

Leading Scottish Scientists Celebrated with Major RSE Exhibition

The Royal Society of Edinburgh – Scotland’s National Academy – unveiled a new free photography exhibition at its offices on George Street in Edinburgh, celebrating some of Scotland’s leading female scientists, all of whom are RSE Fellows.

The women featured were asked to bring along an item that represents their inspiration to become a scientist or their scientific journey. Objects included a female Lego scientist in a lab, solar powered cells, carbon dioxide locked up inside rocks, models of molecules, books, a sixth-year school report on biology and even a melted kettle element. A short self-penned essay next to every photo explains each woman’s expertise and what inspired them to become a scientist and why they do what they do.

Speaking at the exhibition, RSE President Professor Dame Anne Glover who herself is featured in the exhibition said:

“The RSE is privileged to have amongst its Fellowship some of the most innovative female scientists in the world today. By celebrating some of them here, we can hopefully inspire many others in realising what a wonderful and diverse career path science can be and take pride in ourselves as a nation in the calibre of scientists who choose to study, work or carry out their research in Scotland.”



Prof Dame Anne Glover in front of Women in Science in Scotland exhibition. (Credit Duncan McGlynn)

Dr Rebekah Widdowfield, CEO of the RSE said:

“While our recent report, with the RSE Young Academy, Tapping all our Talents 2018, showed some good progress in the number of women pursuing a career in science; we know that more still needs to be done to attract women to study and work in science and to retain them within the profession.

“The report highlighted the importance of positive role models and providing the instigation for this exhibition which seeks to help increase the visibility of some of Scotland’s fantastic women scientists. It demonstrates both the impact of their work and the pleasure these women gain through their life in science.”

- •The exhibition currently features 21 portraits including:
- Professor Dame Anne Glover; Professor Mandy MacLean who carries out research into pulmonary arterial

- hypertension, a fatal disease mainly affecting women;
- Forensic Scientist Professor Niamh Nic Daeid;
 - Professor of Computing Science Muffy Calder;
 - Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland Professor Sheila Rowan;
 - Professor of Reproductive Medicine Hilary Critchley who works with patients with menstrual disorders;
 - Solar Physicist Professor Ineke De Moortel;
 - Professor Karen Faulds who works on developing bionanosensors for detection of biomarkers related to disease;
 - Professor Lesley Yellowlees, expert in solar energy;
 - Professor of Physical Chemistry at University of St Andrews Sharon Ashbrook;
 - Dr Silvia Paracchini whose research currently focuses on the genetic basis of dyslexia;
 - environmental hydrologist Professor Louise Heathwaite;
 - synthetic chemist Professor Eva Hevia;
 - Professor Rona MacKie whose research focused on epidemiology and molecular genetics of malignant melanoma;
 - Professor of Microbiology Nicola Stanley-Wall;
 - Crum Brown Chair of Chemistry Professor Polly Arnold;
 - Professor of Chemical Engineering Raffaella Ocone;
 - research engineer Professor Becky J Lunn;
 - applied statistician Professor Ruth King;
 - Professor of Astrophysics at the Royal Observatory Catherine Heymans;
 - Professor Mercedes Maroto-Valer whose research is addressing global challenges to ensure sustainability of resources and energy.

Four more portraits are to be added at the end of the month including former RSE President Professor Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell.

Women in Science in Scotland is also part of this year's

Edinburgh Science Festival, alongside a special, sold out discussion presented by the RSE, Being a Woman in Science: Changed Times? which features Professor Dame Anne Glover, Professor Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell and RSE Fellow Young Academy of Scotland (YAS) member Dr Silvia Paracchini who will discuss their personal experiences of being a woman in science.

Large-scale prints of the photographs taken by Ian Georgeson will be on display until the Autumn.