

# The Scottish Gallery to host concurrent exhibitions this coming Spring

This coming March will see joint exhibitions in the gallery by Michael McVeigh, who until recently worked in Edinburgh as a street artist, even being known as a cult figure by the city's groups on nights out, who also draws inspiration from his Scottish surroundings. Alongside McVeigh's work is fellow Scot David Cook who uses his imposed isolation on a remote stretch of coastline to connect with the wild and develop his seaside garden.



Michael McVey

Michael McVeigh's works in 'A Sense of Place' also focus on his Scottish surroundings, depicting the world around him, creating both a naïve and sophisticated setting for contemporary life. There is something of the medieval chronicler about the way he works, depicting the quirky nature of our very existence.

His works focus on Scottish subcultures and traditions – Edinburgh streets, Scottish pipes and drums, harbour scenes and pubs, fisherfolk and folk musicians. He draws an older Scotland, referencing painters like David Wilkie, Alexander Carse or James Howe.

Michael McVeigh has followed an unconventional journey as an artist; having left school with no qualifications he decided he wanted to be an artist and so began, unannounced, going to

classes at Duncan of Jordanstone Art College. Eventually his presence was challenged and it was James Morrison, then one of the lecturers, who formalised his position and accepted him as a full-time student, based only on his drawings and painting.

Until recently, he had a stall on Edinburgh's Rose Street selling his 'lizard' prints yet, despite his humble origins, his works are held in both public and private collections including town halls, pubs, fishmongers and a number of municipal and national institutions. His work can be considered outsider art but it is honest and unpretentious portrayals that have drawn him acclaim.







*Bennetts Bar, Michael McVey, 2020, oil on canvas, 49.5 x 60.5 cm and Bennetts Bar, Michael McVey, 2020, oil on canvas, 49.5 x 60.5 cm.*

Christina Jansen, Managing Director at The Scottish Gallery, comments, “Michael McVeigh is a shy artist. He was included in several gallery exhibitions over thirty years ago and it took a lot of courage for him to reconnect with The Gallery in 2015. We were determined that his work deserved a full reappraisal, and we were delighted and relieved that his exhibition in 2016 was warmly received by the public and critics.



David Cook

“Michael is a romantic; there is a unique character to his work which is quietly observed and authentic. His paintings,

drawings and prints connect the people, places, and traditions of Scotland.”

Working in isolation has become normal for many people over the course of the last year. However, for David Cook, whose home and studio are perched on a remote stretch of North Sea coastline, nothing much has changed.

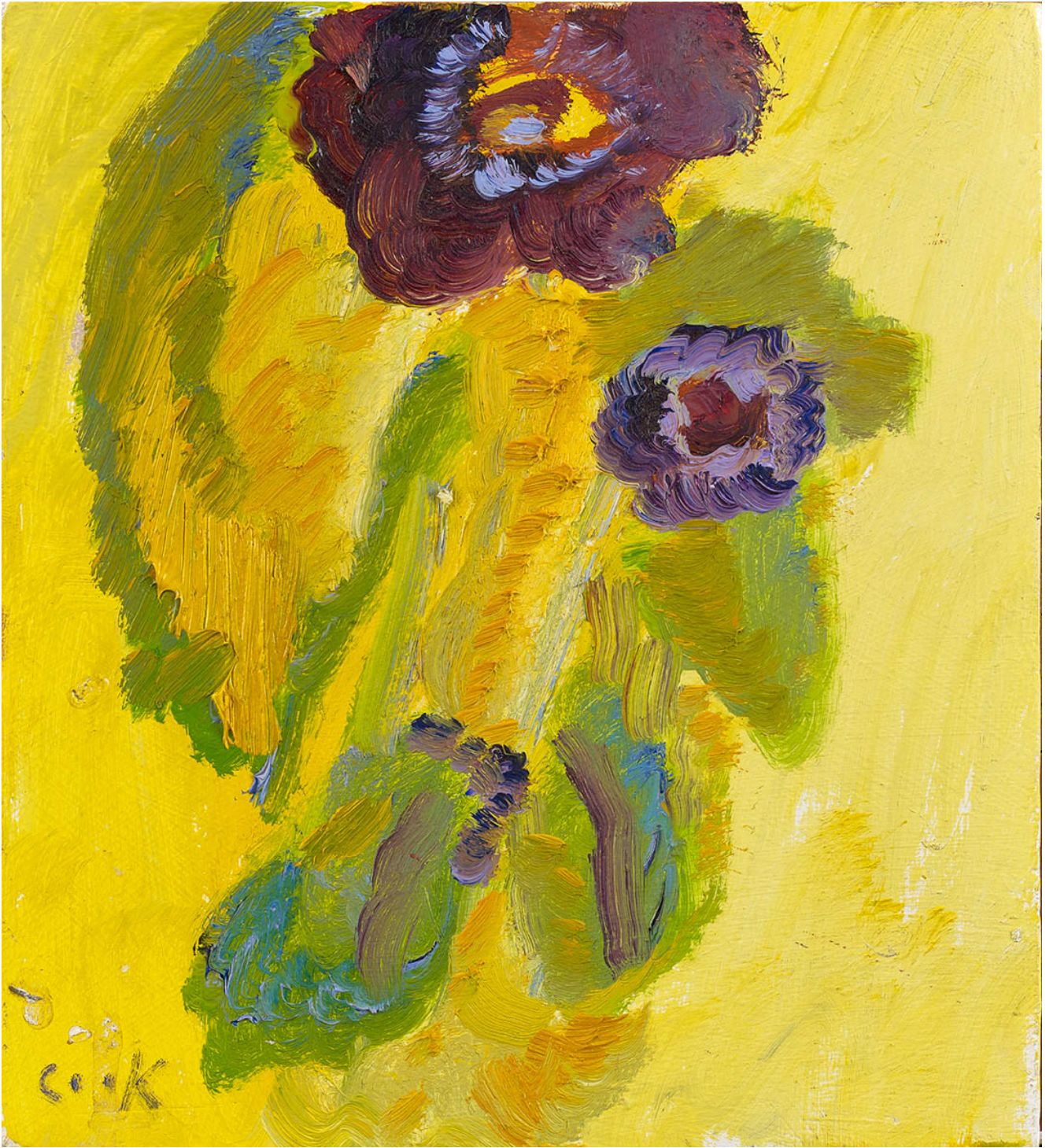
His self-imposed isolation means he takes inspiration from his immediate environment, his works changing with the seasons as he charts the environment through the rhythms of the natural world. Winter and autumn provide the drama of violent seas and ever-changing skies while the spring and summer months offer regeneration that leads to abundance and profusion as life and colour return.

‘Earth Shaker’ is the product of three years’ hard work focussing on the wild, seaside garden in front of his cottage. The fertile grassy acre between his house, a ruined fisherman’s hamlet that he transformed, and the rocky coast is a wilderness garden, enlivened with flotsam sculpture, thrumming with life and brilliant in colour in the summer. Flowers and long grasses grow untamed, threatening to engulf his studio.

His paintings are made in rich impasto of oil paint, with a joyous freedom that shows the intensity of his natural surroundings become the very fabric of his work.

Cook’s career has seen him decorated with numerous high profile art accolades including first prize at the annual student show at the Royal Scottish Academy in 1983, the Guthrie Award at the RSA in 1985 and Scottish Arts Council Awards in 1985, 1988 and 1989.









*Flower Study III, David Cook, 2019, oil on board, 22.5 x 20.5 cm and 29.8.19, David Cook, oil on canvas, 100 x 121 cm. Photography by John McKenzie.*

David Cook comments, "I decided to concentrate on one subject for a long period of time, 2017 to 2020. I chose the garden. When spring arrives, the garden bursts into life, as do I, a relief from long dark winters. Spring to late summer is always a productive time for me.

"I wanted to show the garden bursting into life. The colour, the energy."

*The Scottish Gallery, 16 Dundas Street, Edinburgh EH3 6HZ  
Thursday 4th March – Saturday 27th March 2021*