

Bellany, Elsie Inglis and The Scottish Women's Hospitals



From today at Holyrood there is a new exhibition featuring paintings by the late John Bellany in an exhibition about the Scottish Women's Hospitals alongside video and a new poem by Scots Makar Liz Lochhead.

The whole exhibition is a neat marriage of Bellany's work emphasising the significance of one of Edinburgh's notable daughters Elsie Inglis and her work with the hospitals during the First World War.

Dr Inglis was told by an official to 'go home and sit still' when she offered her services. Not one to do that she proceeded to set up the Scottish Women's Hospitals in the field, against much opposition.

John Bellany suffered much ill health during his life, which means that he knew all about being in hospital, and he worked on these paintings in 2008 about five years before he died. It is only now that the works will be seen for the first time by the public.

Helen Bellany, wife of the late artist, said: "He had a lifelong admiration and gratitude for all the help he had been given by all the doctors and nurses and he never stopped praising them. He had been a very fortunate man. Good nursing can make all the difference to somebody whose life is in danger and who is frightened and frail.

"We didn't know anything about the hospitals. Everyone knew about Elsie Inglis but not the hospitals. It is a long time coming for this tribute to be made and it is a great inspiration for Scotland."

[The Edinburgh Reporter News](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

The Scottish Parliament's Presiding Officer, the Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP said: "The work of John Bellamy vividly brings this harrowing period in our history to life Bellamy's artwork gives us a glimpse of the conditions those working in the Scottish Women's Hospitals faced as well as looking at the many hundreds and thousands of people they helped save.

"These women who would not go home and sit still as they had been told were led by Elsie Inglis who fought to create the Scottish Women's Hospitals. Her story is beautifully portrayed in the poem The Ballad of Elsie Inglis which Liz Lochhead has written especially for the exhibition."