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artwork

Number 187 Pick up your own FREE copy and find out what's really happening in the arts March/April 2015



George Birrell: Fishboxes and Lobster Pots, mixed media, 40x40cm, from his one-man show at Gallery Heinzel, Thistle Street, Aberdeen, March 21 - May 2

Inside: Jonathan Shearer paints en plein air :: Duncan Macmillan on Glasgow's £250,000 spending spree

Aberdeen

ABERDEEN ART GALLERY & MUSEUM, Schoolhill, AB10 1FQ, 01224 523 700, Fax: 01224 632 133, www.aagm.co.uk, info@

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SYLLAVETHY GALLERY, Syllavethy, Montgarrie, Alford, AB33 8AQ, 01975 562 273

Oyne, AB52 6QS, 01464 851

TOLQUHON GALLERY, Tolquhon, Tarves, Ellon, AB41 7LP, 01651 842 343, www. tolquhon-gallery.co.uk March 1 - April 14

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820389, www.countryframes.co.u.
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March 21 - April 21

Emily Hogarth. Scottish Folk
Songs. Words framed with im

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STILL LIFE STUDIO, High Street, AB38 9NX, 01340 871 457

Alloa THE GALLERY, Gordon McFar lane, Watchmaker, 41 Mill Street, FK10 1DW, 01259 723 303 RESONATE ARTS HOUSE, Unit A3, North Castle Street, FK10 1EU, 01259 928 014

Angus

various artists. Deca Flares, Hair & Platf vorks, objects and ph THE CANVAS ART GALLERY

KINBLETHMONT GALLERY

OATHLAW POTTERY & GAL-LERY, Oathlaw, Forfar, DD8 3PQ 01307 850 272

CRAFTS OF ANGUS SHOW-CASE AND SHOP, 14 The Saus E AND SHOP, 14 The Square am, DD8 2PZ, 01674 810379,

SPRINGFIELD CREATIVE ARTS, Dr. Fran Marquis, 4 Springfield Terrace, Arbroath, DD11 1EL, 01241 439 714, www.

www.openstudiosfife.co.uk

The new V & A – Holyrood-on-Tay?

Richard Carr asks if UNESCO's Design City award for Dundee is a bit premature



VITHIN the next few weeks work is to begin on Oundee's iconic building on the waterfront – the V&A Museum of Design by the Japanese architect, Kengo Kuma

Conceived as a repeat on a much grander scale f Richard Murphy's conversion of a 1920s garage on Perth Road into Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA), the V&A museum is intended to do what the DCA has failed to do, namely stage exhibitions and other events that will bring people flocking to Dundee.

The first thing to be said about the new uilding, originally designed to project out into the River Tay, is that it repeats

some of the things that dogged the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, namely uncontrolled rises in cost and – in the case of the Parliament – a design that is difficult and expensive to maintain. The museum, originally intended to cost £43 million, is now expected to cost almost double, even though the building has been pulled back

from the river to reduce cost. The serrated nature of its exterior walls suggests it will are running costs never included in a competition

Also, like the Scottish Parliament, the history of the museum so far has been one of obfuscation if not deceit. Before the referendum, the Scottish government knew about the enormous rise in cost but kept the figure secret because the SNP feared it night lead to a scandal (which it is) and affect voting This is yet another example of politicians failing to serve the public. MPs' expenses and claims to exert nfluence outside Parliament are par for the course.

However, what makes the saga of the museum ven more extraordinary is that, on the assumption that it will be completed – and on the strength of work on medicine and computer games undertaken



by Dundee and Abertay Universities respectively - Dundee has just been awarded UNESCO City of Design. Such a title implies good environmental design, among other things, and Dundee's waterfront is quite simply a disgrace.

The prime position is occupied by TESCO and its filling station (below). Farther along is an ugly block of flats (above) so badly positioned that the dual carriageway has had to be narrowed to a single lane and, farther back from the river, is an equally ugly office block. And, beyond that, a car park that destroys the views of the river as seen from the DCA. In fact.

Richard Murphy even designed a window behind one of its cinema screens that so that cinema-goers could see the river before the film begins

In a recent Design in Action meeting called Design Changing the City, it was left to ArtWork to ask questions about the cost of the V&A museum and the poor quality of the waterfront's environment. The rest of the audience kept their heads below the parapet. And the

celebrated guests - Devan Sudiic from the Design Museum in London and Laura Aalto also be both difficult and expensive to maintain. Why from Finland – seemed to know next to nothing about what is happening in Dundee.

To this correspondent the meeting seemed a waste of time. And, as for the UNESCO title. that should never have been awarded until after the regeneration of Dundee's waterfront had been completed and it was possible to judge the quality of

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KILMORACK GALLERY, The Dld Kilmorack Church, IV4 7AL, 01463 783 230 March 20 - May 2

THE BEAULY GALLERY, 3-4 High Street, IV4 7BY, 01463 783 508

AIRDE GALLERY, House of

Beauly Visitor Centre, Station Road, IV4 7EH, 01381 621 133

BERWICK GYMNASIUM ART GALLERY, Berwick Barracks, The Parade, TD15 1DG, 01289

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Home and Away. Carrick in World

ARBROATH COMMUNITY CENTRE, Marketgate. DD11 Argyll Open Studios Ayrshire. Artists on show at Rozelle, Maclaurin & McKechnie

Na Ban, Tayvallich, Lochgilphe PA31 8PF, 01546 870 310, www.

Barony Centre, West Kilbride, KA23 9AW, 01294 829179, www. FYNE STUDIOS - THE HIDDEN GALLERY, Newton, Strachur, (off the A886), PA27 8DB, 01369 860 379, www.fyne-studios.com Gallery of two Scottish artists Don McNeil & Jean Bell ownscottand.org March 14 - Mav 10 JUNO DESIGN GALLERY, 159

Argyll Street, Dunoon, PA23 7DD 01369 707 767, www.junogallery. Until March 27 RESIPOLE STUDIOS. Acha

m Wright. In the Eye of the THE STABLE GALLERY, Church Square, Inveraray, PA32 8TY, 01499 302 800

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Beauly

Avr MACLAURIN ART GALLERY, Rozelle Estate, Monument Road KA7 4NQ, 01292 443 708, www. south-ayrshire.gov.uk/galleries/

maclaurin/ March 7 - April 12

Ayr Photogra Open Studios Weekend.

April 25 - May 25

Royal Scottish S

| Berwick-upon-Tweed ROZELLE HOUSE GALLER-IES, Rozelle Park, Monument Road, KA7 4NQ, 01292 443 708

April 11 - May 17

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Steve Reich - welcome, but hardly short lived imported junk and mad subsidies to reward foreign owned power companies and

were concerned mainly with the devastating effect that the crackpot windmill policy is having on Scotland's wild places

by all protesters at the travesties we have been witnessing in the so-called planning process.

that. What started out as a very laudable attempt to build on the inspiring example set in the 50sand 60s by the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board has turned into a macho nightmare. The old hydro schemes left a lasting legacy of reliable power which truly served the environment. The board was also deeply rooted in true socialist values based on fairness for all.

The windmill policy uses

large landowners at the expense of the most vulnerable members of society who can afford only the most basic heating systems.

Realising that we are heading for some sort of disaster as older reliable sources of power are being phased out what do the SNP's architects of this mad scheme do? Why, blame someone else, of course.

This time it's the National Grid. who are "charging too much" for connecting the old power stations. But what about the wildly uneconomic new mega pylons defacing the heartland of Scotland that are supposed to carry windpower to the Central Belt? What are they doing when as over Christmas this year, the wind doesn't blow? On Boxing Day wind's contribution was a

pathetic one per cent. Britain as a whole is facing energy chaos in the fairly near future thanks to years of illiterate planning, but the situation in Scotland threatens to be far more serious.

If you can possibly do so you should plan to go 'off grid.' That's REAL independence.

of drawings and screen-printing .He studied at Duncan of Jordanstone in Dundee, graduating hopes that the Borders Railway will feature steam locomotives, with a (Ba) Honours Illustration and Printmaking After leaving Art School he was awarded an Artist in Residence at the Josef & Anni Albers but it is clear that it will be very difficult to run special trains Foundation, in Connecticut USA: spending three without cancelling parts of the onths distilling his style and creating work

Free Admission

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a range of discounts, including half-price travel on local lines. This is just another example o

But failure to plan ahead

Can no one stop the pernicious

GLASGOW is to spend £250,000 on work by Douglas Gordon. It doesn't seem to be clear what the work is exactly, but "included in the overall acquisition are all regular updates of future films by the artist, which will be added to the piece."

Why are they forking out such huge sum from their precious Isn't there a musical space, resources? Simple. He won the Turner Prize. That puts him beyond price, for that quarter million is a bargain, they say. He slowed down Hitchcock's Psycho and appropriated one or two other people's films, often without acknowledgement.

That was the beginning of the 'Glasgow Miracle.' What miracle would that be? Answer again, the Turner Prize. Since Gordon's success, half a dozen or more graduates from the Glasgow School of Art MFA have been short-listed for the Turner Prize. Two (or was it three?) have won it. This 'Glasgow Miracle' is no more than mutual admiration between GSA and the committee that gives out the prizes.

But the Turner Prize bandwagon is no joke. It is pernicious and apparently unstoppable. Cannily, the organisers made an alliance with television from the start. They have media presence; nothing else matters in the arts and they have used it relentlessly to project a distorted and tendentious view of contemporary art.

As our art administrators will never support Scottish artists until they are endorsed from the south, it has seemed a gift to them, a lovely, rolling bandwagon; so the same bunch of artists have monopolised the Scottish presence at the Venice Biennale to dismal effect and were the subject of

Generation, the extravaganza of bad art put on by our National

It was the Turner Prize generation, of course. Opening the show, NGS chairman Ben Thomson crowed about Turner Prize success as though it was some universal accolade.

It isn't. But before that the SNGMA had already adopted the fad. A good deal of our money has been spent on works by artists

"Future generations will scratch their heads in wonder that we spent good money on such ephemeral nonsense."

like Richard Wright, Turner Prize winner, and Cathy Wilkes, Turner Prize nominee, and on others of the same pedigree, like Claire Barclay or Nathan Coley. Future generations will scratch their heads in wonder that we spent good money on such ephemeral nonsense

The SNGMA also have their own Douglas Gordon, expensive of course, but just a list, the names of everyone he ever met, or at least can remember meeting. It really is just a list, too. It is displayed in a stairwell. When it was repainted recently, it was painted out. Put back again, even at a casual

aftercare. Nor is it an original idea. It's a lift from Tracy Emin's Everybody I ever Slept With. That at least has a frisson of prurience to give it edge and is, or was (it was destroyed in a fire) an art work, not just a list.

misspelt.Maybe they didn't pay for

glance, I noticed two names

But Gordon's list says it all. The only person there who matters is the artist himself, his presence implicit in all the other names that mutely pay tribute to his self-importance. Now Glasgow does the same. Shame on them.

But while they are spending quarter of a million on Gordon, Glasgow are spending fifty thousand on Steven Campbell They have got it the wrong way round, haven't they? Campbell really was a major artist, but then of course he didn't win the Turner Prize. Nor would he ever have done. He painted pictures. Disqualified at once. Gordon only makes nonsense. He did win it and so he is priced at five times as

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The same old tunes again? Turner Prize bandwagon?

now, in 2015, cutting edge. Like most arts organisations the Festival is facing very testing times. There is always the temptation to play safe and to

make sure you fill the hall with

tried and tested favourites. Breaking new ground might have seemed to be the job of the Fringe but, as many observers have noted, the Fringe has, for all practical purposes, become the Festival of Standup.

somewhere, for the way-out, the challenging, maybe the plain crazy? It's Edinburgh's loss,

Tilting at windmills (again)

Editorial Comment

THE RECENT joint letter of alarm from the heads of virtually all the environmental and outdoor bodies in Scotland should act as a wake-up call to those who are supposed to be running our energy policy in Scotland.

ANOTHER YEAR, another

for this year's Edinburgh

Festival. The advance programme

International Festival is full of the

usual very worthy fare. There are

the usual guest appearances from

some of the great orchestras of the

work from the classical repertoire.

world playing some of the finest

But search the music

programme for anything

very challenging, any new

in vain.

commissions, anything that

could be called even vaguely

experimental and you will search

A bit of John Adams, a bit of

t begins to look, though, as though they are too sound asleep or simply too set in their ways to take note of any of the many warning signs that have been

The environmental bodies

They voice the frustration felt

But it is far more serious than

Waverley restored – well, sort of

BBC4 RECENTLY showed The Nation's Railway – the Golden Age of British Rail, which made clear that BR did much to stop Lord Beeching from continuing his dismantling of Britain's rail network in the 1960s. But one line that was cut - the Waverley Line from Edinburgh to Carlisle

 has now been partly restored. The new 30 mile route has seven new stations south of Edinburgh and continues to a new terminus at Tweedbank south of Galashiels. One day, it

might even get to Carlisle

One of the arguments for reinstating the line was that it would do much to reinvigorate the Borders' economy and bring more tourists to the area. So, one can only wonder at the way in which cost cutting has reduced much of the line to a single track and worse, that several of the new bridges are too narrow to allow a second track to be added Borders councils to provide pensioners and disabled people with discounts when the line opens for business in September By contrast, people over 60 or with disabilities who live in East and West Lothian receive

Equally disturbing is the

refusal of Midlothian and

regular services.

postcode lottery. and allow for a possible rise

in passenger traffic is much more serious. Those who built the railways in the nineteenth century would never have beer so short-sighted!

CRAIG MCINTOSH

Craig McIntosh is a Glasgow based Artist and ustrator whose work is predominantly a mixture

Thursday 5 to Sunday 29 March 2015 10.00am to 8.00pm



Rozelle

ROZELLE HOUSE GALLERIES Goudie Collection Ongoing exhibition Danish Diaspora 11 April – 17 May 2015

Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour 25 April — 25 May 2015

Home and Away - Carrick in World War I Dates to be confirmed - March/April 2015 Coming soon - Girvan Bronze Age Cinerary Urns redisplayed

Open Studios Ayrshire 24 – 27 April 2015 – Artists on show at Rozelle, Maclaurin & McKechnie

IKON GALLERY, 1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, B1 2HS,

Until May 4 Robert Groves. Golden Years. BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM & ART GALLERY, Chamberlain Square, B3 3DH, 0121 303 2834 Until May 17 New Art West Midlands. Until May 31 Art from Elsewhere:

Art from Elsewhere:
Until June 7
Faith & Action: Quakers & the
First World War.

Borders

FLAT CAT GALLERY, 2 Market Place, Lauder, TD2 6SR, 01578 722 808, www.flatcatgallery.co.uk. THE CHRISTOPHER BOYD
GALLERY, Old Gala House, 3
Crosont, Galashiele, TD1 348 iels, TD1 3.IS THE SCOTT GALLERY, Haw

Museum, Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick, TD9 7JL, 01750 20096 April 4 - May 24 Jan Miller & Mary Sleigh. In Place & Looking Up: Looking Down. Textile - 'art interven-

THE SMOKEHOUSE GAL-LERY, St Ellas Place, Eyemoutl TD14 5HP, 018907 52116, www. KELSO POTTERY, The Know ets' fired in the Kelso Pit Kiln

REAL WOOD STUDIOS. Monteviot Nurseries, Nr Ancru Jedburgh, TD8 6TU, 01835 830 767, www.realwoodstudios.com

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High Street, Lockerbie, DG11 2JI
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Bristol

ARNOLFINI, Bush House, 16 Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA, 0117 Narron 917 2300 Until March 14 Euiiko Nakaya, IBT15 : Fog

Fujiko Nakaya. ... Bridge Exhibition. Until March 20 Manuel Vason. 100 Exposures. BRISTOL DRAWING SCHOOL, Unit 5.18, Paintworks, Arnos Vale BS4 3EH

Caithness

NORTHSHORE POTTERY, Mi of Forse, Latheron, KW5 6DG, 01593 741 777 Studio pottery and ceramic scu ture by Jenny Mackenzie Ross NORTH LANDS CREATIVE GLASS, Quatre Bras, Lybster, KW3 6BN, 01593 721 229, www.northlanderlass.com/info@

northlandsglass March 23 - 27 ing. June 21 - 28

Amanda Simmons, Blooming Vessels, Skills Class July 15 Judith Schaechter, Stained Glas

The Final Frontier.

July 18 - 23

Maria Bang Espersen & Max
Syron. Glass Unknown.

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ST FERGUS GALLERY, Wick Library, Sinclair Terrace, Wick, KW1 5AB, 01955 603 489

Cambridge

KETTLE'S YARD, Castle Stro CB3 0AQ, 01223 748100, www kettlesyard.co.uk, mail@ket-

March 17 - June 21

Rhythms.

April 25 - June 21

Whitney McVeigh. In St Peter's

Castle Douglas CLIENCE STUDIO, 212 King street, DG7 1DS, 01556 504318,

rence: changing displays of land & seascape paintings & prints, mostly Galloway & Western Isle: A D LIVINGSTON & SONS, 183 King Street, DG7 1DZ, 01556 504 234

THE MCGILL-DUNCAN GAL-LERY, 231 King Street, DG7 1DT, 01556 502 468

Intil March 14 ARTS OF ALBA, 39/40 Threave Terrace, DG7 1HG, 01556 504 020, www.artsofalba.com, KD@ artsofalba.com Featuring the work of Freida Dyson, Sam Mullen and Sheila Mullen

ANINA'S ART, Meadowview Springholm, DG7 3LP, 01556 Springholm, DG7 . 650329, www.janir ina@janinasart.co.uk Still lifes, landscapes, portraits

THE GALLERY AT LAURIES. ON, Woodbank House, Lauri n, DG7 2PW, 01644 450 235

Cornwall ROYAL CORNWALL MUSEUM.

River Street, Truro, TR1 2SJ, 1872 272 205, Fax: 01872 240514 LEMON STREET GALLERY TR1 2LS, 01872 275 757

Crieff AITON FINE ARTS, 63 King Street, PH7 3HB, 01764 655 423,

ax: 01764 655 816

THE STRATHEARN GALLERY 32 West High Street, PH7 4DL, 01764 656 100, www.strathearn-

March 21 - April 19 Georgina McMaster Solo. **April 25 - May 31** Judith Brigland, Emma Da Anne Morrison.

Cumbria ABBOT HALL ART GALLERY, Kendal, LA9 5AL, 01539 722464,

Fax: 01539 722494

March 27 - June 13

Face Value: Portraitu March 27 - July 12
Barbara Hepworth.

BLACKWELL, Bowness-on-Windermere, LA23 3JT, 01539 4 139, Fax: 015394 88486

Until April 12 Emilie Taylor. Gordon Baldwin, E Lawson Oyekan. C

Light and Darkness.

April 24 - September 13

Evelyn De Morgan. Artis

BREWERY ARTS CENTRE, Highgate, Kendal, LA9 4HE, Highgate, Kend 01539 725 133 EDEN ARTS, 1 Sandgate, Penr CA11 7TP, 01768 899 444, Fax:

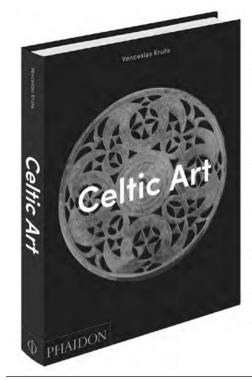
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Head House, Alston, CA9 3NG,
01434 382 157
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Peter Lascelles - please telephone
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Painter who catches the spirit of the East Coast

Frances Anderson talks to George Birrell before his show at Gallery Heinzel

AS A BOY, sketching boats and cars was a refuge for the artist George Birrell. Fast forward to today and Birrell is celebrating a solo show, exhibiting 45 of his works at Gallery Heinzel in Aberdeen. As one of Scotland's most successful artists. George Birrell has an inherent interest in the architecture and landscape of his native Scotland and the spirit of the East Coast towns and fishing villages of Fife provide the primary inspiration for his work.

Growing up in Glasgow's West End, Birrell

disliked secondary school and drawing became an escape: "I was always drawing, especially boats and cars – I was very fond of both – I still am. Drawing allowed me to escape into myself I suppose, to a kind of place where I was okay with

"Looking back it was my refuge, although at the time it was only a mild comfort really It wasn't until I discovered I could paint aged thirteen or fourteen that secondary school picked up. I got a commendation in the Glasgow Schools Art competition, which was a tremendous boost.

"I took painting extremely seriously after that. I loved it because it gave me kudos All anybody wants is to be somebody, and that made me somebody. It was just like being born again really in the most

complete sense. It transformed my life from being a fairly miserable adolescent, into a confident, forwardthinking individual.

"The late William Birnie was my highly influential art teacher at Hyndland School. He showed me advanced techniques with oil painting even before I went to art school. It was through him I discovered the East Neuk villages of Fife".

Glasgow School of Art followed (after a struggle to get Higher English). Birrell states: "It was inspiring, not least for the building itself. You can't spend four years at Glasgow School of Art without being aware of

proportion and scale, shape, pattern and texture
"All the elements of visual art forms are represented in that building; it's part Scottish castle, part grand manor, part institution. It has gorgeous detail. tiny careful detail. My first and second years were important as many disciplines were introduced. William Drummond Bone was a powerful teacher of drawing and anatomy. My main influences from that time (and still today as people as well as fine artists) were William Crosbie and Ioan Rix Tebbutt.

"William Crosbie was a part-time lecturer, and took us in third year for painting on a Tuesday afternoon. I used to look forward to that because here was someone who would sit down and talk, show you a technique.

www.northernbooks.co.u

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He would actually turn up! He was simply a brilliant teacher, like a bedraggled old sailor, but he'd sit down and tell you about the characteristics of the various colours you were using. Like what made Prussian blue special as opposed to ultramarine.

"He was a wonderful painter who became a great friend. I kept my contact with him even after I left art school – I used to go round and paint in his studio. I should also mention Ernest Hood, my printmaking lecturer in third year, who taught me etching and lithography. The year after I left art school he employed me to underpaint a huge mural that he was doing for a distillery. I learned a great deal from Ernest Hood, and he actually paid me!" Even before art school

Birrell fell in love with buildings. At fifteen he vent to Fife, to the East Neuk, Pittenweem, on a week's holiday to paint. "It was like going to a foreign country, my holiday trips had seldom gone beyond the Clyde resorts. Captivated, George made i his artistic focus to revisit these wynds and cottages portraying their quirks and mearthing their history.

"I was completely besotted by the East Coast and still am. Caithness or Aberdeenshire, or Moray or

Fife or the Borders or Berwickshire. It's very different people have a sing-song thing in their voice, the air is lrier, it's sunnier and villages have a unique character "The wee fishing villages of the East Neuk are the best preserved in Britain actually. I went to St Ives

and was disappointed that they were so spoilt by wealth. All those flat roof extensions on otherwise nice, wee places They've been just ruined, fortunately the powers that be in Scotland have prevented that.

"The East Neuk of Fife tickles my eye and stirs my soul. It's all higgledy-piggeldy, built to provide shelter against the east wind with the harbour walls and the warning lights. I love the smell of the sea, the smell of the nets – it's kind of a bygon age in many ways.

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here . . . it's hard to admit to this kind of airy-fairy statement but it has always struck me as a sad wrench when I had to leave the east. And there's definitely something about that coast, the way the harbours were put together over time against the strong seas.' Following his studies, Birrell taught art and design in Scottish schools and art colleges, only starting painting full time in 1998. Since then, he has regularly taken part in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Scotland such as the Edinburgh and Fife Art Galleries as well as having his work on display in London and New York.

Birrell's career has been defined by high key architectural paintings of the East Coast. He doesn't work from a sketch, preferring to recreate the remembered feeling of a place.

"I work from memory (or improvisation?)," he states, "using simplified shapes and heightened colour to express my joy in finding worn walls or

weathered fishing paraphernalia together in a square composition in oil or acrylic (mixed media). I most enjoy recalling the feeling of being on the east coast be it fishing village, cliff top, castle or mill in its hinterland. These feelings and resultant themes have stuck with me for 50 years."

Having spent fifty years honing his view of the world, Birrell can be credited with being one of Scotland's most recognisable painters. His vision of Scotland's castles and seaside harbours is unique colourful, and highly personalised.

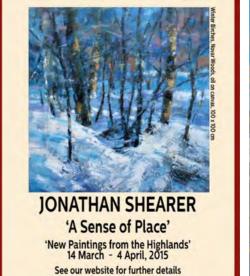
Plans for the future after the show? "I plan to continue enjoying a life filled with painting and playing guitar, alas not very well."

George Birrell, Gallery Heinzel, March 21 to May 2,24 Thistle Street, Aberdeen AB10 1XD t 01224 625629 e info@galleryheinzel.com Gallery Heinzel presents George Birrell – Hardback catalogue available on Amazon, £ 14.99.









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ww.the-leith-gallery.co.uk, info@ the-leith-gallery.co.uk ockburn STILLS GALLERY, 23 Cockburn Street, EH1 1BP, 0131 622 6200 Until April 5 Erich Salomon & Barbara Klemm. TALBOT RICE GALLERY.

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Out in the open – a plein air painter on how it's done

'Sense of Place' at the Castle Gallery, Inverness reveals Jonathan Shearer's secrets

JONATHAN Shearer, whose exhibition 'Sense of Place' is at the Castle Gallery in Inverness during March, gives ArtWork an insight into his expe-

riences of painting in extreme weathers and isolated locations, often far off the tourist track.

"I love the winter light in the Scottish Highlands, particularly at that time in the late afternoon between three and four - before hypo-

thermia sets in! Summer light for me is more lery, marked her 80th birthday. about the coast and the sea – the mountains

are dull then! "I can go out in all conditions with the right winter gear – fingerless gloves, four pairs of socks and now with new proper walking boots!

Being a keen hill walker, he sets out to previously remembered viewpoints, often revisiting favourite spots to contemplate and then to try to capture them in changing lights and conditions - "they are never the same again."

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Scottish Borders

He takes inspiration from other artists who have grappled with the elements to paint en plein air - Mac-

Taggart on Machrihanish beach: Frances Walker painter and printmaker always working in remote regions of Scotland, as well as in Antartica and the Arctic. Walker was his

tutor at Grays. In 2010 her major retrospective, 'Observed Knives (and trowels) at the ready in Solitude' at Aberdeen Art Gal-

> "Just shows," says Shearer, "as a painter, you improve with age - you never retire." He is interested in the methods used by other of today's landscape painters such as Kurt Jackson and Robert McLauren, now

working in the Australian outback. "I'm not bothered by fashion It's the spiritual aspect and physicality of being outside, which is not always easy to translate but it happens there and of course it is important that it does happen! You have more control by being there and you have to treat that with

> respect. It is the raw energy required in capturing the light - maybe a bit rough and edgy but it is important not to labour or overwork." Back in his home

studio he would always use sketches made on site, rather than rely on photographs. In these far off places he sometimes meets other artists. Recently. absorbed in his work. a car drew up nearby and out got James Hawkins who came over for a chat. After work-

Tim

Stead

Object

Maker

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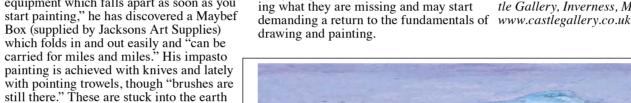
ing with a lot of "rubbish field easels and equipment which falls apart as soon as you start painting," he has discovered a Maybef Box (supplied by Jacksons Art Supplies) which folds in and out easily and "can be carried for miles and miles." His impasto painting is achieved with knives and lately with pointing trowels, though "brushes are

do van, which he bought already converted by its previous owner, with window in the roof and now with bed and cooking gear. He is building a small canopy so that when his palette gets covered in an inch of snow he can take shelter.

beside him or, as in the photograph, into

"When my fingers start getting funny run around for a bit and get out the flask of hot coffee."

Jonathan gives night classes in Inverness and in the Cromarty Arts Trust



Shearer's mobile studio is his Fiat Scu-

workshop. He shares John Byrne's recent criticism of art schools not continuing to teach the basic skills of drawing and feels



Lawlor

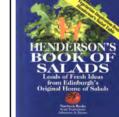
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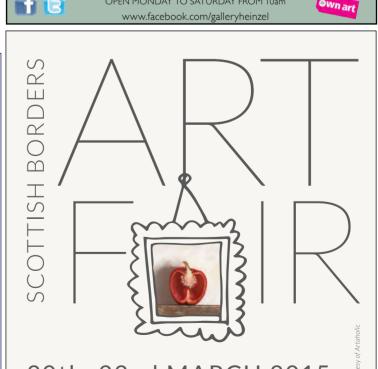
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ArtWork

Elemental adventures with light

THE ELEMENTS have inspired many artists over the years, from composers to painters. In a city of great light it is perhaps no surprise that Los Angeles currently boasts a show solely fo cused on the light. 'Elemental: Seeing the Light' at the Start Haaga Gallery, Descanco Gardens.

Curated by John David O'Brien, a Japanese born American living now between LA and Tuscany, the show is held in the beautiful surrounds of Descanco Gardens in the north of the sprawling city of angels at Flintridge, La Canada.

I met John recently and walked the steep incline through the camellia scented gardens with him, past the many cherry trees, hyacinths and lilies, all contribut ing to a multi sensory artist experience before arriving at the impres-

sive Haaga Gallery at

the top of the hills. Yunhee Min 1 The show includes luminous sculptures by 5 contemporary artists. It successfully shines light on traditional California light and space ovement pioneers Larry Bell, Helen Pashgian and Mary Corse, who have been creating light installations since the '60s and '70s, with more up to date second-generation light and space artists who started in the '80s and '90s, like Heather Carson, Yunhee Min and Fran Siegel.

It's a refreshing and uplifting show that nvites you to question what light really is. As O'Brien says: "The funny thing about light s that you can't really see it. You can see the things that make light, like the sun, the light bulb overhead, or the fire in the fireplace. You can see other things like leaves, rocks, rooms, cars, and buildings because of the light that bounces off their surfaces into your eyes and brain. You can see a rainbow when the conditions are right.

"But you can't see the actual light itself, only its effects. You know it exists because of what it does to everything else. The one thing it can't do



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is portray itself. This fascinating show, aims to expose how artists both use and portray light. It took O'Brien about eight months to prepare for the show, the hardest thing he said was preaching to his church like committee that this was to be the next show

"We have covered other aspects of the Elements here already, like Earth, which is very important to us being in the gardens.

"It's good to do something different here,

here we have many people of all nationali ies, and many women - working all together is the space.'

It's a great show for all ages too with a ightboard section for children – encouragng them to create their own light artworks with perspex. O'Brien loves iving in Los Angeles. apart from the movie

people, he says, but as a working artist and sculptor, the light really is fantastic he says Elemental: Seeing the Light, at Start Haaga

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ArtWork

Porcelain – and old rope

OFTEN IT'S the landscapes around us that inspire way that Nature makes a form; in a semi-liquid art, and if not the landscape itself sometimes the state, exerting pressure from the inside and then sea or even the detritus from the ocean can bring a solidifying with time. work to life. "I first came across porcelain as a medium in

For Scottish ceramicist Elaine Jones, who developed her craft in

Copenhagen, finding objets rouvés washed up on the shores from the North Sea has inspired her to create a range of white porcelain artworks. She combines crisp white

orcelain pieces with things she has found on the beach. pieces of old rope, metal and driftwood, as these she feels have a story of transience.

"They act as a rough plinth to the times when we have held in our pockets a found shell, bone or pebble, treasuring it just for those few moments.

Jones makes porcelain sculptures using both wheel and pulling techniques. Each Trace piece is individual and therefore

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or in a group, sharing markings, surface treatment the same cycles of growth and decay. "I use the organic process of the wheel

o make sculptural forms, as it captures the porcelain in its fluid, moving state. With its rhythms of cyclical growth it is very close to the

completely unique, sometimes belonging in a pair mortality, as we too are temporal beings, subject t Elaine Jones's work can be found at Tolauhon Gallery and at 'Lived In' in Ellon

each tide.

Copenhagen, when I was working as an assistant to

School,

the ceramicist, Christian Bruun,

a graduate of the Danish Design

immediately drawn to its cream

love the materials of fine texture

such as bone and shell, which

continued as a theme throughou

my Masters at Gravs in 2004.

at home, overlooking Buchanne

Lighthouse and the cliffs, she

says her work is often inspired b

washed up on to the beach with

"The vessels imprinted with

traces of life and contents that

have long gone. These fragments

can act as a reminder of our own

and fluid-like qualities. I also

"I was so inspired and

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THE STEWARTRY MUSEUM, 47 St Mary's Street, Dumfries & Galloway, DG6 4DU, 01557 330223, Fax: 01557 331162 KIRKCUDBRIGHT TOWN HALL, Town Hall, St Mary Street DG6 4AA, 01557 331080 TOLBOOTH ART CENTRE, High Street, DG6 4JL, 01557 3 556, Fax: 01557 330 005 THE FAED GALLERY, The Mill on the Fleet Visitor Centre, 56

> NORTH GLEN GALLERY, North Glen, Palnackie, Castle Douglas DG7 1PN, 01556 600 200, Fax: THE NAIL FACTORY, 56 South

High Street, Gatehouse of Fleet, DG7 2HP, 01557 814 458

March 2 - 31
Jennifer Walker. Photography
April 3 - 30
Rose Petal Hall. Upcylced Textile: Kyle

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MCKENZIE FAVILION (AL-LERY SPACE, Finsbury Park, N4 2NQ, 0208 889 9555 SIMS REED GALLERY, The Economist Building, 30 Bury Street, SWIY 6AU, 0207 930 5111, Fax: 0207 930 1555 ALAN CRISTEA GALLERY, 31 & 34 Cork Street, W1S 3N 0207 439 1866, Fax: 0207 439 Until April 2
Richard Long. The Spike Isla
Tapes. Prints April 13 - May 30
Gillian Ayres. New Paint and Prints Working from her studio space Hopton Street, SE1 9GZ, 020 401 9229, Fax: 0207 401 9595 Until March 23 the fragments of shell and bone

GILDEN'S ART GALLERY, 87 Heath Street, NW3 6UG, 020 435 3340, Fax: 0207 435 3340 Until March 29 A Journey into the European Avant-garde: the influence of Cubism. ZEST GALLERY, Units 31-34

> THE GALLERY - ST PETER'S CHURCH, Kensington Park, Nottinghill Gate, W11, 0207 792 8227

> THE ROWLEY GALLERY, 11 Kensington Church Street, W8 7LN, 0207 727 6495, Fax: 0207

Thackeray Street, V 37 5883 Aarch 10 - 27

Vanessa Gardiner.
CADOGAN CONTEMPORARY,
87 Old Brompton Road, SW7
3LD, 0207 581 5451, Fax: 0207
589 3222

CRANE KALMAN, 178 Bromp on Road, SW3 1HQ 20th Century british and Euro-

OSBORNE STUDIO GALLERY 2 Motcomb Street, SW1X 8JU, 0207 235 9667

Countryside, Faintings
SW1 GALLERY, 12 Cardinal
Walk, Cardinal Place (off
Victoria Street), SW1E 5JE, 0207 963 4024 VICTORIA AND ALBERT 2RL, 0207 942 2000

and what it means
March 14 - August 2
Alexander McQueen. Sa
Beauty. A retrospective
April 25 - September 27
What is Luxury?. Addres

REARDSMORE GALLERY, 22. Town, NW5 3LG, 0207 485 0923, Fax: 0207 485 0975 BEN URI GALLERY, The

BEN URI GALLERY, 1ne
London Jewish Museum of Art,
108a Boundary Road, NW8 0RH,
0207 604 3991
March 5 - 31
Notting Hill Carnival: The A-Z
of Elimu Carnival Band, 19802014. Exploring themes such as
Creativity and Family, as well
as inviting band members and
relatives to share their memorie
photographs and artefacts

April 14 - June 14
Frank Auerhach

Jane Joseph, Leon Kossoff, Michael Rothenstein, Glenn Sujo and Edward Toledano and others. No Set Rules. A century of selected works from the Schlee Collection BRITANNIA CENTRE, Britannia Road, North Finchley, N12 9RU, 0208 445 7070

THE CATTO CENTRE, 100

HIGHGATE GALLERY, 11 Sout THE NOBLE SAGE ART GAL-0208 883 7303, Fax: 0208 883 7367
March 1 - April 30
Tasadug Sohail. New Ink and Watercolour Paintings. Works from the late 1970s and early 1980s

ABBOT & HOLDER 2027

ABBOT & HOLDER, 30 Museum Street, WC1A 1LH, 0207 637 3981, Fax: 0207 631 0575 March 19 - 28 Flora McDonnell. From Park Flora McDonnell. From Park

Royal to Orkney and Donegal. Recent oil paintings and works

on paper AUSTIN DESMOND FINE ART, Pied Bull Yare, 68/69 Great Russell Street, WC1B 3BN, 0207 242 4443, Fax: 0207 404 4480 CONTEMPORARY APPLIED

Fiona Rutherford and Peter Coates. Resolutions and Tran

CURWEN & NEW ACADEMY GALLERY, 34 Windmill Street, GALLERY, 34 Windmill Street, W1T 2JR, 0207 323 4700, Fax: 0207 436 3059 March 5 - 28 Thirza Kotzen. Skyhigh (And th Space Between).

DEBUT ART & THE CONINGS-BY GALLERY, 30 Tottenham eet, W1T 4RJ, 0207 636 7478 THE GALLERY AT 94, 94 Cleveland Street, W1T 6NW, 0207

OCTOBER GALLERY, 24 Old

Sculpture
April 2 - May 9

THE COLOMB ART GALLERY W1U 7EA, 0207 487 5118 RAILINGS GALLERY, 5 New Covendish Street, W1G 8UT, 0207 935 1114, Fax: 0207 486 9250 SHERIDAN RUSSELL GAL

THOMPSON'S GALLERY, 15 New Cavendish Street, W1G 9UB, 0207 935 3595 ANNELY JUDA FINE ART, 23

April 1 - May 9

April 1 - May 9
Roger Ackling THE FLEMING COLLECTION. HAMILTONS GALLERY, 13 Carlos Place, W1K 4NB, 0207 499 9494, Fax: 0207 629 9919 Until April 30 Something for Everyone. Group

OPERA GALLERY, 134 New bond Street, W1S 2TF, 0207 491 2999, Fax: 0207 409 0910 2999, Fax: 0207 409 0910
SARAH MYERSCOUGH FINE
ART, 15-16 Brooks Mews, Off
Davies Street, W1K 4DS, 0207
495 0069
AGNEWS GALLERY, 35 Albemarle Street, W1S 4JD, 0207 290

marle Street, W1S 4JD, 02 9250, Fax: 0207 629 4359 499 1616, Fax: 0207 499 1717

Maxwell Doig. Figures in solitude new work . Paintings Until March 14 Rado Kirov. Liquid Steel. New

APRICOT GALLERY, 27 Albermarle Street, Mayfair, W1S 4HZ, 0207 491 8987 BELGRAVIA GALLERY, 45 Albermarle Street, W1S 4JL, 0207 495 1010 Until March 23

Lincoln Seligman, David Eley and Carl Laubin. Art Meets Win

March 24 - May 8
Monroe Hodder. New works CONNAUGHT BROWN, 2 Alber-CENTRE FOR CHINESE

JOHN MARTIN GALLERY, 38 March 13 - April 2
Martin Finnin. The Wolf of Eyelash Mountain.

GROSVENOR GALLERY, 21 ARCH 402 GALLERY, Cremer Street, E2 8HD, 0207 043 2027 MARTYN GREGORY, 34 Bury

JILL GEORGE GALLERY, 38 Lexington Street, Soho, W1F 0LL

March 1 - 14
Alison Lambert. New Drawings
and Monoprints BEAUX ARTS, 22 Cork Street, WIS 3NA, 0207 437 5799 March 18 - 24 BADA Antiques and Fine Art

BERNARD JACOBSON GAL-

LERY, 6 Cork Street, W1, 0207 734 3431, Fax: 0207 734 3277 Until March 28 Robert Motherwell. A Centenary HAY HILL GALLERY, 5a Cork

JAMES HYMAN GALLERY,

MEDICI GALLERY, 5 Cork Street, W1S 3LQ, 0207 495 25 PAINTWORKS LTD, 99 - 101 Kingsland Road, E2 8AG, 0207 729 7451, Fax: 0207 739 0439, THE BAR GALLERY. Willesde

Green Centre, 95 High Road, Willesden, NW10 2SF, 020 8459 GIMPEL FILS, 30 Davies Street W1K 4NB, 020 7493 2488, Fax

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f Artists and Friends. Over se

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ALEXANDRA PALACE, Alexa dra Palace Way, N22 7AY, 0208

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DESIGN MUSEUM, 28 Shad Until April 26
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. Oxford Road, M15 6ER, 0161 275 7451, Fax: 0161 275 7451 Until May 31 Cornelia Parker. Solo Until June 21 Cai Guo-Qiang. Unmanned Nature. Installation

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ArtWork

Dear ArtWork – a reader writes...

Castle Donglas

27th November 2014 Dear artwork folk The more I look at the world, the more begin to feel as if I'm from another planet - so much wealth and greed alongside so much poverty and need. Private enterprise = good. state-run bodies = inefficient and bad, with little notice taken of the pancity of good produced by privatises "competitive services, nor of how well the East Gast railway Did while 8take-run. It seems ideotogy rules, OK So it's good to open artwork and always find incisive writing that heter me to believe that I'm not just to and out of touch.
Obviously, as I'm interested in the arts, I don't believe that we should all wear hair shirts and eat only lentils, but I do feel that we need to reassess basic services such as rail, post, energy and so on, and run them for the benefit of all, not for shareholders.

Do keep the comment coming alongside the excellent arts "Stuff. So much seems to be slipping away without people noticing what they're toring mutil its gone so keeping the sportant on it all is very important.

Many thanks & best wishes

Jackie Machling (Mrs.)

*ArtWork welcomes correspondence – criticism as well as praise! Write to ArtWork, PO Box 3, AB41 9EA, or e-mail artwork@famedram.com. Sorry, we don't do Facebook, Twitter, blogs or any of that time-wasting, narcissistic drivel, same as we do everything we can to avoid using Amazon.

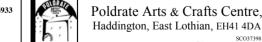
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NORTHLIGHT STUDIO, Stron ness, KW16 3BY, 01856 850 671

ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, Beau-

mont Street, OX1 2PH, 01865 278 000, Fax: 01865 278018 March 3 - June 1 Bengal and Modernity. Early 20th-century Art in India

PAISLEY MUSEUM & ART GALLERIES, 60 High Street, Flown Centre, PA1 2BA, 0141 88 3151, www.renfrewshire.gov.uk Check website for more details

AISLEY ART CENTRE, ew Street, PA1 1EZ, 0141 887

WEEDDALE MUSEUM AND

ligh Street, EH45 8AG, 01721

THE CAIRNS GALLERY, 72

ntil March 8

Paislev

YELLOWBIRD GALLERY

Chocolate Cottage, 2LT, 01856 721 360

Orkney

MARY ANN ROGERS, West Woodburn, Hexham, NE48 2SE, 01434 270 216, www.marogers. com. info@marogers.com

MORAY COLLEGE UHI, Moray Street, Elgin, IV30 1JJ, 01343 576 413 com, info@marogers.com CROWN STUDIO GALLERY, Bridge Street, Rothbury, NE65 7SE, 01669 622890 576 413
MORAY ART CENTRE, The
Park, Findhorn, IV36 3TA, 01309
692 426 www.morayartcentre.org/
April 4 - 22
Randy Klinger. Brief Encounters:
Images of Gestating Friendship.
Drawings SE, 01009 622890 PHOTOWORKSHOPS, The Old Ichool House, Fair Hill, Haltwhis le, NE49 9EE, 01434 322 595

Drawings
FINDHORN POTTERY, 273
Pineridge, The Park, Findhorn
IV36 3TZ, 01309 691 601

THE GALLERY, Elgin Library Cooper Park, Elgin, IV30 1HS,

LEAP STUDIO & GALLERY, 17 Victoria Street, Craigellachi Aberlour-on-Spey, AB38 9SR, 01340 881226 Unique display of whisky related art

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THE MUSEUMS OF MORAY, Tolbooth Street, Forres, IV36 1PF 01309 673701, Fax: 01309 675 863 THE BOOKMARK, 34 High Street, Grantown-on-Spey, PH26 3EH, 01479 873433, www.thebool

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MULL THEATRE, Royal Build

Nairn

BILL MCARTHUR SEASCAPE ART, 3 Lettan, Sandav, KW17 2B NAIRN BOOK AND ART FES-TIVAL, 53 King Street, IV12 4NI 01467 451 804 Oxford

2015 Festival BOATH HOUSE, Auldearn, IVI 5TE, 01667 454 896, Fax: 01667 455 469 Changing exhibitions by Scots contemporary artists William Morris and Andy V Love is Enough, Works Jntil March 22 Serena Korda and Michelle Williams. CAWDOR CASTLE, Cawdor, IV12 5RD, 01667 404 401, Fax: 01667 404 674

he School House, Ferness, Nai nire, IV12 5UP, 01309 651 319,

North Berwick GREENS & BLUES, 59 High Street, EH39 4HG, 01620 890 660 BLUES & GREENS, 13 Market lace, EH39 4JF, 01620 893 37

WESTGATE GALLERY, 39-41 Westgate, EH39 4AG, 01620 894 976 FIDRA FINE ART, 45 Dirletor Avenue, North Berwick, EH39
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GALLERIA LUTI, 16 Ancaste Square, Callander, FK17 8BL, 01877 339577, www.gallerialuti DAWYCK BOTANIC GARDE

CHAPEL STREET GALLERY 19 Chapel Street, Innerleitnen, EH44 6HN, 01896 833 448, www stgallery@gmail.com

New works by members of Roya

MOY MACKAY GALLERY, 17

Perth PERTH MUSEUM & ART GA

Until May 6 Tim Stead: Object maker and FERGUSSON GALLERY.

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Until June 28

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THE RUTHVEN GALLERY, 9

High Street, Auchter 1BJ, 01764 664 233 CA&C @ ST ANDREWS IUSEUM, Kinnesburn Park, loubledykes Road, KY16 9TA, THE BARN GALLERY, The Bield, Blackruthven, Tibberm 1334 659 380 PH1 1PY, 01968 677854

01738 621 206, www.pert CO.JIK
THE PERTHSHIRE ART ASSOCIATION, 5 Westehill, PH1 1DH,
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Pitlochry

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TRE, Town Hall, High Street, Invergordon, IV18 0EL, 01349

Selkirk

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ArtWork

The Romans reach Dundee

ΓΗΕ ROMANS: Power & People is a vonderful exhibition that has arrived at the McManus in Dundee (its only Scottish showing) from the British Museum in ondon. Contained within

wo small galleries, the exhibition diides its subject into five sections that range from Power to In Memoriam. each containing brief introductions and a wide range of objects: busts, helmets vases and amphora. prooches, coins and at the end, a marble sepulchral chest and other vestiges to the There are also

arge illustrations showing the inside of a Roman villa and a tessellated pavement and, if you're into Roman gods, a red, flat circular disc that enables you to dial up Jupiter or Mercury or Diana to find out what their insignia are and what enefits they might

The Dial a Deity just one of a number of clever exhibition techniques. At the beginning of the exhibition is a time-line showing the Roman occupation and abandonment of Britain their occupation lasted from 55 BC-AD 212. It is also a reminder that the Romans built one wall in northern England (Hadrian's) and another from the Firth of Forth to the Clyde, and that they built forts at Carpow Abernethy, Perth and Kinross,

There is also an animated map of the

Roman world that tells the same story. except on a much bigger scale, centred on the Mediterranean. Then, if you look at a collection of gold and silver coins. those in the case are also shown visually

in the caption to the display, and a THE GREEN GALLERY. The magnifying glass is even provided to help you to see the coins nore clearly There is also a case dedicated to

Roman artefacts found in Britain. ranging from a large and very heavy Bronze Age bracelet found in Angus to a tombstone for March 6 - April 16 Gaius Pompenius Valerius, who arrived in London in AD 43

GARTMORE HOUSE, G and died there seven House, Gartmore, FK8 3RS, 01877 382991, www.gartmorhouse.com, mail@gartmoreh years later. The use of some clever exhibition Tutor-led watercolour i holidays in the Loch Lomon and Trossachs National Park techniques is matched by the excellent design of

the exhibition, with SUNDERLAND MUSEUM & ART GALLERY, Burdon Roa its mixture of cases and free-standing Victorian Dreams watercolo from Tyne & Wear Museum artefacts, changes of NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE, Liberty Way, SR6 0GL, 0191 51 5555, Fax: 0191 515 5556 scale and the telling of a story that is VARDY GALLERY, University of Sunderland, Ashbourne clear and concise.

Sutherland

BALNAKEIL CRAFT VIL

these days tend to be blockbusters that blow the mind: this is a treasury that seems small by comparison but is so beautifully and carefully done that it deserves more

than one visit The exhibition continues till May 10 and is accompanied by lectures at the McManus and films at the DCA, Dundee.

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Bridge, Haymarket, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT, 0191 222 7418 enom': deadly cast of world' DISCOVERY MUSEUM, Bland

THE FOTHERINGHAM GAL-LERY, 78 Henderson Street, Bridge of Allan, FK9 4HS, 01786 832 861 ord Square, Newcastle upon yne, NE1 4JA, 0191 232 6789 BALTIC - CENTRE FOR 832 861 Until March 18 ONTEMPORARY ART, Centr

for Contemporary Art, Gatesh Quays, South Shore Road, Gat head, NE8 3BA, 0191 478 1810 Coachhouse, Ballamenoch, Buch lyvie, FK8 3NE, 01360 850 180 ntil April 19 BUCHLYVIE POTTERY SHOP. Jesse Wine. Ceramics
March 6 - May 31
Jason Rhoades. Four Roads.
Work
March 7 - July 12
Tony Swain. Paintings - land Main Street, Buchlyvie, (on A811), FK8 3LP, 01360 850 405, Fax: 01360 850405 SMITHY GALLERY, 74/76 Glasgow Road, Blanefield, G63 9HX, 01360 770 551

March 1 - 29
Carol Stewart. It happened Last
Summer. Solo
April 19 - May 24
Sandy Murphy and David Marti
Later in The Year. New painting LAGDON GALLERY, Milk ope Centre, Berwick Hill Road eaton Burn, NE13 6DA, 01670

SHIPLEY ART GALLERY. & COLLECTIVE, Maple Hous 28 Henderson Street, Bridge of Allan, FK9 4HR, 01786 359864, www.anderstreet

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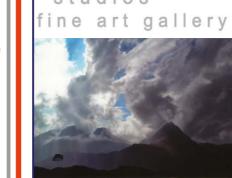
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she is reputed to have steered Creative Scotland off the rocks (on to which her predecessor landed the country's main arts funding body) and into calmer As your ArtWork reporter positions her

IN THE PLUSH offices of Waverley

Princes Street, the softly-spoken Janet

Archer holds sway. Since July 2013,

Gate, at the east end of Edinburgh's

old-fashioned recorder, Ms Archer admits indulgently that she still keeps at home videos and cassettes

that she can't bear to throw away.

Adept, if not sometimes evasive in her responses to this paper's questions, Ms Archer is especially animated when asked what role the arts should play in Scotland (it's a favoured subject these days and has engendered a public debate on Radio 4). When questioned if they should be regarded as a commodity, an excuse to fill the country's coffers or a way to enlarge human experience,

the unceremonious Archer has decided

"We have to think about them in terms of their intrinsic value and purpose and acknowledge that many artists and creative people wish to do something extraordinary or make something meaningful. It's not necessarily about wanting to drive the economy. At the same time, there has to be enough money in the system for people to exist, to live their lives and pay their mortgages."

Referring to small arts projects that have mushroomed into multi-million pound commercial enterprises, Creative Scotland's chief explains how it's their job as funder to embrace both ends of the spectrum.

"We should acknowledge that whether you're an artist or a commercial creative company, your impetus is to make, drive and see something creatively."

Polarisation, she admits, is undesirable. When it comes to arts funding they must understand the mix of creative people they support.

"In our plan we talk about the creative system and our wish to understand the choices that creative people make at different stages of their

The head of Creative Scotland tells Mary Gladstone she's all ears. We hear you.

"I'm listening to you" - Janet Archer

It is crucial to understand how these people go about their lives. This is especially true when, with Andrew Dixon, the former director, artists rebelled against the organisation's attitudes, ideology and language. Since Archer's tenure, it has been noticed that Creative Scotland's funding methods and language have been simplified.

Last year (before the referendum, no

November 2013 to develop the arts for Scottish children and young people), are indicative of an organization that thinks hard in terms of its engagement across Scotland

"I'd like to formalize our relationships in different parts of the country. We could connect with a local area, establish a regular presence there in being present on the same day once a month so we may act as a conduit into Creative Scotland. Then people would

> make a connection with us. In that way, we would feed into community partnerships and local strategic thinking and achieve a better joinedup approach in doing things."

In the old days, the Scottish Arts Council focused on giving funds to artists who were seen as supplicants. The new arts funder concentrates not only on doling out money but on "partnership, both in terms of our relationship with the organizations and individuals we fund, but also the

relationship that those organizations hold with other public agencies involved in supporting the arts and culture. These are absolutely fundamental because it's not possible to do anything entirely in isolation.'

Last month presented a big challenge for Creative Scotland. As a result of their decision last October not to offer the Scottish Youth Theatre regular three year funding, ex-First Minister Alex Salmond went over Archer and her colleagues' heads and awarded the theatre company, along with the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, the National Youth Choir of Scotland and YDance, a £ 1 million package.

If, as head of a non-governmental public body, Archer's nose was put out of joint by Salmond's unprecedented act, she is not letting on.

"Scottish Youth Theatre are working well. They are re-thinking the way they operate in terms of their business model and we're confident that they're getting to a stronger place through the growth working that we're doing together. That'll be a very good thing for the young of Scotland.'



less!) they launched their 10 year funding plan with the title 'Unlocking Potential, Embracing Ambition'.

"We deliberately staked it at 10 years," explains Archer. "But we're also using three year strategies for the arts, screen and creative industries."

Regarding language, Archer, as a dance specialist make a comparison with the different physical languages 'spoken' by dancers who adapt their mode of expression to the demands of the choreographer they are working with:

"You must be sure who you're talking to, listen a lot and get a sense of what language people speak. In Scotland, there is more than one and it's really important to gain an understanding of Gaelic and Scots, as well as English."

Andrew Dixon was accused of "a lack of empathy and regard for Scottish culture" but his successor, in a much more humbled Creative Scotland, has tried to reach out across the

"We've done a lot in terms of our place-based work. Our Creative Place Awards, Place Partnerships and nine regional hubs introduced through the 'Time to Shine' scheme (launched in

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