

From the Chair

As I sit down to write these lines, Christmas is around the corner and another year of activities for the Society is drawing to a close. We just held our Annual General Meeting at the Glasgow School of Art on 13 December and I am pleased to say that 2014 has been a successful year. Our membership numbers are healthy; we offered a diverse range of events throughout the year; and, for the first time in the Society's history, we launched the Journal with a special event at the National Portrait Gallery with three of the journal's authors presenting their work.

We hope to carry this momentum into the new year and we have organised a study day on the theme of 'Scottish Art in the Great War' at the Black Watch Castle & Museum in Perth on 28 February. Please save the date and join us for this fascinating and timely event. Claire and Matthew have also been busy putting together another exciting programme of excursions and visits, and I hope you will be able to join us on some of these events in 2015.

At the AGM, our long-time committee member and journal editor Helen Scott stood down and I would like to thank her for many years of invaluable wisdom and I wish her all the best for her future. Ben Greenman will take over the journal's editorship and we also welcome Tara King as our new minutes secretary (St Andrews) and Kirsty MacNab as a committee member.

I would like to close by thanking committee members for their service and the Society's general membership for your continued support. The Society would not be the same without your enthusiasm and investment. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and all the Best for the New Year.

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: 31 May and 30 November.

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

SSAH Research Support Grant report

By Gráinne Rice, November 2014

I am currently undertaking a part-time PhD at Edinburgh College of Art / University of Edinburgh researching the life and work of the Scottish artist Steven Campbell (1953-2007). As part of my project I am compiling the first catalogue raisonné of Campbell's major works. With the SSAH Research Support Grant I undertook a research trip to the US in August 2014 with the aim to undertake archival research and examine key works relating to the period when Campbell lived in

New York in the early 1980s. This is an academically under-researched period of Campbell's career; it was therefore essential for me to see what I could find.

My first appointment was at the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven to see two Steven Campbell paintings in their collection: *Eagles are Attracted by Disaster* (1983) and *Two Gardeners in an Impromptu Carnival Atmosphere* (1984). I studied the acquisition files for these works and was able to view them at the museums' storage facility. The two paintings had come to the Yale collection via two separate gifts from private collections, and they were significantly larger in scale than both the earlier and later works produced in Scotland. The data gathered from this visit will feed directly in to my thesis dealing with the American collectors of his work.

I then travelled to Chicago where I interviewed Campbell's former New York gallerist who provided me with a wealth of valuable contextual information including detail of the artist's working process and the clientele and collectors of his work at this time.

From Chicago I travelled to Minneapolis where I had an appointment at the Walker Art Center Archives. I spent a full day going through material relating to Campbell's first museum exhibition *Viewpoints* at the Walker in 1985. This was again very useful, providing lots of curatorial information as well as previously unseen press cuttings and an unpublished transcript and sound recording of an in-depth interview between curator Marge Goldwater and Campbell. I was also able to view the two Campbell works in the Walker collection: the large *Two Humeans Preaching Causality to Nature* painting (1984) and a stunning cruciform print *Tragic Hikers* (1983). In addition to the above, the visit helped me find three new artworks for the catalogue raisonné listings and has provided very valuable contextual insight.

SSAH Events

Review: SSAH visit to Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, 18th October 2014

By Rachael Grew, Glasgow School of Art

Back in October, members gathered at the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre (GMRC) in Nitshill for a behind-the-scenes tour of the British and European painting collections. Having been met in the foyer by curators Pippa Stevenson (European Art) and Jo Meacock (British Art), we were whisked off on a whistle-stop tour of the building. The size of GMRC is

extremely impressive; most of the storage facilities cannot be seen from the front of the building, so it is only when we began walking around that the sheer scale of the facility became evident. We peeked through the doors of the conservation workshops and had a quick look around some of the many storage areas, or 'pods', including those dedicated to ceramics, arms and armour, and world cultures. These pods yielded numerous fascinating objects, though perhaps the most intriguing of these was a pink, fish-shaped coffin within the world cultures pod.

Having sampled the variety and scale of the collections, we proceeded to the pod which houses Glasgow Museums' collection of works on paper. Here, Pippa showed us some beautiful pieces, including Degas' pastels of ballet dancers, plus a series of woodcuts designed by Gauguin, and later prints by his son Pola, which were intended to illustrate Gauguin's book on his Tahitian experiences.

We next visited the painting store. Glasgow Museums holds a whopping 4,000 oil paintings, though only a quarter of these are on display in the various galleries and museums across the city. The remaining 3,000 are stored in GMRC. Jo and Pippa enabled us to view and learn more about a wide variety of works, including paintings by Faed, Sickert, and Rousseau. Particular highlights included one of David Wilkie's lesser-known Italian works, painted while recuperating from a nervous illness in Rome, which showed pilgrims having their feet washed. For a long time it was thought of as an image of the Pope washing pilgrims' feet, until, in 1940, Dr Tom Honeyman, then director of Glasgow Museums (who also brought Dalí's *Christ of St John of the Cross* to Glasgow), identified the various religious figures as cardinals, monks and priests, thus matching the description of a work which had previously thought to have been lost! Another highlight was an image of a boar hunt painted by Rubens and his studio. In addition to picking out the differences in the figures painted by Rubens and his apprentices, Jo and Pippa also explained how the wood surface of the work had warped over time, resulting in GMRC having to hang it vertically rather than horizontally to prevent any further damage.

We rounded off our visit with a look at the library and archives, as GMRC is not only a storage and conservation facility, but an educational resource as well. Anyone can use the library and archives, or request to see items held by the collection. We certainly found the visit to be enlightening; it was truly fascinating to see such a wide variety of art works and we are most grateful to Jo and Pippa for providing such a stimulating experience.

Perhaps the best thing about GMRC is that, though it is not a conventional gallery, it is still accessible to the general public. Introductory, highlight, and specialist tours are available Tuesday-Sunday at 2:30pm, though advance booking is required. To find out more go to: www.glasgowlife.org/Museums/GMRC.

Review: tour of the Reid Building, Glasgow School of Art, 13 December 2014

By Claire Robinson, University of St Andrews



Image courtesy of Glasgow School of Art

After our Annual General Meeting of 2014, SSAH members enjoyed a special tour of the new Reid Building at the Glasgow School of Art. Our student guide, Kitty, provided us with a fascinating and thought-provoking insight into the development of the Reid Building and its relationship with Charles Rennie Mackintosh's celebrated Glasgow School of Art.

Named after Dame Seona Reid, former director of the GSA, the Reid Building is the result of an international architectural competition launched one hundred years after the completion of Mackintosh's 1909 Glasgow School of Art. Controversially at the time, the competition was won by the New York based practice Steven Holl Architects working in partnership with Glasgow based JM Architects. They designed the new building on a site located directly opposite Mackintosh's masterpiece. The Reid Building was completed at a total cost of £50 million in 2014. The building houses technical workshops, digital media labs, lecture theatres and exhibition spaces, including studio spaces and seminar rooms for the School of Design.

As we found out during our tour, Holl and his design partner Chris McVoy were motivated by the desire to design a building that was in 'complementary contrast' to, rather than competing with, Charles Rennie Mackintosh's architectural masterpiece. Modern materials have been used to create inspiring

interior spaces. In contrast to Mackintosh's trademark interior schemes and his passion for decoration and ornament, no intricately handcrafted details are in evidence in the Reid Building. Reflective of budgetary and also functional considerations, the Reid Building is a stark, exposed concrete structure enclosed in a glass shell that has been designed to withstand the rough and tumble of a working design school.

Light is central to Holl and McVoy's architectural design. Informed and inspired by an in-depth study of Mackintosh's iconic building and his masterly treatment of light, they set out to utilise the diverse qualities of natural light in the Reid Building. The location of working spaces was determined not only by interdependent relationships but also varying needs for natural light. For instance, studios are positioned on the north façade with large inclined windows to maximize access to the desirable qualities of northern light.



Driven voids of light; image by Claire Robinson

Some of the most striking design features of the interior are Holl's 'driven voids of light'. Ascending through five storeys from the ground floor to the roof, these concrete vertical cylinders have been designed to channel natural light into the centre of the building and provide ventilation. Punctuated by the driven voids, the building is connected by an open circuit of angled stairs, ramps and walkways that facilitate access to different spaces and encourage social interaction or 'creative abrasion' as it is termed by the architects. The building also showcases an eye-catching sculptural work by the 2011 Turner Prize winner and alumnus of the GSA Martin Boyce, which is a reinterpretation of Mackintosh's use of stained glass.

The challenge of designing a building next to Mackintosh's finest work would be a daunting task for any architect. The Reid Building may have its critics but when standing inside this magnificent space it is hard not to be thoroughly impressed by this 21st century addition to the GSA.

**2015 SSAH study day: Scottish Art in the Great War
Saturday 28 February, 2015
The Black Watch Castle & Museum, Perth**

SSAH is hosting a study day exploring the impact of the First World War on Scottish art. Through a series of presentations by curators and scholars, we will learn about artists on the frontline and on the home front, the influence that the war had on their subsequent careers, and the role of art in memorialisation.

The full programme will be announced in the new year, but will include Dr Patricia Andrew speaking about posthumous portraits; Alice Strang on J.D. Fergusson's work for the Admiralty; Sandy Brewer on the connections between art and map making; Emma Halford-Forbes on newspaper artist Joseph Gray; and Sandy Wood on the contrasting wartime experiences of William Gillies and James Miller. Full details on how to book for this fascinating event will be provided nearer the time. In the meantime – save the date!

Feature articles

George Fennel Robson's *Scenery of the Grampian Mountains*, 1814 and 1819

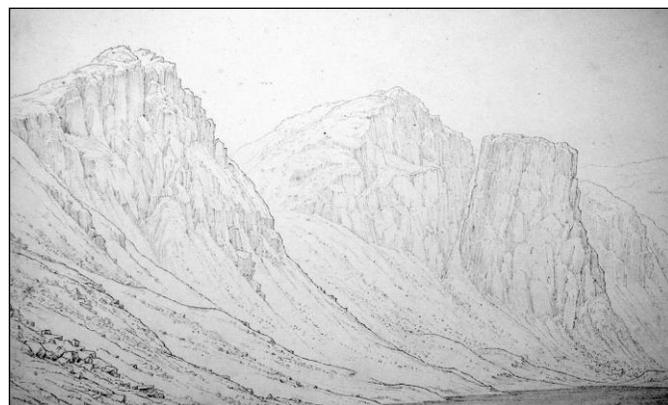
By Robin Campbell, independent researcher

George Fennel (or Fennell) Robson was born in Durham in 1788. After some success in London, he raised enough money to make sketching tours to the Highlands, which produced material for his *Scenery*, published in 1814. This year marks the bicentenary of this celebrated publication, and it seems appropriate to acknowledge it here. The book has a large format, 14 by 20 inches, and contains 41 soft-ground etchings, each with plate-size 11 by 18 inches. The plates were prepared by Henry Morton from Robson's drawings. As the title explains, the plates 'represent the principal hills from such points as display their picturesque features; diversified by lakes and rivers: with an explanatory page affixed to each plate, giving an account of those objects of natural curiosity and historical interest, with which the district abounds.' There is also a map included, made by Lizars. This edition was followed in 1819 by a second edition,

identical except that aquatint was applied to the etchings to yield tonal effects, and the plates were hand-coloured. Copies of both editions are rare and expensive: the 1819 edition suffered the common fate of hand-coloured books – dealers broke many up so that the plates could be framed and sold singly.

The 41 graphite drawings used for the plates have survived, bound in an album by Thomas Brassey, the builder of a third of Britain's railways, and now in the British Museum (1937, 1120.3.1-41). According to his biographer Arthur Helps, 'mountainous scenery afforded [Brassey] immense pleasure' and 'he often found a grateful relaxation at Christie and Manson's or in the tempting rooms of Messrs. Agnew'. Some of the drawings have inscribed dates, but unfortunately they were cut to a standard size before being placed in the album and in some cases parts of the date are missing or illegible. The only surviving dates are for July and August of 1812, on some drawings from No. 25 onwards. The drawings have more detail, are more finely drawn, and have less drama and romance than the published plates – they are a faithful topographical record of what Robson saw. It is probable that the source drawings derived from two or three visits to the Highlands between 1810 and 1812. Robson exhibited five Scottish views at the Associated Artists exhibitions in Bond Street in 1811 and 1812, but these were limited to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs region.

The following images show the precipices at the head of Loch Avon in the Cairngorms in i) Robson's original sketch from the Brassey album, ii) the coloured aquatint engraving from the 1819 edition of the *Scenery*, and iii) a large finished undated watercolour. Notice how the snow gully on the left of the Shelter Stone Crag (the prominent tower) in ii) has been incorrectly drawn as a separating gap in iii).



i) No. 35 in the Brassey album © Trustees of the British Museum



ii) Plate 35, 1819 edition



iii) Later watercolour, courtesy of Abbott & Holder

The sequence of plates in the *Scenery* reaches from Loch Lomond and the Trossachs eastward through the Dochart and Tay system to Dunkeld, before heading north to Blair Atholl, passing through Glen Tilt to Deeside, then again north through the Cairngorms to Speyside, and concluding with a view of Ben Nevis from the north shore of Loch Eil. Southern Argyll, the Trossachs and Perthshire had been previously visited by several notable artists, in order of date Paul Sandby, Moses Griffith (with Pennant), John ‘Warwick’ Smith, Joseph Farington (mainly Trossachs and Loch Lomond), John White Abbott, Hugh Williams, John Claude Nattes and J.M.W. Turner. But none of these artists had produced drawings from Deeside or Speyside, and only White Abbott ever strayed from the road onto mountains as Robson did. So far as I can tell, Robson’s are the earliest surviving drawings of the Cairngorms peaks and of Lochnagar. What is perhaps more remarkable is that the earliest surviving drawing of Ben Nevis seems to be Robson’s. When Pennant visited Fort William in 1769, he observed that Fort William is ‘surrounded by vast mountains, which occasion almost perpetual rain. Benevish soars above the rest, and ends,

as I was told, in a point (at this time concealed in mist)’, so there was nothing for Griffith to draw. But it is surprising that there are no drawings of Ben Nevis by Sandby or his assistant Charles Tarrant, who were stationed at Fort William in the early 1750s, while making maps for General Roy.

Robson went on to enjoy a successful career as a landscape watercolourist, and became President of the Old Watercolour Society in 1820. He showed 650 pictures at the Society’s exhibitions, the majority of them featuring Highland subjects. Despite this copious output, only a handful of his watercolours are to be found in Scottish public collections.

Robson died from food poisoning in 1833, contracted aboard the steam packet *James Watt* in transit from London to Stockton-on Tees, aged 44. He was unmarried, and no correspondence or other papers seems to have survived. The little that we know about his life, aside from what may be inferred from his works, derives from a short contemporary biographical sketch written by his painter friend Thomas Uwins. This appeared in the rare and ephemeral *Lo Studio, an Analytic and Critical Journal of the Fine Arts, Music, and Drama in Great Britain* (London: Frederick Lawrance (sic), 1833). A version was reprinted in Volume XVI of the *Journal of the Old Water-Colour Society’s Club* (1938). During Robson’s early tours, according to Uwins, “that he might enter entirely into the romance of the country, he dressed himself as a shepherd, and with his wallet at his back, and Scott’s poems in his pocket, he wandered over the mountains at all hours and in all seasons, fixing firmly in his mind the various aspects of nature, and collecting a fund of observations on which he might draw for the remainder of his life.’ Uwins commented on the circumstances of Robson meeting the (4th) Duke of Atholl near Blair Atholl, which resulted in an invitation to dinner, and ‘the lasting friendship of the Duke and his family’. Indeed, the *Scenery* is dedicated to the Duke, and describes him as its principal patron. However, there are no Robson watercolours at Blair Castle, and no record in the Atholl Archives of these transactions between them.

Aberdeen Art Gallery – Inspiring Art and Music

By Shona Elliott, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums

Aberdeen Art Gallery and the adjoining War Memorial Court and Cowdray Hall concert hall will be closing in March 2015 for a significant redevelopment and refurbishment project estimated for completion in late 2017. The project aims to stabilise the historic buildings, allow more of the collections to be shown

and provide a better experience for people, whether they're visiting or working here. We have now received the great news that the Heritage Lottery Fund will contribute £10 million towards the £30 million project. The remainder will come from fundraising donations and Aberdeen City Council.

The project will protect and develop Aberdeen's artistic legacy through creating a world-class cultural centre that integrates music with art. There will be new learning suites, an extra gallery floor, passive environmental control and monitoring systems, improved visitor, performer and staff facilities and greater opportunities for visitor engagement.

The redevelopment, which has been designed by award winning firm, Gareth Hoskins Architects, with input from public consultations, will build on Aberdeen Art Gallery's history of extending and revising space to enhance visitor experience. Alexander Marshall Mackenzie created the front range of the building in 1885 and further additions were designed by him in 1905 (Centre Court) and the 1920s (Cowdray Hall and domed Memorial Court). The 1960s saw the construction of the James McBey Library and the 1970s staff offices.

Many improvements will be made to the Gallery and Halls, as the following details show. There will be:

- an additional 11 collections exhibition spaces, enabling more collections to be exhibited, including international loans
- roof top balconies on the new floor with views towards Union Terrace Gardens
- layouts that will enhance visitor orientation
- a visitor lift (the goods lift is currently used by visitors)
- better toilet facilities on every floor
- enhanced physical integration of Cowdray Hall and the Art Gallery
- refurbishment of the Cowdray Hall, which will maintain its unique acoustic
- a second Green Room for performers
- relocation of the ground floor café to a larger front area to accommodate demand and encourage visitors, supplemented by a new top floor café with views over the city
- upgraded heating and electrical systems
- new staff offices and meeting spaces
- an accessible library for researchers
- adaptation of areas to easily accommodate wheelchairs and buggies
- improvements to ensure environmental sustainability, including underfloor heating, recycled insulation and LED lighting

- plenty of natural daylight, with a large central laylight plus glass panes interspersed amongst vertical copper panels in the roof top extension

The work will be undertaken with sensitive treatment of historical features. The popular granite columns will be preserved whilst marble cladding and treads from the current main staircase will be used elsewhere on site, where possible, such as enhancing the Cowdray Hall stairs. New laylights and LED lights will replicate the shape and size of current laylights and the distinctive War Memorial dome will continue to be the highest visible point of the building.



Artist's impression of the redevelopment interior
Courtesy of Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums

Digital technology will be used throughout the redeveloped site to enhance the visitor experience and all exhibition areas within the Art Gallery will have new themes and content. Current ideas being explored include:

- *Paradise Lost*, featuring insights into art during 20th century war and interwar years and the following reconnection with nature
- *French Impressions*, exploring French Impressionism and its links with contemporary British art
- *Shoreline*, featuring artists' responses to the edge of the sea
- *Portrait to Selfie*, highlighting the gallery's outstanding collection of portraits through the ages
- *Politics and Petticoats*: women's contribution to art
- *Balmoral*, exploring Queen Victoria's affection for Scotland and how Scottish identity was developed

There will also be a balcony craft gallery highlighting jewellery and ceramics, an Art Deco display

of ceramics and glass in the Cowdray Hall entrance, a dedicated single media room and a Community Gallery. All designs are being produced with Edinburgh-based company, Studioarc Design Consultants.

In conjunction with planning the decant of all art, furniture, equipment and staff from the Art Gallery by the end of March and designing the content for the new galleries, staff are organising the creation of a new collections centre to house artworks during the redevelopment and later house museum and art items from an existing inadequate store. The centre will further increase the accessibility of our officially Recognised Collection of National Significance, providing dedicated research areas, education facilities and open store tours.

The Art Gallery, Memorial Court and Cowdray Hall will be open as normal in January and there will be reduced opening hours in February so hurry now to visit before we close! For further details, visit our Tumblr site dedicated to the redevelopment: <http://inspiringartandmusic.tumblr.com/about>, which will be regularly updated with blogs throughout the closure period. This site also explores FAQs and provides details on opportunities to provide comments, including through Facebook and Twitter. In addition, we will have a physical presence during closure, including loans to various local areas and loans to institutes elsewhere in the UK and abroad. Further details will be announced over the next few months.

It's a very exciting time for Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums and we look forward to telling you more as the project progresses.

New Acquisition

St Andrews Preservation Trust Museum is delighted to add to their art collection a painting by the late Winifred McKenzie. The *Still Life with Red and Blue Poppies* oil painting went under the hammer at Edinburgh auction house Lyon and Turnbull in July and, with the financial support of the National Fund for Acquisitions, the Museum was successful with their bid.

Winifred McKenzie (1905-2001) arrived in St Andrews with her sister Alison (1907-1981) in 1940 from London. They had intended to return to London once the war had reached its conclusion; however they quickly decided to make St Andrews their permanent home and the sisters remained in the Town for the rest of their lives. Both were accomplished artists, exhibiting their work in galleries in London and at the Royal Scottish Academy, and throughout the Second World War they held popular art classes for allied soldiers

billeted in St Andrews. In 1944, the soldiers' work was exhibited at the National Gallery of Scotland. Many of these works are now held in the Trust's collection and were displayed in 2013 during an exhibition of local art, *The St Andrews School*.



Curator Samantha with the acquisition © Neil McKenzie

The Museum holds a number of works by 20th century local artists, and an archive of material relating to the McKenzie sisters. However, it did not have a painting by Winifred. From the McKenzie archive, curator Samantha Bannerman was able to determine that *Still Life with Red and Blue Poppies* was first sold at the St Andrews Art Club in 1977 for £50. Now, nearly 40 years later, the painting has returned to St Andrews and will be displayed in the Museum next April in an exhibition of recent acquisitions.

Upcoming exhibition

Picturing Conflict: Art of the First World War

City Art Centre, Edinburgh

8 November 2014 – 18 January 2015, admission free

The First World War was a life-changing event for millions of people, the first conflict of a truly global nature. The scale of the war, and its personal toll for so many individuals, prompted an outpouring of responses in literature, music and the visual arts. Artists were at the forefront of this movement. They depicted the people, places and experiences of the war in official and unofficial capacities, producing formal commissions as

well as more personal, private images. These artworks provide a valuable insight into the events of the war and its impact on those involved.

As part of the commemorations marking the centenary of the First World War, the City Art Centre is currently showing a new exhibition drawn from its collection of Scottish art. *Picturing Conflict: Art of the First World War* presents a thought-provoking selection of paintings, drawings, prints and photography. The exhibition includes artworks produced during the war and in its immediate aftermath, alongside images created in later years, which view the conflict through the lens of hindsight and memory.

A range of artists are featured, all of whom were touched by the war and responded to it in different ways. The Glasgow-born painter and printmaker D.Y. Cameron (1864-1945) had already forged a successful career by 1914, but still felt compelled to offer his services to the war effort. Initially he joined his local Volunteer Training Corps in Kippen, and later he became an official war artist for the Canadian War Memorials Fund. Through this scheme, Cameron accompanied the Canadian Army to the Western Front, spending the autumn of 1917 with troops at Passchendaele. He sketched under threat of shelling and sniper fire. Subsequently he painted a series of striking battlefield landscapes for both Canadian and British government commissions. *A Garment of War*, which features in the exhibition, was the final large painting in this series, and perhaps the most dramatic reminder of the devastation of warfare.

Eric Robertson (1887-1941) was just embarking on his artistic career when war was declared. A talented recent graduate of Edinburgh College of Art, he was of the younger generation of men expected to enlist. Resisting this pressure, Robertson instead joined the Friends' Ambulance Unit, a voluntary service established by the Quakers, and staffed mainly by conscientious objectors. Between 1917 and 1918 he was deployed in the Champagne - Ardenne region of France, manning ambulance convoys for wounded soldiers. During this time he sketched his fellow volunteers, including the sensitive drawing *Portrait of George Romney Fox (1917)*. Afterwards, Robertson turned to more abstract modes of expression to depict his experiences of the war. His painting *Shellburst*, with its angular forms and jarring colours, is stylistically related to the Vorticism of Wyndham Lewis and Christopher R.W. Nevinson.

Other artists featured in the exhibition include Andrew Healey Hislop (1887-1954), who spent four years as a prisoner of war in Ruhleben Internment

Camp near Berlin; John Lavery (1856-1941), who was commissioned to depict the British naval fleet and installations around the Firth of Forth; and Morris Meredith Williams (1881-1973), who served with the Royal Engineers and later helped design the bronze processional frieze in the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle. The exhibition also includes the work of several unknown and amateur makers, giving voice to responses from outwith the established art world.



Eric Robertson, *Shellburst*, c.1919 (City Art Centre, Edinburgh Museums and Galleries)

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