

## Report

### ***GLEAN: EARLY 20TH CENTURY WOMEN FILMMAKERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS IN SCOTLAND*, City Art Centre, Edinburgh, 12<sup>th</sup> November – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023**



Jenny Gilbertson (with Cuthbert Cayley) 1938 or 1939, courtesy of Shetland Museum & Archives.

#### SUMMARY

This ground-breaking exhibition presented the work of fourteen pioneering women photographers and filmmakers working in Scotland during the early 20th century. The women were Violet Banks (1886-1985), Helen Biggar (1909-1953), Christina Broom (1862-1939), M.E.M. Donaldson (1876-1958), Dr Beatrice Garvie (1872-1959), Jenny Gilbertson (1902-1990), Isabel F Grant (1887–1983), Ruby Grierson (1904-1940), Marion Grierson (1907-1998), Isobel Wylie Hutchison (1889-1982), Johanna Kissling (1875-1961), Isabell Burton-MacKenzie (1872-1958), Margaret Fay Shaw (1903-2004) and Margaret Watkins (1884-1969).

The lenders were:

British Film Institute, Dumfries Museum, Edinburgh Museums and Galleries, Glasgow Women's Library, Historic Environment Scotland, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery (High Life Highland), The Hidden Lane Gallery, Highland Folk Museum (High Life Highland), The Glasgow School of Art Archives and Collections, Moving Image Archive, Museum of London, National Library of Scotland, National Trust for Scotland Canna House, Orkney Library & Archive, Shetland Museum & Archives, Vanishing Scotland Archive.

The exhibition was curated by Jenny Brownrigg (GSA Exhibitions Director), in partnership with City Art Centre. The exhibition was on first floor, City Art Centre. There were **14** women represented, by **125** photographs, **8** films and **35** related artefacts, drawn from **17** archives.

## Report

There were **32,657** visitors to City Art Centre from 12<sup>th</sup> November – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

There were **10** events (7 in-person, 3 digital), **3** workshops and **4** digital resources created. The total event attendees were **924**. The total views of related digital content **1705**.

There were a further **3** events, where an invite was extended to the curator to speak as a result of the exhibition.

There were **16** media outputs with a further **3** blog posts.

Full exhibition documentation can be downloaded from:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/48252221@N00/albums/72177720305992092/with/52690502113/>

### SHOW OUTLINE

The exhibition aimed to show how the 14 women filmmakers and photographers responded with their cameras to life in Scotland's rural communities, cities and beyond. Their work was drawn from 17 archives predominantly across Scotland, ranging from Galloway to Shetland.

What were the women's different motivations and how did this inform on the photographs and films they made? What different narratives about Scotland emerge from their work? Whilst the majority of the women in this exhibition made their work independently, a small number worked in the film industry. Two set up commercial photography studios. When assessing the aims of these women, their films and photographs were used for a variety of purposes – to record events, to share with communities as well as wider audiences, to educate, for research use, for work, to sell, or to illustrate the other activities that they were involved in. Whilst some described themselves solely as photographer or filmmaker, many described themselves in multiple ways – author, historian, folklorist, photographer, filmmaker. Two of the women had gone to art school, with the rest self-taught or learning as part of a job. A small number would not have thought of themselves in such terms as photographers or filmmakers. Seen in the whole, the work of these women provides a different insight into documentary practice from this period.

These women presented different accounts of Scotland, covering both rural and city places and communities. The exhibition showed the breadth of their photography and filmmaking, offering a critical analysis of their work and how these informed the work they made, and the different narratives we see emerging from their work in Scotland. 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. Exhibits were drawn from a broad selection of private and public collections. The exhibition was curated by Jenny Brownrigg (The Glasgow School of Art Exhibitions Director) in partnership with City Art Centre.

The exhibition funding came from The Glasgow School of Art research development fund and City Art Centre.

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The total visitors to the City Art Centre were **32,657** from 12<sup>th</sup> November – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The footfall was therefore, on average, **272** visitors per day over the show run.

### EVENTS PROGRAMME

Over the show run there were **10** events (7 in-person, 3 digital), **3** workshops and **4** digital resources created. There were a further **3** events, where an invite was extended to the curator to speak as a result of the exhibition. The total event attendees were **924**. The total views of related digital content **1705**.

### EVENTS DURING EXHIBITION RUN

- Glean curator's lecture, Tuesday 10 January 2023. Gallery Lecture in association with 'Glean: Early 20th Century Women Filmmakers and Photographers in Scotland.' Attendance: **86** <https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/glean-curator%E2%80%99s-lecture>
- *Glean / Futureproof* joint gallery tour with Stills, Friday 20 January 2023. Joint Gallery tour in association with the exhibition 'Glean: Early 20th Century Women Filmmakers and Photographers in Scotland.' Attendance: **26** <https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/glean-futureproof-2022>
- *Glean: Focus on Filmmaking panel*, Friday 27 January 2023. An online event focusing on early 20th Century women filmmakers in Scotland, chaired by Professor Melanie Bell. The event discussed the film production of that period, the ethics of filming others, and caring for their work. It also reflected on how the women filmmakers saw themselves and their motivations for making film. This discussion was with Ros Cranston (Curator of Non-Fiction Film and Television at the BFI National Archive, BFI National Archive), Shona Main (filmmaker and PhD researcher, University of Stirling / The Glasgow School of Art); Janet McBain (founding Curator, Scottish Screen Archive); Professor Sarah Neely (Theatre, Film & Television Studies, University of Glasgow, Dr Isabel Seguí Fuentes (Film and Visual Culture Department, University of Aberdeen) and Jenny Brownrigg (The Glasgow School of Art, curator of Glean). Attendance: **56** <https://vimeo.com/800461681>
- *Photography & Memory* Symposium, Thursday 2 to Friday 3 February 2023. A collaboration between the City Art Centre, Edinburgh Napier University School of Arts and Creative Industries, and The Glasgow School of Art (GSA). The Symposium took as its starting point three concurrent exhibitions at the City Art Centre: *Glean: early 20th Century women filmmakers and photographers in Scotland* curated by Jenny Brownrigg, GSA Exhibitions Director; *Edinburgh: A Lost World* an exhibition of work by Ron O'Donnell, Lecturer in Photography at Edinburgh Napier; and Paul Duke, an alumni of Edinburgh Napier's Photography programme, with his exhibition: *No Ruined Stone*. As keynote speakers at the Symposium, O'Donnell and Brownrigg presented the contextual background to their exhibitions. Attendance: **120**

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<https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/photography-and-memory-symposium>

- *Glean: Focus on Photography and Cultural Heritage* (Alyne E. Jones, Hugh Cheape), Thursday 16 February 2023. Gallery In-Conversation with Alyne E. Jones (Vanishing Scotland Archive) and Professor Hugh Cheape (University of the Highlands and Islands) in association with the exhibition *Glean: Early 20th Century Women Filmmakers and Photographers in Scotland*. A number of the women in the exhibition used photography and filmmaking as a way to record a disappearing way of life in Scotland. This discussion gave a wider context to the exhibited works, considering how to read the photographs from a cultural heritage perspective - considering the built and natural environment and cultures and practices of the communities the women recorded - in order to explore the stories that the photographs have to tell. Attendance: **28**  
<https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/glean-focus-photography-and-cultural-heritage>
- *The Women behind the lens: lecture*, Linda McDonald, Monday 20 February 2023. Gallery Lecture in association with *Glean: Early 20th Century Women Filmmakers and Photographers in Scotland*. Led by Linda MacDonal, this talk examines the various barriers to equal opportunities faced by women in this period of history. Attendance: **64**  
<https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/women-behind-lens>
- Spin group, City Art Centre, talk by Glean curator, Thursday 23 February 2023. Attendance: **25**
- *Glean: focus on Beatrice Garvie*, Friday 24 February 2023. Digital Talk in which sculptor, community artist and archive activist Fiona Sanderson spoke about Dr Beatrice Garvie, one of the photographers featured in the exhibition *Glean: Early 20th Century Women Filmmakers and Photographers in Scotland*. Dr Garvie was medical doctor for North Ronaldsay, Orkney, in the 1930's and '40s. Over the last five years, Sanderson has researched Dr Garvie's photography which uniquely captured island life. It is part of a wider body of work which Sanderson has begun to return island knowledge to the place it came from. This event was in partnership with The Audacious Women Festival. Attendance: 88 attending Zoom Talk and 148 watching on Facebook. Total - **236**  
<https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/glean-focus-dr-beatrice-garvie>  
<https://vimeo.com/806872281>
- *Margaret Fay Shaw: Hebridean female crofters in sharp focus* (Fiona MacKenzie) Digital Talk led by Fiona MacKenzie, Thursday 9 March 2023. An accomplished Gaelic singer, MacKenzie uses her voice to embellish all of her talks and presentations about the Campbell's work, bringing the songs and stories to life with echoes of a time long past, but now preserved though the images of Margaret Fay Shaw, one of the photographers featured in the exhibition *Glean: Early 20th Century Women Filmmakers and*

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*Photographers in Scotland*, and the sound archive of John Campbell. Attendance: **103**  
<https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/margaret-fay-shaw-hebridean-female-crofters-sharp-focus> <https://vimeo.com/807034493>  
<https://vimeo.com/807034493>

- Glean Curator's Tour, Saturday 11 March 2023. Overview Curator's Tour with Jenny Brownrigg in association with *Glean: Early 20th Century Women Filmmakers and Photographers in Scotland*. Attendance: **27**  
<https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/glean-curator%E2%80%99s-tour>

### FURTHER DIGITAL RESOURCES AND IN PERSON WORKSHOPS

The City Art Centre organised a range of online digital resources to accompany *Glean*.

- Digital BSL Tour of City Art Centre Photography Exhibitions, Sunday 29 January, 5pm: **201** views
- Descriptive Tour for the visually impaired: *Glean: Early 20th Century Women Filmmakers and Photographers in Scotland*, Saturday 11 February, 7pm – **103** views
- Music video reflecting on the artworks at end of exhibition - **264** views
- Thanks to Fiona J Mackenzie, who created a National Trust for Scotland short film on Margaret Fay Shaw for *Glean* and shared with City Art Centre – *Euan Bheag* - **442** views

City Art Centre also delivered 3 workshops (1 in-person and 2 digital).

- In Gallery Adult Creative Workshop *Silhouettes in a Landscape*, Creative Art Workshop in association with *Glean: Early 20th Century Women Filmmakers and Photographers in Scotland*, Saturday 25 February, 10.30am - 3.30pm – **5**
- *A Postcard from Right Now - Creating a Visual Diary*, to accompany *Glean: Early 20th Century Women Filmmakers and Photographers in Scotland*, Digital tour of key artworks and follow up art workshop, Saturday 4 February, 2pm – **336** views
- *A Map of My World*, to accompany *Glean: Early 20th Century Women Filmmakers and Photographers in Scotland*. Digital tour of key artworks and follow up art workshop, Saturday 11 March, 7pm – **361** views

### FURTHER RELATED EVENTS

There were a further three invitations from other organisations, during the show run, for the curator Jenny Brownrigg to speak about *Glean*, with a total attendance of **148**.

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- Govanhill Baths Panel Exhibition: Launch and Panel Discussion: Women, Activism, Archives & Heritage. Monday 6 March 2023. Attendance: **30**  
<https://www.govanhillbaths.com/iwd2023/>
- Hippodrome Festival: A trip to the National Library of Scotland's Moving Image Archive in Glasgow, Thursday 23 March 2023. An exclusive chance to hear from curator Jenny Brownrigg (Director of Exhibitions, Glasgow School of Art) about her ground-breaking exhibition *Glean: Early 20th Century women filmmakers and photographers in Scotland*. Attendance: **15** <https://www.hippodromecinema.co.uk/whats-on/sff23-glean-early-20th-century-women-filmmakers-and-photographers-in-scotland/>
- *Photography of Violet Banks*, Historic Environment Scotland, online, Thursday 9 February 2023. Attendance: **103** <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/whats-on/event/?eventId=9b43cc8a-b573-462d-ac39-af7100db16a6>

## MEDIA COVERAGE

There were **16** media outputs with a further **3** blog posts.

The Herald, *The untold story of pioneering Scottish women photographers*, 5.11.22, Barry Didcock

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/homenews/23102960.untold-story-pioneering-scottish-women-photographers/>

Fine Art Highlights of the December edition, the Skinny, Harvey Dimond

<https://www.theskinny.co.uk/art/news/scottish-art-events-and-exhibitions-december-2022>

Edinburgh Reporter, *At the City Art Centre – Glean – an exhibition of films and photographs*, 10.11.22, Phyllis Stephen

<https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2022/11/at-the-city-art-centre-glean-an-exhibition-of-films-and-photographs/>

Edinburgh Reporter, podcast 10.11.22 <https://player.fm/series/the-edinburgh-report/at-the-city-art-centre-a-new-exhibition-glean>

BBC Radio Orkney, *Around Orkney*, Jenny Brownrigg and Fiona Sanderson, on Dr Beatrice Garvie, 16.11.22 (4 mins)

The Scotsman, Art Reviews: Glean, \*\*\*\*\* 21.11.22, review by Duncan Macmillan

<https://www.scotsman.com/arts-and-culture/art/art-reviews-the-love-of-print-ron-odonnell-glean-3926267>

BBC Radio Scotland, The Afternoon Show, Janice Forsyth, 6.12.22

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001fvpp> 38 mins in, for 12 minutes



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"9gu10", BBC Radio nan Gàidheal, presented by Cathy MacDonald, 3.01.23. An hour-long programme responding to *Glean: Early 20th Century women filmmakers and photographers in Scotland*.

Strathspey & Badenoch Herald, *Highland Folk Museum Founder featured in early 20<sup>th</sup> century exhibition of women's photography*, Niall Harkiss, 2.1.23 <https://www.strathspey-herald.co.uk/news/highland-folk-museum-founder-featured-in-early-20th-century-298410/>  
The National *Exhibition showcases forgotten female photographers and filmmakers*, 'The Big Read', Iona Glen, 7.1.23 <https://www.thenational.scot/culture/23235609.exhibition-showcase-forgotten-female-photographers-archivists/>

The List, Edinburgh in Focus, 3 photography exhibitions at the City Art Centre, Kevin Fullerton, 18.3.23 <https://list.co.uk/news/43008/3-photography-exhibitions-at-the-city-art-centre>

The Drouth Magazine, *The Glean*, Sara Stevenson, review, 24.1.2023, <https://www.thedrouth.org/the-glean-review-by-sara-stevenson/>

The People's Friend, Feb 18, 2023, No. 7965, *They offered a realistic view of Scotland*, Janey Swanson, P.62-63

'A one woman job' - early 20<sup>th</sup> century Scotland in pictures, 23.2.23, The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2023/feb/23/a-one-woman-job-early-20th-century-scotland-in-pictures>

Studies in Photography, Winter 2022, The Scottish Society for the History of Photography, P.108-109

*Glean: Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century women Filmmakers and Photographers in Scotland*, Fleming Collection, Susan Mansfield, 8.3.23 [https://www.flemingcollection.com/scottish\\_art\\_news/news-press](https://www.flemingcollection.com/scottish_art_news/news-press)

## Blogs

Travel Mag *10 exhibitions to see in Edinburgh this Fall*, 16 Oct 2022, Allie D'Almo <https://www.travelmag.com/articles/exhibitions-edinburgh-fall-2022/>

Wee Walking Tours, *Celebrating the start of 2023 at Edinburgh's City Art Centre*, <https://www.weewalkingtours.com/post/city-art-centre-winter-2023>

*A message from our curator, Kari Moodie (Curator, Collections) 2022 collections round up... and a sneak peek at what's in store for 2023!* <https://www.highlifehighland.com/inverness-museum-and-art-gallery/a-message-from-our-curator/>

## DOCUMENTATION

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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/48252221@N00/albums/72177720305992092/with/52690502113/>



Entrance to exhibition at City Art Centre, First Floor, Edinburgh Photo: Alan Dimmick



Installation View *Glean: Early 20th century women photographers and filmmakers in Scotland*  
Photo: Greg MacVean



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Installation View *Glean: Early 20th century women photographers and filmmakers in Scotland*  
Photo: Greg MacVean



Installation view, *Women and Society* section, *Glean: Early 20th century women photographers and filmmakers in Scotland*, *Housing Problems (1935)* in foreground. Photo: Alan Dimmick

### A SELECTION OF VISITOR COMMENTS

*Amazing looking through the eyes of these talented women – thanks!*

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*Wonderful exhibition. So many issues still relevant to today.  
Enlightening, evocative, informative- wonderful!*

*Great – I lived on North Ronaldsay and was pleasantly surprised to see it here.*

*Should all be in Wikipedia – they are now!*

*What an outstanding exhibition – really captivating!*

*Very interesting on women in filmmaking.*

*Very interesting – I never thought of there being women filmmakers at this time.*

*Brilliant demonstration of early women photography skills.*

*Thank you for small re-balance of women's contribution to documentary.*

*Fascinating to see all the work of all of these women. Great collections.*

*My mother came from Shetland – loved the old photos.*

*Only managed half of the exhibition as I had to travel but loved the anti-armament film particularly. Excellent range of work all round. Important archival material.*

*Amazing exhibition, particularly the work of Margaret Fay Shaw. Thank you.*

*Fantastic exhibition- so informative. The first of many I hope.*

*Fantastic but need to come back and watch the videos and see it all again.*

*I'm aware of Margaret Fay Shaw's collections as a Hebridean singer myself but had no idea her passion for folklore and rural life extended to photography. Love Violet Banks work too!*

*This is a fantastic visual exhibition and prompt for thinking about artistic inquiry and social issues.*

*Very important for the Gaelic community. What a wonderful exhibition – thank you!*

*The Shetland film was great – my ancestors' home!*

*A really important and beautiful exhibition. A great range of women showcasing a variety of aesthetics and motivations.*

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*Brilliant exhibition, very special images of island life, especially enjoyed the crofters on Shetland video. Will be coming back!*

*The work about the crofter's life was amazing!*

*The best black and white film – Shetland life - I've ever seen. Up close to people and really showing how they lived.*

*Well presented and curated. And a revelation. These women are important and their work incredible.*

*This view of Scottish history is intimate, empathetic, kind. Makes me want to do something practical!*

*My mother was from Trebb, North Ronaldsay and would have known Dr Beatrice Garvie. So good to see her photographic record of 1930s & 40s in North Ron, as well as records recorded of life at that time by the other photographers. Well done and thank you.*

*History is very important for our souls. We need to know about the past.*

*Margaret Watkins' eye for detail is superb. What is also apparent is the dignity of everyone, whether poor or rich.*

*A very interesting collection of photos. We've indeed learned so much from it about work, farming, fishing etc.*

*Marvellous exhibition. The film by Jenny Brown (on Shetland) is a treasure.*

*Great windows into lost worlds. Embraced the issue of privilege matter-of-factly. Great to see this so popular as a show.*

*Refreshing and affirming to see history through women's eyes. Inspirational!*

*Amazing imagery. Should be a permanent display somewhere in the Highlands.*

*This is a great place to inspire young women. Excellent images.*

*This brought tears to my eyes. Thank you.*

*Loved this exhibition. That Margaret Fay Shaw explanation of trying to record songs is wonderful!*

*The suffragettes and anti-fascism films – 100 odd years ago yet we are still fighting for social justice.*