afternoon with SSAH members.
Natasha Ferguson from the Treasure Trove Unit who provided us with a fascinating introduction to the Treasure Trove system. The Treasure Trove law in Scotland ensures artefacts of archaeological significance are preserved for the nation in museums across Scotland. The Treasure Trove Unit deals with the reporting of archaeological assemblages from archaeologists and chance finds made by the public. We had the opportunity to see and handle a number of archaeological objects, from stone tools to medieval jewellery, which had been handed in by members of the public.

In the afternoon, we enjoyed a tour of textiles and jewellery from the Art and Design Collection at the National Museums Collections Centre in Granton, Edinburgh. We learned about the outstanding collection of contemporary jewellery from Sarah Rothwell, Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Design. One highlight was Woman Sitting in a Window, part of a set of fifteen finger rings on a nickel alloy stand, created by Wendy Ramshaw.

Earlier this summer, members of the SSAH met in Edinburgh for an exciting outing to two National Museums Scotland sites. To start off the day, we were met at Chambers Street by Dr

Images courtesy of University of Dundee Museum Services.

Visit to National Museums Scotland, June 2014
By Claire Robinson, Museum Collections Unit, University of St Andrews

David Poston, Tapestry Circles and Green, 2011
Bangle of welded stainless steel wire and tapestry woven cottons.
Collaborative piece with Jonathan Cleaver, Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh

Wendy Ramshaw, Woman Sitting in a Window, section of ring set, 1987 - 1989
Another highlight was David Poston’s stunning *Tapestry Circles and Green* (2011), created in collaboration with the Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh, reflects his interest in the tactile experience of the wearer and the visual synergy between the wearer and the object.

Next, we found out about the collection of historic textiles from Emily Taylor, Assistant Curator of European Decorative Arts. We viewed items of historic costume and a wooden casket intricately embroidered with motifs of animals, figures and floral patterns in silk and silver gilt threads, dating from the 17th century.

Lastly, Lisa Mason, Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Design, talked to us about some of the 20th century treasures in the fashion and textiles collection. The Bernat Klein Collection, acquired in 2010, provides an insight into the working methods of the fashion designer who was based in the Scottish Borders. Klein is perhaps best known for his mohair tweed fashion textiles of the 1960s, popularised by designers such as Chanel, Dior, Yves St Laurent and Hardy Amies. The collection includes samples of Klein’s woven and printed textiles, pattern books and dye sample records. We were also lucky to see items from the Jean Muir Collection, acquired in 2005, which forms the world’s largest museum collection of any internationally renowned fashion designer.

Lincoln covered wooden casket with figures, animals and patterns embroidered in silk and silver gilt threads, and the interior comprising of drawers and compartments: English, c. 1650 – 1680

Woman's coat dress of navy blue leather, calf length and sleeveless, trimmed with strips of the same leather bound through hole. Sample designed by Jean Muir, British, 1966 - 1995

We were very grateful to the Treasure Trove Unit and Art and Design Department at National Museums Scotland for hosting such a great day out filled with wonderful objects and insights into their collections!

Images courtesy of National Museums Scotland.
December 2013 marked the 60th anniversary of the first grant made by the National Fund for Acquisitions (NFA) in December 1953. Since then the NFA has made over 6,000 grants to more than 120 organisations throughout Scotland, helping museums, galleries, libraries and archives to develop their collections, preserve aspects of local heritage and widen engagement with local communities. Funding (currently £150k per annum) is provided by Scottish Government and the NFA is administered by National Museums Scotland working in partnership with the National Galleries of Scotland and National Library of Scotland to provide expert advice on applications. The Fund has helped to develop collections in the arts, literature, archaeology, history, natural sciences and technology. A wide range of organisations benefit from the Fund, including local authority museums and archives, university museums, regimental collections and local trusts. Partnership with other funding bodies, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund and Creative Scotland, has enabled museums to maximise funding and buy more ambitiously in the market than they otherwise could.

The first grant made by the NFA was £1.10s for the acquisition by Stromness Museum of specimens of the Orkney rare breed of North Ronaldsay sheep. While this gives some indication of the breadth of subject matter covered by the NFA, the story of what happened next presages the extent to which fine art would become a major strand in the work of the Fund. By 1953 the Orkney-born artist Stanley Cursiter had retired from his post as Director of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. Now King’s Limner and Painter in Scotland, he spent his summers in Stromness and took an active interest in his local museum. He offered to paint a backdrop to the case displaying the North Ronaldsay sheep and executed what was to be his largest landscape painting. It can still be seen by visitors to the museum today, forming a magnificent background to the local fauna populating the natural history displays.

Fine art typically dominates grants made by the NFA with percentages over the last ten years ranging from 35% of total funding to as much as 70%. This is only partly explained by the comparatively high prices which these acquisitions command. While many purchases are made as examples of periods or figures in the history of art, much again is collected because of what it records – portraits, historical events, changing landscapes, depictions of a way of life now lost. The truism that a picture is worth a thousand words is nowhere more relevant than in a museum context where a multitude of cased objects and accompanying text might be required to convey the information contained in, for example, a single painting depicting the topography of a town prior to the invention of photography.

The sheer breadth and depth of the collections which the NFA has supported over the last 60 years is difficult to sum up in a short article. On one level the list of grants reads like a roll call of some of the great names and movements in the history of British art, particularly the modern era: Pre-Raphaelites, Glasgow Boys, the Camden Town and Bloomsbury Groups, the Vorticists, the St Ives Group and the Scottish Colourists to name a few. J.D. Fergusson, long-lived and prolific, features in grants to the Fergusson collection at Perth Museum and Art Gallery and in no less than eight other collections. Pop Art puts in an appearance in Andy Warhol’s iconic Campbell’s Soup screenprint at Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums and Richard Hamilton’s Swingeing London at Glasgow Museums.

Looking to the Continent we find Impressionism and also Post-Impressionism represented by examples of the work of Auguste Renoir and Edouard Manet at Leisure and Culture Dundee, Pierre Bonnard at Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums and Vincent van Gogh at Glasgow Museums. There is a nod to the Surrealists with a
sketch by Salvador Dali for *Christ of St John of the Cross* in Glasgow Museums’ collection and a pen drawing of Edinburgh Castle by Man Ray in the collection of City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries. In this last example we find this internationally renowned artist in a very local context and this is a feature of many of the fine art acquisitions which the Fund has supported. When Glasgow Museums purchased a portrait by Van Gogh in 1974 the subject was the Glasgow-born art dealer Alexander Reid who shared digs in Paris with Van Gogh and his brother Theo. Encountering the direct gaze of this very Scottish sitter with his red hair and his good tweed jacket, we feel an immediate connection with the artist which no amount of sunflowers and Provençal landscapes could achieve. When in 2004 the Hunterian acquired a pen and ink drawing, *Head of a Bearded Man*, by the great Baroque artist Peter Paul Rubens, its particular significance was its presence for over 200 years in Scottish private collections.

The NFA has been critical in helping to build individual collections including the internationally important print collection at the Hunterian, where Thomas Rowlandson, James McNeill Whistler and his circle, Wassily Kandinsky, Pablo Picasso, Lucien Freud and David Hockney are a few of the examples supported by the NFA, and the superb fine art collection at Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums where we find Joshua Reynolds, William Blake, J.M.W. Turner, David Wilkie, Samuel Palmer, Walter Sickert, James Cowie, Paul Nash and Bridget Riley, again only scratching the surface of this wide-ranging and extensive collection. In the impressive collection of British art at City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries are, among many others, Paul Sandby, Arthur Melville, Joseph Crawhall, Percy Wyndham Lewis, William Gillies, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham and Joan Eardley. Other examples of fine art collections which have developed with support from the NFA include those at Glasgow Museums, the Pier Arts Centre, Leisure and Culture Dundee, Perth Museum and Art Gallery, East Dunbartonshire Council’s Lillie Art Gallery, the University of Stirling Art Collection and the collections held by South Ayrshire Council.

Artists actively collected by museums in the area in which they were born or worked accounts for a significant proportion of fine art acquisitions supported by the NFA, including examples of the work of William Dyce, James McBey and James Cowie at Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums, John Byrne at Paisley Museum, Kilmarnock-born Robert Colquhoun at East Ayrshire Leisure and William Darling McKay and William Gillies at East Lothian Council Museums.

Portraiture features strongly among grant-funded acquisitions with examples of the work of Henry Raeburn at Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums, the Hunterian, the Museum of the University of St Andrews, Leisure and Culture Dundee and City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries. History painting is well represented (Gavin Hamilton at the Hunterian and Glasgow Museums and John Opie at the Museum of the University of St Andrews) as are topographical works. Offering ‘snapshots’ of a town or landscape at different points in history, such works are

Vincent van Gogh, *Portrait of Alexander Reid*, 1887, oil on pasteboard
© CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection
invaluable both in terms of research and display. In this role the work of Alexander Nasmyth features in the collections of the Hunterian, Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum, Paxton Trust, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery and City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries. Other typical examples of the genre are the images of the town of Dunblane and its cathedral painted during the first half of the 19th century by Hugh William Williams and Macneil Macleay, acquired by Dunblane Museum Trust. Away from the flock, as it were, we encounter again our old friend Stanley Cursiter, depicting local landscapes acquired by the Hunterian, Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Orkney Museum, Shetland Museum and Archives and Leisure and Culture Dundee.

James Barret, *The Village of Stornoway with a Shooting Lodge, on the Isle of Lewes, 1798*, oil on canvas © John Maclean, courtesy of Museum nan Eilean

A remarkably early view of Stornoway, painted in 1798 by James Barret, was acquired by Museum nan Eilean with NFA funding in 2005. A companion piece to a landscape in the collection of the National Galleries of Scotland, the painting depicts the settlement at a time of rapid expansion when it was described by one contemporary visitor as ‘daily increasing’. We see buildings which no longer survive, including the ruined castle of the Macleods and the shooting lodge of their successors the Mackenzies, as well as the buildings which comprise the newly built and thriving port with its fleet of herring busses under sail. A wonderful pencil and watercolour panorama of the town of Largs by Samuel Parlber, dated July 1856 and acquired by Largs Museum Trust in 2011, affords us a series of fascinating views of the town including the Colm’s Day cattle and horse market where animals are paraded past bidding farmers and people line up hoping to be hired on as servants.

Occasionally we find acquisitions of work by gifted amateur artists. One example is the work of Holocaust survivor Marianne Grant, acquired by Glasgow Museums in 2004. This extraordinary young woman, born to Jewish parents in Prague in 1921, brought her art materials with her when she was transported to the Theresienstadt ghetto in 1942. Later, at Auschwitz-Birkenau, she was forced by the notorious SS doctor Joseph Mengele to make drawings to aid his experiments on prisoners. In Bergen-Belsen, following liberation by the Allies in 1945, she continued to make her own record of the suffering she saw around her. When she came to live in Glasgow in 1951 Marianne brought with her the trunk containing these remarkable artworks which now stand testament not only to humanity’s capacity for violence and brutality but also to our compassion and instinct for survival.

It is encouraging to see that throughout its existence the Fund has supported the acquisition of work by living artists. Looking through the lists of grants made during each decade of the Fund’s existence we can read off examples of each succeeding generation: Anne Redpath and Barbara Hepworth, Eduardo Paolozzi, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Elizabeth Blackadder, David Hockney and John Byrne. The work of John Bellany appears in no less than thirteen collections. Peter Howson, Adrian Wizsnewski and Calum Colvin are well represented. We find the Young British Artists (YBAs) Tracey Emin and Jake & Dinos Chapman represented at Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums. In the present generation, examples of recent graduates of Glasgow School of Art include Alison Watt, Jim Lambie, Christine Borland, Kenny Hunter, Rosalind Nashashibi and Turner Prize winners Douglas Gordon and Martin Boyce. It is perhaps significant that examples of the work of
almost 30% of the artists represented in *Generation: 25 Years of Contemporary Art in Scotland*, a series of exhibitions organised by the National Galleries of Scotland and Glasgow Life as part of the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme, have been acquired by Scottish collections with NFA support.

This short survey can only hope to give a general impression of the range of acquisitions supported by the NFA. The NFA webpage includes more examples of purchases made with the help of the Fund as well as a blog where museums write about the NFA-funded objects that are important to their collections (http://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/services-and-expertise/national-fund-for-acquisitions/).

On 1 October 2014 a symposium will take place at the National Museum of Scotland, *Collecting Scotland: Celebrating 60 Years of the National Fund for Acquisitions*. Speakers from museums across Scotland will be talking about some of the acquisitions they have made with the help of the Fund. In addition, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Art Fund will present their current funding programmes, and there will be opportunities to participate in discussions around collections development. If you are currently working in a museum and involved in making acquisitions for your collections and you would like to attend this free event, please contact Karyn McGhee, National and International Partnerships Officer at National Museums Scotland, k.mcghee@nms.ac.uk, for details.

**Barbara Rae – Painter and Printmaker**
*By Gareth Wardell,*  
*Writer and award winning filmmaker*

Let’s begin by scorching a myth – Barbara Rae is *not* a landscape painter. You won’t find any puffy cumulus clouds floating across romantic grasslands flecked by bright red poppies, lark in the air. Rae’s subject matter is socio-political – structures shaped by the hand of mankind, aged by use and the elements. What misleads the casual observer is many of her images are tied to the soil. They make a leap of logic from earth to landscape. Studies include ancient Celtic standing stones, a Spanish farmer's modest finca high in the Andalusia's mountains, or 3000 year-old Anasazi rock art deep in the Arizona desert. Pristine buildings and opulence don’t interest her. If a landscape does figure large its because it has pattern and structure that she lifts to the perpendicular, flat behind the main interest of her study, a dividend to the object in the foreground.

The other misdirect is lack of knowledge of her development as an artist. She can actually draw. That might sound obvious for any artist trained at an eminent Scottish art school but not today when so many have dropped fine art in place of coldly commercial ‘conceptual’ art – an arid fashion, a lot of it preposterous to this writer at least, where you think up an idea that offers no development, gets lauded by the Tate, a massive collection of inert objects, or a brief film on a loop.

Rae produces realistic images as well as semi-abstract. She has commissioned portraits to her credit. What she has in abundance is a highly developed understanding of colour: how one affects the other, how they affect the viewer, and what constituent elements make up the exact hue. In that she is masterly, respected internationally. Essentially, Rae is the archetypical dedicated, driven, utterly focussed painter and printmaker.

*Achill Fence*, screen print, © Barbara Rae
Her artistic voice took off late in the 1980s when she visited Santa Fe, New Mexico, at the invitation of a Dallas gallery:

The revelation was being able to work on a large floor where before I had a limited space in the Glasgow School of Art. I prefer acrylic paint to oil, it dries so quickly, but I use a lot of collage material. And I chuck a lot of water around, so working large canvases on the floor is just tremendous. Back then I noticed I worked much faster in a freer space than before.

Rae is an inveterate traveller, constantly searching for inspiration in the most far-flung remote corners of the globe. Europe is her main hunting ground - France, Spain and Italy - but she has also spent a lot of time in the USA's Southwest, in Japan and Australia, and in South Africa. Ireland figures largely in her work: 'I prefer the west coast of Ireland and Scotland. The light is more dramatic than in the east.' She is an annual visitor to the Ballinglen Arts Community in County Mayo, spending a month there each year in winter's worst blasts, sequestered in a modest cottage, with enough wine to see her through the worst storms. Does lots of travel make her less studio bound?

No. I take a lot of time to study my chosen location, mix with the people, learn their history, making multiple studies in my sketchbooks for development later in the studio. But I am in studio a lot, usually from 9am until early evening, a strict regime. I have to be. All my art materials are there!

Rae is a painter and a printmaker, not merely an artist who dabbles in prints. Her prints have broken new techniques in their production, both complicated and labour intensive. Some are subjected to many separate layers of inks to achieve the desired finish. In that she welcomes surprise and serendipity. She does not reject in preference to that in her imagination, but instead works through trial and experiment accepting error. Error too can be art. These days, as a Royal Academician, her paintings command high values, but her prints are a good way of acquiring a 'Barbara Rae' because they are as innovative as her paintings but at collectable levels of commerce.

She is often asked who are her heroes. They are almost all Spanish - Goya, Velasquez, Miro, Tapas, Picasso - but she has great affection too for Raeburn and Ramsay, 'painters as great as any of the Europeans'. Matisse figures largely in her admiration. No one can accuse Rae of copying them. There are no Rae 'homage to Picasso' images in her oeuvre. She is her own artist.

Rae's style is dramatic and bold with strong flourishes; a simple sweep of the brush conveying a complete item in a work. In studio she doesn't try to reproduce what's in her sketchbooks, but 'to do something different. It's a painting, not a reproduction of a landscape or a boat or a bridge.'

She was born in Falkirk, but soon moved to Crieff in Perthshire where her father was Provost of that market town. She attended Morrison's Academy and her art teacher spotting latent ability almost immediately. Rae's journey from there to art school and elevation to the Royal Academy of Arts in London reads like a fairy story. In her youth she was a fine fencing champion, a costly sport where females got little if any financial sponsorship. ‘It was either thick thighs or paint under my fingernails’, she says, dismissing the misogyny she met in that male preserve. ‘It never paid expenses.’

Her work is invariably uplifting, life affirming. But she can get irked when observers try to inject meaning into it:

I did a painting of Spanish rooftops, Moorish houses with Moorish chimney pots. This woman came up to me and said, ‘I want to know what you mean by this. What are you
trying to say?’ I told her it was a painting of Spanish rooftops. There was no meaning. She was taken aback.

On another occasion I witnessed, a couple of admiring female art students were discussing one of Rae’s major works in a London gallery on a preview evening. When they realised Rae was nearby they buttonholed her, desperate to discover how she attained a particular technique. ‘Tell us, how do you do that, that there?’ They pointed enthusiastically at the canvas almost bouncing with excitement. After a pregnant pause Rae answered firmly and politely, ‘That took me over 30 years of experimentation. Get your own techniques.’ Disappointed, nevertheless they understood.

Rae has little affinity with the Scottish colourists of yesteryear - Cadell, Fergusson, Hunter or Peploe. She handles paint in her own way so successfully shallow imitators straggle behind.

My recognition of her importance in the art world happened during a visit to a national art museum in Dublin. In its largest room of contemporary art hung a massive Monet, a Matisse on the wall opposite, a Raeburn nearby, the large canvas at the far end very familiar. A few steps closer to see the signature and, wallop, it was a Rae.

This year Rae is concentrating on large-scale works on canvas, but has three exhibitions; two running simultaneous in University of St Andrews and the palatial Pallant House Gallery in Chichester, the latter on show until the end of October. She has held exhibitions all over the world.

Her work at this year’s Royal Academy Summer Show sold out within 48 hours. Small galleries throughout the United Kingdom often contain a few of her prints for sale. Buyers and collectors have a way of seeking her out despite her ability to batten down the hatches and concentrate on creating new work. Her print show at last year’s Edinburgh International Arts Festival all but sold out, with demand still continuing that she is unable to satisfy. She has no factory of output or assistants. In the classic phrase, it’s all her own work.

Today any book written on Rae’s output sells out in days. She has masses of fans worldwide as well as private and public collectors. It can be unnerving to be visiting friends in Outer Prades only to discover a Barbara Rae hanging on the living room wall. ‘We’re mad fans. Do you know her? How fortunate.’ Fans tend to buy catalogues and write gushing letters to get them signed.
What of the future? Another Edinburgh show is planned with a mixture of paintings and print, there's a paperback reprint of the Royal Academy book of her prints, and she hankers after a journey to Hudson's Bay to make studies of the places visited by the Orkney explorer Dr John Rae, her famous namesake. John Rae was a consummate native-taught adventurer who discovered the Northwest Passage, but after encountering the bodies of the unsuccessful expedition of Sir John Franklin, and delivering his findings to the Royal Society in London, found himself vilified by Franklin's widow, and of all people, her friend the novelist, Charles Dickens. John Rae's reputation never recovered. Franklin was credited with finding the Northwest Passage, a calumny yet to be fully corrected.

Barbara Rae would never regard herself as one of the art world's elite. Elected to London's prestigious Royal Academy of Arts, one of only 80 artists so appointed at any one time, there are few privileges other than recognition by her peers that her work is outstanding. In spite of all the honours bestowed upon her, those who meet her are impressed by her down-to-earth honesty, her Scottish sense of practicality, her wit, and erudition. She eschews explanations of her work, ill-informed waffle, and pretentious descriptions hung next to artwork. There's very little in the public domain about her private life, other than she enjoys travel and cooking. Her answer is always the same to intrusive questions: 'People can judge me by my work.'

Public and critics have judged Barbara Rae's work and found it striking and powerful. What else do we need to know? It's there for us to enjoy, a gift motivating us into new ways of seeing.

The exhibition, Barbara Rae: Place & Process, can be seen in Gateway Galleries, St Andrews between 23rd August and 13th December 2014. A parallel display of Rae's work will also be on show in the School of Art History, 79 North Street, St Andrews, which is open Monday to Friday, 10am - 4pm.

Current and Upcoming exhibitions

American Impressionism: A New Vision
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Modern Two)
19 July 2014 – 19 October 2014; Admission £8 / £6

A major international exhibition which explores the impact of French Impressionism on American artists in the late 19th century is one of the highlights of the National Galleries of Scotland’s summer exhibition programme. American Impressionism: A New Vision brings together nearly 80 paintings by some of America’s most celebrated artists, such as James McNeill Whistler, John Singer Sargent and Mary Cassatt. It also features the work of a number of significant artists who are probably better known to American audiences – among them Theodore Robinson, Childe Hassam, William Merritt Chase, Edmund Tarbell and John Twachtman. Paintings by the major French artists Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot and Edgar Degas demonstrate how closely the Impressionists worked with their American colleagues.

The exhibition reflects the impact of Impressionism on both Americans working abroad in the period from 1880 to 1890, and those working at home in the following decade. It begins with iconic paintings by Cassatt and Sargent, who cultivated friendships with French Impressionists – in particular Monet and Degas - and participated in the development and promotion of this revolutionary new way of painting.

More than any other American artist working in France, Mary Cassatt (1844 - 1926) helped to shape Impressionism. Through her friendships with French artists Edgar Degas and Berthe Morisot she participated in four Impressionist exhibitions between 1879 and 1886. Two of her finest works, Children on the Beach (1884) and Young Girl at a Window (c.1884), appeared in the eighth and final Impressionist exhibition in Paris in 1886 and are included in the Edinburgh show.
John Singer Sargent (1856 - 1925) was one of several young artists from North America who worked at Giverny in Normandy in the late 19th century. He developed a close friendship with Monet and visited him at his house in Giverny on several occasions; he immortalised their shared work sessions in his 1885 painting *Claude Monet Painting by the Edge of a Wood*. The work shows the French artist at work on a canvas that has been identified as *Meadow with Haystacks near Giverny*, one of the earliest works in his famous series of haystacks paintings.

Other artists assimilated Impressionism in a more gradual way: Theodore Robinson (1852-1896) experimented with the changing effects of light while working outdoors alongside Monet at Giverny, as seen in the luminous painting *Blossoms at Giverny* (1891). Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 - 1935) incorporated impressionist colours and subjects into his more traditional ‘Salon-style’ pictures, using bright colours to capture the effect of a bright sunny day in *Grand Prix Day (le jour du grand prix)*, c.1888.

In America, artists turned to Impressionism slightly later. Between 1890 and 1900 painters such as Hassam, Chase, Tarbell and Twachtman adapted Impressionism by responding to the new subject matter, compositions and colours of the movement in scenes depicting their native country and creating a new vision for an American audience. Their subjects included New York parks, East Coast beaches, New England villages and, of course, the image of the American woman. Prismatic colour, broken brushwork and purple shadows became prevalent at exhibitions in New York, Philadelphia and Boston in the early 1890s. Chase, for instance, created a series of bright, urban park scenes as well as bright, outdoor pictures of women and children at leisure during summers on the coast of Long Island in the 1890s. The exhibition includes four of his paintings of East Coast scenes at Shinnecock from the 1890s.

Edmund C. Tarbell, *In the Orchard*, 1891
Oil on canvas, 154.3 x 166.4 cm
Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago, Daniel J. Terra Collection, 1999.141
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This major international exhibition has been organized by the musée des impressionnismes Giverny and the Terra Foundation for American Art with the collaboration of the National Galleries of Scotland and the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, with the generous support of the Terra Foundation for American Art. For its only UK showing, it can be seen at the SNGMA (Modern Two). Afterwards, the exhibition will be shown at Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza from 4 November 2014 – 1 February 2015.

The exhibition is accompanied by a lavishly illustrated catalogue American Impressionism: A New Vision, 1880 - 1900, published on the occasion of the exhibition. The catalogue reproduces more than 80 paintings by significant American artists (160 pages, 120 colour illustrations, price £20.00). American Impressionism is part of the Edinburgh Art Festival.

You Choose: Favourites from the City Art Centre
By Helen Scott, Curator of Fine Art

Francis Campbell Boileau Cadell, The Black Hat, 1914
(City Art Centre, Edinburgh Museums and Galleries)

Voting is currently open for everyone to choose their favourite oil and acrylic paintings from the City Art Centre’s collection. The most popular artworks will feature in the forthcoming exhibition You Choose: Favourites from the City Art Centre, which opens in December 2014.

Of course, choosing a single favourite painting is no easy task. To assist the decision-making process, over 900 artworks from the City Art Centre’s collection can be viewed on the BBC Your Paintings website. From landscapes to portraits, from abstract images to still life scenes, there is something to appeal to all tastes. So, if you
want to see William McTaggart’s *Running for Shelter*, or F.C.B. Cadell’s *The Black Hat*, or perhaps a lesser-known treasure from the collection, why not vote for your favourite?

Browse the collection and vote online here: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CityArtCentreFavourites](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CityArtCentreFavourites). Please note that voting closes on 30 September 2014. The exhibition *You Choose: Favourites from the City Art Centre* will open to the public on 13 December 2014.

James Cadenhead, *Lady with Japanese Screen and Goldfish (Portrait of the Artist’s Mother)*, oil on canvas (City Art Centre, Edinburgh Museums and Galleries)

**News**

Have you taken a look at *Art Detective* yet? [www.thepcf.org.uk/artdetective](http://www.thepcf.org.uk/artdetective)

*Art Detective*, which was launched earlier this year, is a groundbreaking initiative that connects public collections in search of information about their oil paintings with specialists and members of the public with relevant knowledge. Whether it is to discover the name of a beautiful 1930s society hostess or the artist behind a Dutch 17th century still life, *Art Detective* helps collections put names to unidentified sitters, places and events depicted in their paintings and the unknown artists behind works.

*Art Detective* addresses the serious issue of insufficient – and declining – specialist knowledge within public art collections. It is available to all 3,000 or so collections that participate in *Your Paintings*, the website created by the PCF in partnership with the BBC. The vast majority of these participating collections - many of which are not museums - do not have fine art curators, whilst many have lost experienced curators through funding cuts over the years.

There are approaching 30,000 paintings on the *Your Paintings* website where the artist is not known and over 15,000 works where the attributions are uncertain. Some 8,000 portraits are missing the identities of the sitters and many other paintings are missing information about the places or events depicted. Ahead of the launch of *Art Detective* a small number of paintings on *Your Paintings* were already firmly re-attributed, notably one to Van Dyck at the Bowes Museum and one to Gainsborough at the Museum of St Albans. *Art Detective* promises more discoveries - both major and minor. Visitors to the website can already read about several of the discoveries ([http://thepcf.org.uk/artdetective/discoveries](http://thepcf.org.uk/artdetective/discoveries)).

*Art Detective* has been built by the PCF using the support of public funding through the Arts Council’s Renaissance Strategic Support fund. It has been developed in collaboration with the University of Glasgow, together with representatives of Manchester Art Gallery, the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, Tate, Yale Center for British Art and a number of smaller institutions, the art trade and academia. An Expert Panel oversees the appointment of the specialists who lead *Art Detective*’s special interest group online discussions.

The principal outcome of *Art Detective* will be improved knowledge of the nation's oil painting collection. *Art Detective* will also actively engage the public in the care and curatorship of public collections, and allow them to witness and participate in the processes of art historical research, connoisseurship and knowledge creation that lie behind the displays and exhibitions in our public museums and galleries.
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