

Dream Walking with Hares



House moves give us ideas; we think we'll do all sorts of new things, even if we've only gone a few miles down the road. Sally Bruce Richards and her family went a bit further than that, exchanging their life in Devon for a new one on the Isle of Mull in the Inner Hebrides. Both Sally and her husband Graham were already established artists, with Sally working primarily as a draughtswoman – but something about the island scenery set her free from the straight lines and symmetry of her training, and she started to explore the shapes of the natural world around her.



Five years after that pivotal move, Sally has a new exhibition ***Dream Walking with Hares*** at **The Gallery on the Corner** here in Edinburgh. Sally now specialises in beautiful copper, gold and silver leaf paintings on natural timber; she particularly focuses on birds and hares, all depicted against shimmering gold and silver backgrounds.

In ***Peacock in Blossom*** brilliant turquoises and greens highlight the bird's trailing tail; in another painting the filigree wings of dragonflies are tinged with blue, and this fine detail is also seen in Sally's pictures of bees. Sally is skilled at expressing movement; the fluid motion of fish swimming towards one another in ***Koi Twins*** is expertly captured; ***Together In Slumber*** is equally effective in conveying the closeness of two hares curled into the foetal position; these hares have a slightly sepulchral look, whilst ***Winter Slumber*** shows a rather more cuddly hare sleeping beside a hedgehog, their heads close together.



Although some of Sally's paintings are almost miniatures, ***Dreaming of Sparrows*** is a large piece in which bare black branches stand out against a silver background. Two birds perch together under a silvery yellow moon. There are more little birds in ***Huddled Up;*** again they wait on a branch, but this time beneath a yellow star. ***Meeting Mouse*** is a witty painting in which a fox graciously turns his head to listen to a chatty rodent.



Sally and Graham also paint landscapes together (though Sally says she 'does the easy bits'). Graham is especially interested in the changing weather patterns on Mull and the effect these have on both natural and man-made objects – 'Trees permanently arched back from the wind, a rusting tin roof washing away...'

Dream Walking With Hares is on at The Gallery on the Corner, 34 Northumberland Street, until 31st January 2015. All works are for sale. The Gallery is open 11-5 Tuesday to Saturday: it was the first social firm developed by Autism Ventures Scotland. You can also buy Sally and Graham's work via their [gallery website](#), or you might like to take a trip across The Sound of Mull and pay their studio a visit. Maybe not just now though – Sally and Graham's preview night was so windy that they couldn't even get home themselves.

