

NEWS RELEASE – embargoed until 2pm Friday 21st October

RGI Announces 150th Open Annual Exhibition Prize Winners

With some of Scotland's finest contemporary art set to be showcased at its 150th annual exhibition which opens on **Sunday 23 October**, **The Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts (RGI)** has announced the 20 prize-winning artists selected to receive 21 special awards (please scroll down for full list, biogs & artists' quotes).

Out of over 1300 entries submitted by emerging and established artists earlier this month, 360 artworks were selected for the exhibition which runs **from 23 October until 12 November at The Mitchell in Glasgow**. As Scotland's largest open submission contemporary art exhibition, the show offers the public a unique opportunity to view and buy contemporary art at its best.

Along with the prestige of having their work exhibited and possibly purchased by art enthusiasts, 20 artists have been selected by a judging panel of established artists, to receive awards, including several expressly aimed at young painters and sculptors, or first time exhibitors.

This year see no less than 16 of the awards going to artists from the Glasgow area, three from Fife, one from Edinburgh, one from Aberdeen and a young Russian sculptor based in West Sussex. For several of the prizewinners, this is the first time they have submitted to the annual show.

The artists are following in famous footsteps, as over its 150-year history, the annual show has exhibited works by The Glasgow Boys, while Charles Rennie Mackintosh designed the 1895 show invitation.

Given that this year is the RGI's 150th anniversary, thousands of visitors are set to attend, and with prices from £200 to £2950, the show is relaxed and informal way of buying art for the first time.

RGI President Gordon Macpherson says: "I hope that the city of Glasgow will turn out in full force to support and enjoy this landmark exhibition and help us to celebrate 150 years of the RGI."

The RGI's 2011 Annual Exhibition

The Mitchell, North Street, Glasgow G3 7DN

23 October – 12 November 2011 Mon-Sat 10.30am – 5pm Thurs 10.30am – 7pm

Sun 23 Oct 12 – 5pm (Closed Sundays 30 Oct & 6 Nov) www.royalglasgowinstitute.org

For interviews, images & further information, please contact Heather MacLeod on 078911441571 or words@heather.uk.net. The prizewinners will be at The Mitchell on Friday 22 October from 2.30 – 4pm for photographs. If you are unable to attend, I will be emailing images later in the day.

PRIZEWINNERS 2011

Inverarity One to One Travel Award

Autumn Wind, Tuscany
Christine Woodside RSW RGI
Auchtermuchty, Fife

For Christine, who is originally from Aberdeen and studied at Gray's School of Art, winning the Inverarity Travel Award is the culmination of what has been one of the most fruitful years of her professional life.

The Travel Award includes a cash prize of £1000, a two-week visit to a vineyard in the Bordeaux area of France during the grape picking season, and a solo exhibition at the RGI Kelly Gallery featuring work inspired by the visit.

"I'm very keen on landscapes and adding an assembly of things I love against that," says Christine. "I enjoy walking and am particularly inspired by the texture and pattern of autumn. Recently, dogs have started to appear in my paintings and my whippet Jinky sits beautifully."

The David Cargill Award £2,000

The Silence of the Sea
James McNaught RSW RGI
Glasgow

Born in Glasgow, James is the only son of parents who worked as carpet designers at Templeton's Carpet Factory. James was accepted unconditionally at Glasgow School of Art where he stayed until 1970. Since retiring from teaching (fellow prizewinner & RGI Simon Laurie was a pupil) James is now a full-time artist, exhibiting both in the UK and internationally. His paintings hang in significant private collections around the world and his work has also been widely used on book covers.

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The David Cargill Award £1,000
The Road Home III
Claire Forsyth BA (Hons) Fine Art
Glasgow

Glasgow artist Claire Forsyth has won the £1000 David Cargill Award with her first ever submission to the show, *The Road Home 111*, a four-colour silk screen-print. As Claire is a full-time workshop manager at Glasgow Print Studio, most of her time is taken up facilitating the work of other artists.

"I almost fainted when I heard I'd won," says Claire, "as I don't have much time to make my own work but was determined to submit something this year. This prize will buy me some time to concentrate on my own work. Winning a prize is a boost to any working artist as it recognizes and validates your work, and is such an encouragement to keep going."

The Walter Scott Purchase Prize £2,000
Red Herring
Helen Wilson RSW RGI PAI
Glasgow

Given Helen Wilson's reputation as an artist, it's not surprising that she has won two awards at this year's show, the brand new Walter Scott Purchase Prize for *Red Herring* and also the Crinan Residency for *Rigoletto Rigout*. Helen is currently artist in residence with Scottish Opera which will culminate in an exhibition next year to celebrate 50 years of the company. *Red Herring* was inspired by the words of the Joni Mitchell song *Case of You* from the album *Blue*. "I always try to submit something every year as the RGI is very special to me," says Helen who studied at Glasgow School of Art in the early 70s. "Receiving a prize at this stage in my career means even more to me." Helen has also been awarded the Crinan Residency Prize (see below).

The N S Macfarlane Charitable Trust Award £1,000
Altarpiece
Phil McLoughlin
Newport on Tay

Five years ago, after a long and successful career as psychotherapist, Phil McLoughlin returned to his first love of painting, and it was clearly the right decision as this is the first time he has submitted work to the annual show.

"I usually work in oils and this is the first time that I've worked in acrylic. *Altarpiece* operates on a number of levels for me," says Phil, who is originally from Dunfermline. It's about worship in an increasingly secular Scottish society, and I chose objects such as Mother's Pride Bread and a paper plane from an *Oor Wullie* Book as references to what has become important to us. "After 35 years of listening to other people telling their story, it seemed time to tell mine and express some of the lessons I've learned from life that are meaningful to me."

City of Glasgow Prize £1,000
The Pursuit of Ecstasy
Ian Moir BA (Hons) Fine Art
Dunfermline

This is the first time that Ian, who graduated in 2000 from Glasgow School of Art where he studied drawing and painting, has submitted to the annual show. **He has had solo exhibitions in Edinburgh, London and the United States, and works full-time as an artist in Dunfermline.** Ian says his work is inspired by meditation, nature and local history, and has a particular fascination with the rundown industrial buildings of his home town.

"I'm delighted to have won this prize and am greatly encouraged by it. Although I have exhibited work in galleries over the years, I am currently seeking representation in Scotland. Although I've proven that my work is commercially viable, I still consider it to be alternative in method, style, and content. It is reassuring, therefore, to be selected by the RGI for this prize."

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow Award £1,000
Charing Cross in the Rain
Alastair Strachan BA Drawing & Painting
Glasgow

From tenements in his native Glasgow to Hong Kong high rises, artist Alastair Strachan's

fascination with urban life around the world is the inspiration behind many of his paintings. "I usually work in oils and this is the first time that I've worked in acrylic. *Altarpiece* operates on a number of levels for me," says Phil, who is originally from Dunfermline. It's about worship in an increasingly secular Scottish society, and I chose objects such as Mother's Pride Bread and a paper plane from an *Oor Wullie* Book as references to what has become important to us. "After 35 years of listening to other people telling their story, it seemed time to tell mine and express some of the lessons I've learned from life that are meaningful to me."

House for an Art Lover £1,000

Stacks - North East

Philip Reeves RSA PPRSW RGI RE

Glasgow

As one of the founders of both the Edinburgh and Glasgow Print Studios, and the former head of printmaking at Glasgow School of Art (1979-91) Philip Reeves, who studied at Cheltenham School of Art and the Royal College of Art in London, has devoted much of his career to encouraging young artists.

Philip, who lives in Glasgow, was inspired to paint Stacks-North East through his affection for the Caithness landscape and the Duncansby Stacks in particular. "They are such a beautiful colour of red and the stones, while horizontal are sometimes built in a very upright way."

Philip's work is held in many public collections including the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art and the V&A in London.

The Armour Award £1,000

The Edge of the World

Saul Robertson

Glasgow

Glasgow based artist Saul Robertson is no stranger to receiving awards. As a student at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art (1996-2000), Saul won The Ninewells MRI Imaging Purchase Prize. Soon after graduating he was voted Young Artist of the Year at The Hunting Art Prizes at the Royal College of Art in London. Since then he has won numerous awards including The City of Glasgow Prize, The David Cargill Senior Award, and The David Cargill Award, all at the RGI annual show. In 2005 he won second prize at the BP Portrait award in London.

"For *The Edge of the World*, I built a statuette from still life objects including ceramics," explains Saul. "While I was painting it, the whole thing collapsed, which felt like a disaster at the time, but I re-built it and was able to finish the painting."

Crinan Residency

Rigoletto Rigout

Helen Wilson

Glasgow

Helen Wilson (see above) who also won The Walter Scott Purchase Prize, will spend one week's residency at Crinan Hotel, Argyll, followed by an exhibition at the Crinan Gallery.

The Mabel Mackinlay Award £500

Spell

Margaretann Bennett BA(Hons) RSW

Glasgow

This is the fifth RGI award for Glasgow based artist Margaretann Bennett, who graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 1991. There is always a strong sense of the individual about Margaretann's work, and *Spell* follows on from previous paintings featuring dark figurative ideas. "It's a large work with two spooky ladies, with white abstracted shapes in the torso area which represent feelings about the body both physically and emotionally," explains Margaretann. "It's a *momento mori* piece reminding us of the brief timescale of life and to enjoy it while we can." As well as the annual show, Margaretann is currently exhibiting at the Smithy Gallery in

Cuthbert 'New Young Artist' Award £500

Fishing

Barry McGlashan BA(Hons)

Aberdeen

Born and raised in Aberdeen, Barry McGlashan studied painting at Gray's School of Art, graduating in 1996 with first class honours. He later returned to teach in the drawing and painting department until 2005 when he left to pursue painting full time. He has exhibited widely in both solo and group exhibitions with his work being held in many private and public

collections both in the UK and abroad.

In 2001, Barry was awarded The Alastair Salvesen Scholarship through The Royal Scottish Academy which allowed him to travel to the States for three months. Since that time he has continued to travel extensively in America, a country which continues to fascinate him and influence his work *Fishing* is an oil on canvas and is part of a series of works on isolation, a situation Barry is not unfamiliar with working alone in the artist's studio. The painting was inspired by the fishing huts of Minnesota, which Barry visited during the scholarship.

The Norma Frame Foundation £500

New Found Lands I

Murray Robertson BA(Hons)

Eaglesham, Glasgow

Murray Robertson lives and works in Glasgow and as well as painting and drawing, maintains an interest in printmaking techniques through his long association with Glasgow Print Studio as Master Studio Printer. It is the research, development and application of digital imaging and printing that has particularly interested Murray's current practice.

New Found lands is part of a series, *Deep Waters*, that Murray is currently working on, inspired by 15th, 16th & 17 century maps, alongside modern technology. Sources include textbooks on natural history, astrological charts, early printed maps, scientific/technological imagery and cultural icons collected from world travels.

Art Hire Framing Prize £500

Inside my Drawers

Fran Hanley BA (Hons) Fine Art

Glasgow

A lot of life has happened to Fran Hanley since graduating from Camberwell School of Art in 1987, but it wasn't until the age of 45, during a visit to a Hebridean beach that she had her 'Geronimo' moment of inspiration. "It felt like my artistic life really started then, as over the years I was bringing up my children as a single parent and teaching full-time.

"I'd bought a camper van and started filling it with

flotsam and jetsam picked up on beaches during my travels, but it wasn't until that day in the beach that my artistic life truly took off."

The prizewinning work is based around a printer's tray which Fran came across and has filled with found pieces, each with their own identity. Fran lives and works in Glasgow and has recently exhibited at the Mansfield Park Gallery in Partick.

The Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts Exhibition £500

On the Way Back

Mhairi Malcolm BA (Hons) Fine Art Painting

Glasgow

This is the first time that Glaswegian artist Mhairi Malcolm, who studied at Gray's School of Art has won a prize at the annual show. "A lot of my work is inspired by journeys, and this piece in particular features remnants of the landscape which I've gathered and abstracted from materials I've come across on a journey. "I'd like to produce a body of work on journeys and I'd love to exhibit at the RGI as so many of the journeys centre on the city of Glasgow itself."

A4A Art Foundry Prize

Torso

Duncan McLaren

Balfour, Stirlingshire

Duncan studied at Glasgow School of Art in the 1960s, a time when the sculpture department was being infused with fresh ideas. Although he kept his hand in at sculpture, Duncan followed a career in industry and education, but is now focusing on art almost full-time.

"I'm developing the work that's gone before, and there is a figurative origin to it. The current piece, *Torso*, is identifiable but is also detached from a stylistic point of view. It's made from polyester resin surface medium with an aluminium matrix at the base. It's quite a slow process as you are applying small quantities at a time."

The Foundry Prize involves the creating of an 8in maquette which is cast in bronze, and Duncan will be invited to observe the final casting process.

David Gilchrist Memorial Award £250

Standing Woman and Landscape

Audrey Grant

Edinburgh

Audrey studied at The Leith School of Art, an independent art college, from 1991 –1992 and 2002 – 2004. Born in Falkirk, Audrey grew up in Grangemouth and has lived in Edinburgh for over 20 years. This the first time that Audrey has exhibited at the annual show

“The painting, *Standing Woman and Landscape*, was created last spring, and the single figure is presently my main subject matter,” explains Audrey. “It seeks to explore the figure’s presence in space, an often unspecified space/landscape. I suppose I am interested in how the body expresses something essentially about being human.

“I am delighted to win this award, as it means a great deal to me to receive affirmation for my work and I am very grateful to the RGI for making the award to me.”

James Torrance Memorial Award £250
The Return of Magda the Magnificent
Alice McMurrough
Kirkintilloch G66

Alice left teaching in 2007 to concentrate on painting full-time and was preparing for her first solo show within months. She has since won several awards and exhibited widely.

“I paint every day, often until late in the evening, creating from memories of particular events and also general influences such as family legends, cultural myths and religious fables. **I often find archetypes in old children’s books, toys and television programmes.** I aim for an attention that children have for the world, before ritual and maturity strips life of its daily magic.

The Return of Magda the Magnificent is returning from a difficult journey to a place of peace, which is symbolised by the family croft at the foothills of Quirang in the Trotternish ridge in Skye.

Milly and Benno Schotz Award £250
Motanka
Yulia Podolska BA MA Sculpture
Rye, East Sussex

The late sculptor Benno Schotz would have approved that the winner of this award, Yulia Podolska, has Estonian grandparents, as Schotz was originally from Estonia. Yulia, who now lives in Rye, West Sussex, is from the former Soviet Union and arrived in the UK in January 2010. Her family were Soviet sportsmen, her mother a rhythmic gymnast and her father a biathlete, while her grandfather was once an Estonian weightlifting champion.

The 14-year-old Podolska became fascinated with art following a trip to the Hermitage in St Petersburg, and took up drawing as a result.

A family friend was so impressed that he took the young artist to the Kiev Academy of Fine Art where, at the age of 16, she was offered a place at one of the most prestigious art teaching institutions in Ukraine.

Montanka is based on a traditional Ukrainian doll made by winding yarn and fabric round an iron armature. That the doll is unravelling is Yulia’s representation of what is happening to Ukrainian culture at the moment.

The Art Exposure Gallery Award £250
The Acrobat
Kevin Low
Glasgow

This is the second time that Glasgow artist Kevin Low, who gave up an established career as a theatre photographer to become artist, has successfully submitted work to the show.

“When I was chosen last year, it spurred me on to contact galleries and I now have show coming up in Edinburgh. It’s such a boost to your confidence.” *The Acrobat* is a digital painting inspired by pre-Victorian Staffordshire figures. The technique is similar to painting and involves drawing on to a digital tablet, then adding colour on top of colour. Kevin plans to use the prize to buy more Staffordshire figures to inspire him.

The Glasgow Art Club Awards
A Scot’s Quair
Elspeth Lamb RSA RGI
Glasgow

A Scot’s Quair is a lithograph printed from stone during Elspeth’s residency in Newfoundland and the title is inspired by a poem written by King James 1. “It was a laborious process as the stone was so huge that I needed a fork-lift truck to move it. You paint on to the stone directly and then it goes through a chemical process with gums and acids,” says Elspeth, who graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 1973. She is delighted with her membership to the Glasgow Art Club. “Artists are usually skint so meeting other artists in such a special setting will be a particular luxury.”

Herbal Jar and Fruit
Simon Laurie
Glasgow

Since studying drawing and painting at the Glasgow School of Art, **Simon has had several oneman shows in London and in Scotland, with his work held by well-known collections including the Contemporary Arts Society in London and Aberdeen Art Gallery.**

"I'd always wanted to go to art school and Jim McNaught (also a prizewinner) my art teacher at secondary school was really encouraging," recalls Simon, who mainly works on contemporary semi-abstract, still life and landscape paintings. "Then at art school, Barbara Rae (also an RGI) was equally supportive."

For several years in succession, Simon was arts convener of the RGI, and his chief hanger of this year's hanging committee.

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Notes to Editors:

It may have been founded back in 1861 but the Institute is forward thinking when it comes to promoting and encouraging Scotland's contemporary art and artists.

The RGI's first annual exhibition in 1861 at the McLellan Galleries attracted a huge number of submissions and over 39,000 visitors – many on 'Working Men's Tickets'.

The award of RGI is made to artists for artistic merit and dedication to the Institute, and there are only 50 RGIs at any given time. Current RGIs include George Wyllie, Barbara Rae and Dame Elizabeth Blackadder.

The RGI's Kelly Gallery at 118 Douglas Street, Glasgow G2 4ET hosts a full programme of exhibitions, talks and events.