

Five things you need to know today



Royal Scottish Academy – Edinburgh College – Debating next week – Giant pandas waiting for the right moment – #Edinhour

The Royal Scottish Academy is opening a new exhibition from tomorrow, featuring the works of last year's degree shows. The fifth annual RSA NEW CONTEMPORARIES exhibition will take place at the Royal Scottish Academy Galleries in Edinburgh from 13 April to 8 May 2013. Presenting work across a wide range of media, this carefully curated exhibition offers a unique opportunity to see the best of Scotland's emerging talent under one roof.

Art graduates have been chosen by exhibition convenor Francis Convery RSA, with assistance from members of the Royal Scottish Academy and representatives from the five main colleges of art. This year the six schools of architecture in Scotland have put forward candidates to work with architecture convenor Neil Gillespie RSA (Elect). The graduates are given the opportunity to launch their career at the prestigious RSA galleries by exhibiting a substantial body of new work; including painting, sculpture, film making, photography, printmaking, architecture and installation.

“The artists we selected this year were all chosen because their degree shows were outstanding in their respective degree shows. From almost 400 graduating artists, we selected 55, who are joined by 5 graduating architects, nominated by their respective schools.

The selecting panel were choosing work that would represent the best of current practice and we responded mostly unanimously, where we could identify a combination of the

visually compelling, the use of intelligent skills and materials, where there was a tangible contemporary relevance in the work (or its complete absence in some cases), where there was ambition, energy, courage, humour and subtext, all essential elements of the best contemporary art.

The selection was not about 'the most hip', the 'latest thing', the 'most shocking', it was not about fitting any specific theme or agenda, it was primarily what visually interested us, what skillfully held our attention, made us curious. In some cases the work seemed fully formed but others we thought showed greater potential given the extra time this show would provide. So we did take some risks when selecting those, alongside the more unanimously nominated presentations. However, in spite of our open agenda, a loose theme did emerge from the selection and a 'unity of diversity' would appear to accurately reflect the zeitgeist."

Francis Convery RSA, Exhibition Convenor

Works will be for sale and the exhibition offers a wonderful opportunity to invest in Scotland's up and coming talent. The RSA is part of the Own Art scheme, allowing buyers to spread the cost of an artwork over ten interest free monthly payments!

RSA NEW CONTEMPORARIES represents the RSA's commitment to supporting and presenting the best contemporary work in Scotland. The RSA team works closely with the artists and architects towards developing a lasting relationship in the lead up to the exhibition and beyond. With over £11,000 worth of monetary prizes in addition to residency, studio and purchase prizes, the development of this exhibition is an important initiative for emerging artists in Scotland, enabling a 'first exhibition' opportunity for some 50+ emergent artists annually. The RSA are delighted to announce that Walter Scott will be Exhibition Patron and, for the fifth consecutive year, The Skinny will be our Media Partner.

"The RSA is to be commended for providing recent graduates

with the opportunity to show their work in such a high-profile venue at the start of their careers.” Jim Birrell, Head of Painting & Printmaking, Glasgow School of Art.

The Edinburgh Reporter met Arthur Watson, the President of the Royal Scottish Academy the other week at [the Edinburgh Award](#).



We were delighted to hear about the Edinburgh College students who fundraised the money to pay for their trip to New York to go and dance on a stage in Central Park as part of Tartan Week. They look as though they had a good time! [You can read more here.](#)

Next Saturday there is a big debate in Edinburgh.

[English-Speaking Union Scotland](#) is proud to be hosting debates featuring the best university debating teams in Wales, Scotland, England and Ireland who will battle it out to be crowned the 2012-13 John Smith Memorial Mace Champion. Founded in 1954, the [John Smith Memorial Mace](#) is one of the largest and most prestigious debating competitions in the world, featuring over 200 teams across four national

championships.

The **International Grand Final** of the John Smith Memorial Mace will take place on Saturday 20 April at [The Royal Society of Edinburgh](#). The event will start at 6:15pm – doors will open at 5:30pm.

The organisers say this is a fantastic opportunity to watch a high quality debate and take part in a public floor debate on a controversial topic.

The draw for the debate is as follows:

1st Propostion: England-Kaplan Law School

1st Opposition: Wales-Aberystwyth University

2nd Proposition: Ireland-Trinity College Dublin Historical Society

2nd Opposition: Scotland-St. Andrews University

The motion for this year's final will be "This House Would Make the Use of Unmanned Military Attack Vehicles a War Crime". The debate will take place on Saturday 20 April 5.30-8.30pm at The Royal Society of Edinburgh (22-26 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PQ) Tickets are free and can be bought at <http://jsmminternationalfinal-eorg.eventbrite.co.uk/#>



Edinburgh Zoo is keeping a close eye on the two giant pandas, Tian Tian and Yang Guang. There is a chance for the two to mate in about ten days time when everything should be just right. This is of course the whole point of the pandas being here, to try and produce a panda cub or two. Apparently twins are very common, although we are sure that the Zoo would be delighted to have just one. The Edinburgh Reporter went out to the Zoo to meet Iain Valentine who has overall charge of the pandas to find out more.

The first #Edinburgh took place on Wednesday, and the organisers say there were about 2000 tweets. The next is on 8 May 2013 and you are invited to join in. [The instructions are here.](#)

An hour like this is to set aside a time for people to get together and discuss one particular topic. In our case it is all things Edinburgh. There is also a Scotland Hour...guess what they talk about...