



University of the Highlands and Islands
BA (HONS) FINE ART & FINE ART TEXTILES

DEGREE SHOW

2024

UHI Moray School of Art
UHI North, West and Hebrides
UHI Orkney
UHI Shetland

With enormous congratulations to all
graduating students:

Rachel Birse
Caitlin Brodie
Yolanda Bruce
Claire Davenport
John Ferguson
Beverly Fox
Anna Charlotta Gardiner
Emma Justice
Katie Leask
Kiara-Isabella Mackenzie
Keith Massey
Duncan May
Ami Robb
Gizela Trzmiel
Jennifer Upson
Lucy Wheeler

Introduction

This booklet marks the summit of a collective ascent that has taken our students four or more years of preparation, planning, navigation, exploration, discipline, and sustained effort to attain, through all weathers and against challenging obstacles. We celebrate with them their successes and we congratulate them as they finally emerge above the clouds on the heady heights of their achievements.

Each student presents a unique panorama for us. Art shows us how to see the world, teaches us how to see more richly. It can bring a fresh perspective to things and might even challenge our basic assumptions about the world or an aspect of it. Through the work presented here we see the world, we see others, with more clarity and with greater understanding. With that understanding comes more compassion and increased empathy for the world and for our fellow travellers. We are reminded who we are within the changing contexts that surround us and that clamour for our attention.

We may be pointed to strange new terrains full of paradox and absurdity, resonant with humour or tragedy. We may be pleasantly puzzled or constructively confused, compelled to look deeper, to find out more. Then our eyes may be opened to new kinds of beauty and new languages to express these novel realities. The world is made of meaning and it is through our creative imaginations that this meaning is revealed.

Our map is made from new forms and patterns, new structures and compositions, and new rhythms and measures, and the artworks are our guides. So let's meet at the top and celebrate together as we enjoy the panorama and share our students' accomplishments.

– Norman Shaw, Programme Leader



UHI Shetland

Rachel Birse

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The soft light and open skies of Shetland, alongside the layers of hills and sea in the Outer Hebrides are the foundations of my woven textile collection. Drawing inspiration from these elements of earth, water and air, I observe how the movement of weather casts light and shadow onto the colours of these islands. To me the landscape is an immersive place where I draw from sight and sound, collecting objects which bring these colours from the distance into the palm of my hand.

The block weave structures create colour variety over the warp and weft faced sections, mimicking the way the elements weave their way through the landscape. Tweed structures also influence my practice, as the simplicity of pattern allows for more complex colour blending through frequent yarn changes.

While outside, I find myself composing poetical lines or thinking about Gaelic songs which celebrate the land, sea and natural world. These ideas start to take form in my sketches and photographs of the sea and hills, noticing patterns, rhythms and key colours which I can then translate into woven textiles.





UHI Orkney

Caitlin Brodie

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A beautiful song shows that mushrooms grow from dry trees. Children grow, learn and act as roots for growth and innovation. So I see families, fungi and cave systems; alien and unknown. Of course, don't ask but it is safer to run your fingertips along the branches of the family tree.

If I had to choose, I would rather be a bird from the side, with all four faces of my grandfather to hug and kiss my parents when they were children and give them a million loves.

I do many things, history and the ghosts of the past are about hope and terror, past and future so intertwined that one cannot help the other.

When you take my doll and hold it in your hand you will hear the soft clicks of the mummy machine and feel the warmth and tenderness of the daddy hand. At the end of the world people tend towards good.





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UHI Shetland

Yolanda Bruce

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Who are we beyond the masks we wear?
Who are we beyond the veil?
What stories are we here to live?

My art is a deeply personal exploration of identity and myth using mixed-media painting, photography, printmaking, and sculpture. A highly intuitive practice, where creating is both a meditation and a healing experience. Inspired by Joseph Campbell's 'Hero's Journey', I have sought to express stories of my life in a series of multi-layered self-portrait paintings where I use art as the sacred journey. Triggered by a personal object, photograph, or memory, I am intuitively shown an image which begins the initiation journey, taking me deep into the darkness. This helps me create powerful retellings of traumatic events where I, the hero, emerge from the darkness, from the primordial universe of Prussian Blue into the light, healed, reborn and with a new understanding of my life.

Photography has also helped me continue this search of personal identity using opportune snapshots on my iPhone of the illusions of the self in modern society, where all I see are reflections and shadows, neither of which are the real me, in the hope of discovering who I am beyond the masks I wear and beyond the veil of civilization.





Don't touch the rings
Oh dear he touched the rings
He must been to me



“Not until a machine can write a sonnet or compose a concerto because of thoughts and emotions felt, and not by the chance fall of symbols, could we agree that machine equals brain”

– Jefferson Lister

My practice is an examination of creativity in the age of machine-learning. Using collage from print media and AI-based text-to-image generation, I wish to test the limitations and opportunities of an artist’s practice that is aided by technology. These explorations mine both a digital and non-digital practice for its ability to express complex thoughts and emotions and ask needed questions about our fascination with robotic sentient versions of ourselves in the future.

Images are re-arranged both physically and using editing software into colourful compositions which then inform drawings and paintings. Masquerading as Picasso, I train ChatGPT’s DALL-E in a text-based conversation to render an image like Guernica revealing the advantages and snags of the technology’s current state of play. This interaction forms the basis of a painting.

The work does not aim to guard a traditional art practice but instead explore the potential trajectory of that practice in the machine age. What will be gained? What risks being lost? Would a machine be able to conjure Guernica’s brutal look if given the right search terms? Is style the preserve of a human artist? Is the body important in art making? Does it even matter anymore?





“Cipher, not decipher. Work on illusion, make illusions to make events, make the clear enigmatic, make the intelligible unintelligible... accentuate the false transparency of the world, make all events unintelligible The golden rule of thought is to return the world as it was given to us, and if possible, make it even more unintelligible, a little more enigmatic.”

– Jean Baudrillard

Art is a way of life

Art is not a career

Art is seeking truth not polemic

Art is not propaganda

Art is not education

Art is not community work

Art is dialogue beyond conversation

Art has its own voice

Art will have multiple voices

Art feeds on the contraries

Art is not political

Art is Political

Art should disrupt wherever and whenever possible.





My multidisciplinary practice is rooted in painting, including 3D incorporations that act as an extension of the painting.

Focusing on my past in relation to the places I've been or have lived in, the overlapping and recreating of memories over time presents intriguing and strange visuals that I use in my work. I am strongly influenced by Surrealism, specifically Magritte, as the strange vagueness of his paintings reflect the way I see my own memories: confusing yet oddly clear.

Research into the psychology of memory and dreams has provided a scientific backing to my practice, especially the work of Sigmund Freud and Gaston Bachelard.

"Through dreams, the various dwelling-places in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days. And after we are in a new house, when memories of other places we have lived in come back to us, we travel to the land of Motionless Childhood." (Gaston Bachelard)





Explorer exploring, explored. Meanings are lived, muddling through an unbroken and undivided whole movement to play, to transgress – logic, muscle, blood, and breath. Dropping threads, connecting, disconnecting, reconnecting. Mycelial existence evoking traces of the hand of darkness. Ephemeral landscapes, not something human, the music with nothing left over, the saying of being itself. The resonance of what-is. This oscillating thou art that, nature and our selves – the old gods, entangled. We are deeply rooted ecosystems, a place of not knowing. Think on further. Know uncertainty. Live with being lost. Making poetry, from poetry, in poetry.

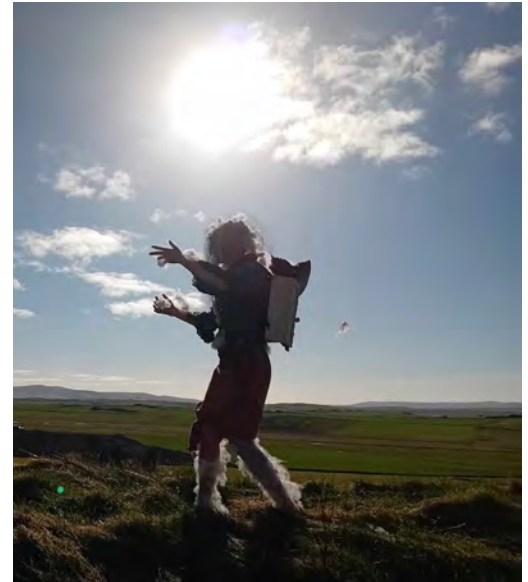


image credits: left - Yvonne Harcus, right - Heidi Holtan



UHI Moray School of Art

Emma Justice

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"I think there's something about being a young woman that feels very murderous."

– Florence Welch

My work is a study of the intricacies of being a woman. I focus on the complexities and contradictions of the everyday, pushing the sweet into the vein of sickly. My multidisciplinary approach ranges from dipping stuffed animals in pink plaster to traditional painting techniques and sculpture, all of which is knitted together through the use of wool.

As a woman, I've had a long and complicated relationship with the colour pink. For many years I rejected anything associated with femininity, including pink. As I've developed a healthier relationship with my femininity, I also mourn the years I lost while resenting the societal pressures that made me reject that part of my identity.

I see my work as a physical representation of that anger and its reconciliation, bringing an element of violence to the perceived innocence of femininity. You will be confronted by the idea that two things can be true at the same time.





My practice is about noticing and valuing those parts of life that are easy to miss or dismiss, the mundane or the everyday. Through the process of oil painting, I hope to reveal and preserve precious fleeting moments that might otherwise be lost amongst digital masses. I see painting as an important way of extending time, for both painter and viewer.

My work is an archive of snapshots from one woman's perspective, a quiet counterpoint to imagery more commonly associated with 'women's art'. I am instinctively drawn towards using home as a subject. With a particular interest in exploring light, I paint moments that reflect personal feelings of belonging, familiarity, and connection. Noticing is about seeing and reflecting, my practice is a continuous process of both.





UHI Moray School of Art

Kiara-Isabella Mackenzie
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'A piece of cloth is only half-experienced unless it is handled.'

– Peter Collingwood

I am a multidisciplinary artist who works primarily with textiles. As a textile artist, I focus on textures and the tactility of fabric: and of our relationships with it.

The work revolves around an ethos of rebellion against the ocularcentric ideals of the gallery. As an autistic artist, I aim to create spaces where the viewer can feel the work, both physically and mentally. The work also aims to allow the viewer to become aware of their own relationship to touch and to textiles.

Through the use of hand sewing, and the creation of smaller, hand-held aspects of the work, I invite the viewer to become part of the work by holding them and contributing to their involvement with the rest of the space.

In my latest works I have been focussing on large wall-based installations, and creating environments in which to encase the viewer. In creating these engulfing spaces, I hope they allow the viewer to become fully aware of the work and themselves within it, touching and experiencing the work fully.





The ability to transform materials into the form of a carving aesthetic is the essence of my artwork. Working in various mediums, I remould images both physically and emotionally, exploring the concept of edge by taking the subject to its limits and rearranging into a new form whilst incorporating and paying homage to its natural beauty.

Through sculpting, limitations are experienced by understanding the heritage, malleability and vulnerabilities of the material. When oil painting, these same limitations are evidenced through the paint's application, creating brushstrokes that blend and transcend across the surface or, encouraging the subject to jump out from the canvas through the interplay of light and shadow. And, when working with digitally created moving images, I explore the technical and creative effects that distort movement and time, resulting in a unique imaginary experience beyond those possible with painting or sculpture.

I link my work thematically, both realistically and conceptually with the aim of inviting the viewer to examine their perceived realities in the hazy interface where imagination lives and where they can find similar connections and reflections.





TEK

Feræ Nature

Eirú
Tímur &
Væðing



“What the artist seeks...is the fiction reality will sooner or later imitate.”

– Robert Smithson

At the mouth of the Findhorn river, local sandstorms and floods (both recent and historical) tell of the interactions between people and nature, there is a communication. Similarly, global events causing the rising water temperature in the Findhorn and reduced rain fall affecting salmon on the river show a communication between deeply networked cognitive entities.

This installation is my machine for thinking, a performing of the creation of new metaphors, hybrids of fact and fiction – which go beyond re-presenting what already exists. These performances collapse information into verbs of materiality, where alchemical processes and sympathetic actions can play out within diagramming, drawing and sculpting. Together these networked hybrids interact and present a deepening and widening investigation, which invite the further creative performance of the viewer. The installation is both a dance and poem where the diagram is a step into the hybrid, the drawing a step back, and the sculpture a step through the hybrid. In this sense, you and I can walk into the echoes of the near future(s) of 2050.





UHI Shetland

Ami Robb
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I am a multidisciplinary practitioner led by material, research and process. My blended creative practice currently combines sculpture, textiles, ceramics, performance and participatory art.

Elevating process over a final product, my sculptural assemblages of waste and found materials create a tension between such materials, challenging the viewer to consider them in a different context.

And there is rust, lots of rust! Rust as a metaphor for time; the dissolution and reclamation of the manufactured; loss of land through rising sea levels. A desire to collaborate rather than control the material - to discover what it does rather than what it is - results in alchemy. Raw clay coated with an iron oxide engobe slip encounters seawater and returns to liquid form, a literal and metaphorical disappearance of the land.

My textile 'offerings' - created with rust and seawater mark making - suggest atonement: the opportunity to redress extractive practices and to repair our relationship with the land, sea and non-humans. A participatory element invites you to offer a votive, a word or a phrase written in response and placed in an amphora-esque ceramic vessel.

Performance is a valuable dialogical tool, conversing and conveying my heightened environmental concerns, personal connection to the sea and a sense of place.





A reflection says more than a thousand words.

I paint detailed self-portraits and still lifes in a traditional style, using acrylic paint.

In my self-portraits I represent myself as two separate alter egos. These personas are based on the Red and White Queens from Lewis Carroll's 'Through the Looking-Glass: And What Alice Found There'. They represent duality or inner conflict – conflicts of love and hate, of spiritual and material, of needs and wants which we all experience. This investigation of the self is an exorcism through the reopening and healing of old wounds.

One of the tools of exorcism is a mirror – a looking glass if you will. Thus, the act of painting a self-portrait becomes ritualistic and allows my past to finally be left behind in the layers of paint. The Surrealists, particularly Frida Kahlo had similar concepts, and like her I say that ultimately, "I paint myself because I am so often alone and because I am the subject I know best."





UHI Moray School of Art

Jennifer Upton
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I arrived as a fine art student at a turning point in my life and I now balance my time between my creative studies and working as a therapist in private practice.

My creative practice embraces architecture, installation, and sculpture. As a process-led artist, I explore the possibilities for change, renewal and healing through working with materials and spaces, echoing my work in the therapy room.

I prefer utilising recycled and repurposed materials, drawing on their inherent history. I enjoy the playful aspects of exploration and experimentation, repetition, and reconfiguration, all of which feature heavily in my work.

To create this site-specific sculptural work, I have used wooden 'lathe' ripped from my 200-year-old cottage on the Moray Coast, repurposing materials previously hidden or discarded and displaying the internal framework of home.

I am inspired by artists such as Rachel Whiteread and Phyllida Barlow and favour a phenomenological approach to exploring the human experience of being in the world.

"We do not only dwell in space, we also dwell in the continuum of culture, time and memory."

– Juhani Pallasmaa





UHI Shetland

Lucy Wheeler
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Landscape is at the core of my creative practice, informed by the weather, climate and the changing seasons. Reinforced by an emotional connection to the Shetland landscape, driven by a strong sense of place and identity as an Islander.

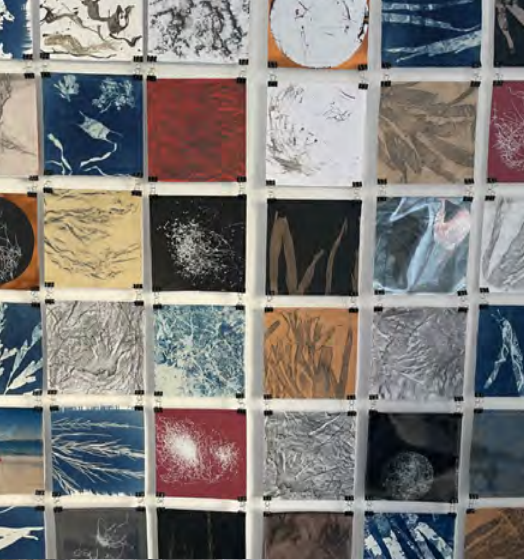
My work is atmospheric and captures a sense of expressive energy, creating a visual reinterpretation of the landscape, with a vivid use of colour, abstraction, texture and form. Focusing on the relationship between these elements gives a sensory awareness of the environment that surrounds us

Process is integral to my practice, and the physical nature of materials. I use various surfaces, mediums and techniques, primarily paint and print on canvas and paper. These include watercolour, acrylic, and natural pigments from the land alongside etching and mono-printing processes.

There is a close relationship between my paintings and my printmaking, connected through bold compositions and awareness of tonality. I enjoy the unpredictability in the printmaking process and watercolour painting.

My art intends to evoke a sense of connection with our surrounding landscape, inviting viewers to contemplate their own relationship with the natural environment.





UHI North, West and Hebrides

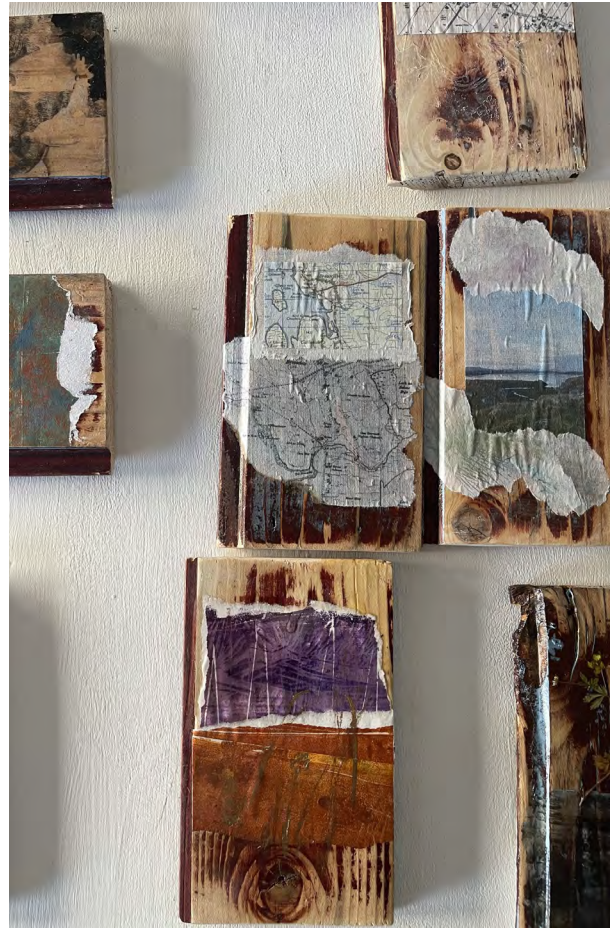
This year UHI North, West and Hebrides will be hosting an Open Studios Exhibition to showcase the work of students in years 1 and 2 of the BA (Hons) Fine Art programme, alongside students from the NC Art and Design.

The art courses occupy the beautiful coastal studios of Taigh Chearsabhair Museum and Arts Centre, nestled on the shores of Loch nam Maddadh, on the Isle of North Uist.

The Open Studio shows the creative breadth and ambition of our student cohort this year. With 12 students taking part, the range of work on display is varied and includes sculpture, drawing, painting, printmaking, sound, and installation. Themes of the work explore the synergy between creative practice and the island environment.

Left (clockwise from top left): **Philly Hare, Sue Envill, Natalie Cloughley Macleod, Sian Swinton, Liz French, Janet Beck.**

Right: **Maggie Barker**





With thanks to all staff contributing to the
BA (Hons) Fine Art & Fine Art Textiles:

Louise Barrington	Hannah Laycock
Amy Beeston	Harry Ross
Anne Bevan	Alison Lee
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Rosie Blake	Shaun MacDonald
Paul Bloomer	Anne Mackenzie
Brian Boag	Rebecca Marr
Edward Bruce	Catriona Meighan
Joanna Buick	Nicola Neate
Samantha Clarke	Gillian Neish
Simon Clarke	Doug Rattray
Sarah Dearlove	Norman Shaw
Kerriane Flett	Stuart Sim
Alistair Fowlie	Steve Smith
Kelly France	Judy Spark
Allane Hay	Edina Szeles
Katherine Hayes	Kristi Tait
Pete Honeyman	Stacey Toner
John Hunter	Holly Totten
June Hyndman	Stephanie Tristam
Mark Jenkins	Cordelia Underhill

Study Fine Art at UHI

If you want to study contemporary art and develop your creative skills in a vibrant and challenging environment, the BA (Hons) Fine Art degree is for you.

You will be taught by a highly experienced team of visual practitioners, who will support you to develop and experiment with a range of fine art media. We encourage exploration of multiple media including painting, digital imaging, photography, drawing, spatial studies, printmaking, and textiles. You will also have support from a team of academics who will help you to write about your own work and that of other artists, whilst also establishing an awareness of industry and sector professionalism.

With access to your own studio space and specialist equipment, you will have all the necessary resources at hand. Our small class sizes ensure regular contact with a diverse array of staff whose professional knowledge and expertise will enable you to develop to your fullest potential as part of a community of learners.

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image: Emma Justice



UHI Degree Show 2024

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Caitlin Brodie

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Claire Davenport

John Ferguson

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Anna Charlotta Gardiner

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Highlands and Islands
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean