

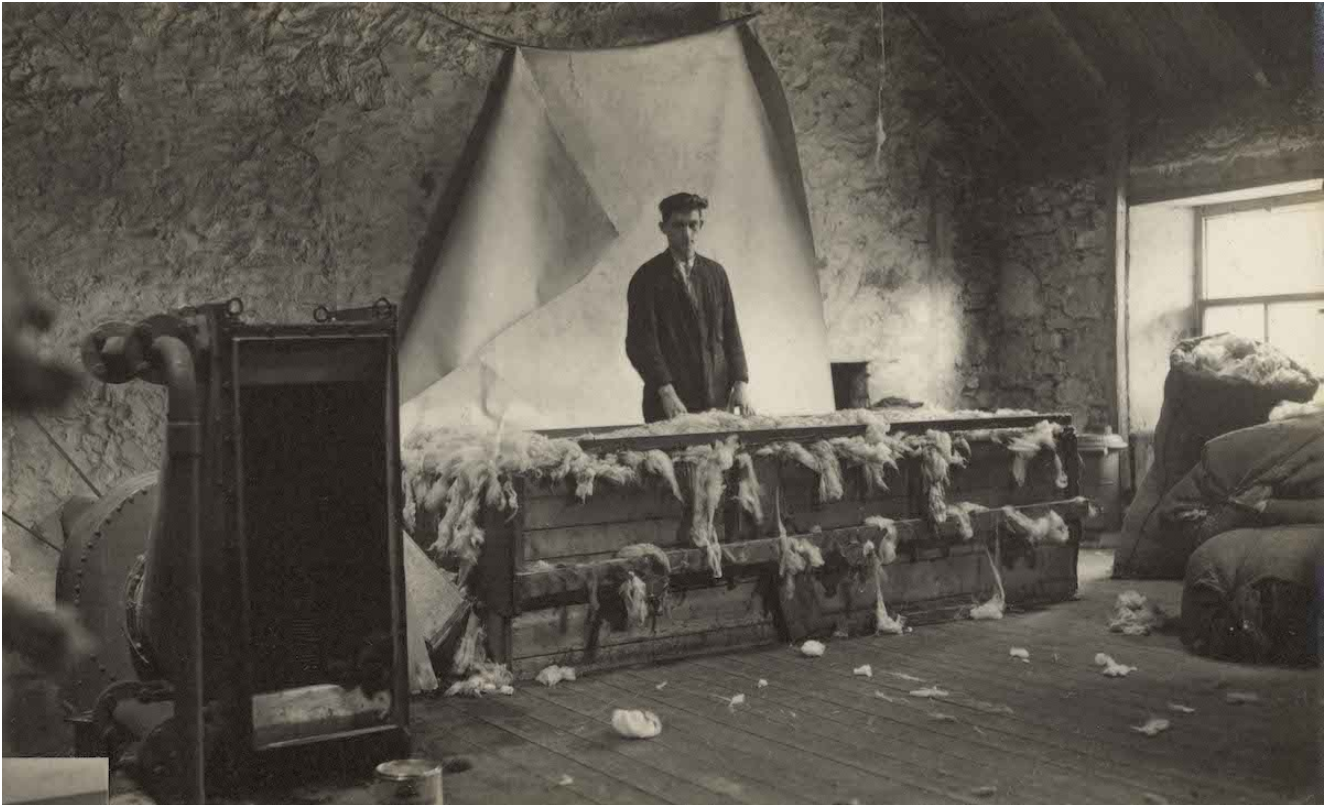
# New photography exhibition opening at City Art Centre

A new exhibition which opens in November at the City Art Centre will feature 125 photographs, eight films and 35 related artefacts by 14 women who worked in Scotland in the early 20th century.

The work forming the exhibition called Glean is drawn from 17 archives predominantly from Scotland, from Galloway to Shetland. The exhibition will show the ways the women responded with their cameras recording life in Scotland's rural communities, cities and beyond. It is the first time their work will have been seen together, and it uncovers a previously untold story within the history of Scottish photography and filmmaking from this period. These women present different accounts of Scotland, covering both rural and city places and communities. The exhibition will show the breadth of their photography and filmmaking, offering a critical analysis of their work.

The work is grouped under the themes of nature, landscape and travel and looks at the ways the women keenly observed nature and landscape, including working the land. **Capturing Scotland** shows how the women captured the shift from traditional to modern life in both urban and rural contexts. **Recording Community** looks at the works of two of the women in particular, Margaret Fay Shaw and Dr Beatrice Garvie, who lived for long periods of time in the communities they were recording. **Women and Society** looks at how, as photographers

and filmmakers, they portrayed the role of women in rural and urban societies.



Wool Drying Plant Violet Banks © Historic Environment Scotland  
From rural Scotland, we see a portrait of Shetland from Jenny Gilbertson, Margaret Fay Shaw's portraits of sisters Màiri and Peigi MacRae and their life in the small village of North Glendale, South Uist, to the wanderings of M.E.M. Donaldson in her walks with her camera across the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. In a time when islanders and highlanders were represented purely as 'type', the work of these women presents them as real people and equals, an intimacy afforded by living in their communities over a long period of time.

Through their lenses we can also glimpse the issues of the time, from the recording of protest marches by Helen Biggar and Christina Broom, to the housing conditions of the lower classes through Ruby Grierson and the interwar years in Marion Grierson's films. Rural and city work, industry and trade are represented in particular by Violet Banks, Margaret Watkins, Margaret Fay Shaw and Jenny Gilbertson. Isabell Burton MacKenzie was The Highlands Home Industry travelling organiser

from 1911-14. Using a Kodak Vest Pocket camera as an aide memoire, she visited the homes of islanders involved in craft, to encourage them to sell their work directly through exhibitions on the mainland through The Highlands Home Industry initiatives. Dr Beatrice Garvie, who was the medical doctor for North Roaldsay, Orkney, for 15 years, recorded the work and significant community events in the island.

The exhibition alludes to the different contexts in which the women worked. Some were independent to those working in or with industry. This was, of course, during a period when only some women over 30 had the vote from 1918 onwards, with all women over 21 being granted the vote in 1928. The early women photographers and film-makers were forging a different path to that expected of their gender. Banks and Broom sustained their own commercial photography studios, whilst the Grierson sisters worked through their brother, documentary maker John Grierson's national government and industry financed film initiatives.



Shadow on the Stairs Margaret Watkins c.1935 ©Joe Mulholland  
Hidden Lane Gallery Glasgow

The exhibition curated by Jenny Brownrigg, Exhibitions

Director at The Glasgow School of Art, is a partnership project with City Art Centre. There is a programme of events accompanying the exhibition which brings together other researchers, gallerists and archivists who have championed the work of these women.

Culture and Communities Convener Cllr Val Walker said: "Glean promises to be an empowering exhibition that looks back on the wonderful work of female photographers and early filmmakers who were creating an important legacy in a male dominated field. The women featured played a huge part in the photography history of Scotland and Glean invites viewers to find out more about these inspiring women and it's fantastic to see the accomplishments of these extraordinary practitioners."

City Art Centre Curator, David Patterson said: "The City Art Centre is delighted to be staging this exhibition in partnership with Glasgow School of Art Exhibitions Director, Jenny Brownrigg. We were really intrigued by Jenny's original proposal to tell the story of these pioneering women, and to bring their work to a wider public. The proposal also fitted so well with other photographic exhibitions being staged at the same time, providing a national and historical context to the two other displays which have a definite Edinburgh focus. We are confident that visitors will find the exhibition of real interest, as well as the accompanying events programme which enables a deeper exploration of the work of some of the artists."

Jenny Brownrigg, the curator of 'Glean' said: "I am delighted to be working with City Art Centre for this exhibition and am grateful to all the lenders. I hope that the exhibition shows the women's different motivations for making their work. Seen together, their photography and films show different stories about Scotland."

Glean: Early 20th Century women filmmakers and photographers

in Scotland

12 November 2022 – 12 March 2023 City Art Centre 2 Market Street EH1 1DE



Jenny Gilbertson with Cuthbert Cayley 1938 or 1949 courtesy of Shetland Museum & Archives



Johanna Kissling Image taken on St Kilda 1905 Courtesy of  
David Lockwood Dumfries Museum Collection