

Bet Low – An Island On Your Doorstep

11th January – 8th February 2025

The centenary of the birth of the Scottish artist **Bet Low** (1924-2007) is marked in both Glasgow and Orkney through a collaboration between the Reid Gallery, The Glasgow School of Art and the Pier Arts Centre in Stromness, Orkney.

This exhibition, celebrating the centenary of her birth reflects on Bet Low's working life, from early studies of Glasgow to the late Orkney landscapes and go some way in reassessing this important Scottish artist's contribution to Scottish art and culture.

Both Glasgow and Orkney played a crucial part in the artist's life and work, forming the backdrop to important stages in her long career. This exhibition is part of Glasgow 850.

The exhibition also contains reference to Low's wider contribution to Scottish arts, in Glasgow, from her role co-founding the New Charing Cross Gallery (1963-8), to her other activities with Glasgow Unity Theatre, the Clyde Group and open-air exhibitions on the railings on Glasgow Botanic (1956).

The exhibition is on show in the Reid Gallery, Glasgow School of Art until 8th February 2025, after which it will be on show in the Pier Arts Centre, Orkney from 1st March – 7th June 2025.

Loans are from public and private collections, including The Bet Low Trust, Centre for Contemporary Art Glasgow (CCA) Archive, Culture Perth & Kinross Museum & Galleries, The Glasgow School of Art, Lillie Art Gallery, National Galleries of Scotland, National Library of Scotland, North Lanarkshire Council, Orkney Islands Council, The Pier Arts Centre Collection, Royal Scottish Academy Diploma Collection and University of Glasgow Library Archives and Special Collections.

The loans and exhibition are supported by the Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund. Created by the Garfield Weston Foundation and Art Fund, the Weston Loan Programme is the first ever UK-wide funding scheme to enable smaller and local authority museums to borrow works of art and artefacts from national collections.

Bet Low RSA RSW RGI D.Lit. was born in Gourrock in 1924. She attended Glasgow School of Art (1942-45), during the period of the Second World War, gaining a diploma in Drawing and Painting. In 1945, Low undertook a three-month diploma course at Patrick Allan-Fraser School of Art, Hospitalfield, Arbroath. Low attended teacher training at Glasgow's Jordanhill Training College in 1945. However, she did not wish to teach and left the course, to become involved in Glasgow Unity Theatre. She helped paint set scenery, did occasional set design and assisted with publicity.

In 1946 she joined the Clyde Group of Writers and Artists, going on to be part of their 'Art and Peace Festival and Exhibition' in McLellan Galleries, Glasgow. In 1956, with her husband Tom Macdonald and others, she co-organised a series of open-air exhibitions on the railings of Glasgow's Botanic Gardens. She joined the Glasgow Group Society in the mid-1960s, taking part in many of its exhibitions. In 1963 she co-founded and was one of the directors of the New Charing Cross Gallery in Glasgow (1963-1968). Low was elected a Professional Member of the Society of Scottish Artists in 1964 and was an invited Professional Member of the Scottish Society of Women Artists.

Whilst Glasgow was to remain home, in 1967 Low and Macdonald bought a small cottage in Lyness, Hoy (Orkney). This sustained relationship with place had a great impact on her practice. Low had several solo shows through Cyril Gerber Fine Art, including 'The Forties, Glasgow People and Places: Drawings and Paintings, Tom Macdonald & Bet Low' (1984). In 1985 she had a significant retrospective, selected by Cordelia Oliver, at the Third Eye Centre, Glasgow, which toured Scotland to Dumfries, Perth and the Pier Arts Centre, Orkney. Her work was acquired for both public and private collections in her lifetime. Low was elected an Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1988 and made a Royal Scottish Academy Academician in 2005. In 1999 she was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters from Glasgow University. Bet Low died at the age of 82 in Glasgow.

Exhibition Events

Exhibition tour 'Bet Low: An Island on Your Doorstep'

11am 11th January 2025 Free but ticketed – Book via Eventbrite

City Streets, Scottish Islands and Silhouetted Hills: Bet Low Art and Life

3pm 21st January 2025 Free but ticketed – Book via Eventbrite

LOWLANDS: Round Table

6pm 24th January 2025 Free but ticketed – Book via Eventbrite

Painting with Coloured Pulp Inspired by Bet Low – Papermaking Workshop

1pm 28th January 2025 Free but ticketed – Book via Eventbrite

New Charing Cross Gallery (1963 – 68) and Contemporary Artist-Run Models in Glasgow

6pm 3rd February 2025 Free but ticketed – Book via Eventbrite

Walk and Talk: 'Bet Low – an Artist's Life Reflected Through Glasgow's Architecture' Walking Tour with Hildegard Berwick

11am 8th February 2025 Free but ticketed – Book via Eventbrite

Scan the QR code to book your free tickets
or visit [www. https://gsaexhibitions.co.uk/whats-on/](https://gsaexhibitions.co.uk/whats-on/)

