From the Chair

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed a festive Holiday Season and managed to get some rest after what has been such a busy year for many of us. The Society offered a number of exciting excursions throughout 2015 and its study day on the topic of *Scottish Art in the Great War* proved popular amongst members and generated a superb print journal co-guest edited by Patricia Andrew, which should be with you by now. Another promising study day focussing on *Women in Scottish Art 1885-1965* is being organised by Alice Strang and Matthew Jarron for 23 January 2016. The study day dovetails with the current exhibition *Modern Scottish Women* (7 November 2015 - 26 June 2016, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art) and it is a great privilege for the Society to be part of this event. Our membership numbers continue to be healthy and we hope to attract incoming student cohorts across Scottish Universities to maintain the Society’s momentum throughout 2016. We were also able to give out a number of grants to support research on Scottish topics, which represents an important investment into the future of art history in Scotland.

At the recent AGM held at the Surgeons Hall in Edinburgh, our treasurer William Rough stepped down but he has agreed to stay on the committee as a regular member. We also lost our membership secretary Rachael Grew, who is moving to Loughborough for a new academic appointment but Liz Louis (Art Curator, Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums) has kindly agreed to take over from Rachael. Our heartfelt thanks go to Billy and Rachael for being such fantastic committee members! This is also my last letter to you as I am stepping down as Chair. It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve the Society for the past four years and I hope that you will continue to support Scottish art history through your membership and your engagement with the SSAH’s diverse offerings. I also hope that you will join me in thanking each committee member for volunteering his or her time to assure the continued running of the Society.

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 deadline: 30 November 2016.
To apply for a research grant 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

Grant Report by Jessica Carden, Curator, Mother Tongue and PhD candidate at TrAIN: Transnational Research Centre for Art, Identity and Nation

Mother Tongue is a research-led curatorial project formed by Tiffany Boyle and Jessica Carden in response to individual periods of investigation in northern Scandinavia and West Africa. Mother Tongue led a half-day event called Blind Spots: Exploring Themes of Race in Archives of Visual Art through Curating at the Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow on the 27th June as part of ‘Curating Europes’ Futures’, supported by a research grant from the Scottish Society for Art History.

‘Curating Europes’ Futures’ is a discussion series, taking place within contemporary art spaces in Glasgow, and exploring curatorial practices that complicate the understanding of art histories across the borders of the former West and former Eastern Europe. The discussions are intended to contribute to an international exchange of ideas by bringing to Scotland’s curatorial landscape the experiences of curators/researchers from ‘new’ and 'old' Europe, to share their research and expertise and to network with Scotland-based researchers and practitioners.

Mother Tongue presents Blind Spots: Exploring Themes of Race in Archives of Visual Art through Curating, 27th June 2015, CCA Glasgow.
Left to Right: speakers Power Ekroth, Nana Adusei-Poku, Eddie Chambers and moderator Tiffany Boyle. Speaker Loulou Cherinet shown onscreen. Photo credit: Kirsteen Macdonald.

The series is organised collaboratively between Mother Tongue (Jessica Carden and Tiffany Boyle), Leigh French (Variant magazine), Professor Katarzyna Kosmala at the Creative Futures Institute, University of the West of Scotland, and Framework Scotland (Kirsteen Macdonald). The first event in the series took place in October 2014, with Blind Spots being the sixth in this ongoing series.

The event began with a screening of Swedish filmmaker Ruben Östlund’s 2011 Play, followed by a panel discussion of four presentations from artist Loulou Cherinet, curators Nana Adusei-Poku and Power Ekroth, and art historian Eddie Chambers. These presentations were filmed and have been uploaded to the ‘Curating Europes’ Futures’ event archive on the website. Additionally, translated excerpts of writer Oivvio Polite’s White Like Me: Selected Texts on Racism (Danger Bay Press, Stockholm, 2007) were translated into English specifically for this event and for the first time. Please contact info@mothertongue.se if you would like a copy.
The presentations began with artist Loulou Cherinet, who first gave feedback on Mother Tongue’s 2012 essay on the positioning of two artists - Maud Sulter and Oladélé Bamgboyé - within Scottish visual art narratives. This moved into a discussion around the location of her practice between Sweden and Ethiopia, the international touring of her early work made as a student in Addis Ababa, and how the issues addressed within her work are situated in Sweden. This was followed by curator Nana Adusei-Poku, who first spoke about her research around the term ‘post-black’ and the work she has been doing around the institution’s literacy in her role as Research Professor in Cultural Diversity at Rotterdam University. Alongside this role, she is currently a curatorial fellow at Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, and she spoke about the exhibition No Humans Involved, that she curated within this role with the artist collective HOWDOYOUSAAYAMINAfrican in 2015.

Swedish curator Power Ekroth (based in Berlin) presented a paper outlining the boom of contemporary art in the Nordic region in the 90s, often referred to as the ‘Nordic Miracle.’ This drew upon the idea of the Nordic region being a northern periphery of Europe, cultural branding and the past proliferation of the biennale. The final presentation came from art historian Eddie Chambers, who discussed his early work as an artist, the BLK Art Group which formed out of Wolverhampton in the 80s and how this could be contextualised. He discussed the research within his 2014 monograph Black Artists in British Art: A History Since the 1950s, focusing on the systemic erasure facing black artists, in terms of evidence of their life and work in print, exhibitions and collections.

The presentations were followed by an in-depth audience discussion - an important aspect to this event for the organisers, with its emphasis on dialogical discussion and undertaking these public conversations as a research method in itself. Blind Spots is a continuation of previous Mother Tongue projects, and it was an objective of the Blind Spots event to encourage reflection upon the lack of diversity in the recent visual arts practices associated with Glasgow and Scotland from the 80s onwards, and to look towards what ‘Curating Europes’ Futures’ can mean in terms of race and diversity for the arts now and beyond.

Reviews

Review - Costume and Colour: A Century of Style, 1800-1899, Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery
By Jenny Macleod, postgraduate student, University of Glasgow

Scottish Designer Judy R. Clark and Rebecca Quinton Curator of European Costume and Textiles © CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection
It’s been over twenty years since Glasgow’s last major costume exhibition, but in September the doors were finally opened to Glasgow Museums’ highly anticipated Costume and Colour: A Century of Style, 1800-1899. Arranged thematically by colour, this exhibition intends to challenge the perception that Victorian dress was typically drab, dull and lifeless, and instead confronts us with a brightly coloured and beautifully put together collection of over 40 ensembles and accompanying accessories taken from their vast European Costume and Textiles Collection.

The story of the changing silhouette is divided into nine sections, the first of which is aptly titled Dreich. This section reminds us of the practicality of Glaswegians in dressing according to their environment, whether that be in a mid-1880s grey silk, showerproof Heptonette cloak or a late-1880s tweed coat. Within each colour, the pieces are arranged chronologically, allowing us to experience the development of Victorian fashionable dress before our very eyes.

Throughout the exhibition we are treated to an array of dresses in different shades of red, purple, black, green, yellow, blue and white. The white backdrop allows the visitor to truly appreciate the colours, and the rotating stands and antique mirrors on the walls enable us to examine the finer details on the backs of the garments.

The Multi-Colour section gives us the first glimpse of the variety of colours worn by the Victorians. An impressive 1850s woollen French shawl hangs on the wall in fantastic shades of blue, green, black, yellow and pink on a red ground. The practicality of Glaswegians is again attested to as we are next presented with a fabulous home-made housecoat made from a Kashmir shawl of silk, wool and cotton. By the 1880s, the reduction of the skirt and introduction of the jacket made these shawls redundant, but enterprising Glaswegians such as Miss Martin from Uddingston ensured the elaborate textiles found new life in jackets and coats.

One of the highlights of the exhibition is the shimmering black dress by Parisian designer Merlot-Larchévêque, which took centre stage in the third gallery. By the 1880s, the colour black experienced a revival and was associated with the most fashionable in society. The cuirass bodice and draped over-skirt are adorned in jet black glass beads, which added considerable weight to the gown, whilst also giving it the most chic appearance.

The narrative ability of dress is highlighted through this exhibition. The 19th century was a time of astonishing social, economic and technological change, and dresses in diverse colours, materials and techniques illustrate the impact these changes had not only on contemporary fashionable dress, but on society as a whole. A late 1830s dress of printed cotton
represents the advances in technology, as improvements in dyeing and printing techniques opened up a wide colour palette to the masses. Fantastically bright dresses in varying shades of blue and purple represent the advent of synthetic dyes from the 1850s, whilst a 1890s tailored dress in silk and cotton illustrates the advances in dressmaking made possible by the sewing machine by the end of the century. An 1870s bandana and length of cloth in brightly coloured printed cotton demonstrates Glasgow’s importance as a centre for textile production in the 19th century. Achieved through the dying process Turkey Red, these textiles were sent all around the world to America and the Far East and used for clothing and furnishing.

A number of children’s and men’s garments are also on display, such as the expertly crafted 1st King’s Dragoon Guards coatee, shoulder belt and sash worn by Captain James Stirling-Stuart of Castlemilk House in 1848, and the delicate infant’s cotton dress from 1850. Portraits of the garments and accessories being worn serve as a reminder of the personal stories behind the objects and bring the pieces to life, such as Lady Simpson (1892) by Valentine Cameron Prinsep and James McNeil Whistler’s Arrangement in Grey and Black, No. 2: Portrait of Thomas Carlyle (1872-73).

This is an absolutely stunning exhibition, and is enriched by the fascinating information labels which describe the materials, dates and provenance of the garments, drawing the visitors closer to the designers and makers who created the pieces and the individuals who wore them. Placing the garments in the context of the industrial revolution brings home the impact it had on the people of Glasgow as their sartorial choices were affected by the technological and stylistic advances of the 19th century.

New Book

‘Independent & Individualist’ – Art in Dundee 1867-1924
By Matthew Jarron, Curator of Museum Services, University of Dundee

This lavishly illustrated book by former SSAH chair Matthew Jarron explores in detail the period when Dundee was recognised as one of the major art centres of Britain. In the late 19th century, the city staged the largest exhibitions of art outside London and hosted some of the most ambitious private art collections in Scotland. Following a significant development in art education, the number of professional artists working in the city increased dramatically. Thanks to the unique talents of John Duncan, Stewart Carmichael, George Dutch Davidson and others, Dundee developed a distinctive new style of art, a fusion of symbolism, decorative art and the Celtic Revival. The city also produced exceptional talents working in landscapes and portraiture, such as David Foggie, Frank Laing and W.B. Lamond. At the same time, there was a boom in commercial art as Dundee became an important centre for newspaper and magazine illustration.

This is the first time that Dundee’s art culture has been studied in depth, placing the city’s artistic outputs in a social, economic and political context. One London critic described Dundee’s artists as a ‘fiercely independent and individualist school’, which has often led them to be overlooked by art historians. This book seeks to re-establish the significance of Dundee as ‘perhaps the most vital centre of art appreciation in Scotland.’

The book is 230 pages and contains nearly 400 illustrations. It has been co-published by the Abertay Historical Society and the University of Dundee Museum Services and is available to buy for £12 from www.dundee.ac.uk/museum.

Special offer! Members of SSAH may claim a £2 discount and purchase the book for £10 (plus £5 p&p) by sending a cheque payable to ‘University of Dundee’ to Matthew Jarron, Museum Services, University of Dundee, Dundee DD1 4HN.

New Acquisitions

Two works by Frank Auerbach allocated to Glasgow Museums
By Pippa Stephenson, Curator of European Art

This year, Glasgow Museums welcomed two paintings by the renowned British artist Frank Auerbach into its collection: Mornington Crescent-Winter Morning from 1989, and Head of EOW, painted in 1955. The works are part of a group of 40 given to the nation in 2014 in lieu of inheritance tax, from the estate of the late painter Lucien Freud who died in 2011. Glasgow Museums was one of fourteen successful applicants to benefit from the Freud allocation.

Recognised as one of Britain’s finest living artists, Auerbach has worked from his studio in Camden, London for over 60 years. He and Freud were good friends, both becoming British citizens after fleeing Nazi Germany as children. The works represent two spectrums of Auerbach’s output: from the intense, small, deeply sculptural form of Head of EOW - a depiction of his long-term lover Estella Olive West - through to the sprawling,
joyfully expressive representation of his local area, represented in *Mornington Crescent - Winter Morning 1989*.

Frank Auerbach, *Mornington Crescent - Winter Morning 1989*
© Frank Auerbach, courtesy Marlborough Fine Art

20th century British Art is an area of Glasgow Museums' collection identified for development, and the addition of these stunning works will enrich and enliven the collection, allowing for comparison with contemporary Scottish artists, and an exploration of themes including the use of repetition and revision in his paintings, the depiction of urban landscapes, and the textural nature of his work.

Both works are on permanent display in Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum: *Mornington Crescent* is displayed alongside an extract of a letter written by Auerbach to Glasgow Museums in the downstairs ‘Looking at Art’ Gallery, while *Head of EOW* has been on display in Kelvingrove’s Dutch and Flemish Gallery since May 2015. The work is shown beside the splendid *Man in Armour* by one of the artist’s biggest inspirations, Rembrandt.

A free ‘Auerbach Afternoon’ has been scheduled for 3 February 2016, 2-4pm. Informal discussions and talks surrounding both works, as well as interactive art activities, will take place on a drop in basis. All are welcome.

Frank Auerbach, *Head of EOW, 1955*
© Frank Auerbach, courtesy Marlborough Fine Art

Upcoming Conferences

*Celtic Revival - Authenticity and Identity*
Stevenson Lecture Theatre, British Museum
Saturday 16 – Sunday 17 January 2016

This conference will examine the Celtic Revival as a rewriting, recreation and reimagining of the past, from the medieval period to the 20th century.

Papers will cover topics such as the impact of Ossian on the visual arts, Celtic Revival costume,
Mary Watts’ designs for Compton Chapel, the Welsh bardic tradition, medieval sculptural casts, silver facsimiles, medieval illuminated manuscripts and Irish arts and crafts. Key themes include authenticity and innovation, the role of the copy, patina and preservation, and imagined identities.

Speakers: Raghnall Ó Floinn (National Museum of Ireland), Oliver Fairclough, (National Museum of Wales), Colum Hourihane (Former Director, Index of Christian Art, Princeton University), Nancy Netzer (Boston College), Karen Overbey (Tufts University), Siobhán Fitzpatrick and Bernadette Cunningham (Royal Irish Academy), Sally Foster (University of Stirling), Murdo Macdonald (University of Dundee), Frances Fowle (Scottish National Gallery & University of Edinburgh), Elizabeth Cumming, Heather Pulliam (University of Edinburgh), Martin Crampin (University of Wales), Rachel Moss (Trinity College, Dublin), Louise Boreham and Nicola Gordon Bowe.

Organised by the British Museum and the University of Edinburgh, and supported by The Kilfinan Trust. Cost = £50, students £35, including coffee, lunch and entry to the exhibition Celts: art and identity.

SSAH Study Day:
Women in Scottish Art 1885-1965
Hawthornden Lecture Theatre, Scottish National Gallery, The Mound, Edinburgh
Saturday 23 January 2016, 10.30am-4.30pm

This special one-day conference accompanies the exhibition Modern Scottish Women: Painters and Sculptors 1885-1965 (Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art Two, 7 November 2015 – 26 June 2016) and explores the role of women in Scottish art during this period. It will showcase new research on lesser known female artists, their widening educational opportunities, participation in exhibitions and role within social and professional networks.

Tickets to the Study Day (£18 full price / £12 for NGS Friends and SSAH members) should be booked in advance via Eventbrite. Visit http://www.ssah.org.uk and click on the ‘Study Days’ tab to find the link to Eventbrite.
New Exhibitions

Tower Foyer Gallery, University of Dundee
5 December 2015 - 13 February 2016

The Tower Foyer Gallery currently features drawings and screenprints by award-winning wildlife artist Lara Scouller. Lara graduated with a fine art degree from the University’s Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design in 2006 and has since held exhibitions across the UK. However, this new show, AVEM: A Journey with Birds, is her first solo exhibition in Dundee, where she still lives and works. The exhibition features a selection of recent work inspired by her time on the John Busby Seabird Drawing Course earlier this year.

Lara is well known for her studies of animals in museum collections such as the University’s D’Arcy Thompson Zoology Museum and the Bell Pettigrew Museum in St Andrews. Recently she has been drawn to studying birds and their surrounding landscape. ‘I like to be immersed in the birds’ natural habitat,’ explains Lara, ‘bringing me closer to their lives. The work shown in this exhibition marks a new phase in my work as an artist.’

Lara Scouller, Guillemot Contours, St Abbs Head
Pastel on paper, 2015

Lara has won numerous awards for her drawings including The James Torrance Memorial Award and The Pastel Society Young Artist Award. Her work can also be found in many museum and private collections.

Lara Scouller, Gull
Screen Print (edition of 10), 2015

The exhibition is open Mon-Fri 09.30-19.00 and Sat 13.00-17.00.
Grim Reflections on WWI: Percy Smith’s ‘Dance of Death’
By Dr Jo Meacock (Curator of British Art, Glasgow Museums)

Percy Smith (1882-1948) is little known as a war artist, but the drawings and etchings that he produced during and in the immediate aftermath of WWI are powerful and personal responses to his experience of the conflict.

Percy Smith, *Death Intoxicated*, 1919, etching and drypoint on paper
Presented to Glasgow Museums by Edward J. Marshall, 1960 (PR.1960.23.ab)
Image Glasgow Museums Collection © The Percy Smith Foundation

Smith studied and then taught lettering, typography and book design at Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in London. He was twice turned down for active service on medical grounds, having an operation for a ruptured hernia in 1915. However, he finally succeeded in enlisting in January 1916, serving as a sapper and gunner with the Royal Marine Artillery (Howitzer Brigade) in France and Belgium. He arrived at the Somme in late October 1916 and was initially stationed in the Thiepval area, which he described as ‘simply a heap of rubbish decorated by gaunt trees’. He was ill-suited to the heavy duty work of a sapper (a military engineer responsible for trench digging and road building) and it was possibly as a result of this that he became a gunner. Fascinatingly his diary from the frontline exists, relating his experience of the cruelty of war, the enormous casualties, the harsh winters endured (when some men just froze to death overnight), and the difficulties he faced as a soldier and as an artist.

Smith was not an official war artist but made sketches during his time at the Front, recording the war-ravaged countryside with its blasted trees and treacherous waterlogged shell holes. He also drew the large Howitzer gun, nicknamed ‘Granny’, that he helped to operate, the size and menace of which fascinated him. In addition he documented everyday trench life: soldiers huddled for warmth and drying clothes around a brazier, smoking or reading on their cramped wire bunk beds or having a make-shift bath. Etching plates were smuggled to him between the pages of magazines and gramophone needles were adapted as etching tools. His *Drypoints of the War* was printed at Southampton Art Club during leave at Eastney Barracks. Not surprisingly some looked on his art with mistrust and he found himself suspected of being a spy. However, a blind eye was turned to his drawings after he appealed to his commanding officer, Captain Boffey and Major General Sir George Aston. He made himself popular with some by sketching portraits and sending drawings of graves of the fallen home to war widows. His artistic skill resulted in him receiving training in map making, with a view to surveying and mapping the trenches in ‘no-man’s-land’ in France.

The etchings by Smith now on display in the Fragile Art Gallery at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum go beyond mere documentation of the war. They are based on the theme of the ‘Dance of Death’, which was popular in 15th and 16th century German art and printed books; Hans Holbein the Younger’s 1538 series is probably the best known example. In this tradition, Death was personified as a skeletal figure who would escort people from all walks of life to death and judgment. Smith reworked this theme, which was tied up with plague times, adapting it to a modern day world
afflicted by war. His Death is more sinister, being not just a guide or an escort, but actively taking pleasure in suffering (Smith was given access to an actual skeleton through Southampton Art Club). Death is shown stalking soldiers, waiting on the battlefield for casualties, celebrating violence and destruction, snatching life from those desperate to survive and denying death to those for whom it would be a relief. The series, which is unsparing in conveying the artist’s horror at trench warfare, shows the influence of European Symbolism, particularly the menacing skeletons of Belgian artist James Ensor, who was preoccupied with mortality and the world’s inhumanity. Rembrandt’s example is also apparent in Smith’s use of dark drypoint lines and heavy surface tone to convey suffering and despair.

William Gear Exhibitions:
- **William Gear 1915-1997: The painter that Britain forgot**
- **Jagged Generation: William Gear’s Contemporaries and Influences**
City Art Centre, Edinburgh
Both 24 October 2015 – 7 February 2016
By Dr Helen Scott, Curator (Fine Art)

To mark the centenary of William Gear’s birth, the City Art Centre in Edinburgh is currently showing two exhibitions on the work and influences of this 20th century abstract artist.

*William Gear 1915-1997: The painter that Britain forgot* has been organised in partnership with the Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne. It presents a comprehensive overview of Gear’s career, featuring over 100 artworks in a variety of media. The exhibition traces Gear’s development from his art college years to his involvement with the avant-garde CoBrA group in the 1940s, and from his daring abstract work of the 1950s to his mature style of the 1970s and 1980s. It brings together some of his most important paintings, with loans from public and private collections, including the Tate, the National Galleries of Scotland and the Royal Academy.

*Jagged Generation: William Gear’s Contemporaries and Influences* is a complementary display drawn from the City Art Centre’s own collection of Scottish art. This exhibition explores the dynamic circle of Scottish artists associated with Gear – his college tutors, life-long friends and contemporaries. Featured artists include William Gillies, John Maxwell, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Margaret Mellis, Alan Davie and Eduardo Paolozzi. This exhibition contextualises Gear’s achievements, shedding light on his personal and professional relationships as well as his artistic development.
William Gear was born in the Fife mining town of Methil in 1915. His artistic talents emerged at an early age, and were encouraged at primary school. Later, as a teenager, he visited nearby Kirkcaldy Art Gallery, where he was particularly impressed by the paintings of S.J. Peploe and William McTaggart.

Gear enrolled at Edinburgh College of Art in 1932. The teaching style of the time was academic and rigorous, with a focus on figure compositions and still life. Gear was often frustrated by the conservatism of this approach. However, he did benefit from the tuition of some of the younger and more experimental members of the teaching staff, including William Gillies and John Maxwell. These tutors were inspired by avant-garde developments taking place on the Continent, drawing directly from artists like Georges Braque, Paul Klee and Mark Chagall. Their example emboldened Gear to follow his own creative path.

Gear’s independent spirit and avant-garde ambitions were shared by several of his fellow students in Edinburgh. Like Gear, Margaret Mellis undertook post-diploma training in Paris in the late 1930s, where she was exposed to Cubism and Surrealism. Their friend Wilhelmina Barns-Graham was also interested in experimentation. After graduation she became part of the St Ives artists’ community where she worked alongside Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth.

Having completed his studies at Edinburgh College of Art, Gear spent the winter of 1937-38 training under Fernand Léger in Paris. He subsequently travelled around Italy and the Balkans. By the time he returned to Edinburgh he was working in a Surrealist style. In June 1939 he exhibited as part of the New Era Group, contributing to one of the first ever public displays of Surrealist art in Scotland.

During WW2, Gear served with the Royal Corps of Signals. He was stationed in the Middle East and Italy, but still found opportunities to paint and even exhibit his work. At the end of the conflict he transferred to the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section of the Central Control Commission, in which he was responsible for safeguarding Germany’s cultural heritage.

After demobilisation in 1947 Gear returned to Paris. Although he only intended a short stay he remained there for the next three and a half years, establishing himself within the avant-garde scene. He was visited by his friend Alan Davie, who absorbed the influences of the French capital before moving on to Italy, where he discovered American Abstract Expressionism at the Venice Biennale. Gear’s own painting style progressed rapidly during this period. His abstract compositions came to the fore, increasingly bold and colourful. In 1949 he became a member of the international CoBrA group and started exhibiting with artists like Asger Jorn and Karel Appel.
Gear returned to Britain in 1950 and settled in Buckinghamshire. One reason for his relocation was an invitation to participate in the Festival of Britain exhibition *Sixty Paintings for ’51*. Several Scottish artists contributed to this exhibition. Gear’s former tutors William Gillies and John Maxwell produced paintings, as did the Glasgow-trained artists Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde. Yet Gear attracted the most attention by submitting a bold abstract canvas. His composition *Autumn Landscape* was awarded a £500 prize and acquired for the Arts Council Collection, provoking widespread public outrage. The infamy of the episode made Gear a household name.

By the mid 1950s Gear had established an international reputation as an innovative abstract artist. He was also undertaking commissions for fabric and wallpaper designs. However, this did not translate into financial stability for his family. To improve their situation he applied for the post of Curator at the Towner Art Gallery, a job which came with accommodation and a studio. Gear served as Curator from 1958 until 1964. During this time he transformed the Towner’s art collection, acquiring over 300 works by modern and contemporary artists like Alan Davie, Roger Hilton and Ceri Richards.

In 1964 Gear became Head of Fine Art at Birmingham College of Art and Crafts. Here he was able to employ his substantial administrative skills whilst finding more time for his own creative work. He retired ten years later to concentrate on painting and printmaking, although he remained an active figure in the Birmingham art scene.

Gear was finally elected as a member of the Royal Academy in 1995. That same year his significant contribution to the CoBrA group was recognised with the opening of the CoBrA Museum of Modern Art in the Netherlands. Today, his work is still perhaps better known on the Continent than it is in his native Scotland. Hopefully the centenary exhibitions at the City Art Centre will go some way towards rectifying this situation.

Opening hours:
Monday – Saturday from 10am to 5pm, Sunday from 12 noon to 5pm.

For further information, including details about spotlight tour times, please visit http://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/Venues/City-Art-Centre/Exhibitions/Current-Exhibitions
A trio of exhibitions offering a rare opportunity to see selected works from the city’s extensive drawing collection opened at The McManus: Dundee’s Art Gallery & Museum on 10 December 2015. Drawn from the city’s nationally significant Fine Art collection, the exhibitions feature a vast range of work by artists including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Augustus John and Franzika Furter.

Drawing is one of the most basic and enduring of human activities. Even before a child can master language they are encouraged to draw. As such, it remains one of the simplest and most effective forms of communication, requiring only a pencil and paper, stick and sand or crayon and wall. Despite contemporary innovations in art practice, the discipline of drawing still remains fundamental to artistic training and practice.

**Draw the Line: Old Masters to The Beano**, the largest of the three exhibitions, shows the vast and all-encompassing range of creativity expressed in drawing. By loosely grouping works into broad themes including figures and portraits, illustration, preparatory sketches, landscape and topography, the exhibition offers a glimpse into the many varied ways that artists use the discipline. No timeframe was placed on the chosen works and the display features historic and contemporary artists alike. There is also evidence of Dundee’s proud publishing history with the inclusion of original artwork from the DC Thomson archives.

The second exhibition, **Taking a Line for a Walk**, shows the freedom of working with pencil on paper. It illustrates how by using these basic materials, artists are free to experiment, use their imagination, challenge themselves or simply have fun. The display showcases ambitious drawings, featuring both playful and outsize works by artists including James Gunn, Franziska Furter, Tim Knowles and Massimo Bartolini.
Tim Knowles, *Larch on easel, Buttermere Shore #1*, ©The Artist

Tim Knowles’ art is rooted in the most fundamental element of an artist’s practice - drawing. Yet, he creates drawings that are independent of his own hand, using elaborate apparatus or time-consuming practices.

This diptych is from a series in which the artist attached pens to the tips of branches of various trees. Paper was placed under them, allowing the chance movement of the wind to dictate the composition of the final drawing. Like signatures each drawing reveals the different qualities and characteristics of each tree.

Lastly, *Work in Progress: From Paper to Paint*, this year’s annual winter works on paper display, focuses on the importance of drawing as a preparatory stage for work completed in other media. Shown alongside finished works, the chosen drawings offer the opportunity to consider how a work progresses from paper to paint. Highlights include a drawing by William Quiller Orchardson for his oil sketch *Voltaire*, and an exquisite study by Rossetti for the right-hand attendant in his masterpiece *Dante’s Dream on the Day of the Death of Beatrice*. The display also includes a rare pen and ink sketch by William McTaggart, shown in stark contrast to the colourful coastal images of children seen on the gallery walls.

John Philip, *A Scotch Fair*, c.1847
Courtesy of Dundee City Council (Dundee’s Art Galleries & Museums)

This drawing is a full-sized study for Phillip’s oil painting *A Scotch Fair* c.1847, now in Aberdeen Art Gallery. It is typical of the scenes of everyday life popularised by David Wilkie (1785-1841).

The dense composition, full of narrative detail, was devised through numerous studies of individuals, groups, tents and animals.

The three exhibitions are complemented by a series of lunchtime talks and collection highlight events. Admission to all exhibitions and associated events is free. *Draw the Line: Old Masters to The Beano* extends until autumn 2016. *Taking a Line for a Walk* runs until 17 April 2016 and *Work in Progress: From Paper to Paint* continues until 31 January 2016.

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