

John Bellany: A Life in Self-Portraiture

An exhibition John Bellany: A Life in Self-Portraiture and a programme of associated events and talks will take place at the City Art Centre from 31 May to 28 September.

John Bellany, CBE, RA, is one of the most significant painters of modern times. He was born in Port Seton, the son and grandson of fishermen, and his art regularly features fish and seaside themes. The assembled works on display will include paintings, drawings, prints and sketchbooks from the 1960s to 2103 when he died. He was a prolific artist and in particular he drew many self-portraits almost to the point of obsession. His work helped him to explore personal and universal themes and he often depicted himself as a mythical figure or fantastical character.

Some of the exhibition includes art which has never been on public display before, and which is on loan from collections both public and private, as well as some from the artist's estate.

His work is on display in many places worldwide including MOMA in New York and the Metropolitan Museum there, and the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut which has a vast collection of art in lofty airy rooms.

The works will span his whole career. and there will be a book to accompany the exhibition. This will include a foreword by John Bellany's widow, Helen and essays by Sandy Moffat who was

a contemporary at Edinburgh College of Art, and Bill Hare who have curated the exhibition.

John Bellany died in 2013 and he is buried in Dean Cemetery, near the National Galleries of Scotland the Modern.

Event Programme Highlights

Lectures:

Thursday 31 July, 2pm – 3pm: *A Life-Long Friendship*

A reflection on the enduring friendship between John Bellany and Sandy Moffat. Sandy will discuss Bellany's boyhood in Port Seton, their time together at Edinburgh College of Art, his turbulent London years and final years in Italy will all be explored.

Thursday 14 August, 2pm – 3pm: *'I don't borrow – I steal': John Bellany and the Art of Visual Quotation*

Bill Hare will explore Bellany's technique of incorporating visual references from European art history into his own distinctive style, creating rich, multi-layered works.

Thursday 21 August, 2pm – 3pm: *Time Will Tell*

Reading from her critically acclaimed memoir, *The Restless Wave*, Helen Bellany will talk about her enduring relationship with John Bellany.

Wednesday 24 September, 2pm – 3pm: *The Bellany Sketchbooks*

Helen Bellany will lead exclusive exploration of Bellany's private sketchbooks, which reveal the raw, personal side of his creative process.

In Conversation:

Thursday 10 July, 2pm: *John Bellany: In Conversation with Bill Hare and Sandy Moffat*

Join the curators for a conversation about Bellany's artistic journey, his impact on Scottish art, and the special connection they had with him.

Gallery Tours:

Monday 11 August, 2pm – 3pm: *Gallery Tour with Curators Bill Hare and Sandy Moffat*

An intimate guided tour of the exhibition with the curators, offering expert insight into Bellany's work and career.

Saturday 23 August, 2pm – 3pm: *Gallery Tour with Curators Bill Hare and Sandy Moffat*

Another opportunity to experience the exhibition with the curators, who will discuss the life and art of John Bellany in detail.

Described Tours and BSL Tours:

Friday 15 August, 11am – 12pm: *BSL Interpreted Tour of 'John Bellany: A Life in Self-Portraiture'*

A British Sign Language (BSL) interpreted tour, offering a deeper understanding of Bellany's artistic journey for the Deaf community.

Friday 15 August, 2pm – 3pm: *Described Tour for the Visually Impaired of 'John Bellany: A Life in Self-Portraiture'*

A guided tour specifically designed for visitors with visual impairments, offering detailed descriptions of the artworks on display.

Adult Creative Workshops:

Saturday 12 July, 10.30am – 3.30pm: *Self-Portraiture in Ink and Watercolour*

A hands-on workshop exploring Bellany's techniques, encouraging participants to create their own self-portraits using ink and watercolour.

Saturday 9 August, 10.30am – 3.30pm: *From Sketchbook to Masterpiece*

A workshop that delves into the process behind Bellany's iconic works, guiding participants through transforming initial sketches into finished art.



John Bellany, 'Sad Self-Portrait', 1976. © The Estate of John Bellany