



## Minutes of the 123rd AGM of the Society of Scottish Artists Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh Sunday 18 February 2018, 11am

### 1. Apologies:

Sue Clarke, Adele Gregory, Billie Thackwell, Cécile Simonis, Chelsie Dysart, Chris Brook, Claire McVinnie, David Coles, Christine Sloman, Fiona R Hutchison, Gillian Murray, Helen Angell-Preece, Heather Wilson, Ingrid Arthur, Jean Hill, Jeff Wilson, Jo Edwardson, Judith Rowan, Justine Miller, Katrina Balmer, Daniel Killeen, Kenneth Wilson, Kyra Clegg, Linden Hopwood, Louise Philip, Margaretann Bennett, Mary Morrison, Pauline McGee, Stephan-Maria Aust, Patrick McNelis, Ursula Pretsch, Rachel Duckhouse, Shona Grant, Lorraine Robson, Stanley Brooks, Todd Garner, Toby Trueman, Susan Wilson, Christopher Wood, James Lumsden, Silvana McLean, David Faithful

### Present:

Sharon Quigley (President), Paul Charlton (Vice President), Aleksandra Kargul, Norman McBeath, Rick Ballard, Kirsty Lorenz, Jenny Smith, Anna Bergin, Micaela Walker, Andrea Geile, Lesley May Miller, Penny Cuthbert, Miriam Vickers, David Forster, Rowan Paton, Liz Crichton, Eleanor Buffam, Sarah Mackenzie Smith, Deborah Cumming, C.S. Thomson, Caroline Watson, Gavin Johnston, Ruth Nicol, Jo McDonald, Carmen Ambrozovich, Nicky Sanderson, Sheila Carnduff, Su Grierson, Lys Hansen, Chrissie Heughan, Linda Kosciwicz, Alan Bond, Leena Nammari, Mary Gillespie, Sheila Chapman, Joan Doerr, Soosan Danesh, Katharine Aarrestad, Gerry Smith, Liz Douglas, Eona Murray Aitken, Gayle Nelson, Jill Bennett

In Attendance: Lynne Mackenzie

The President welcomed all to the AGM at the Royal Scottish Academy during the Annual Exhibition, OPEN 2018.

### 2. Minutes:

The minutes of the last AGM held on 18th March 2017 were presented and accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed Jill Bennett, Seconded Paul Charlton

### 3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

### 4. Election of Committee Members

Two committee members are standing down. The President thanked Jill Bennett and Anne Forte for their contribution to the Society. Gerry Smith will become a member of council having been co-opted to council at the previous AGM. Council have also co-opting Jamie MacAteer of Detail Framing in Edinburgh on to council. The President formally welcomed the new committee members.

### 5. President's Address

Annual Exhibition: OPEN SSA + VAS Together

We set out in March with our VAS colleagues to create one cohesive exhibition, one committee, open submission, and one selection and installation team. Working together on this one-off collaborative venture has allowed the SSA and VAS to combine expertise and experience; to create what we hope is a carefully conceived show. Our partnership with VAS has allowed us a unique insight into how each of the two historic societies operate, making us both stronger and better for that experience. It's helped the SSA recognise what our strengths are as a Society and where we could be working harder.

At the heart of OPEN 2018 is the open selection. We were overwhelmed by the volume and quality of the submissions, and we'd like to thank everyone who submitted work.

General Submissions: Total Artworks: 1955, Total Artist Applications: 963, Total Selected: 183

Installation and New Media Submissions: Total Artworks: 108, Total Artist Applications: 125, Total Admin Selected: 12. Total artworks submitted: 2063, Total artists applications: 1088, Selected: 195

Out with the open selection, we have preserved within the show certain projects, partnerships and collaborations unique to the SSA. These curated elements are hugely important to the Society as well as to the

overall concept of the hang. They underpin the show and allow us some certainties as we face the great unknown of the general submission.

#### Invited elements

The Invited Graduate showcase can add considerable strength to the show and this year is a really good example of this, for example Will Braithwait's concrete and bronze towers in Gallery II. The SSA featured the work of 5 graduates within the show. We paired up with our VAS counterparts to select work that would represent the remit of each Society with VAS concentrating their selection on applied art and contemporary craft and the SSA focusing in on fine art, sculpture and new media. Each of the SSA graduates has a point of contact within the Council and receives the support required to realise their installs.

SSA Award in 2017 went to one of our recent graduates, Tom Stevenson who was invited back to create his poignant piece 'For Absent Friends', the gable end and hearth of highland croft, reformed from charred sleepers.

Observer Cinema by Bafta Award winning filmmaker Sven Werner was created in partnership with the Society of Scottish Artists and New Media Scotland and created at the Alt-w LAB, a pilot space for the production, and presentation of creative technology at the City Art Centre.

Eichtatt Lithography Residency Award – Two examples of Jodi Le Bigre's exquisite lithographs made during this residency were selected for inclusion in the show and have since won the MacCracken Pollock Prize.

The Engramme Exchange is an on going international exhibition exchange between the SSA and Engramme Printmaking Studio in Quebec and we were delighted to have the SSA selected artist visit in person to install her work.

#### Prizes and Awards:

We would also like to extend deep gratitude to each and every one of our generous prize givers, who add so much to the exhibitions. This year, the Exhibiting Societies of Scotland (RSW, SSA and VAS) would like to welcome a significant new gift of £120000 for the arts in Scotland, to be presented over a 10-year period: the W Gordon Smith and Mrs Jay Gordon Smith Award. Every year an artist (or artists) from each exhibiting society will be selected to receive the sum of £4000. In 2018, 4 awards were given, across all art forms.

We are also happy to welcome the & Gallery Exhibition Prize, Gallery 10 Exhibition Prize and Intaglio Printmaking Award.

We would like to sincerely thank everyone involved from our selection, hanging, arranging and installation teams. These teams consist of elected SSA members and VAS council members, along with many tireless volunteers. Everyone has contributed immense levels of time, enthusiasm and passion to all aspects of the production of this show.

#### Society News

In 2017 the SSA continued to extend its reach beyond the central areas of Scotland. At the last AGM we announced that we would be co-opting to Council members in the Outer Hebrides, Caithness, Sutherland and the Border Regions of Scotland. These new members of Council have been busy fostering new artist-led projects and partnership.

The first of these partnerships to bear fruit is our collaboration with An Lanntair led by James Lumsden. Larach a Hebrides Showcase is the first instalment of this partnership and will be followed in May 2019 by a members show at An Lanntair curated by the SSA with a 2 month run throughout their galleries in Stornaway.

Other planned off-site shows in the pipeline will take place at Wall Projects in Montrose in August 2018; a show curated on behalf of the SSA by Past President Gayle Nelson, will also launch a new prize for the SSA. Olsztyn Polish Printmaking Exchange will be launched in the summer of 2018. The Meffan Gallery and Museum Members show scheduled for early spring 2019 and Gracefield Arts Members Show - scheduled to place in autumn 2019.

The SSA is developing new international exhibition opportunities, exchanges and residencies across Europe and beyond for its members such as Eichstatt, Olsztyn and Engramme but delighted to be creating members' opportunities closer to home.

We are also delighted to be returning to full occupancy of the upper Galleries in late 2018 /early 2019 and plans are already underway for this with an exciting prospective partnerships and prizes.

President introduced Norman McBeath to talk about Prism, an international group of artists brought together to create cross-cultural contacts through printmaking. The critically acclaimed group were founded by John Read and Nigel Oxley and exhibit artists such as such as Rebecca Jewell, Susan Aldworth and Hideki Kondo to name just a few. Norman introduced Prism as potential inclusion in the next Annual Exhibition.

Norman also presented the case for changing the name of the SSA from 'Society of Scottish Artists' to 'Scottish Society of Artists' as it perhaps better describes the open and inclusive nature of the SSA and will help broaden our membership.

President introduced Aleksandra Kargul to talk about the Olsztyn Polish Printmaking Exchange that she will work on along with Paul Charlton. It is hoped that there will be an exhibition exchange opportunity for SSA members working in printmaking to take place in 2018/19.

President introduced Jenny Smith who has been developing the continuation of the SSA Eichstatt Residency. We are delighted to continue to work in partnership with Li Portenlänger, Director of Lithographie-Werkstatt Eichstätt in Bavaria, Germany to offer a bi-annual lithography residency prize that includes a period of time working in the studio and a solo exhibition with opening reception. The format of the award will change to allow all artist members working in stone lithography to apply.

President introduced Rowena Comrie who has been working with Ruth Nicol on an SSA exhibition at Gracefield Arts Centre for 2019. The exhibition will invite application from all SSA members, further details to follow.

President welcomed Gerry Smith who gave details of work done to organise a series of talks at art colleges to inform students of the work of the SSA and encourage them to become a member.

#### 7. Adoption of Accounts

The accounts to the year-end December 2016 were made available to members to view. The accounts are currently in credit and, therefore, show that the Council and Administrator are managing the charity successfully. Accounts were formally adopted. The President thanked accountant David Jeffcoat, Lynne Mackenzie and Rick Ballard who prepare and oversee the accounts.

#### 8. Discussion

It was asked if visitor figures were recorded. National Galleries of Scotland record the visitor figures and, at the end of the exhibition, give totals for each day during the run of the Annual Exhibition.

Council was asked to expand on reasons for the Annual Exhibition being combined with VAS' exhibition. For early 2018, Exhibiting Societies of Scotland (RSW, SSA and VAS) were offered the upper and lower galleries of the RSA for a shorter period than we would usually have the upper galleries for 3 consecutive exhibitions. RSW are exhibiting in the lower galleries, which meant SSA and VAS sharing the upper galleries or presenting two separate but very short exhibitions. It was important that the SSA and VAS both made the best of the situation so it was decided by both councils to work collaboratively to present the best exhibition possible in the circumstances.

The question was raised on why exhibition space was given to curated or invited elements over works by SSA members. Council explained that the curated elements bring something different to the exhibition each year and also provide the selecting and arranging committees with curated elements that can underpin the overall presentation of the exhibition. The open submission continues to be critically important to the exhibition.

Council confirmed that the direction of the Society over the coming years is to build membership, extend reach across Scotland and beyond the central belt and to commit to developing and creating international opportunities for members.

**The meeting closed at 12 noon.**