



University of the Highlands and Islands

**BA (HONS) FINE ART & FINE ART TEXTILES
DEGREE SHOW 2023**

UHI Moray School of Art
UHI Orkney
UHI Outer Hebrides
UHI Shetland

With enormous congratulations to all
graduating students:

Hayley Anderson
Elizabeth Bown
Moira Downie
Kirsty Duguid
Jenna MacNeill
Erin Matheson
Adam McNab
Beccy Mooney
Barbara Morrison
Susan Pearson
Amy Ross
Molly Shearer
Cilla Robertson
Janine Smith
Elaine Catherine Thomason

cover image: Molly Shearer, UHI Orkney

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Introduction

The BA (Hons) Fine Art course at The University of the Highlands and Islands affords students four or more years of creative learning across four separate centres of learning at Moray, North Uist, Orkney and Shetland.

This year we see the work of students graduating from Moray, Orkney and Shetland. Congratulations to the students on their impressive achievements, and as they emerge into the wider world we thank them for their contribution to the life of the University, each bringing their own unique perspective to the University's diverse learning landscape.

The past few years have borne the added challenge of lockdowns, restrictions, and isolation, yet these exhibitions are a testament to the ways that human creativity is an unstoppable force that flourishes despite obstacles. The images and objects, sounds and words that you see here carry with them the rich residue of years of exploration, experimentation, discipline, and rigorous research into places, myths, dreams, memories, objects, people, subcultures, beliefs, histories...

Media and materials are magically transformed to ignite your imagination, to provoke questions, to inspire and motivate, and to reveal what was hidden. It's a kind of alchemy, where base materials are transformed into gold. You will encounter intriguing forms, challenging ideas, beguiling patterns and colours, unfamiliar worlds, surprising new perspectives, all manifestations of the creative power of the imagination to turn personal vision into collective experience. As viewers we share in these transformations ourselves by bringing our own openness, curiosity, and receptivity, participating in the transmutation of materials and mediums into the gold of inspiration, empowerment and connection.

Through these alchemical transformations we are reminded of who and what we are, individually and collectively, how we perceive and think, and how we enhance our understanding of the world by sharing in the rich diversity of our individual perspectives.

Celebrate with us the amazing accomplishments of these artist-chemists. Enjoy the show, you will emerge transformed.

– Norman Shaw, Programme Leader



UHI Moray School of Art

Hayley Anderson

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Female narration has historically focused on the physical elements of the female form told through archetypal characters, reducing female achievement to superficial beauty or the ability to biologically reproduce before fading into aged invisibility.

Through my practice I aim to narrate female stories encompassed in an immersive retelling of Scottish mythology, focusing for this body of work on the story of the Cailleach, the mother of all gods and goddesses in Scotland. I examine the parallels of her story and mine, a mother grappling with the psychological effects of ageing and trying to propagate a world of her own making.

Removing all trace of physical descriptors of the goddess as she transforms from young to old, I have instead created a liminal space which celebrates the environment said to have been created by the Cailleach. Her compositions made in moments of solitude.

This work utilises traditional printmaking techniques, creating imagery without the use of technology, and celebrating the tactile, hands-on nature of the medium. Lino carved with basic tools, inked, and printed by hand and paper cut with blades. Each element slow, considered and created in an intuitive, materials-led process.





UHI Orkney

Elizabeth Bown

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My work is intrinsically connected to, and influenced by, my Christian faith and the organic farm on which I live and work. I make ceramic pots and have been experimenting using local clay, dug from ditches on the farm. I mainly use a wheel made from redundant farm machinery and a woodfire kiln made from stones and scrap metal.

Pots that do not survive the firing process are repaired with coloured glues, paper-mâché, and other materials. I look for beauty in this brokenness and celebrate the imperfections or elevate the discarded. Collaborating with the materials I am inspired, and I experiment with materials and process to discover beauty in the materials as I make. These ideas are rooted in the Christian message of a second chance for all.





UHI Moray School of Art

Moira Downie

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The Origins of an Autobiography

When I revisit the rural area in the NE, and the Buchan farm where I was brought up, I inevitably see the place where my childhood memories are rooted considerably altered by social, economic and technological progress and where now only traces of my past remain visible.

I collect artefacts with qualities which, like the countryside, have altered through time, but remain a tangible connection to my past and therefore have the ability to generate the memories and stories of my early life. Like the fallibility of memory, those objects I recreate are susceptible to age, wear and decay and because of that, I choose to make these objects in impermanent or unsuitable materials.

The installation is a reencounter with my past and a reflection on how my early childhood experiences have influenced me in becoming the person I am now. The objects I have made symbolise the people and the life of the place where I felt I belonged. Moreover, for me, such objects and the meaning they contain, also evoke the loss of some of the values and beliefs which were integral to such a close and interdependent community.





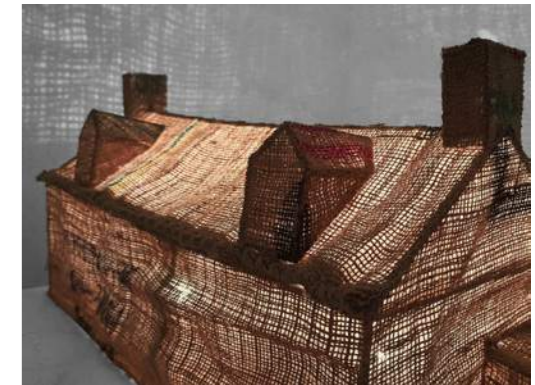
UHI Moray School of Art

Kirsty Duguid
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Through my artwork I explore how memory and experience can affect the relationship between place and identity. My childhood home, Ploverwards, was a livestock farm located in the North-East of Scotland. The farm built the foundations of my identity, but moving to the small town of Keith and working in a bar whilst studying for my art degree allowed me to appreciate the importance of not only where you come from, but also where you are now.

I recreate meaningful buildings from my past and present using repurposed materials. Using my memories, photographs, and documents as reference I replicate these buildings in the state they were when I experienced them, not necessarily how they exist now. On the farm everything could be repaired or reused. Now, I adopt this ethos in my practice and use any materials I have access to. This includes hessian bags, beer boxes and bar towels. By manipulating these materials, I add another layer of history to their story as I use them to share my own.

I gather family photographs to be used as references for my detailed charcoal drawings which surround my buildings. My artwork is deeply personal, yet relatable. By juxtaposing these elements, I aim to convey a sense of nostalgia and displacement through my artwork. A cross over between my past and present which come together to form my identity.





UHI Moray School of Art

Jenna MacNeill
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My influences engender a multidisciplinary role, my inspiration comes from many aspects of the artistic realm namely music and history because I find both to be rich in content and creative energy.

Examining music's linguistic ability to communicate, connect and translate between generational gaps has been the subject of fascinating ongoing studio discussion this year. My work has seen me explore the strong relationship I have with my mother, a prime factor in our bond has been a mutual love for the music of her youth and how it has become mine too.

Music's ability to transcend time, place and troubles is a crucial driving force behind my work, the connection one can feel to certain artists and albums creates relationships between likeminded tribesmen and bestows a cultlike form of worship.

I have been enjoying the juxtaposition between tradition and popular culture in my paintings, choosing to paint modern icons of rock, embracing a kitschy undertone but completing in a formal manner. The more contemporary painterly techniques and compositions of Audrey Flack, Steven Shearer and John Byrne have provided insight whereas academic masters such as Alexandre Cabanel, Albrecht Dürer and Leonardo da Vinci have also been channelled.





UHI Moray School of Art

Erin Matheson

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The sum of our collected objects accumulated within our homes or valued environments can become an outer representation of ourselves. Investigating our connection to the everyday object as an extension of the self, I am inspired by how these connections arise between the owner and the possession. In my practice I question when an object stops becoming a possession and transforms into a part of the self. These objects that we accumulate are nostalgic and connect us to memories, people, and places.

Through the medium of oil paint, I explore this connection through removing the object from its mundane environment. The value and sentiment of the object is equally represented by the care and treatment of the surface underneath the painted object as much as the painted object itself, where the soft curved surfaces represent the preciousness of these objects and the significance of what it represents. These paintings depict objects that all hold the same value despite their differences. Whether broken, worn, or pristine, all these objects still have the strength to hold within our personal sentiments. These paintings which are either displayed in a diptych or show a multiple, reflect the exploration of my experience of being a fraternal twin.





UHI Moray School of Art

Adam McNab (MADA)

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My work is an archaeology of the imagination. I excavate, study and piece together narratives and display the outcomes that showcase all of the skills I have developed on my journey. I have combined my Visual Communication background with my Fine Art practice to produce work that encourages the viewer's creativity through the interactions of fictional characters. These characters are deliberately humorous, being placed in scenarios that many would find awkward... yet these scenarios facilitate the need for questions to be asked about why these characters are there and what the purpose of them is.

I have utilised every skill at my disposal to create this narrative of past and present, combining the old and the new to produce an experience which triggers more creativity and imagination. Through a combination of 2D and 3D work, digital and practical, my work seeks to explore our existence as human beings - with that in mind... Picture this: If we had the technology to visit our ancestors in the distant past, and they had the opportunity to visit us in the present day – what would our impressions be of one another and have we really changed at all as a species?





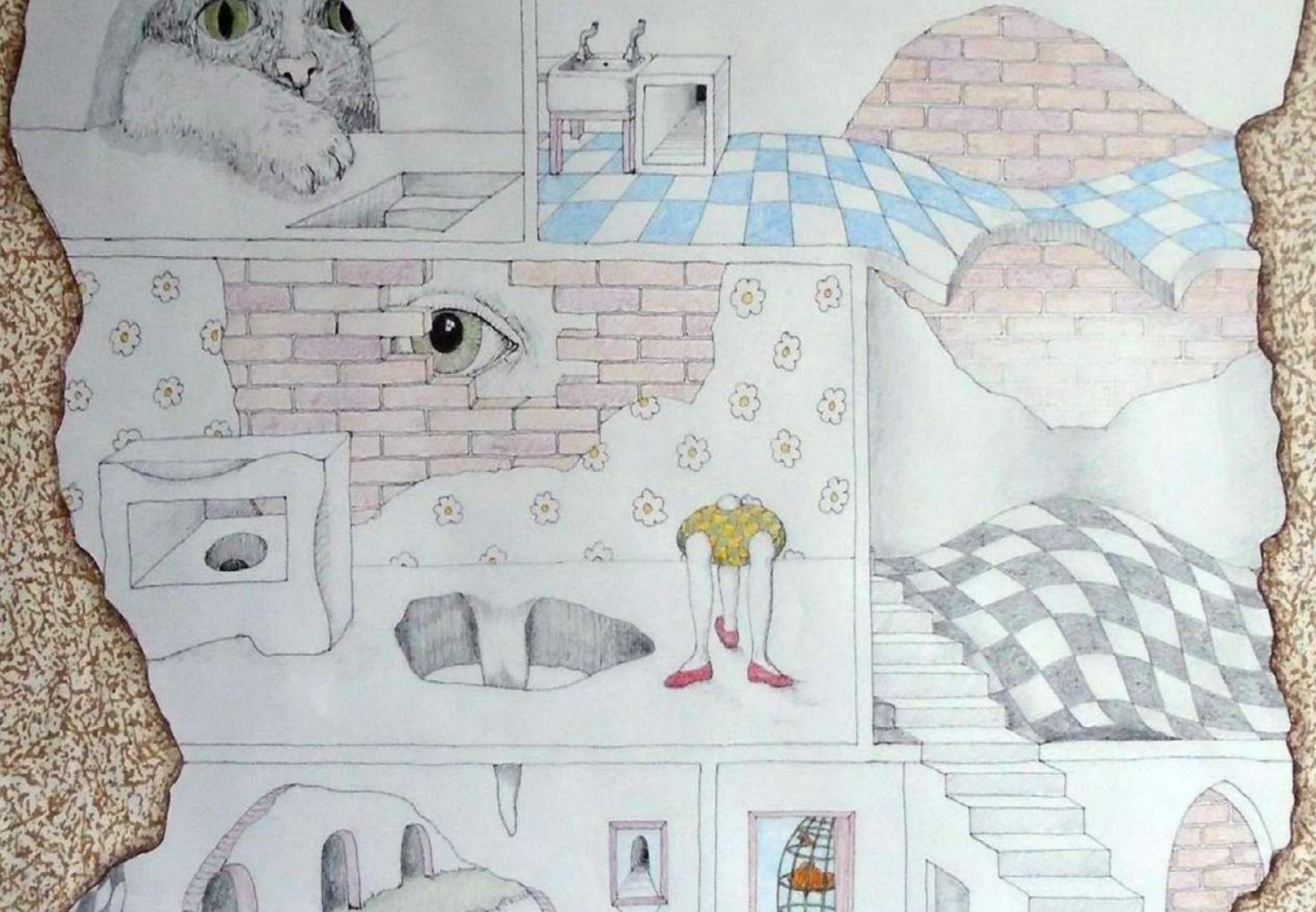
UHI Orkney

Beccy Mooney

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My main interests derive from the limitations of my film camera and the experimental images this leads to. I am documenting a particular time in the day called the blue hour. During the summer months in Orkney this period is prolonged and can be known in dialect as the 'simmer dim'. The lens of the camera and the line drawings are used to exercise the possibilities or impossibilities of framing this blue space.





UHI Orkney

Barbara Morrison
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My work is partly about imagination, dreams and the inner life, but it also echoes the essential weirdness of the parts of the outer world that lurk just under the surface of that which we recognize as reality.

In the same way that small creatures live beneath the surface of the soil, so strange things have their existence in our subconscious just below the veneer of normality.





UHI Shetland

Susan Pearson

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In my practice I create images in two main ways:

1. Sketching from life or books; observing or abstracting 'real' things like a landscape, or a plant, cloth or a chair, bones or the human figure etc.
2. Experimenting with surrealist practices such as automatic writing and drawing, which is said to reveal the creative unconscious.

Whether from life or from the unconscious, art, for me, is about curiosity, experimentation, and instinct. Art can reveal more than what we perceive. This also applies to the materials I use; I find that they have their own ideas.

**Charcoal Paper Pen Ink Canvas Paint Cloth Clay Plaster
Wire Old Dolls Card Found Objects Seaweed Pebbles
Yarn Concrete String Glue Moss Bones**

I am influenced by the writing of Aldous Huxley, Kate Bush, and Giles Deleuze, exploring links between the unconscious, spirituality, culture, and folklore. I am also inspired by the story telling found in the work of Paula Rego, Francisco Goya, and Leonora Carrington. My influences often pull me in different directions; I examine the energy and tension found in these contrasts.

Vulnerability and Strength, Masculinity and Femininity ,
Natural and Man-Made, Figurative and Abstract, Light and
Dark, Hidden and Exposed, Strange and Familiar, Uncanny
and Homely.





UHI Shetland

Cilla Robertson

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During my studies on in the Fine Art degree at Shetland UHI, the inspirations that have endured are space, place, and the vernacular dialect.

My work enters the spaces and places we as humans find ourselves in throughout the different seasons of our lives. A recent season of illness and loss created a pain that was difficult to communicate verbally, and this art reflects the emotions of this time some of which were difficult to deal with.

These pieces highlight different difficult stages of grief by expressing feelings and mood that I have explored in various mediums and techniques.





UHI Moray School of Art

Amy Ross

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'To romanticise is to discover the world's original meaning'
(Koerner 2009:31)

Inspired by old cemeteries and graveyards, this body of work is centred entirely on Old High Church, Inverness. A historic church with a grim past of Jacobite imprisonment and execution. The future of the church in recent years has been uncertain as it is now up for sale, leaving the church and its grounds in a state of limbo.

Sound plays a vital role in the understanding of my work. The use of a quiet ambient drone encourages a state of contemplation and reflection when viewing the abstract work.

The work comprises a mix of fine detail and abstract oil paintings. My detailed work centres on doorways and barriers which lead into the body of abstract pieces. I focus on the use of pictorial space to create a sense of obscurity and uncertainty. Taking inspiration from classic Romantic landscapes, such as those painted by Casper David Friedrich. My work is open to interpretation and almost holds an anthropomorphic quality. I can visualize it as skyscapes, lichen on trees or moss growing on graves.





UHI Orkney

Molly Shearer

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By applying traditional hand textile processes to my contemporary practice, I aim to explore my connections to the Orkney landscape. Despite the ever-changing and often wild environment of Orkney, to me, it sustains a constant sense of calm.

I work towards developing a slow and sustainable art practice which informs this dialogue between myself and the landscape.





UHI Orkney

Janine Smith

In my work I am exploring the way in which memory can be held within the landscape. Through photography and mixed media, I record the shapes and patterns I see around me every day. The fields, fences, stone dykes, clusters of farm buildings; the old is very evident contrasting with the new in the Orkney landscape. The small intricate details of plants, grasses, spider webs, and butterflies intrigue me. The sea and sky are always surrounding me, the beaches, stones, shells, and sand.

The everyday objects I collect belong to another time, old photographs, maps, broken crockery. A past time that is lost or disappearing, these objects still hold within them the space for memory. The elemental forces of the wind and sea forge the connection between object, land, mind and body, shaping the realisation that place and memory are important for a sense of identity.

The invisible connection between place and the experience of the person is given the space to exist in the traces of objects and the changing shapes of the land.





UHI Shetland

Elaine Catherine Thomason

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As an artist I have always re-used materials that have been discarded, the everyday objects become a creative resource in my practice. From the 1800's the Industrial Revolution has accelerated production and consumption, objects clutter my daily life.

My thoughts have focused on the lives of two young women from the Holocene to Anthropocene era, and an imagined slip of time which finds them conversing on the world around them. Enmeshed in this space I have considered the history, ecology, natural and artificial materials of an island life.

Practicing in assemblage, lino-print and drawing I have created a visual narrative for the viewer to explore.





UHI Outer Hebrides

This year UHI Outer Hebrides will be hosting an Alumni Exhibition to showcase the work of graduates from the BA (Hons) Fine Art programme. The course, established in 2006, occupies the beautiful coastal studios of Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre, nestled on the shores of Loch nam Maddadh, on the Isle of North Uist.

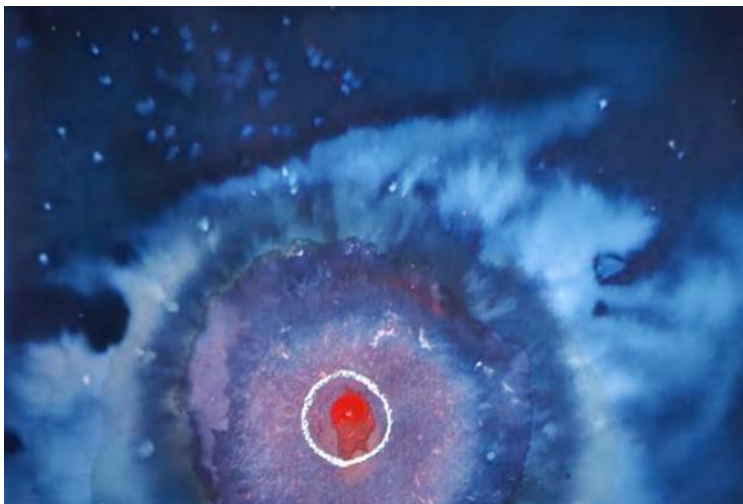
The programme initially ran in partnership with Moray School of Art, and from 2017 the full 4 years have been delivered from the North Uist site.

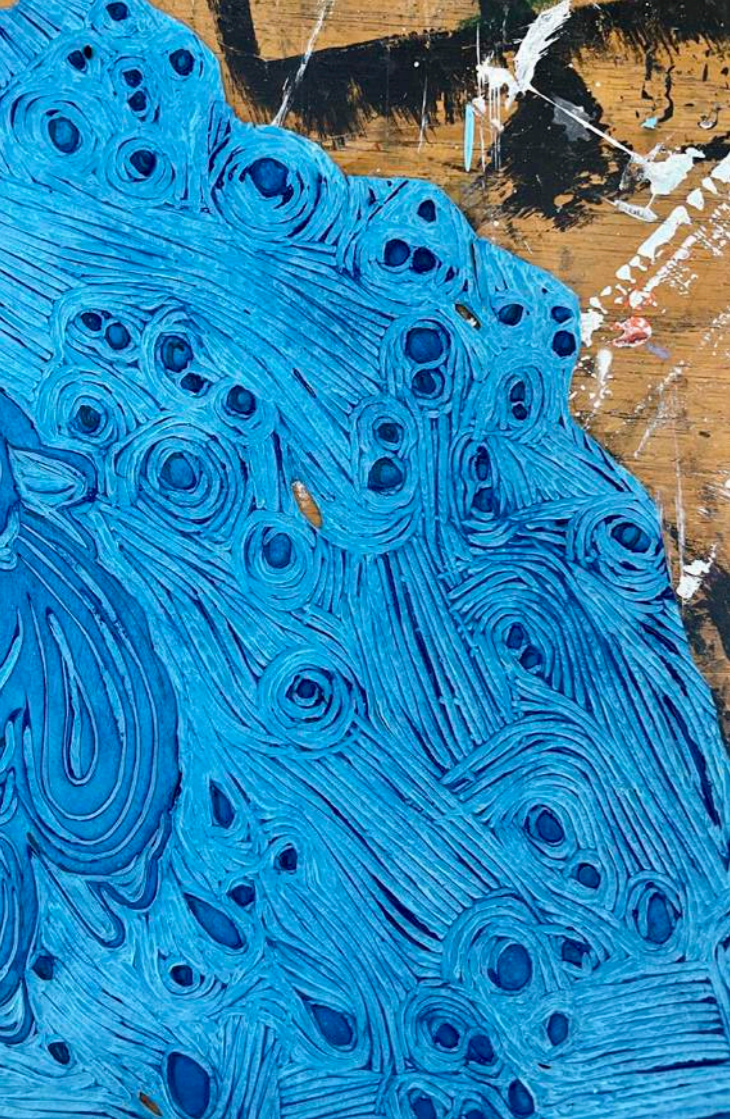
It is truly wonderful to show how many alumni have continued their creative practice following graduation. This year's group exhibition reunites graduates from across the course's 17 year history. Eighteen alumni will contribute work representing a vibrant range of media and subject matter including drawing, sculpture, installation, painting, film and more.

The theme of the exhibition is RITUAL / REBELLION! to encompass both the repeated sequences and gestures of creative practice, and a refusal of order or resistance to established traditions, and the urge to discover new pathways.

All of our alumni chose to study in this unique environment, and the rich and specific history, ecology and deep time of the island is braided into their work in one way or another. The exhibition will draw together this varied group, reconverging their work in the locale which stimulated their practice on the BA (Hons) Fine Art, and beyond.

images clockwise from top left:
Jean Newman, Class of 2018
Maya El Nahal, Class of 2021
Katherine Taylor, Class of 2020





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

Louise Barrington
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Paul Bloomer
Brian Boag
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Samantha Clarke
Simon Clarke
Sarah Dearlove
Kerriane Flett
Kelly France
Pete Honeyman
John Hunter
June Hyndman
Mark Jenkins
Hannah Laycock

Alison Lee
Kenneth Le Riche
Shaun MacDonald
Anne Mackenzie
Rebecca Marr
Catriona Meighan
Nicola Neate
Gillian Neish
Doug Rattray
Norman Shaw
Stuart Sim
Steve Smith
Judy Spark
Edina Szeles
Kristi Tait
Stacey Toner
Holly Totten
Stephanie Tristam
Cordelia Underhill

image: Hayley Anderson, Moray School of Art

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'll be taught by a highly experienced team of visual practitioners, who will support you to explore and experiment with a range of fine art media. We support 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.

Find more information and apply online:

moray.uhi.ac.uk/courses/ba-hons-fine-art/

orkney.uhi.ac.uk/courses/ba-hons-fine-art/

outerhebrides.uhi.ac.uk/courses/ba-hons-fine-art/

shetland.uhi.ac.uk/courses/ba-hons-fine-art/



image: Kirsty Duguid, Moray School of Art

UHI Degree Show 2023

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