

University of Aberdeen
Art History Round Up
2023-24



Do Not Feed the Seagulls
Hope Markillie
2024
Acrylic Yarn
Being attacked by a bloodthirsty seagull is a right of passage for many Aberdeen students. This crocheted tapestry was inspired by a sign seen in Stonehaven warning people about the scariest seagulls in the world
Hope Markillie's Instagram: @shootingcometcrafts

Welcome to the 2nd annual *RoundUp* of teaching and research highlights from the Art History Department at the University of Aberdeen! This year's front cover is courtesy of 2024 graduate, Hope Markillie. It featured in the student art exhibition, *Beyond the Granite Walls*, curated by Wet Paint collective in the Sir Duncan Rice Library.

It's vital that our students have the opportunity to create and to question, as well as to learn and to contribute. Working constraints are a constant for any curator, but they can also inspire positive action and outcomes. Here's to more of this student entrepreneurial spirit in AY24-25! Just remember, don't feed the seagulls...

You might have heard that we're ranked No. 1 in the UK for Art History in the National Student Survey 2024, and for Scotland, with students declaring their high levels of satisfaction across all questions. We're proud of this achievement, making it three years in a row!

Our interdisciplinary profile is ever growing, with new collaborations, projects and grants and awards feeding into a dynamic research culture. Turn to the Postgraduate and Staff pages to find out what been going on.

Our contact details are on the last page, so if you have feedback, ideas for future development or can offer support, do get in touch – we'd love to hear from you!

Joanne

Dr Joanne W. Anderson
Head of Art History Department

UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

It's been a fantastic year, teaching students across our UG programme. We saw the launch of new courses that reflect the research specialisms of staff in the department, the injection of even more collections-based content, and outstanding work produced by students, from essays, exhibition pitches and portfolio work through to final year dissertations.

This doesn't happen without our PG Tutors. So firstly, I want to thank Genevieve Strong, Haley Turner and Freya Jensen (PhD candidates in Art History) for their sterling work at sub-honours, leading tutorials, helping to run fieldtrips and ensuring that our students get the best possible start with their education.

Level 1 students got out and about in **Introduction to Modern and Contemporary Art** and **Encountering Art: Museums through History**. They visited treasures in the University Collections, Marischal College Museum Store and Aberdeen Art Gallery. In Dundee, we squeezed in a visit to Michelle Williams Gamaker's exhibition, *Our Mountains are Painted on Glass* at the DCA, alongside the V&A and The McManus. The bus back across the landscape of *Sunset Song* was the final, and restful treat!



We're excited to announce our new L1 course in AY24-25 **AH1504 Fashion: History and Theory**. Savage Beauty anyone?



Level 2 students were thinking about approaches to art history in **What is Art?** From formalism and taste through neuroscience to globalisation and eco-



criticism. **Art Matters: Materials and Techniques** had handling sessions with Inuit ivory carvings, parchment and prints. For the week on concrete, Karl led the group to the Trinity Shopping Centre for an examination of Brutalist architecture. The name refers to Trinity Hall, second site of The Seven Incorporated Trades - its Neo-Gothic façade on Union Street is a striking reminder.

We ran a new L2 course, **Art and Protest**. Topics ranged from early modern defamatory pictures to contemporary activism. In a year of protest across UK university campuses, including our own, it was timely to explore the role of the visual in times of social, political or religious unrest.

Finally, thanks to our friends at **Peacock** in the Castlegate for hosting our L2 students in their workshop during the first term. Great context for Helen Pierce's teaching of relief printing!

Level 3 students taking **Curation: Theory and Practice**

were led by Cat McAra – research curator in our department - and Neil Curtis, Head of University Collections.

To help the curatorial teams reconcile creativity with practicality, they visited

[Aberdeen Art Gallery](#) and the [Grampian Hospital Art Trust](#),

based at Foresterhill, UoA's health campus. They were in

the art store, on corridors and in the Suttie Arts Space to think about how a collection is curated in a care-environment (Lat.

curare, to care). Thanks to UC, GHAT and AAG staff for sharing their expert knowledge of their rich and diverse collections with

our students, as well as their professional experience.





Level 4 **Art and the City** students were back to Berlin with Hans Hönes in November to explore the post-war cityscape and monuments. It was an intensive three days on site, visiting the Berlin Wall, the Jewish Museum, the Soviet War Memorial and the Alte Nationalgalerie, among others. Students gave short presentations in front of memorials and artworks, helping each other to understand their history and significance. We couldn't do this without our generous benefactors and renew our thanks for such instrumental support. AY24-25 andiamo a bella Firenze!



L3 and L4 offerings also included **Materialising Faith: Women, Art and Religion, 1150-1500, Art and Society in 18th-Century England, Performance Art and its Aftermath and The Twelfth-Century**

Renaissance. L4 students' dissertations explored themes of deaccessioning, crafting resistance, commercialising craft, antiquarian travel and othering, Greek revivalism, memory and socialism, masculinity and contemporary art practice...

AY2023-24 PRIZE WINNERS AND AWARDS

In Art History, we have a range of prizes to award every year in recognition of excellent work in the discipline. This year's awardees, as confirmed by the exam board:



L2 – **Leigh Wilson** was awarded The Felicia Murray Lefebvre Prize for his essay, 'To What Extent Does Parchment Explain the Book of Deer's Functionality as a Manuscript?' (HA2511 Art Matters: Materials and Techniques).



L3 – **Morven Tarbert** was awarded the Donal Byrne Prize in Art History for her essay, '*Object, Subject, Painter, Composer?: Feminism through the lens of Janine Antoni's performative body art.*' (AH3013 Performance Art and its Aftermath).



L4 – **Allie Glew (Single hon)** was awarded the Derek Ogston Prize in History of Art in recognition of her proficiency in the History of Art subjects taken as part of her degree programme. Allie is continuing with an MRes in Art History at Aberdeen with Karl Kinsella.

Congratulations all round!! Their achievements appeared on their transcripts in addition to the receipt of their prizes. Information about the prizes for the next academic year will be circulated in September.

POSTGRADUATE AWARD

We were delighted to learn that Harriet Duffus, 2024 Art History graduate, was recipient of a John Reid Postgraduate Award from the University of Aberdeen. Harriet is commencing postgraduate studies at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London in October. Good luck, Harriet!



ART HISTORY SOCIETY



The **Art History Society** completed its first year under the direction of an energetic committee. They will be on the AUSA stands during the AY2024-25 Welcome Week for all new sign ups. Or students (any level of study) can join [online](#). The Society comes together to talk and do all things art. This year's activities included a walking architectural tour, craft sessions and an art history quiz. Trips further afield are in the planning, along with guest speakers and workshops. We're giving them a big shout out here for organising the student-led tours of *Striking Impressions*, the major exhibition in the SDRL Gallery this year, co-curated by Helen Pierce. Bravo!



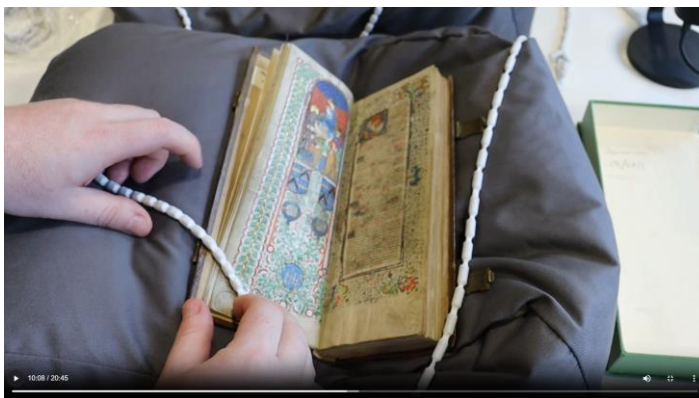
For more information, contact **President Rosemary Brumett**, **Secretary Nicole Luchita** or **Treasurer Anna-Maria Fernandez**.

POSTGRADUATE NEWS



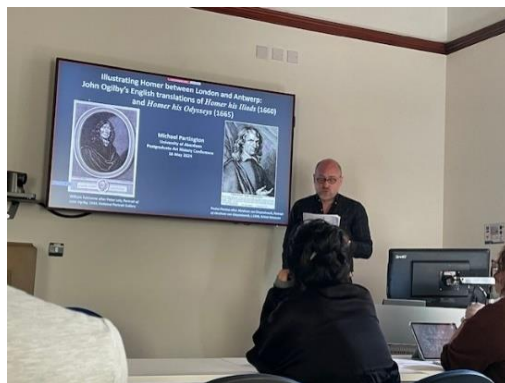
The **MLitt Christianity and the Visual Arts**, taught with our good friends in Divinity is about to go into its third presentation. This interdisciplinary programme, which represents a key research strength - namely art and religion - can be studied on campus or online. For more information, see the [MLitt prospectus page](#) and the [On-Demand Learning platform](#).

In the online programme this year, we were teaching **Materialising Faith: Women, Art and Religion, 1150-1500** and **Romantic Revivals: Religion and Art in the 19th Century**. We are working with a global cohort yet it's important to bring Aberdeen, its art, architecture and rich collections into the virtual classroom: from precious manuscripts owned or read by women to our numerous churches and their stained glass.



We held our annual **Art History Postgraduate Conference** in mid-May with papers given by MLitt, MRes and PhD researchers (hybrid format). Topics ranged from medieval visual culture, virtual pilgrimage, and early modern printed books, through Sámi culture and Swedish national romanticism to imaged lesbianism in 19th-century art, and contemporary art theory and practice, all with fascinating insight. Well done to **Nicole Cogan MacLellan, Gina Ford, Freya Jensen, Emily Metcalfe-Corrison, Kristen Morris, Bianca Morsink, Maria Nordvall, Kristina Ocnasova, Michael Partington, Audrey Ni Ruorong, Avery Tower** and **Haley Turner**, for sharing their research and fielding our questions. We look forward to progress updates in a year's time for PhDs and the final MLitt dissertations.

Postgraduate study is offered at Master of Letters (MLitt), Masters by Research (MRes) and doctorate (PhD) levels, full-time or part time, campus or distance/online. Get in touch if you have a research project or are interested in the taught programme.



Here's Michael giving his excellent presentation in the seminar room in College Bounds – it was a beautiful day and lunch was free flow into the garden.

GRADUATION

The final flourish for UG and PG study is graduation, and we enjoyed a glorious (albeit blustery) afternoon in Old Aberdeen on Thursday 27 June. Our UGs took full advantage of the giant deckchair on King's Lawn with photos galore by proud parents, families and friends! Some had travelled considerable distance, and it was wonderful to be together. Congratulations, everyone, and best of luck with your bright futures – keep in touch!



Special mention for **Ellie Thomson** who received her MLitt Christianity and the Visual Arts. Here she is in her academic robes with Karl and Joanne.

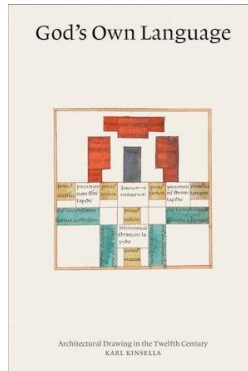
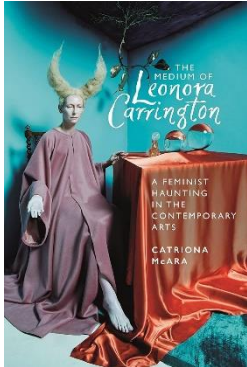


Dr Kirsty Haslam was in her red robes for the ceremony to graduate as PhD. Her thesis, "A Bellicose Burgh? The Social and Cultural Context of Martial Activity in Aberdeen, 1411-1651" was co-supervised by Helen Pierce and Aly McDonald in History.

EVENTS



The Art History Research Seminars began in October with a **double book launch** by our very own **Cat McAra** and **Karl Kinsella**. They shared their insights and experience of publishing taking questions from students and staff. It was an unusual combinations of subjects, but dear reader, it worked!



In November we welcomed **Amy Miller** (Curator, Aberdeenshire Museums Service), who spoke on ***From Mountains to Sea: Curating the New Museum of Aberdeenshire***. We can't wait for its grand opening and the chance to appraise the displays!

In January, our new colleague and Interdisciplinary Fellow, **Dr Isabelle Gapp** gave a talk entitled, ***All Aboard the Nascopie***:

Image-making and Coastal Memory in the Eastern Canadian Arctic.

Professor Sarah Smith (School of Art, University of Glasgow) came up to Aberdeen to give a talk on ***Decolonial Encounters with Hollywood Cinema: The Fragment as Audiovisual Metonym in Artists' Moving Image.***

In May, Catriona McAra was in-conversation with artist, **Arpita Shah** about her photographic exhibition, **Nalini** (Duff House), generously hosted by Aberdeen Art Gallery. They spoke movingly to Arpita's grandmother, heirlooms and memory.

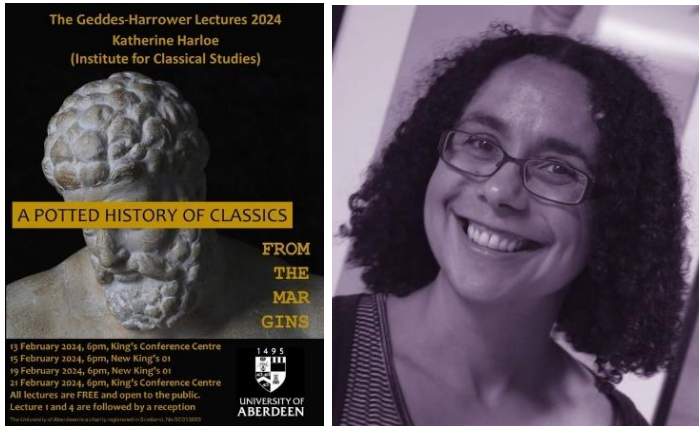


Also in May, we held another in-house **double book launch**. **Hans Hönes** and **Issy Gapp** interviewed each other about



Tangled Paths, A Life of Aby Warburg and ***A Circumpolar Landscape: Art and Environment in Scandinavian and North America, 1890-1930.***

PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES



In February, we welcomed the 2024 **Geddes-Harrower-Chair in Greek Art and Archaeology**. **Professor Katherine Harloe**, director of the Institute of Classical Studies (University of London) delivered four public lectures on the Old Aberdeen campus on the theme of ***A Potted History of the Classics***: ‘Decline and Fall?’, ‘Winckelmann’s Love Letters’, ‘Beyond “Notability”’: Women in Archaeology’, and finally, ‘Classics and Humanities in the 21st century.’ She was an inspiring speaker and passionate advocate for the Classics and Humanities.





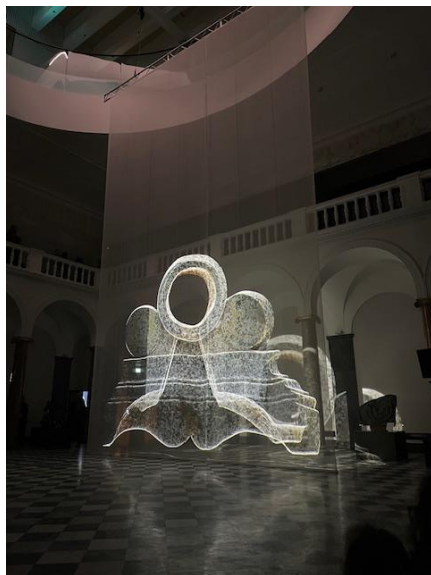
Professor Miri Rubin (Queen Mary University, London) was this year's prestigious **Gifford Lecturer** giving six public lectures during March on the theme of **The Feminine and the Religious Imagination**. This interdisciplinary series included a concert of various *Magnificat* composed over the centuries in Kings College Chapel, sung by the Chapel and Chamber Choirs, and an in-conversation event at Aberdeen Art Gallery with Art History's Joanne Anderson, focusing on Marian artworks in the collection.



ABERDEEN: ART, CULTURE & OPPORTUNITIES



We are lucky in Aberdeen to have big cultural events such as [Spectra](#) and [Nuart](#). [Nuart's](#) theme this June (in its 8th year of running) was **Living Heritage** and it was amazing to see a whole raft of new wall paintings appear, including this one by Italian



artist, Millo. Back in February, we were treated to the 10-year anniversary of the light fantastic with [Spectra](#), including this stunning projection inside AAG. *Winds of Change* by Heinrich & Palmer, is about Aberdeen's heritage and maritime past. Both events rely on volunteers and many of our students grab the chance to get involved.

There are regular opportunities to volunteer with University Collections. We also run careers events to bring students into contact with academics, museums professional and recent graduates. In February, Helen Pierce co-organised *Working With Words* an alumni careers event for Schools of DHPA and LLMVC students. It was made possible by a successful application to the Development Trust's Student Experience Fund. Speakers included Art History-English graduate Rory Bucchieri.

The Careers and Employability Service at the University offers a wide range of resources that can be used throughout student studies – from job and internship opportunities to advice and support in making applications. Check out the [website](#) to see what's there, incl. the ABDNConnect Experience Programme.

The logo for ABDN Connect is centered on a dark blue rectangular background. The text "ABDN" is in a large, white, serif font. To the right of "ABDN" is a white icon consisting of several small circles connected by thin lines, forming a network or cluster. Below "ABDN" is the word "Connect" in a large, white, serif font.

ABDN 
Connect

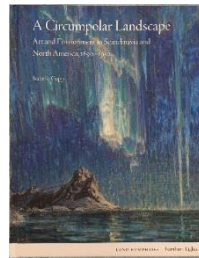
STAFF NEWS



Cat McAra has been working on her third monograph, *Scottish Artist-Women and the Feminist Avant-Garde, 1985-2025* (Edinburgh UP) with a research trip to Argyll and Bute funded by the [Scottish Society for Art History](#). She was in Texas in November to give a paper on Dorothea Tanning's soft

sculptures at the ISSS surrealism conference. Cat's done a fair few 'in-conversations': with the Glasgow-based artist and pedagogue, Sam Ainsley, for International Women's Day – see her ArtUK profile on Ainsley '[Cocooning Wonder, Debunking Myth](#)' - with photographer Arpita Shah at Aberdeen Art Gallery in May, and with filmmaker Michelle Williams Gamaker at the DCA in March.

Issy Gapp joined Aberdeen in October as Interdisciplinary Fellow (Environment & Biodiversity Challenge Area), working across Art History and

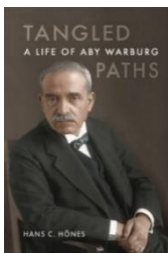


Glaciology. She recently won a British Academy Knowledge Frontiers grant for the community-led research project [From the Floe Edge. Visualising Local Sea-Ice Change in Kinngait, Nunavut](#) in collaboration with Duke University and the West Baffin Coop in Kinngait; and a NERC-Arctic Office UK-Greenland Research Bursary for *Voices on Ice*, [Teaching Arctic Environments](#) online resources. She published *A Circumpolar Landscape: Art and Environment in Scandinavia and North America, 1890-1930* (Lund Humphries, 2024), spoke at [London Art Week on Nordic](#)

[Art](#), and co-curated the exhibition, *Anna Boberg: Painting the Arctic Summer* at Ben Elwes Fine Art, London.



Karl Kinsella was awarded a British Academy Talent Development grant with Nathaniel Greene in Divinity for their digital humanities project, [Digitising Pre-Modern Material Culture: Foundations and Innovations](#). Together, they've organised a series of seminars on the Digital Humanities at Aberdeen, the first of which was held in May, and in August presented the project at The Digital Humanities Oxford Summer School 2024. Karl gave a research paper at Birkbeck College, London.



Hans Hönes published his third monograph, *Tangled Paths. A Life of Aby Warburg* (Reaktion Books, 2024). Italian and German translations are coming soon. He organised the conference, *The Practice of Art History in Britain, 1900–60: Paul Oppé's Art Worlds*, at the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art, London, 30 Nov– 1 Dec 2023. Hans was recently awarded the Aby Warburg-Preis for an Emerging Scholar and will travel to Hamburg in November for the ceremony. He led the summer school, *Let's Talk About Art* at Aberdeen Art Gallery in August, with the first day bringing in eye-tracking technology in collaboration with Psychology at UoA. Hans is on research leave Aug-Dec 2024.

Helen Pierce co-curated *Striking Impressions* in the SDRL Gallery, focusing on the ways in which we create, view and interpret faces. She spoke on "John Michael Wright: Prints and Proof(s)?" at a conference on the artist held at the Scottish National Gallery in October. She led a session for historians working with images at the *Integrating the Visual: Printed Images in Early Modern Britain* workshop at the University of Newcastle in April. Helen published "Francis Place in Glasgow: a Confirmation", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 86:3 (2024), pp.497-504.



Joanne Anderson was speaking about Mary Magdalen and medieval stained glass at a research workshop organised by the University of St Andrews and hosted by the Burrell Collection, Glasgow in February. She was in-

conversation with Prof. Miri Rubin at Aberdeen Art Gallery in late March as part of the Gifford Lecture series, which she co-organised. 'Visualising the Feminine' focused on Marian artworks in AAG's collection. Joanne's excited to be working on her second book, *Exhibiting Frescoes from Florence, 1968-1974*. She will be on research leave Jan-Aug 2025.

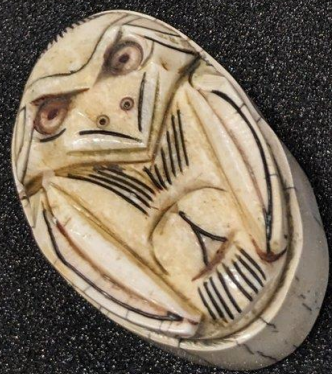
Our Thanks

In December 2023, we wished **Kathleen Brebner**, Art History's administrator a very happy retirement. We all miss her calm efficiency and bottomless institutional knowledge, but after many years of dedicated service, it's richly deserved.

Barbara McGillivray took on the reins and we thank her for helping us during this transitional period.

There are just not thanks enough for **Kate Smith**, School Administration Manager, and the full admin team for what they have achieved this year and what they have done for us as a department in a sea of change. Cheers, everyone!





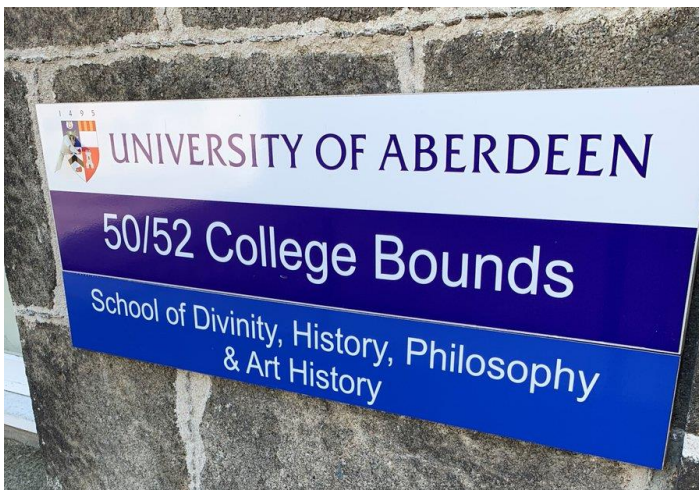
ART HISTORY CONTACT DETAILS

Email: art-history@abdn.ac.uk

X @abdn_arthistory

f abdn.arthistory

Instagram @arthistory_abdn



Until next year!

All images courtesy of the Art History Department. Ivory carvings on p.23,
University Collections.
Front and back covers - *Don't Feed the Seagulls*, Hope Markillie (Class of 2024);
[NuArt Mural by Millo](#), Aberdeen Health Village, 2024.

