

From the Chair

Happy New Year to you all! I am delighted to report on our activities at the end of 2019 and share news about our big plans for the rest of 2020.

Since the last edition of the newsletter, we have hosted two events for our members. In November, Dr Helen Scott, Curator of Fine Art at Museums and Galleries Edinburgh, gave a special tour of the exhibition *Mary Cameron: Life in Paint* at the Edinburgh City Art Centre. This was followed by the launch of an extended edition of the SSAH's journal for 2019/20, which features a selection of papers from our two-day symposium on 'Sculpture in Scotland' that we held in February 2019. The launch took place at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and was accompanied by a talk by Liz Louis, Curator of Portraiture at the National Galleries of Scotland, on 'From Pollokshaws to St Petersburg: The life and work of James Tassie (1735-1799)'. Many thanks to the SSAH Committee and members for their support with events and the journal.

The SSAH has arranged a busy programme of events for 2020! Our Study Day for 2020 is on the theme of 'Scotland and North America' and will explore the connections between the art history and visual culture of Scotland and North America (USA and Canada), past and present. It is hosted in association with the Terra Foundation for American Art and The Hunterian, University of Glasgow. The study day will take place at The

Hunterian at the Kelvin Hall on Saturday 1 February 2020.

The SSAH's Annual General Meeting for 2020 will take place on Sunday 1 March, 2-3pm, in the A. K. Bell Room at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. It will be accompanied by talks by Dr Aonghus Mackechnie, formerly of Historic Environment Scotland, and Dr Kate Cowcher, Lecturer in Art History, University of St Andrews. We have also arranged visits to artists' studios and curator tours of exhibitions at the Edinburgh City Art Centre and the newly redeveloped Wardlaw Museum at the University of St Andrews. More details to follow.

We are pleased to report that we received several applications to the SSAH Research Support Grants Scheme round for 2019. We will provide funding support for three projects this year.

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

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.
Application deadline: 31 October 2020.

Please note we do not fund attendance at conferences, reprographics, hire or purchase of equipment, or subsistence. 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.

Recipients will be given a one-year free membership of the SSAH and will be asked to write a report for the SSAH newsletter, explaining how the grant was used.

Please download the [guidance notes](#) for more information. Successful applicants should submit a completed [claims form](#) with their receipts.

To apply for a research grant, 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

Please email your grant applications to scottishsocietyforarthistory@gmail.com, addressed to the Grants Officer.

Grant Report by Kate Cowcher, Lecturer in Art History, University of St Andrews



Kate, Meredith and Elikem with the Argyll Collection

In autumn 2018 I was awarded a SSAH grant to begin a research project exploring modern art works from East Africa in the Argyll Collection. The Argyll Collection was begun in 1960 by the novelist Naomi Mitchison, with assistance from art teacher Jim Tyre. It was set up as a public art collection, paid for using funds from Argyll County Council, on which Mitchison served as a councillor for much of the 1950s and 60s. Mitchison was motivated by the desire to create a collection of art that could be enjoyed by Argyll's school children, for whom major museums were far away. The collection began with modest ambitions to acquire reproductions of works by European modern masters, but quickly expanded to include original work by leading Scottish contemporary artists, including Joan Eardley, Sir Robin Philipson, Dame Elizabeth Blackadder and others. The collection, which ceased further acquisitions in the 1980s, numbers around 180 works.

The SSAH grant facilitated research on one of the lesser known sections of the collection: fourteen paintings and works on paper collected by Mitchison in the 1960s and 70s in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia. During this period Mitchison was making regular trips to Botswana where she had been made 'Mmarona' or mother of the Bakgatla people, the chief of whom, Linchwe II, had become a close friend of hers. Dividing her time between the Highlands and East Africa irked her Argyll constituents and she lost her seat on the council in the mid 1960s. Mitchison, however, remained committed to developing the collection and, in fact, it was in the wake of losing her seat that she added art purchased in major East African cities.

Archival materials in Argyll and in the Borthwick Archives at University of York make clear that she was motivated by a desire to emphasise what she saw as commonalities between decolonising African states and Highland communities. Both were places that had undergone significant social and political turmoil (Highlands - 19th century, Africa - 20th century) and were subjected to processes in which new national identities took precedence over ethnic or local ones. Her sense of an affinity between the two is

well documented in both her writing, such as *The Africans* (1970) and in her biographies, but the paintings and works on paper in the Argyll Collection add another dimension, demonstrating that she sought to use art as a means of challenging assumptions and asserting connections.

Unfortunately, however, the works she collected are not well documented; in some cases, they have been mislabelled or had their artists' names misspelled. I combined the SSAH grant with additional funding from the University of St Andrews and travelled to Lochgilphead with two undergraduate research assistants, Meredith Loper and Elikem Logan, in March 2019. We photographed these works and examined archival material held in Argyll. With Meredith and Elikem, research was conducted on each of these pieces, revealing that they are notable works by major East African modernists. For example, amongst the Argyll's holdings is a work by Samuel Ntiro, Tanzania's most famous modern artist who served as High Commissioner to London for independent Tanganyika in the earliest years of independence. By the time Mitchison purchased his work in Dar Es Salaam (for the same price she had paid for Eardley's work a few years previously) Ntiro had already exhibited in major exhibitions in London and New York, and been collected by the Museum of Modern Art. He personally mailed his painting, *Cutting Wood*, to Dunoon in 1967, along with a photograph of himself in a white coat standing in front of an easel, asserting his pride at being an internationally recognised, professional artist.

The support from SSAH enabled the completion of the first stage of research into these important works and their significance both as historical records of art in the era of colonial independence and as works specially selected for the children of Argyll. I presented an overview of the research conducted with support from SSAH at the National Gallery of Scotland's Research Conference on 'Women Collectors' in September 2019. It was well received, and new contacts were found for developing the research further.

It is hoped that the research generated can be disseminated via the Argyll Collection's website

through refreshed captions, and that a focused exhibition of this unique and important body of work can be organised in the near future.



Elikem and Meredith undertaking research

Grant Report by Caroline Douglas, PhD candidate, Royal College of Art

In August 2019, I had the pleasure of working in The Wolfson Reading Room at the University of Aberdeen. This archival research, made possible by grant from SSAH, was driven by my interest in the women who worked for the celebrated 19th century Scottish landscape photographer, George Washington Wilson (1823-1893), at his Aberdeen printing works. Wilson was a pioneering figure, and by the early 1880s, his Aberdeen firm had grown to be the biggest photographic and printing company in Scotland. He was one of the earliest photographers ever to mass-produce landscape views and his female workforce played a crucially important role in the production process.

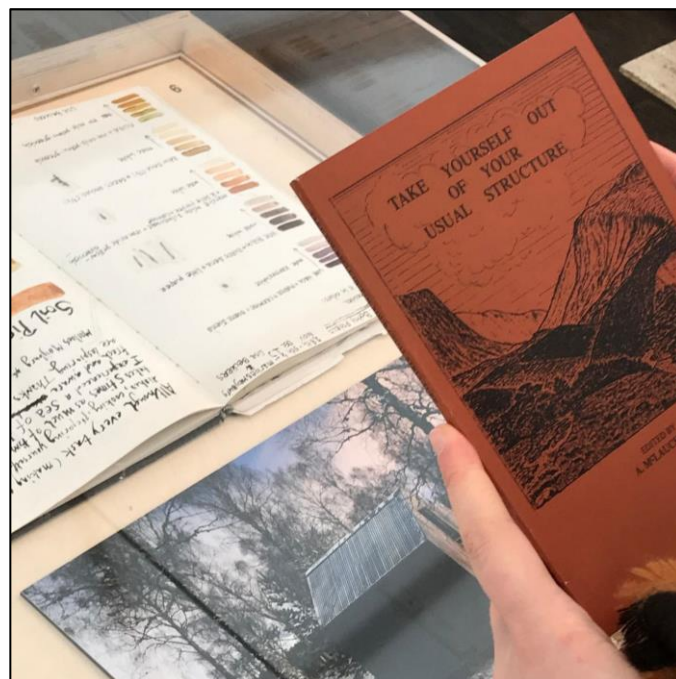
My practice-based PhD *Retouching the Archive: Unknown Women in Early Photography in Scotland* explores the silencing of women in 19th century Scottish photography and their untold roles in the early formation of the discipline. In this work, I explore the history of women in early photographic practice in Scotland, from 18th century boundary-crossing Elizabeth Fulhame to the photographed ‘fishwives’ of Newhaven. With the support from SSAH, I was able to undertake this new project, examining the working women in the Wilson factory founded in late 19th century.

The collection in Aberdeen includes significant materials relating to George Washington Wilson (GWW & Co.) and his factory. I was led to this collection by the scholarship of Roger Taylor, whose contextualisation of Wilson’s output has paved the way for generations of researchers to navigate the photographic terrain of 19th century landscapes. My interest is in the predominately female labour workforce that reproduced the negatives of these scenic views, and the Aberdeen collections offer a rare glimpse into this very material output. Through encountering this underside of the history of photography and the role of women in early photographic production, the gendered, invisible labour of early Scottish photography can be brought into view. Over the coming year, I plan to share the findings of my research visit to the GWW & Co. factory collections through my practice-based PhD.

Grant Report by Anna McLauchlan, Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Strathclyde

The Bothy Project provides off-grid art residencies in bespoke buildings in an estate called Inshriach, Cairngorms National Park, and in Sweeney’s Bothy on the Isle of Eigg. Another bothy – Pig Rock – is presently in the grounds of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Modern One) in Edinburgh. The Bothy Project (<http://www.thebothyproject.org>) aims to be a platform for artists to journey and explore the peculiarities of Scotland’s history, mythology, landscape and people. My SSAH award supported travel from Glasgow to Inshriach, then to Eigg, then back to Glasgow. The practicalities of getting to

grips with life ‘off-grid’ at Inshriach led to a season in the online arts publishing platform, [MAP magazine](#). *Take yourself out of your usual structure* has writing by me and by the artists James N. Hutchinson, Siân Robinson Davies and Sarah Rose. We launched a print version on 18 January 2020 at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.



The SSAH award has also supported my research thinking through what it means for an artwork (the bothies) to be ‘site-specific’ and simultaneously functional – existing as places that are formed by artists but also one in which artists can reside. We are surveying and interviewing people who have done Bothy Project residencies to allow us to consider:

- the project’s contribution to the history and understanding of ‘site’ in relation to site-specific art work
- its contextualisation within the history of bothies, huts, shelters, shielings etc as a place for shelter
- the project’s history and future as a provider of artists’ residencies in Scotland.

We aim for this research to contribute to SSAH’s ambition to promote enjoyment of art and an understanding of art history in Scotland.

Reviews

Review – SSAH visit to *Mary Cameron: Life in Paint* at the City Art Centre, Edinburgh on 16 November 2019

By Michelle Kaye, SSAH Research Grants Officer

In November several members of the SSAH met in Edinburgh for a tour of the City Art Centre's current retrospective, *Mary Cameron: Life in Paint*.

The artist Mary Cameron (1865-1921) was born in Edinburgh and studied at the Trustees Academy School of Art. She began her artistic career as a portraitist and genre painter in her native city in the 1880s and was fortunate to have the support of her family to embark on a career as an artist, a pursuit not generally available for the majority of women at this time. She soon ventured abroad to study in Paris where there were better opportunities for female artists, and then travelled to Spain. Strangely, though Cameron was recognised as an accomplished artist in her own lifetime, she has since faded to relative obscurity.

This major exhibition offers a unique opportunity to re-evaluate her legacy, and our group were delighted to have Dr Helen Scott, Curator (Fine Art) at the City Art Centre, provide us with a fascinating tour of the exhibition, which brings together a wide selection of Cameron's paintings - the majority of which have been borrowed from private collections - for the first time.

After a useful introduction, Helen led us through the exhibition, which was mostly chronological in design, and illustrated to us that in the earlier years of Cameron's career, particular subjects are revisited time and again - military figures and scenes; equestrian scenes; portraits of relatives and of her father's business associates (he was editor of the Oban Times and patented the Waverley pen nib); and not least the family's dogs, especially two beautiful borzois, who feature regularly.

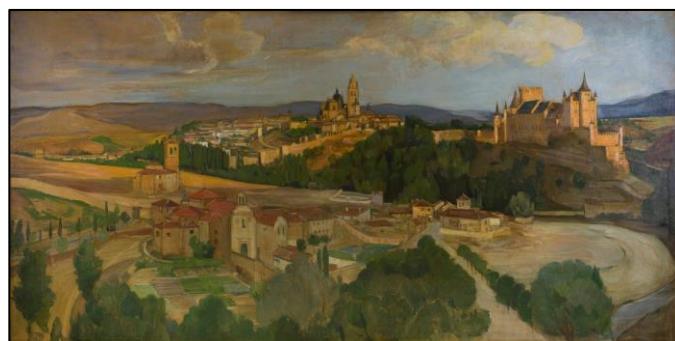
Indeed, the highlight of the exhibition for me, as a dog lover, was a painting entitled *Mrs Blair and her borzois*, a powerful portrait of Cameron's sister with her two dogs. This huge work, some two

metres square and with a beautiful and elaborately carved gold frame, dominates the gallery. It's not surprising to learn that it was awarded a Mention Honorable when it was exhibited at the *Salon des Artistes Français* in Paris.



Mary Cameron, *Mrs Blair and her Borzois*, 1904
Private Collection (Photo: Eion Johnston)

Cameron's ambition and sense of adventure led her to travel to Spain to study the works of Velázquez in Madrid, and to discover and document in her ambitious paintings many emblems of Spanish culture, such as bullfighting, gypsy costume and religious festivals.



Mary Cameron, *Segovia, Castile*, 1906-1907
Private Collection (Photo: Eion Johnston)

Her time in Spain was to have a profound impact on her career. Rolling landscapes of the countryside around Segovia in Spain, to the north of Madrid, feature heavily - less so as the main subject (though the exhibition features a rare example of this in a painting called *Segovia, Castile*), but usually as the backdrop for allegorical paintings, featuring recognisable studies of, for example, local peasants and gypsies. This can be seen in the painting *Les Joueurs*:



Mary Cameron, *Les Joueurs*, c.1907
City Art Centre, Museums & Galleries Edinburgh
(Photo: City Art Centre)

The painting has a vivid still life in the foreground depicting glazed earthenware ceramics, watermelons and red peppers. Helen also interestingly pointed out the traces of a now missing fourth figure from this scene, which has since been over painted.

Though we were told that very little of Cameron's preparatory studies and sketchbooks remain, it was wonderful to have the opportunity to view some of her photographs and volumes of press cuttings displayed alongside the finished artworks. She seems to have employed a professional news cuttings service to keep records of her reviews in the press. It was fascinating to get a sense of how her works were received at the time – especially the outrage that seems to have been caused by her realistic, and at times shocking, scenes of bullfights in Spain – mostly because these violent scenes were deemed to be 'masculine', and

not something 'lady painters' should be tackling in their work.



Unknown photographer, *Mary Cameron with painting materials, Spain*, c1909. Private Collection.

Cameron exhibited prolifically, gaining recognition and praise in her time, and yet today, she remains surprisingly unknown. *Mary Cameron: Life in Paint* provides a fascinating reappraisal of her impressive career as a pioneering female artist, and the influences that shaped her. The exhibition began in November 2019 and runs until 15 March 2020. A huge thank you to Dr Helen Scott for providing such an enlightening tour of her exhibition. We appreciated her insight and the chance to chat and ask questions after the tour.

The exhibition is accompanied by a book *Mary Cameron: Life in Paint* written by Helen E. Scott with a foreword by Kenneth McConkey, published by Sansom & Co. It is available from the Edinburgh City Art Centre shop and also online at <http://sansomandcompany.co.uk/product/mary-cameron-life-in-paint/>.

Upcoming SSAH Events

'Scotland and North America' SSAH Study Day

The Hunterian at the Kelvin Hall

Saturday 1 February, 9:30am-4:20pm

The SSAH Study Day for 2020 will explore the theme of 'Scotland and North America'. This study day is hosted in association with the Terra Foundation for American Art and The Hunterian, University of Glasgow. The programme features a panel of speakers from the United States and Europe who will examine connections between the art history and visual culture of Scotland and North America (USA and Canada), past and present.

The Study Day themes include transatlantic influences and networks, patronage and collecting, new research on individual artists, and art and education in Scotland and North America. The difficulties created by differences in transatlantic terminologies, research methods and access to resources will also be discussed.

The Study Day is free to attend for SSAH/AAH members and the public. Admission includes refreshments and a catered lunch. At the time of booking, please inform us if you have any access or dietary requirements. Tickets can be booked here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/scotland-and-north-america-study-day-tickets-87063097067>

SSAH has received generous support from the Terra Foundation for American Art, which is dedicated to fostering exploration, understanding, and enjoyment of the visual arts of the United States for national and international audiences. Recognizing the importance of experiencing original works of art, the foundation provides opportunities for interaction and study, beginning with the presentation and growth of its own art collection in Chicago.

To further cross-cultural dialogue on American art, the foundation supports and collaborates on innovative exhibitions, research, and educational programs. Implicit in such activities is the belief that art has the potential both to distinguish cultures and to unite them.

Programme

09:30 Registration

09:50 Welcome from Mungo Campbell

Session 1: Transatlantic Influences and Networks

10:00 Keynote – Robin Nicholson, Executive Director, Telfair Museums, Georgia

Scottish Artists in North America 1714-1946

10.30 Questions

10.40 Break

Session 2: Patronage and Collecting

11:00 Karen McWhorter, Whitney Western Art Museum, Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Wyoming
An Ersatz American West in Scotland: The Murthly Castle Millers

11:20 Dr Andrew Watson, Independent Researcher
James Patrick and His Collection of Scottish Art

11:40 Robin H. Rodger, RSA, *Stars, Stripes & Saltires: Two Centuries of Trans-Atlantic Relationships between the RSA and North America*

12:00 Erin Walter, University of Glasgow
Influencing the Archive: Scottish Avant-Garde at New York's Franklin Furnace

12.20 Questions

12.30 Lunch

Session 3: New Research on Individual Artists

13:20 Dr Shannon Vittoria, The American Wing, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
'Tween the Gloamin' and the Mirk: The Scottish Origins of Mary Nimmo Moran's American Landscapes

13:40 Dr Sarah Iepson, Community College of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
The "New Woman" Crosses the Atlantic: "The Red Rose Girls" and the "Glasgow Girls"

14:00 Dr David Steel, Independent Researcher
Galloway and Canada, some artistic and family connections

14:10 Matthew Jarron, University of Dundee
Brothers in Art – The Trans-Atlantic Careers of Sydney Adamson and Penhryn Stanlaws

14.20 Questions

14.30 Break

Session 4: Art and Education in Scotland and North America

14:50 Dr Annie Storr, Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University, ^[SEP]*Scotland's John Duncan in Ellen Gates Starr's Chicago Transatlantic Movement for Artist Activism, 1900-1925*

15:10 Nancy E. Green, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, New York, *From Edinburgh to Santa Barbara: Frank Morley Fletcher's Transatlantic Influence*

15:30 Karen Mailley-Watt, University of Glasgow and Glasgow School of Art, ^[SEP]*'Keen on the methods used in the old country': Charles H. Scott & Grace Wilson Melvin's impact on the Vancouver School of Decorative & Applied Arts*

15:50 Questions and roundtable discussion on the topic 'divided by a common language': differences in Transatlantic terminologies, research methods, access to resources and other issues

16.20 Finish

We hope to see you there.

SSAH Annual General Meeting

Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh
Sunday 1 March, 2-3 pm

The SSAH Annual General Meeting will be held in the A. K. Bell Room, followed by presentations from Dr Aonghus Mackechnie, formerly Historic Environment Scotland, and Dr Kate Cowcher, Lecturer in Art History, University of St Andrews. Aonghus will explore the Skelmorlie Aisle, Largs and Kate will share information about her project 'From Kampala to Campbeltown: Naomi Mitchison and the Argyll Collection', supported by an SSAH Research Support Grant. If you would like to come along, please contact Claire Robinson: cr67@st-andrews.ac.uk.

Studio visit: John Creed, internationally renowned and award-winning Scottish artist
Saturday 18 April, 10.30am-12.30pm

John Creed works in metals as a sculptor and silversmith in Lenzie. He is a Fellow of the

Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths and taught at Glasgow School of Art from 1971-95. John works in a variety of scales and materials, from small objects in precious metals to architectural ironwork. He is best known for gates and screens for museums and gardens and his pioneering recreations of Iron Age musical instruments from archaeological fragments. He has worked on restorations of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's buildings. John Creed will guide us through his workshops and studios and give a demonstration. Booking information: places are limited to 6 people. To book, please contact Andrew Greg on ajwgreg@aol.com.

Studio visit: Peter Chang, internationally renowned and award-winning Scottish artist
Saturday 25 April, 10.30am-12.30pm

Peter Chang studied printmaking and sculpture at the Slade. After moving to Glasgow in the 1980s he turned increasingly to jewellery. Peter's innovative interest in plastics has made him a major figure in contemporary jewellery. He is represented in major public collections in Australia and across the USA and Europe. Peter sadly died in 2017 but his evocative workshop in Glasgow has so far been kept as it was. Barbara Chang and Andrew Greg will show us the family's collection of Peter's work, and the workshop itself, with videos of Peter at work. This event is a rare opportunity for intimate explorations of the working environments, materials and techniques of these artists. Booking information: places are limited to 6 people. To book, please contact Andrew Greg on ajwgreg@aol.com.

Exhibition tour of Charles H. Mackie: Colour and Light
City Art Centre, Edinburgh
Saturday 20 June, 11am-12pm

The Scottish painter and printmaker Charles Hodge Mackie (1862-1920) was one of the most versatile artists of his generation. He worked across an impressive range of media, producing murals, woodblock prints and book illustrations, as

well oil paintings and watercolours. His influences were similarly diverse, drawing inspiration from French Symbolism, the Celtic Revival movement and the landscapes of his European travels.

In summer 2020 the City Art Centre is staging the major retrospective *Charles H. Mackie: Colour and Light*. Timed to mark the centenary of the artist's death, the exhibition showcases the breadth of his talents, with over 50 artworks from public and private collections. Join for a special tour of the exhibition led by Pat Clark (author of *People, Places & Piazzas: The Life & Art of Charles H. Mackie*) and Dr Helen Scott (Curator of Fine Art).

Booking information: tickets are priced at £5 for members, £7 for non-members. 15 places available. Please book a place via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tour-of-charles-h-mackie-colour-and-light-edinburgh-city-arts-centre-tickets-88799243929>

Exhibitions

Julia Margaret Cameron: Vision & Verse

Wardlaw Museum, St Andrews, Fife

4 April to 17 May 2020

By Museum and Gallery Studies students, University of St Andrews

The exhibition *Julia Margaret Cameron: Vision & Verse* will explore Lord Alfred Tennyson's *Idylls of the King, and Other Poems*, 1875, photographically illustrated by Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879). The Arthurian Legends, the inspiration for the *Idylls of the King*, were remarkably popular during the Victorian Era. Camelot's perfection and the human faults leading to its downfall eloquently captured the Victorian imagination. As a result, representations of the legends reached many media including literature, paintings, illustrations and photography.

Alfred Lord Tennyson, born in Somersby in 1809, published many poems throughout his lifetime, receiving the poet laureateship for his success in 1850. Tennyson met Julia Margaret Cameron in London, both of them part of the flourishing arts scene. Their relationship blossomed

after they became neighbours on the Isle of Wight in 1860. By this time, Cameron was in the middle of her career as a photographer. Her unique approach to photography made her a pioneer of the wet collodion photographic process. Her technique at the time was highly criticized for its soft-focus and blurred sitters. Often only too excited to start working and capture a sitter's expression, Cameron would expose the image before properly focusing on the subject, thus creating this soft-focus effect for which she is now well known.



Julia Margaret Cameron, *The Beggar Maid*,
Albumen Print, 1875,
Special Collections,
University of St Andrews Library

In 1874, Alfred Lord Tennyson asked Cameron, now a close friend, to produce a selection of photographs to illustrate his writings of the *Idylls*. Including rough drafts, Cameron created no less than 200 photographs, directing her maids, family members, and even strangers to sit for them. To her dismay, only three

photographs were reproduced by his publishers as small woodcut engravings. In response, Cameron created her own volume. Bound in leather, *Alfred Tennyson's Idylls of the King and Other Poems* brings together twelve photographic illustrations of nine Tennyson poems including *Maud*, *The Princess* and *The Passing of Arthur*. Her editorial control of this book extends beyond the integrity of her photographs. Cameron cut down Tennyson's poems, in some cases dramatically, to highlight the female stories within his words.

Vision & Verse will explore the way text and image interplay to form new meaning. It will engage with the more romantic tone of her stories, and reverence for her female subjects. This volume was purchased by the University Library's Special Collections in St Andrews, with the help of Friends of the National Library. This will be the opening exhibition in the newly redeveloped Wardlaw Museum's Albany Two gallery. New pages from the volume will be displayed each week. Follow 'The Wardlaw Museum' on Facebook for sneak peeks, interviews and other content on this exhibition.

Alexandra Haeseker: The Botanist's Daughter

Edinburgh Printmakers

18 January to 22 March 2020, Tue-Sun, 10am-6pm

An installation of new contemporary print works by Canadian artist Alexandra Haeseker, drawing inspiration from the rich and bountiful resources of hand-pulled engravings found in Museum and Library collections, illustrating botanical and entomological themes. *The Botanist's Daughter* subverts relationships of scale between the viewer and the plants and insects represented in the exhibition, encouraging us to develop a new paradigm in relating to the natural world, by considering more fully what is often invisible to our eyes, and below our feet.

Haeseker invites us to reflect upon how small changes made to the atmosphere and environment can have drastic and irreversible consequences for ecosystems, highlighting the fragility of the natural world, which is jeopardising the future of our planet and species.

ACTINIC - Photography in Print

Nick Devison, Morwenna Kearsley, Marysia Lachowicz, Kristina Chan and Itamar Freed

Edinburgh Printmakers

18 January to 22 March 2020, Tue-Sat, 10am-6pm

Edinburgh Printmakers and The ACTINIC Festival are working in partnership to present an exhibition of photographic printmaking by Scottish based artists that celebrates the techniques of 'Actinism' in the context of contemporary visual arts practice. Each of the works on display demonstrates the techniques of 'Actinism', which is an intrinsic property in radiation that produces photochemical activity, and within the medium of photography includes processes such as photochromism, pinhole photography, salt albumen, chemigram, and instant film.

E. A. Hornel: From Camera to Canvas

City Art Centre, Edinburgh

7 November 2020 to 14 March 2021

By Ben Reiss, Morton Photography Project Curator

E. A. Hornel: From Camera to Canvas is a collaborative exhibition between the National Trust for Scotland (the Trust) and the City Art Centre in Edinburgh, opening in November 2020. It will be the first major retrospective of art by Hornel (1864–1933) for over 35 years, and will re-evaluate his paintings in light of his extensive photographic collection. There are approximately 1,700 photographs from Scotland, Japan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar in the collection that Hornel used while painting, collected from friends and contacts, purchased commercially and taken or posed by himself. These photographs were crucial to the development of Hornel's artistic technique. *From Camera to Canvas* will show that from 1890, the influence of photography can be seen in almost every facet of his painting. It provided him with access to people, places and networks. It helped him build a visual library from which he could refresh his memory and take inspiration. Hornel not only chose his subject matter based on his photographs, but copied figures, poses and imagery directly from photograph to painting.



Top image: *Sri Lankan woman carrying a water pot*, attributed to E. A. Hornel, glass plate negative, 1907. National Trust for Scotland, Broughton House.

Bottom image: *Ceylon Water Pots*, E. A. Hornel, oil on canvas, 1907-09. National Trust for Scotland, Broughton House

Stylistically, too, photography was significant. The vertical composition of the Yokohama shashin prints Hornel collected is mirrored in the composition of a number of his paintings. He would paint full scenes and then crop them down, as if taking a snapshot of the most visually appealing area. Against the frenzied, blurred backgrounds of his paintings, the faces and hands stand out, painted with almost photographic veracity.

The exploration of Hornel's photographic collection in *From Camera to Canvas* will also reveal a more challenging hinterland to his paintings. While his photographs of Scottish girls (brought to him by their mothers and chaperoned by his sister, Elizabeth) are merely discomfiting to a modern eye, those he took of girls and young women in Sri Lanka and Japan are often unashamedly intimate. We know Hornel visited areas where sex work was rife in Japan, and the status of the models in many of his Japanese photographs is ambiguous to say the least.

Also problematic – although hardly atypical for the time – were his attitudes as a westerner abroad experiencing 'the other'. In Sri Lanka, his photographs ignore any nuance of identity among his subjects or, indeed, any sense of individual identity at all. The photographs Hornel collected in Japan reflect his aim to find a land of traditional Japanese motifs. They depict the country and its people as stereotypes without reflecting the rapidly modernising reality. Even the girls in Kirkcudbright were othered by him to fit an innocent, rural ideal.

From Camera to Canvas will feature photographs, paintings and ephemera from Broughton House, Kirkcudbright (Hornel's home 1901–33, now cared for by the Trust) and paintings from the Hunterian Museum and City Art Centre.





Bottom image: *Young Girl With Primroses*,
E. A. Hornel, oil on canvas, 1906.
National Trust for Scotland, Broughton House

The exhibition is part of the Trust's Morton Photography Project – supported by the Morton Charitable Trust – and is included in the Japan-UK Season of Culture 2019-2020.

2020 Committee Members

Chair: Claire Robinson, cr67@st-andrews.ac.uk

Treasurer: Jim Barnes (Independent Researcher)

Membership: Lili Bartholomew (The McManus)

Research Grants: Michelle Kaye (Glasgow School of Art)

Journal Editors: Karen Mailley-Watt (University of Glasgow/ Glasgow School of Art), Matthew Jarron (University of Dundee)

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

Events: Claire Robinson (University of St Andrews),
Matthew Jarron (University of Dundee)

Minutes Secretary: Tara King (University of St Andrews)

General member:
Imogen Gibbon (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)



Top image: *Head of a Kirkcudbright girl*, attributed
to E. A. Hornel. Glass plate negative, 1890-1930.
National Trust for Scotland, Broughton House

