

'Glean' – Early 20th Century women filmmakers and photographers in Scotland

Currently open at the City Art Centre, Glean, features 125 photographs, eight films and 35 related artefacts by 14 women who worked in Scotland in the early 20th century.

The work is drawn from 17 archives predominantly from Scotland, ranging from Galloway to Shetland. This exhibition aims to show how the women responded with their cameras to 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.



Glean, City Art Centre, Edinburgh, 1st Dec 2022

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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 exhibition groups the work under four themes: nature, landscape and travel looks at the ways the women were keen observers of 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.



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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.

The exhibition alludes to the different contexts the women were working in, from those who 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 in 1918, 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. For example, 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.



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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.



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“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.



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“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”.