

Press Release

5 May 2011

First solo show at Kelly Gallery for RGI prizewinner Emma Semple

With the RGI celebrating its 150th anniversary, the timing is exactly right for the one the Institute's prizewinners to stage her first solo show at the RGI Kelly Gallery.

It's over two years since Glasgow based artist **Emma Semple** (28) was awarded the RGI David Cargill Award for a portrait at the RGI's Annual Open Show. Now the Kelly Gallery is showcasing Emma's one-woman exhibition which runs from Tuesday 17 May until Saturday 28 May. The show features a combination of different work, including paintings, drawings, paper sculpture and embroidery.

"It was such a confidence boost to win the Cargill Award in 2008," points out Emma, "as it was the first year I'd had work accepted by the RGI. Something like that is a real encouragement to a young artist. The RGI's annual show is massively important as it plays such a significant role in promoting new young Scottish artists."

Emma studied drawing and painting at Glasgow School of Art, and since graduating in 2005, has continued to paint extensively, exhibiting in various galleries throughout the UK. Her work is strongly influenced by travel experiences in Europe, Africa, India and her native Scotland.

Emma's love of travel stems from a Travelling Scholarship to Andalucía, awarded by the Princes Trust. "With hindsight, this had a great influence on my work," recalls the artist. "I am particularly fascinated by the landscape and nature, and in creating hypnotic and meditative spaces for contemplation.

"I am also interested in playing with the viewers' perception of 'traditional' landscape by using different materials in my work and by exploring the crossover between abstraction and figuration.

"I enjoy working in lots of different mediums as they open up other ideas and challenge traditional materials. All mediums feed off one another, for example, embroidery is not dissimilar from drawing as it's drawing with thread, with each thread a brush stroke."

When the exhibition closes, Emma is off on her travels again, this time to Ethiopia where she hopes to spend time teaching at a charity funded school.

Press & photographers are cordially invited to the private view on Thursday 19 May from 5pm - 7pm.

-ends-

For an interview with Emma or further information and images, contact Heather MacLeod on 07891144157 or words@heather.uk.net or RGI Kelly Gallery Curator Lynne Mackenzie Tel: 0141 248 6386 curator@royalglasgowinstitute.org

Notes for editors

The Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts (Charity No SC044650)

2011 is the 150th anniversary of The Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts.

It may have been founded back in 1861 but the Institute is forward thinking in 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 RGI continues to host this major annual exhibition at the Mitchell Library, which offers awards to selected artists, including several expressly aimed at young painters and sculptors, or first time exhibitors.

The RGI's Kelly Gallery at 118 Douglas Street, Glasgow G2 4ET hosts a full programme of exhibitions, talks and events, and has recently appointed Lynne Mackenzie as Gallery Curator & Project Manager, and Amy Marletta as Assistant Curator. **Gallery opening hours: Tues - Fri 10.30am - 5pm, Saturday 10.30am - 3pm**

