From the Chair

It is my great honour to write to you as Acting Chair of the SSAH. In this edition of the newsletter, I am excited to report on the SSAH’s wide-ranging activities and some of our plans for the future.

2016 got off to a fantastic start with a special one-day conference on ‘Women in Scottish Art 1885-1965’ (23 January), which was hosted in collaboration with the National Galleries of Scotland. Accompanying the exhibition Modern Scottish Women: Painters and Sculptors 1885-1965 (Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art Two, 7 November 2015 – 26 June 2016), the conference showcased new research on lesser known female artists, their widening educational opportunities, participation in exhibitions and role within social and professional networks. The conference attracted a fantastic turnout with 121 attendees and following the event, we have welcomed 26 new members to the SSAH! All of the papers from the conference will feature in the next edition of the journal, preparations for which are already well underway!

In February, the SSAH’s Journal Editor, Kirsty MacNab, delivered a hugely popular ‘behind the scenes’ tour of the fine and decorative art collection at the McManus: Dundee’s Art Gallery and Museum. Due to the high level of interest, we hope to run a similar event in 2017.

We have several exciting events lined up for our members for the rest of 2016 and beyond. In late May, SSAH members are taking part in a special visit to the artists’ town of Kirkcudbright in Dumfries and Galloway. We have also arranged tours of the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and the new Art and Design Galleries at National Museums Scotland. More details about these events are to follow.

Guided by feedback from our members, we are looking into a possible visit to Orkney for 2017/2018. In addition, we have been approached by other institutions and societies and are in the process of exploring opportunities for potential collaborations and themes for future journals and study days. We will keep you informed about these developments.

I am pleased to welcome two new SSAH committee members: Robin Baillie and Jim Barnes. You can find out more about them, as well as our Membership Secretary Liz Louis, in the short bios that appear in the newsletter. We are delighted to have all three on board! On behalf of the SSAH committee, I would also like to thank my predecessor, Sabine Wieber, for her tremendous hard work and vision. She is a very hard act to follow!

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our members for their continuing support and enthusiasm for the SSAH. Working with the SSAH’s dedicated committee, I am committed to developing the society’s activities and the range of benefits that we are able to offer our members. Building upon strong foundations, I will strive to raise the profile of the SSAH and promote wider recognition of its role as a vibrant hub for intellectual exchange and for the appreciation of Scottish art. I am always keen to hear from you and if you have any ideas that you would like to discuss in greater detail, please do get in touch at cr67@st-andrews.ac.uk.

Claire Robinson
New Committee Members

Jim Barnes

Jim is an independent scholar whose research interests are 19th and 20th century prints including colour woodcuts of the interwar years, Scottish watercolours, and the members of the Tayport Artists’ Circle of the Edwardian era.

Since the mid 1980s he has been active both as a private collector and as a dealer in Fine Art with his own gallery in Falkland, Fife. He curated an exhibition of the watercolours of James Douglas R.S.W at Perth Museum and Art Gallery, for which he also prepared the catalogue. He also selected the pictures from private collections for a subsequent exhibition of the Bavarian watercolours by Douglas in Rothenburg ob der Tauber. He has given talks on Douglas, the Tayport Artists’ Circle, and Art Circle member Frank Laing, at a SSAH conference at Dundee University, the City Art Centre, Edinburgh and the Abertay Historical Society, Dundee, respectively.

A graduate in Law and in Modern History, Jim was a partner in various Tayside firms of solicitors for over 30 years.

Robin Baillie

Robin attended the University of Edinburgh from 1977-81 and graduated with a joint Honours degree in Politics and Modern History. He subsequently completed a postgraduate degree in Fine Art at the Slade School of Art, University College London. Robin then taught art history for five years at Edinburgh College of Art. He has worked as Senior Outreach Officer in the Education Department at the National Galleries of Scotland since 2001. He specialises in the creative interpretation of historical artworks and historical research and is about to begin a part-time Collaborative PhD with NGS and Professor Andrew Blaikie from the University of Aberdeen, entitled Performing History: Scottish history painting and the visualisation of a national narrative, c.1800 - 1860

Robin has written art criticism for The Scotsman, The List, Variant, Contemporary Art and the Scottish Society for Art History Journal, and has published essays and articles in academic journals. He has delivered numerous conference and research papers on interpreting NGS’s historic collections in relation to stimulating community participation and creativity. He has delivered 37 public lectures on NGS collections. Exhibitions he has curated include Parallel Lives 2 (SNG, Dean and SNPG, 2008); Mirrors: Prison Portraits (SNG, 2010-11); Silver City Soul (SNG, 2011 and Aberdeen Art Gallery, 2012); The Nation/Live (SNPG, 2013-14 and Duff House 2015), The UNTITLED: Bad Entertainment (SNPG and Harbour Arts Centre, Irvine, 2016) and Third Hand: Autonomous Art from Scottish Prisons, co-curated with Henry Coombes (CCA, 2016).

Liz Louis

Liz replaced Rachel Grew as membership secretary in December 2015. She holds an MA in English and History of Art from the University of Aberdeen and graduated in 2014 with an MLitt in Museum & Gallery Studies from the University of St Andrews. After one year as collections manager at the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses, she joined the team of art curators at Aberdeen Art Gallery where contemporary art and the work of James McBey are two of her main research areas.

Liz moved to Scotland from Luxembourg for her studies and decided to stay on, having gained valuable experience working at Luxembourg’s contemporary art museum MUDAM and the National Museum of History and Art.

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.

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, sculphurstado@yahoo.co.uk

Grant Report by Alistair Peebles
Research PhD student in the School of Arts at Northumbria University

My PhD thesis, supervised by Professor Ysanne Holt at Northumbria University, concerns the early career of Ian Hamilton Finlay. At this writing up stage, I mostly base myself at home in Orkney, but I was grateful for the support of the SSAH for a research trip to London last October, in search of correspondence and contemporary publications. For those purposes I visited the British Library, Tate Archive and Chelsea School of Arts Special Collections.

Other opportunities that offered a connection with my research, or indeed a substantial contrast, included the National Portrait Gallery’s Giacometti: Pure Presence, with a lecture on the artist’s studio by Michael Peppiatt. Likewise, for quite different reasons, the British Museum’s Celts: Arts and Identity. In fact it was difficult not to find some kind of relationship in most of what I managed to see, including the handling of the role of the gods in the Almeida production of Rachel Cusk’s Medea.

Tate Britain’s exhibitions of Frank Auerbach and Barbara Hepworth (and the small show of work by Gustav Metzger) were obvious choices, given where I was working, and I benefited from having read T.J. Clark’s account of Auerbach in the LRB (10/9/15). Having arrived with still strong impressions of Two Forms, Orkney—the Pier Arts Centre’s major new acquisition—it was possible to understand all the more clearly its place in Hepworth’s career (and to see the Pier’s loans to the show in a very different context). As with Giacometti, as well as being struck by the locational fixity of Auerbach’s professional practice, albeit in both cases metropolitan, I found it a stimulating opportunity to reflect on the contrasting character of Finlay’s own investigation of the aesthetics of visual representation.

The only public installation of Finlay’s in London that I haven’t yet seen is at the Serpentine. Some years ago I visited while the Pavilion was being installed, and the area which includes his Virgilian benches was closed. This time the Pavilion was being dismantled, and I have learnt that the horse chestnut which bore Finlay’s tree plaque has been felled. But I enjoyed their Jimmie Durham exhibition, for itself as well as for the fact that given his interest in architecture and power, as well as his literary engagement, it evoked a further range of responses in respect of Finlay’s work.

Reviews

Review – Behind the Scenes’ tour of The McManus: Dundee’s Art Gallery & Museum,
Saturday 20 February
By Claire Robinson, Museum Collections Unit, University of St Andrews

In February, SSAH members enjoyed a tour of the City’s Nationally Significant Fine and Decorative Art Collection at The McManus with Curatorial Assistant, Kirsty MacNab, from the Fine and Applied Art team at Leisure and Culture Dundee.

Kirsty provided an impressive start to the tour by providing us with access to some of the artistic treasures inside The McManus’ oil paintings store. A source of great delight for many on the tour was the opportunity to see major works by the Celtic Revivalist artists, Stewart Carmichael and John Duncan. A real highlight was Duncan’s The Riders of
the Sidhe, 2011, which had recently returned from being on-loan to the British Museum for display in the blockbuster exhibition Celts: Art and Identity (24 September 2015 – 31 January 2016). A further section of picture racking revealed a wonderful selection of works by the Scottish Colourists, with paintings by Francis Cadell, John Duncan Fergusson and Samuel Peploe. Moving to the modern, we observed a painting by the Fife-born artist, William Gear, who studied under Fernand Léger in Paris. Associated with the post-war COBRA movement, his work is currently undergoing something of a reappraisal.

Next, Kirsty took us on a tour of The McManus’ works on paper store where we had the opportunity to see posters and sketches by the artist, Frank Brangwyn. Well-represented within the collection, a number of Brangwyn’s works featured in The McManus’ exhibition Through Smoke & Flame: WWI Propaganda Posters (22 November 2014 – 25 January 2015), which was held in commemoration of the First World War. Although he was never an official war artist, Brangwyn created several striking propaganda posters for the British government and other agencies. Highlights from the fine art photographic collection also included works by the luminaries, Joseph McKenzie, Calum Colvin and Patricia MacDonald. Kirsty also told us about The McManus’ project to create bespoke storage for their applied art collection, which includes Rachel Woodman’s visually striking and innovative glass work entitled Chosen 1, 2004.

It was wonderful to gain an insight into the strength, breadth and diversity of the fine art collection at The McManus. Big thanks to Kirsty for hosting such a wonderful visit!

Upcoming Conference

Artisans and craft production in 19th Century Scotland
G.04, 50 George Square, Edinburgh
Thursday 9 June 2016

This one-day conference will explore artisans and craftwork in 19th century Scotland. Topics will include amateur craft, the furniture trade, jewellery crafts, stained glass making and textile crafts.

Speakers:
- Annette Carruthers (University of St Andrews)
- George Dalgliesh (National Museums of Scotland)
- Clive Edwards (Loughborough University)
- Stephen Knott (Kingston University)
- Sally Rush (University of Glasgow)

Janice Helland (Queens University, Ontario) will give a free public lecture as part of the conference on Wednesday 8th June. The conference fee is £20 (£12 for students). For a booking form and further information, see http://www.ed.ac.uk/history-classics-archaeology/news-events/events/artisans-conference

Enquiries about the conference can be sent to Professor Stana Nenadic (stana.nenadic@ed.ac.uk). More information about the Leverhulme Trust funded project, Artisans and the Craft Economy in Scotland 1780-1914 can be found at https://artisansinscotland.wordpress.com/

New Exhibitions

Castles, Battles and Bridges: John Clerk of Eldin’s Scotland
Fragile Art Gallery, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, April - December 2016, admission free
By Dr Ailsa Hutton (Co-curator)

John Clerk of Eldin (1728-1812) was a Scottish printmaker and artist who, during his long lifetime, depicted the landscapes of Scotland in a series of etchings. These small and intricate etchings record a wide range of natural scenery, buildings and antiquities and offer a unique insight into how the nation looked in the later 18th century.

One of the youngest sons of the influential antiquary and politician Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Clerk of Eldin was well connected. During his earlier years he embarked on sketching trips in the Scottish countryside with neoclassical architect and designer Robert Adam (1728-1792) and landscape painter Paul Sandby (1731-1809). Over the following decades he travelled throughout the British Isles, meticulously
recording the landscapes around him in his numerous diaries as well as in his landscape sketchbooks.

Clerk of Eldin is believed to have been self-taught as a printmaker and began etching around 1770, continuing the practice for the next decade, before ceasing in around 1780. Although never considered a professional artist who received financial reward for his art, Clerk of Eldin’s artistic skills were well known among his social circles in Scotland and England. His etchings were often viewed and collected by antiquaries and naturalists such as Richard Gough (1735-1809) and Thomas Pennant (1726-1798), and can be understood as part of a growing visual awareness and appreciation of Scotland in the second half of the 18th century. Engravings after his etchings and drawings were occasionally featured in the Edinburgh Magazine between 1785 and 1789, and in 1786 a collection of his etchings were presented to King George III.

Species of Space by Robert Powell
Edinburgh Printmakers
01 April to 16 July 2016

Species of Space is a solo exhibition by Edinburgh-based artist Robert Powell. A metromanic fantasy of tiny proportions, at the heart of this collection of works is a literal cardboard city clad in screen-printed laser-cut wood veneers. This is a sculptural piece which takes the form of an ideal and idealised walled city reminiscent of those found in mediaeval paintings and manuscripts, or those Herodotus saw in Egypt ‘which appear very nearly like the islands of the Aegean sea’, cut off from their surroundings and complete in themselves.
Through the windows, the doors, the cut away facades of this city we see its inhabitants restaging in their daily lives scenes from history, art, literature and mythology. As with Walter Benjamin’s phantasmagorias of the interior, in which the inhabitant ‘brings together the far away and the long ago’ the living room becomes a box in the theater of the world. Besides the city, *Species of Space* contains *High Rise*, a two metre tall house, comprising of stacked units. Like a modern Babel, the piece ascends through human history and thought, from the feverish chthonic carnivals taking place in the lower apartments to the airy rationalism of the penthouse.

Thus conceived, the city collapses past, present and future, laying claim to all that has been or can be – an ideological topomachy between different visions of utopia.

*Species of Space* is a meditation on the city as an idea and as a physical artefact, its construction and its conservation. It is about the universal city and about Edinburgh in particular and it is about their citizens, the lives and stories of those who live within them. The exhibition contains work published with Edinburgh Printmakers.

A free but ticketed printmaking demonstration will be given by Robert Powell on Saturday 18th June from 2 – 3 pm. Powell will explore the etching techniques used in his exhibition *Species of Space*, and discuss the important role that drawing takes within his practice.

The exhibition contains work published with Edinburgh Printmakers.

John Lavery, *The Flower Show*
The name ‘Glasgow Boys’ comes from their association with the city. Most of them lived, studied, or had a studio there at one time. As a group, they were bound by friendship and a shared desire to rebel against the existing art establishment in Scotland. Founded in 1826, the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA) in Edinburgh dominated the Scottish art world in the late 19th century. The RSA followed the sentimental Victorian tradition in art – a romanticised view of Scotland, her landscape and her people. The Glasgow Boys chose to reject this.

Instead, they were inspired by artists working in Holland, France and London, particularly Jules Bastien-Lepage and the American-born painter, James Abbott McNeill Whistler. Following their example, the Glasgow Boys wanted to paint life as they found it – real people in real places. They adopted the practice of painting out of doors and much of their work initially followed a similar path – intimate scenes of Scottish rural life. The most distinctive features of many of these early works are the use of the square brush technique and a high horizon line.

Although it may not look particularly radical by today’s standards, their work was progressive, especially the paintings produced between the mid 1880s and the mid 1890s. By the end of the 1890s their paths had largely diverged. Their friendships remained intact but the Glasgow Boys were heading off in different directions, both artistically and geographically. Travelling widely in pursuit of inspiration – to France, Spain, North Africa, the Middle East, Malaysia and Japan – they diversified into landscapes, portraits, military scenes and animal and flower paintings, using watercolours, oils and pastels.

As they entered the 20th century the Glasgow Boys were no longer pioneering new movements in art but they were well-respected and continued to enjoy critical and commercial success, both at home and abroad. They saw their work enter museum collections across the world and were invited to become members of the institutions that, as young men, they had rebelled against.

The Glasgow Boys – A Spirit of Rebellion brings together in one venue 25 paintings by 17 artists, illustrating the diversity of the work produced by the group during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It follows the Glasgow Boys from the early days of their association in the 1880s, through the international recognition achieved in the 1890s, to the critical and commercial success of the early 20th century.

The exhibition features works by leading members of the group and many others associated with it, including John Lavery, E.A. Hornel, George Henry, James Guthrie, E.A. Walton, D.Y. Cameron, James Paterson, W.Y. Macgregor, Joseph Crawhall, Alexander Roche, David Gauld and Thomas Millie Dow. There are two large paintings by Arthur Melville, widely regarded as one of the finest British
watercolourists of the 19th century. Melville was very recently the subject of a major retrospective at the National Galleries of Scotland. Visitors to St Andrews Museum may recognise one of our Melville paintings – *The Boatyard* – from that exhibition. They may also recognise Hornel’s *Seashore Roses* – another version can be seen in the City Art Centre, Edinburgh.

*Art in Relief*
Tower Foyer Gallery, University of Dundee
6 May – 25 June 2016

Duncan of Jordanstone College Collection,
University of Dundee Museum Services

An exhibition of woodcut and linocut prints from the University collections. Relief printing is a traditional form of printmaking in which the raised areas of the print surface are inked and printed (in contrast to etching and other intaglio processes where the recessed areas hold the ink). Its two most common forms are woodcut and linocut prints, each of which gives a very distinctive and bold graphic appearance, allowing for some truly striking imagery.

This exhibition features a selection of relief prints from the University’s extensive print collections. It includes works by notable masters of the form such as Alison McKenzie and Willie Rodger, as well as former students of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design. The exhibition has been created as part of Print Festival Scotland 2016.

2016 Committee Members

Acting Chair: Claire Robinson (University of St Andrews). E-mail: cr67@st-andrews.ac.uk

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Jim Barnes (Freelance Researcher)

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