

# artyFACTS

*The magazine of the Art Society of Inverness*

*August 2025*



## MAN AT WORK

ASI member William Mather, from Fortrose, is often to be seen at local events with his pastels at the ready to sketch ten minute portraits of passers by. Over the years he has raised funds for various good causes with this unique talent. Look out for him!

*Meanwhile you will find a few other "artists at work" here and there inside this edition - see how many you can recognise!*

Hallo ASI members -  
It's your editor here!

This page is the one that the President used to inhabit. However, the Society seems to be trucking along quite nicely without one, and as I write this there is no sign of the Secretary either, as he is working hard painting in the south of France. (Scottish artists have traditionally headed there for the light, and there are other attractions too).

Our Annual Exhibition is getting closer and I hope you are all getting your entries ready. You need to get the details in by Wednesday 20th August. The Exhibition runs from 5th to 14th September at Inverness Creative Academy (WASPS). You should have all the details on an email from Kevin - contact him if not. Do put something in if you can! You'll find some hints on ways you can manage framing without breaking the bank in this magazine too.

Remember to publicise the exhibition to your friends and contacts - there will be a poster e-mailed to you and you can pass this on. Looking forward to seeing your work!

As you read on you'll find news of several forthcoming workshops this autumn. We must congratulate Fiona Morris on her excellent organisation of these events - she goes to a lot of trouble to make them run smoothly. Our thanks to all who give their time to the ASI.

Enjoy the rest of your summer everybody! CB



## WHO DOES WHAT

### SECRETARY

David Brown

### TREASURER

Elaine French

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Kevin O'Neill

### WEBSITE

Bob Peckham

### WORKSHOPS

### LIBRARY

Brian Jones

### SCREENS

Belinda Johnson

### (PAINTING WEEKEND)

Belinda Johnson, Mira Staszowski,  
Jane Nestor

### ANNUAL EXHIBITION

Sue Marshall

### MORNING ART GROUP

Sandra Dingwall

### EVENING CLASSES

### PAINTING DAYS

Jonathan Shearer

### BEGINNERS' CLASSES

Michelle Knight

### ARTYFACTS

Clare Blois, Jenny Hepburn  
David Brown

### YOUR COMMITTEE

David Brown

Kevin O'Neill

Brian Jones

Mira Staszowski

Jane Nestor

Sue Marshall

Elaine French

Bob Peckham

Belinda Johnson

Colin Munro

Liz Hoey



## Art Society of Inverness:

### What You Told Us – Membership Survey Highlights *Elaine French reports:*

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our recent membership interests survey! With 112 responses - nearly half our membership - this has been a valuable opportunity to hear your voices and shape future events around your interests. We'll be holding a special committee meeting after our September exhibition to consider all the feedback more fully, but here are some early highlights and decisions already made based on what you told us:

#### Outings and Events

While there was initial interest in a trip to *Beyond Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience* in Aberdeen, the cost of hiring a coach was simply too high to make this feasible. Sadly, this trip won't go ahead - but we are always open to other outing suggestions for the future!

On a brighter note, it looks like a Christmas party will be a welcome addition to our calendar. Over 77% of you said you *would* or *might* attend, so we'll be moving forward with plans for a festive celebration. A New Year party drew a more cautious response, with 43% not interested, so for now we'll focus on Christmas.

#### Workshops and Classes – What You Want to Learn

We offered a wide selection of art media and asked what kind of learning format you'd prefer - just a one-day taster, a short two-day course, or a longer class block. Here's what stood out:

- **Drawing (graphite, charcoal, pen):** Interest was strong, with over 58% interested in at least a one- or two-day session.
- **Watercolour** continues to be popular, with nearly 75% expressing interest, especially in class blocks.
- **Pastels and Acrylics** also fared well, with more than 60% of respondents keen to participate.
- **Mixed Media and Oil** had more mixed interest, but still worth considering for future programming.
- **Collage and Lino Cut Printing** had more limited appeal, and **Stained Glass** and **Fused Glass** had the highest proportion of "Not interested" responses—though we know these do appeal to some!

A number of you used the comments section to ask for **portraiture, life drawing, landscape and perspective workshops**, and **monoprinting**. These will be considered alongside our regular offerings.

Interestingly, many of you expressed a preference for **shorter, accessible formats** like one-day or weekend sessions. We also noted suggestions for **art history talks, Saturday sessions**, and even a **novice section at the annual exhibition** to encourage new artists to display their work.

## When Works Best

Most members are most available on **weekday daytimes**, with 51% saying they could “always” or “usually” attend. **Weekends** are also reasonably popular, with 40% saying they “usually” or “sometimes” can attend. **Weekday evenings** are the least popular—perhaps not surprising during our Highland winters!

## Helping Hands – Volunteers and Committee

We asked if anyone would be willing to help out on the committee. While 34% said “Yes” or “Maybe”, only a small portion actually included their names or contact details. So, if you *did* tick “yes” but forgot to tell us who you were, please reach out! You can speak to *any* committee member - our emails are just inside the front cover of this newsletter. If joining the committee feels like a big step, don’t worry. 68% of you said you’d consider helping out with specific jobs or events. Thank you! We’ll be in touch where contact details were provided, but if you meant to offer but didn’t leave a name, just get in touch.

## Who Are Our Members?

We were pleased to see a good mix of members:

Around 43% described themselves as either **hobby artists** or **serious amateurs**. 28% were **newcomers**, while 34% have been with the Society for over 5 years. Several members have been with us since the 1980s! It’s clear that we have both a wealth of experience and an exciting number of new members to welcome and nurture.

## Final Thoughts and a Few Gems from the Comments

The final comments section was a treat to read. Quotes that made us smile:

“I love this art society – the teaching, the camaraderie, the encouragement.”

“Thank you, ASI, for all that you do for the members. Your hard work is greatly appreciated.”

“Just love Artyfacts – look forward to it arriving on my doorstep.”

There were also a few useful reminders—for example, to be mindful of accessibility, to consider the challenges of driving into Inverness in winter, and to offer options for both beginners and more experienced artists. These are all important points we’ll take forward.

## Still Time to Have Your Say

If you haven’t filled in the survey yet, there’s still time! Please do by September 15th. The more responses we have, the better we can shape activities to suit *you*. The link is here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7X93WQN>

Thank you again for your support, your feedback, and your continued enthusiasm for all things art.

*Thank you Elaine for this useful analysis - ed.*

## ESTHER ARMSTRONG CLASSES

**Esther Armstrong** will be delivering a series of daytime classes on soft pastels for ASI over a five week period at Killearnan, starting on **Friday 19 September**.

The classes will run on consecutive Fridays from 10.30 to 1.00.

The series is not yet fully costed, but notes of interest please to Fiona by email at [fionamorris285@gmail.com](mailto:fionamorris285@gmail.com).

Esther is a well known highland artist who specialises in pastels. She teaches a weekly class in Garve and also regularly gives private lessons to guests at Skibo Castle. She is also busy with workshops for various art groups and with making and selling her own work.

In this series of classes Esther will introduce you to the many ways in which pastels can be used. Much recommended!



BELINDA JOHNSON has kindly arranged this opportunity for a group of ASI members to try lino printing on the afternoon of **18th October 2025 at Highland Print Studio**. Keep the date if you are interested! You will receive full details and booking information by e-mail in due course.

**Print your own Christmas Cards this year with this unique taster class in Lino Cutting at Highland Print Studio**

Over this afternoon taster session you will create your own original linocut print, and print a small edition of 12 Christmas cards.

You will be printing a small single colour image. You will learn how to transfer your image onto traditional lino and experiment with an assortment of lino cutting tools to create a variety of line and textured effects. You will learn about using traditional oil-based inks and print on the Takach and Albion presses.



## DON'T FORGET

that you can exhibit your work on the ASI website. Bob Peckham is keen to receive your images! Have a look at what fellow members have been up to on

[www.artinverness.com](http://www.artinverness.com)

Details on the website or in February's edition of Artyfacts.

[rjpeckham@hotmail.com](mailto:rjpeckham@hotmail.com)

## HEADS UP

The Paintbox School of Art has generously granted ASI members a 20% discount on on-line courses purchased via its website. Apply the code "IAS" at the checkout.

THE PAINTBOX SCHOOL OF ART  
[www.paintboxartclasses.com](http://www.paintboxartclasses.com)



## JONATHAN SHEARER CLASSES and WORKSHOPS

Jonathan's evening classes, and occasional Saturday workshops, are held at Inverness Creative Academy (WASPS) at various times in the year. There are also monthly painting days at Killearnan Church Hall. You are receiving regular information about all these by e-mail. Contact Jonathan direct for all enquiries:

[jonathan.lyle@btopenworld.com](mailto:jonathan.lyle@btopenworld.com)

Even better, keep up with it all on the Facebook Group: **ASI Jonathan Shearers Classes and Workshops**

**MICHELLE KNIGHT** teaches a beginners' evening class at Killearnan Hall. E-mails are sent out about these too. You can contact Michelle direct :

[michellecaroline@btopenworld.com](mailto:michellecaroline@btopenworld.com)

## NEXT ISSUE OF ARTYFACTS (November)

Contributions please by 15th October.

Send them to

[clare.blois@btinternet.com](mailto:clare.blois@btinternet.com)

Text should be sent in a Word document or on an ordinary e-mail. Please send photos **separately** as JPEGs. Please note that PDF, Google, Messenger or Whatsapp messages are not suitable!

All contributions very welcome! Thanks!

## **FRAMING WITHOUT FEAR - Don't panic!**

SO you are going to exhibit your work and it needs a frame - and getting one seems a daunting and expensive prospect. Here are some hints and ideas borne of experience:

**Does it really need a frame?** Probably, but a deep sided canvas (approx. 4 cm) can be shown without one. Make sure the sides are clean, maybe painted white or black, or the image continued around the sides. (Unless you like the paint splattered look!)

**FRAMERS:** The two best known professional framers in Inverness are:

**We Frame It** in Tomnahurich Street

The **Inverness Framing Company**, very conveniently situated within WASPS (Inverness Creative Academy). [www.invernessframingcompany.co.uk](http://www.invernessframingcompany.co.uk)

Both of these can be very busy so don't leave it until the last minute.

There is also a new business at Lentrán, awaiting feedback: **MacLennan's Picture**

**Framing Services**, 07789 814578, [shinty49@gmail.com](mailto:shinty49@gmail.com). And there are others.

Professional framing is not a cheap solution as you are employing a skilled and experienced expert who can offer you all kinds of options, and you will come away with something beautiful. Worth it if you can.

However, there are other things you can do with a bit of ingenuity (and no carpentry):

**FRAMES ONLINE:** You can buy frames online, not as cheap as you might think although there are usually discounts if you buy a few. Allow plenty of time for delivery.

[www.bramptonframing.com](http://www.bramptonframing.com) are very obliging and good for larger bare-wood frames (i.e. you paint them yourself). Best to get a few to make the postage worthwhile.

[www.easyframe.co.uk](http://www.easyframe.co.uk) are good for tray-style frames for canvas. There is not space here to describe how to frame your paintings with these, and what accessories you need, but I am very willing to advise if you want to contact me directly. It's not difficult.

**UPCYCLE:** Useful for smaller works. Buy small frames from the likes of Dunelm, The Range, Hobbycraft etc, preferable wooden ones. Inspect them carefully before you buy and reject any with defects. You can paint them (carefully) before use (a matt grey looks quite smart) and you will usually need to apply D-rings and cord, and tape the backs. Remove the struts from the back of photo frames.

**WOODEN PAINTING PANELS** can be converting into tray frames by turning them over! You might want to sand them before painting them. Use No Nails glue to stick your canvas or board inside— you can raise a board up to “float” using small blocks of wood (try mini jenga blocks from The Works)



**RECYCLE (if you are up for it):** This is feasible for a work on paper that needs to be mounted under glass. Look in charity shops or the local auction for unwanted prints in sound frames (preferably wood that you can paint). Instead of a mount you could stick your painting onto a piece of mountboard cut to the size of the frame. Some people leave the edges gently torn rather than cut, which can look quite attractive. Paintings on canvas need a frame exactly the right size. Works on board can be trimmed if it won't spoil your composition. Or get the frame first and paint on a board the right size. If your glazed frame does not have re-usable "tabs" to hold painting, mount and backing board in place, you can buy a Framing Point Driver from Amazon. This is a fun piece of equipment! Do not point it towards yourself unless you need multiple piercings (thanks for that advice Kathy Sutherland).

You can use good quality household emulsion to paint frames. Matt, vinyl, silk or egg-shell, whatever you want. Neutral colours are generally best. The New Start charity warehouse in the Carse in Inverness sells bashed tins of good paint very cheaply. (They also have loads of used frames just now).

I cannot emphasise enough that you should not attempt a DIY framing job if you are unable to take your time and be scrupulously clean, neat and accurate. Look at the back of your framing - would you be happy to have bought this yourself?

### **What else?**

Accessories such as tape, D-rings, cord, fixings etc are cheapest from e-bay or Amazon. Glazed frames must be neatly taped round on the back.

Cord is better than picture wire. (no String PLEASE - it rots after a few years).

The D-rings go one third of the way down the back of the picture.

Everyone needs a bradawl (pointy thing, £2.50 at B & Q)

"Offset Framing Clips" are useful for fixing canvas into frames as you can easily swap the canvas for another one at a later date.

Sticky labels frequently fall off the back of frames. Use glue. Write neatly.

Paint frames by balancing them on a paper cup or bean tin at each corner.

Price your work so that you will not be out of pocket with framing costs.

**Finally**, follow all exhibition instructions to the letter, as it's disrespectful to the organisers if you don't! You can do it!

In a future issue, Bob Peckham will explain how to make your own frames using the Lionpic Chop Service (warning, may involve carpentry, possibly an axe?)

HAPPY FRAMING - If there is anything (simple) I can advise on, please feel free to contact me. Clare Blois (editor) [clare.blois@btinternet.com](mailto:clare.blois@btinternet.com)

## Art to help save a Kirk and Hall

Thanks to a huge amount of work by a lot of individuals, a very healthy profit was made by a 'Grand Art Sale' in July to help save the Kirk and Hall at Killearnan. This came out of the commission from sales of paintings and cards (some of which were full donations by artists), from a raffle, an auction and sales of delicious home-bakes and refreshments.

Heading up the team of organisers were ASI members Belinda Johnson and Margaret (Maggie) Macdonald who advertised it as a special sale 'at bargain prices' by ASI members "to help save this historic building and hall for community use." Doors opened on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> July with a display of at least 200 paintings in the church and cards and refreshments in the hall. The sun shone, the people came and a wonderful atmosphere resulted.

Many came representing the numerous art groups that meet regularly at the hall. There were many positive comments about the suitability of the venue as a future community centre for the arts in the Highlands – if only it can be saved. Supporters point out that the hall is modern with a great car park, the church is beautiful and there are many painting opportunities around. There has been a church there since 1223 and the whole site is of great historic interest.

Additional attractions included live music from Daniel Shearer, a Secret Auction of Paintings by his dad Jonathan, and Portrait Sketches by William Mather. Winner of the 'Lucky Square' raffle - with people paying £5 per square - was Colin Riach, who is now the proud owner of an original painting by William Mather. Maggie, a member of the church, said: "Colin is always helping at the church and transported the ASI screens for us. He is a very worthy winner and he and his wife are delighted with the painting."

The church and hall face possible closure due to the Church of Scotland facing difficult decisions to 'rationalise its estate' and make the best use of its resources.



*(See also back page for more background on our favourite class venue)*

## **A selection of art exhibitions and events in the Highlands**

*Jenny Hepburn has compiled a useful list*

Here are some ideas for things to see over the next few months. There's lots of good stuff on and I would particularly recommend visiting Ullapool for Peter White's exhibition and later for the Art Week.

**Inverness Museum and Art Gallery:** William Gillies: "Modernism and Nation,"  
2nd August till 27th September. (*Don't miss this - ed.*)

### **Eden Court:**

August: Cecilia Mann and Ali MacKay, "Resilience", plus 4 Abstract Photographers  
September: Carolyn Eva: "Odyssey"

### **Inverness Creative Academy:**

"Isle of Riso" till 16th August (*an interesting printmaking method*)

WASPS Summer Market : 15th (evening) to 17th August

Gael Hillyard : "Fair Isle's Windswept Voices" 22nd August till 10th October

ASI Annual Exhibition: 6th to 14th September

WASPS Open Studios: 20th & 21st September

**Inverness Botanics:** David Body & Jenny Hepburn till end of August

### **Alchemist, Dingwall:**

Meg Milne: "Shifting Landscapes" till 9th September

Debbie Lee: "Lines of the Landscape" 10th September till 21st October

**Kilmorack Gallery:** Allan MacDonald, Robert McAulay, Lotte Glob (August & Sept.)

### **An Talla Solais, Ullapool:**

Peter White: "Where the line is drawn" till 17th August

Members' Show : 30th August till 23rd October

Ullapool Art Week : 5th till 14th September

**North East Open Studios :** 13th till 21st September

**Nairn Book and Arts Festival :** 30th August till 7th September

### **Castle Gallery, Inverness:**

August: Summer Mixed Exhibition

September: Louise Scott: Etchings and Collage

October: Fiona Watson: Cyanotypes and Etchings

**Browns Gallery** (*No information currently on website*)



## HIGHLAND ART PRIZE 2025

The main information about this was published in the May edition of Artyfacts. New members (and those who don't do filing) will find all details on [www.artinverness.com](http://www.artinverness.com). Meanwhile here is an update on the arrangements:

In addition to the £1,000 prize for the winner (to be shared with their corresponding arts organisation), WASPS have confirmed that they will once again offer the opportunity for the winner to mount a solo exhibition in The Briggait in Glasgow, ideally in October 2026 when the 2026 Highland Art Prize exhibition will also be taking place (as the Royal National Mòd is in Glasgow next year). Alongside that, Cass Art will present a £250 gift voucher to the highly commended runner-up, and the Highland Soap Company will give a gift set to each of the 10-12 shortlisted artists.

*David Page 2022*



*David Greenhall 2023*



*Jules Mather 2024*



### DEADLINES

ASI Members wishing to participate should e-mail good quality images of their works (one per artist) to [ripeckham@hotmail.com](mailto:ripeckham@hotmail.com) by **15<sup>th</sup> August**, stating title, medium and size. This will provide a useful preview for the independent judge, and allow all the submitted works to be seen on the website.

The selection of the 5 paintings to be entered from ASI will take place at WASPS, Inverness, on **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August**. **Please bring your paintings** (or send somebody else) **to WASPS between 1pm and 2pm. The works must be retrieved between 4pm and 5pm.**

You can also look at the Highland Art Prize website: [www.highlandartprize.org.uk](http://www.highlandartprize.org.uk)

Here you can see the winners of previous years (here on right), together with this year's entries as and when they are received .

*Here's a chance to benefit from Kenneth Le Riche's excellent teaching and experience of life drawing and painting, if you are new to it. Much recommended. Kenneth runs an ongoing Studio Practice Course in Inverness (Fridays) and Findhorn (Thursdays), for all levels of experience, and this is very worthwhile too, but he tells me both venues are fully booked for the Autumn Term.*

## **NEW 11-WEEK ART COURSE with Kenneth Le Riche**

WHAT: Figurative Drawing and Painting from the Life Model

WHEN: starts Thursday 11th Sept from 3 to 5pm

WHERE: The [Moray Art Centre](#)

ART MATERIALS: All Provided    REFRESHMENTS: Provided

COST: £286    MAX. PLACES: 10

LEVEL: from beginners to experienced

For details about the course and how to sign up, please see the following link:

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/kennethleriche/1756651>

## **MORNING ART GROUP, MERKINCH COMMUNITY CENTRE**

The next block will start on **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September** and **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025**. This block will run for approximately 14 weeks. In order to meet the room hire charge the fee is payable per block, and will be dependent on the numbers signing up. Time: 10.00 a.m.-12.30 p.m.

This is an untutored group in which the members like to produce their own work in a variety of media and subject matters. We all help each other out if required, and it is a great opportunity to do your own work in the company of like - minded people.

It's great to experience the different approaches to work and we all enjoy the company and the blether. For many of us the group provides the spur and opportunity to focus on our art work, without other distractions.

All are welcome. There is good parking and coffee/tea and snacks are available to buy. If you would like to join the group but have no transport, please contact us and we will try to help if we can.

Contact Sandra Dingwall Tel: 01463 731715

[s.dingwall237@gmail.com](mailto:s.dingwall237@gmail.com)

**NEW EXHIBITION BY ONE OF OUR MEMBERS**



## **Odyssey**

**An exhibition of paintings by Carolyn Eva**

**Eden Court Theatre (Stalls Gallery), Inverness**

**September 2025**



## **“What artists see”: Block of 6 classes with Fiona Stewart: REVIEW**

This was an excellent series of classes at WASPS. Fiona is a very engaging tutor and the sessions were informative and entertaining.

The subjects of the classes were: **Mary Fedden** (still life); **Van Gogh** (landscape drawings); **Alex Katz** (re-imagining place - collage); **Georgia O’Keeffe** (shells); **Matisse, Picasso and Klee** (mono print); **John Piper** (coastal collage).

Fiona was well prepared for each class: materials set out for participants, examples of each artist’s work pinned up on the wall, and printouts to help us focus our own efforts. Fiona had provided still life subjects for the Mary Fedden session, while for some of the other classes we were asked to bring along materials such as photographs to work from.

Each class began with a presentation by Fiona on her i-pad, setting out the background to the artist’s work and his/her influences and methods. This also gave us the chance to ask questions and have a wider discussion. Following the presentation, it was our turn: Van Gogh’s mark-making; how to create a monoprint; how Mary Fedden arranged her still life compositions; re-creating an Alex Katz collage; looking into and through shells as inspired by Georgia O’Keeffe.

Let’s hope there are more in future – after all, there are so many artists to choose from...

*Thank you, Margaret Brown, for sharing your enjoyment of Fiona’s classes!*

Fiona Stewart has recently completed a very successful series of weekday morning classes for us and will be delivering a series of three whole day Saturday classes aimed primarily at beginners, but suitable for all abilities. Classes will take place at WASPs on the following dates:

**Saturday 27 Sept; Saturday 25 Oct; Saturday 22 Nov**

These classes are currently at the planning stages as far as content and cost are concerned, but materials are likely to be included.

Fiona Morris is taking notes of interest by email at

[fionamorris285@gmail.com](mailto:fionamorris285@gmail.com)

so do feel free to contact her.



## **'Save Killearnan Church' Working Group**

### **The Venture**

Our vision is to enable use of the church and the hall for those who live in the local area and beyond, while continuing as a place of Christian worship with a team ministry. We would like to promote the church as a tourist attraction and a place of historic interest, as well as a space for larger events such as weddings, funerals, musical events, art fairs, concerts and celebrations, etc.

The heading '**KIRK AT KILLEARNAN**' has been chosen to promote our new venture to save historic Killearnan Parish Church.

### **History**

Killearnan Parish Church dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is steeped in history. In addition to many interesting gravestones, the only complete morthouse in the north of Scotland is located on the east side of the graveyard. These historic buildings and the surrounding graveyard are our heritage and our identity. This will be lost forever if we don't value them. They deserve to be maintained in good condition in order to be fully appreciated and enjoyed by all, now and in the future.



*The Morthouse*

### **Volunteers**

Preparation to procure the buildings involves many laborious tasks such as business planning, securing funding, applying for charity status and developing a sustainable business model, which all takes time and requires specific skills. We really need volunteers who can help with these tasks.

Would you, or anyone you know, be willing to give your time to join us in our efforts to Save Killearnan Church for the community and preserve this important historical building for future generations?

If interested please contact Catherine Zawalnyski:-

[kittyzkilcoy@icloud.com](mailto:kittyzkilcoy@icloud.com)