

From the Chair

Happy New Year to you all! 2018 has already got off to an exciting start. I am delighted to report on our activities at the end of 2017 and share some of our plans for the rest of 2018.

Since the last edition of the newsletter, the SSAH has hosted a number of events. In October, we held a Curator's tour of the *Hidden Gems* exhibition at Edinburgh City Arts Centre. December saw a visit to the new Prints and Drawing Study Room at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, accompanied by a visit to the exhibition *A New Era: Scottish Modern Art 1900-1950*. The end of 2017 also saw the launch of the latest edition of our journal on the theme of 'Printmaking in Scotland'. Thank you to everyone who helped to make these events possible.

The SSAH's study day for 2018 on the theme of 'Art Organisations and Institutions in Scotland' will take place at Glasgow School of Art on 10 February 2018. The event is hosted in association with Fine Art Critical Studies, Glasgow School of Art. Tickets for the upcoming study day can be purchased online via Eventbrite.

In addition to our study day plans, future events for 2018 include a Curator's tour of the *Face to Face* exhibition and *Revealing Characters* at The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum on 3 February. Our AGM will take place in the A.K. Bell room in the National Portrait Gallery on 10 March. It will be accompanied by a presentation by Dr Peggy Beardmore in advance of the launch of her book *Students of Hospitalfield: Education and Inspiration in 20th-century Scottish Art*. A Curator's tour of the exhibition *The Glasgow Boys: A Spirit of Rebellion* at the newly

redeveloped Dunfermline Carnegie Library and Galleries is lined up for 13 April.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you for your continuing support and enthusiasm for the SSAH. If you would like to share any ideas or news with the society, please do contact me on cr67@st-andrews.ac.uk.

Claire Robinson

New Committee Members

We welcome Michelle Kaye to the SSAH committee. Michelle replaced Sarah Rothwell as Research Grants Officer in winter 2017. She graduated with a first class honours degree in History of Art and Slavonic Studies from The University of Glasgow in 2006. With a personal interest in Art Nouveau and Glasgow Style architecture, furniture and interiors, Michelle joined The Glasgow School of Art as Archives and Collections Assistant in 2012, having previously worked in various museum and archive roles at The National Trust for Scotland and The University of Glasgow. Amongst these was a job as Project Assistant for the Stoddard-Templeton Corporate and Design Archive, the archive of one of the world's most successful carpet manufacturers. In 2014, as Archives and Collections Project Officer, she developed and managed a project to create an online catalogue for GSA's archives and collections.

Michelle's current role as Collections Development Officer for GSA's fire recovery project is to oversee the cataloguing, documentation, digitisation, conservation and repackaging of GSA's holdings following a major fire in the School's Mackintosh

Building in May 2014, which resulted in the loss of parts of the School's built heritage, art and furniture holdings and damage to some of its archives, objects and textile collections. Michelle has given a number of papers on a range of topics including copyright, archives, Scottish carpet design, manufacture and the role of art in the First World War.

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: 31 October 2018. 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

Further information can be found on the SSAH website: <https://ssahistory.wordpress.com/grants/>.

Applications should be sent electronically to scottishsocietyforarthistory@gmail.com, addressed to the Grants Officer.

SSAH Membership

We thank you all for your continued support of the Scottish Society for Art History. If you pay your membership by standing order, we would be grateful if you could ensure that you have changed your standing order to the price of £18 (single)/ £25 (joint)/ £10 (student)/ £24 (overseas) as introduced last year.

If you have any queries about membership or if you would like to notify the committee of changes to your details, please get in touch with Liz Louis (l.louis@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

SSAH Reviews

Review – SSAH visit to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, 6 December 2017

By Claire Robinson, Museum Collections Unit, University of St Andrews

In December, SSAH members enjoyed a day out at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. We began with a tour of the newly opened prints and drawings study room with Charlotte Topsfield, Senior Curator of British Drawings and Prints. Charlotte showed us a selection of works on paper from the National Galleries of Scotland's rich collection of historic prints and drawings, that consists of over 30,000 works which are of international importance. It was a delight to find out more about works by distinguished Scottish artists, including Allan Ramsay, Alexander Runciman, David Allan, Alexander Nasmyth, David Wilkie, William Bell Scott, Joseph Noel Paton, Joseph Crawhall, Arthur Melville, Annie French, Samuel Peploe, Charles Hodge Mackie, Mabel Royds, Stanley Cursitor, James McBey, and Ian Cheyne. The opportunity to see Arthur Melville's masterful handling of colour in *Eastern Scene* was a real highlight of the tour.

Last, but far from least, was the Vaughan Turner Collection, which consists of 38 watercolours by J.M.W. Turner. They were bequeathed by the art collector Henry Vaughan in 1900 and in accordance with his wishes, the watercolours are famously exhibited every January at the Scottish National Gallery. Wonderfully atmospheric and still spectacularly vibrant in colour, these works span Turner's career, from early topographical works undertaken during sketching tours in England, Wales and Scotland, to watercolours created during his travels in continental Europe and illustrations produced as a result of his collaborations with Sir Walter Scott, including publishing ventures such as the *Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland*.

In the afternoon, we enjoyed a tour of the recently launched *A New Era: Scottish Modern Art 1900-1950* with the exhibition curator, Alice Strang, Senior Curator at SNGMA. Showcasing more than 100 paintings, sculptures and works on paper by over 50 artists, the exhibition explores the most progressive works that were produced by Scottish artists in response to European modern art movements, from Fauvism and Expressionism, to Cubism, Art Deco, abstraction and Surrealism. It is named after the

Edinburgh-based New Era group that was established in 1939 to exhibit its members' works.

A *New Era* charts the birth of Scottish modernism, as the exhibition argues, at the beginning of the 20th century when J.D. Fergusson moved from Edinburgh to Paris in 1907. Whilst there he encountered the avant-garde works of French artists such as Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse. Escaping the Scottish art establishment, Peploe joined Fergusson in Paris in 1910, and the move proved to be a significant moment in their respective artistic careers. This can be seen in Fergusson's *La Terrasse, Café d'Harcourt* and Peploe's *Tulips and Fruit*. Also on display is Duncan Grant's *The White Jug*, which is one of the first abstract paintings made by a Scottish artist. He adapted the work to incorporate still life elements a few years later. A sketchbook owned by the Celtic Revivalist John Duncan reveals that he too experimented with abstract motifs. Stanley Cursiter's magnificent *The Sensation of Crossing the Street – West End, Edinburgh* records his dalliance, albeit short lived, with Futurism.

The outbreak of the First World War saw Fergusson's departure from France to London, via Portsmouth on war-related work. The result was a series of remarkable Vorticist-inspired paintings, such as *Dockyard, Portsmouth and Portsmouth Docks*. Eric Robertson's wartime experiences were very different from that of Fergusson as exhibited by *Shellburst*, which he painted on his return to Edinburgh in 1919. A selection of works by Scottish artists who were part of the London avant-garde in the 1920s, including William McCance and Agnes Miller Parker, can be seen alongside pieces by artists such as William Crozier, William Gillies and William MacTaggart, who created opportunities to exhibit their work at home. Robert Burns' wonderfully lavish *The Hunt*, produced as part of the decorative scheme for David Crawford's tearooms on Princes Street, typifies the extravagance of the Scottish Art Deco style.

During the 1930s, Edinburgh's avant-garde art scene continued to thrive and the staging of groundbreaking exhibitions featuring works by artists such as Paul Klee, Edvard Munch, Georges Braque and Picasso by the Society of Scottish Artists fostered an increasingly liberal, internationalist outlook. Scottish artists looked not just to France for inspiration but also to northern Europe. This is evident in Gillies' Klee-inspired work *Harbour Scene, St Monans* and John Maxwell's *Harbour with Three Boats*. Towards the end of the decade, the emergence of Scottish Surrealism, roused by exhibitions of Surrealist pieces by Max Ernst, Giorgio de Chirico, Salvador Dali and René Magritte,

was evident in the works of Edwin Lucas, Charles Pulsford and Alexander Allan.

The outbreak of the Second World War provided new stimuli for Scottish artists. The much-overlooked Keith Henderson was made an official war artist for the Air Ministry, resulting in his nearly surreal painting, *Camouflaged Hangars and Gas Gong, 1940*. Edward Baird's *Unidentified Aircraft (over Montrose)* provides a visual representation of the anxiety faced by a community under the threat of aerial bombing raids. Fergusson's return to Glasgow in 1939 shifted the focus of progressive art from Edinburgh to Glasgow, the exhibition argues, invigorated by the creation of the New Art Club and the New Scottish Group. The arrival of refugee artists, including Jankel Adler and Josef Herman, created a strong impression on the work of a new generation of Scottish artists, particularly The Two Roberts - Colquhoun and MacBryde. *A New Era* admirably illuminates the work of their less well-known contemporaries, Benjamin Crème and Tom Pow.

Scotland's vibrant post-war art scene saw the artists Alan Davie, William Gear, Stephen Gilbert, Eduardo Paolozzi and William Turnbull burst onto the scene. Gear and Gilbert were the only British members of the cutting-edge CoBrA movement, exhibiting in both major exhibitions in Amsterdam in 1949 and Liège in 1951. Gear, alongside Colquhoun, Merlyn Evans, Grant, Gillies, MacBryde and Maxwell, also contributed to the *Sixty Paintings for '51* exhibition held at the Suffolk Galleries in London as part of the Festival of Britain. Gear's powerful *Autumn Landscape* was purchased by the Arts Council amidst great controversy, which elevated his reputation. Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, based in St Andrews and St Ives, was a leading figure in both the Scottish and England art scenes. Her magnificent series of glacier paintings, including the breath-taking *Upper Glacier*, confirmed her status as one of the foremost practitioners of British abstraction.

A New Era is a wonderfully rich and stimulating exhibition that captures the vibrancy and diversity of Scotland's artistic landscape during the first half of the 20th century. The exhibition is showing at Modern 2 until 10 June 2018. The SSAH would like to thank Charlotte Topsyfield and Alice Strang for such an informative and enjoyable day at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

Upcoming SSAH Events:

SSAH Study Day 2018

Tickets are still available for the study day *Art Organisations and Institutions* in Scotland on 10 February 2018 at the Reid Auditorium, The Glasgow School of Art. Talks will share current research and scholarship on art institutions, galleries, societies, collectives and support organisations in Scotland. The event will feature a selection of papers from a variety of different speakers, from academics and independent researchers, to curators and practising artists. Tickets for the study day can be purchased online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/art-organisations-and-institutions-in-scotland-ssah-study-day-tickets-39874340225>

Programme

10.30 Welcome

Collecting art and contemporary responses to historic collections

10.35 Peter Trowles and Dr Thea Stevens, The Glasgow School of Art

The Plaster Cast Collection of The Glasgow School of Art: History, Aura and Experience

10.55 Sandy Wood, Royal Scottish Academy
An Evolving World: the Kinross Scholarship, Emerging Artists and the Royal Scottish Academy Collections

11.15 Questions and Break

Artist-led societies and collectives in Scotland

11.45 Dr Peggy Beardmore
The Artists of 'The Most Paintable Town in Scotland'

12.05 Karen Mailley-Watt, University of Glasgow and The Glasgow School of Art
Women's Work Praised – The Glasgow Society of Lady Artists (1882-1938)

12.25 Dr Deborah Jackson; University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh College of Art
Artist-Run Initiatives: Locating History in the Present

12.45 Gayle Nelson and Sharon Quigley, Society of Scottish Artists
The Society of Scottish Artists – its role and relevance, for its members and within the wider cultural landscape

13.05 Questions and Lunch

The role of production workshops and commercial galleries

14.45 Tommy Zywn, The Scottish Gallery
Portrait of a Gallery

15.05 Dan Brown, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop
Means of Production: 50 Years of Scottish Production Facilities 1967 – 2017

15.25 Questions

The emergence and changing role of art institutions in Scotland

15.35 Professor Neil Mulholland, Edinburgh College of Art

The Unlearning Organisation: Cultural Devolution and Scotland's Visual Arts 1967- 2017

15.55 Helen Kendrick, Glasgow School of Art Glasgow
City of Creative Production

16.15 Questions and End

SSAH Annual General Meeting

The SSAH AGM will take place at 14:00 on 10 March 2018 in the A.K. Bell Room, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh. The AGM will be accompanied by a presentation by Dr Peggy Beardmore in advance of the launch of her book *Students of Hospitalfield: Education and Inspiration in 20th-century Scottish Art*. She will share a glimpse into this exciting piece of new research. For nearly two centuries, Hospitalfield has been a centre for art: in the 19th century, as the home of artist and patron Patrick Allan-Fraser, in the 20th century, as an art school and centre for continuing artistic exploration for students from Scotland's four art schools, and in the 21st century, as a contemporary residency centre. Despite its significant connection to British Art, Hospitalfield's history has not been fully studied or understood until now. Discover the fascinating story of how a stately home in Arbroath became the setting for revolutionary approaches to art education and a source of inspiration for hundreds of artists. This book will be released on 27 April 2018. The publisher's website contains further information: <http://sansomandcompany.co.uk/shopping/students-of-hospitalfield/>. If you would like to attend the AGM, please email Claire Robinson (cr67@st-andrews.ac.uk).

SSAH Upcoming Tours

Curator's Tour of *Face to Face and Revealing Characters*

11 am, 3 February 2018

The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum

Join us for a curator's tour showcasing portraits from Dundee's nationally significant fine art collection. The selection of works reflects the diverse range of styles and approaches taken by artists in their challenge to depict the human form. Find out more in this newsletter's *Exhibitions* section.

Curator's Tour of *The Glasgow Boys: A Spirit of Rebellion*

13 April 2018

Dunfermline Carnegie Library & Galleries

Linked by friendship and a shared desire to rebel against the artistic traditions of 19th century Scotland, the Glasgow Boys became one of the most significant groups of painters working in Britain at that time. A loose association of around 20 artists, many of the group went on to enjoy critical and commercial success, both at home and abroad. The exhibition explores the evolving style of the Glasgow Boys and their impact on the art world at large. It features 30 works from Dumfermline's collections by 17 different artists, many of them leading members of the group, including Arthur Melville, W.Y. Macgregor, E.A. Hornel, John Lavery, D.Y. Cameron, James Guthrie and George Henry.

To book places on the above tours, please email Claire Robinson (cr67@st-andrews.ac.uk).

Feature Article

Recognition Status for Paxton House, Scottish Borders

Details and images provided by Dr Fiona Salvesen Murrell, Curator of Paxton House



Courtesy of The Paxton Trust

The Award of Recognised Collection status has been given to Paxton House for their Nationally Significant Collection of furniture by Thomas Chippendale the Elder and Younger and by William Trotter (and its associated archives). The award was given by Museums Galleries Scotland in November on behalf of the Scottish Government. This newly Recognised collection is one of only 49 in Scotland. The Recognition Scheme seeks to 'improve the accessibility and longevity of the [Nationally Significant] collections, as well as the long term sustainability of the organisations that hold them' (Joanne Orr, CEO of MGS).



Drawing Room, photography © John Hammond

The Trotter collection is the largest publicly accessible collection of his work in the world and the Chippendale collection is amongst the eight largest documented collections of the firm's furniture in the UK and worldwide. The comprehensive collection was created with the highest quality craftsmanship by Scotland's most important cabinet maker, William

Trotter, and by the internationally famous design and cabinetmaking firm of Thomas Chippendale, commissioned for Paxton House between 1774 and 1815. It contains many rare and unique items. The history of art and design can be studied through the changing styles of furniture including the late Rococo, Neo-classical designs with some French and Greek influences, and the Greek revival styles. It is integral to the social, cultural, and economic history of Scotland and to the international history of art and design.



Principal Bedroom furnished by Chippendale 1774-76, courtesy of The Paxton Trust

Key pieces include the unique mahogany secretaire, the painted suite of bedroom furniture, large pier glasses for the Drawing Room and the magnificent

sideboard suite by Chippendale. The Trotter furniture includes a set of marble topped rosewood tables and a unique picture viewing sofa made for the Picture Gallery.

Having achieved Nationally Significant status for the collection, Paxton House is now focusing upon improving the access for visitors to the house and online visitors with a specific focus on schools, families, tourists, and community outreach.

There will be a nationwide celebration of the tercentenary of Thomas Chippendale the Elder's birth in 2018, and Paxton House will join in with the Chippendale 300 Festival celebrations (www.chippendale300.co.uk). A special Chippendale exhibition entitled *The Paxton Style, 'Neat & Substantially Good': Chippendale furniture at Paxton House, its influences and legacy* will be shown at the house from 5 June to 28 August. This exhibition will highlight the Paxton Style of Chippendale furniture, a significant element of the master cabinetmaker's work with loans from private and public collections. There will be a series of lectures by Chippendale experts, furniture masterclasses, and family activities over the summer. Bookings for these can be made at: www.paxtonhouse.co.uk/events.

Individuals and groups are welcome to visit and explore the house and the collections on display. From 8 January to 17 March, the Tearoom and Grounds will be open from 11am to 3pm, and the house opens for the season on 17 March.

Exhibitions

Passion, Vision and Spirit – Norman Gilbert

Tatha Gallery, Newport-on-Tay, Fife

13 January – 17 February 2018

The Tatha Gallery opens 2018 with a solo exhibition of extraordinary paintings by 91 year old artist Norman Gilbert. The artist was born in Trinidad in 1926 but moved when very young to Glasgow where he attended Glasgow College of Art. Thereafter, like many artists in penury and a family to support, he looked for alternative work to help pay the bills whilst he painted. He found himself living in a caravan on a farm tending 200 pigs. Whilst this wasn't ideal it allowed him to pursue his love and passion for art. Norman Gilbert has now painted for nearly 70 years but his work is as fresh and as current as any young artist in practice today.



Norman Gilbert, *The Traverse Opening*, 1969
Oil on Board

Norman's oil paintings on a gesso ground are vibrant, and his decorative use of colour and pattern enlightens the senses. His works are generous and delightful insights into intimate family life normally unseen by an outsider.



Courtesy of Patricia Ramaer

Norman has exhibited in a wide range of places including Scotland, Brussels, London and Quebec, and his work has caught the eye of the media over the years, including *Vogue* in 1967, a *Scope* TV documentary in 1974, and more recently BBC Scotland News in 2018. Tatha Gallery is open from 10:30 till 17:00 on Monday and Wednesday through to Saturday.

With thanks to Helen Glassford for providing details and images.

Renny Tait – Thresholds to Brighter Worlds

Flowers Gallery, London

10 January to 17 February 2018

See architecture in a new light. A new exhibition by Scottish-born Renny Tait shows the artist's innovative oil paintings of buildings. Amongst the works on show are pictures of London landmarks, Italian scenes, and two Scottish sites - Braemar Castle in Aberdeenshire and Bell Rock Lighthouse off Angus.



Renny Tait, *Braemar Castle Evening Light*, 2015

© Renny Tait

Courtesy of Flowers Gallery London and New York

The artist strips back the detail and focuses on the geometric order of the built environment; guided by principles of abstraction rather than naturalism. These works invite reflection on our perceptions of iconic buildings.

Renny Tait studied at the Edinburgh College of Art, the Royal College of Art in London and the British School in Rome. His work can be found in a number of private and public collections, including the Tate and the Government Art Collection.

The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum:
Revealing Characters (27 January to end of 2018)
Face to Face (27 January to 20 May 2018)

Portraiture is the theme of a major new exhibition at the McManus. Drawn entirely from Dundee's nationally significant fine art collection, the works selected form two separate displays.



Stewart Carmichael, *The Artist's Wife*, oil, 1897
© Dundee City Council (Dundee Art Galleries and Museums)

In the 20th century gallery, *Revealing Characters* looks at the enduring attraction of the portrait. Here we dig beneath the surface to uncover the stories of the people on display. All are individuals who have made their mark – their portraits a record of their contact, however fleeting, with an artist. As photography replaced the need to record what someone looked like, artists adapted. Their skills are used to capture more than a likeness, using the human face to explore their own artistic expression as well as the emotional life of the sitter. The selection of works reflects the diverse

range of styles and approaches taken by artists in their challenge to represent their sitters and keep them real. From the painterly to the photographic, works include Stewart Carmichael's affectionate portrayal of his wife and Wolfgang Tillman's sophisticated selfie.

The *Face to Face* display unites the great and good of Victorian Dundee with more contemporary individuals. From Provosts to posers we consider what makes a successful portrait and how we can learn more about the sitter than what they look like. Also included is the McManus contribution for the Scotland's Year of Young People 2018 that features a special display of portraits of children and young people by celebrated photographer Joseph McKenzie.

With thanks to Lili Bagyanszki for providing details and image.

2018 Committee Members

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

Treasurer: Jim Barnes (Independent Researcher)

Membership:
Liz Louis (Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums)

Research Grants:
Michelle Kaye (The Glasgow School of Art)

Journal Editors: Kirsty MacNab (The McManus, Dundee)

Newsletter Editor:
Shona Elliott (Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums)

Events:
Claire Robinson (University of St Andrews)
Lili Bagyanszki (The McManus Dundee)
Matthew Jarron (University of Dundee)

Minutes Secretary: Tara King (University of St Andrews)

General members:
Imogen Gibbon (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)
Shannon Hunter Hurtado (independent scholar)

