

Photocall: 11.30am – 1pm, Thursday 12 February 2009
NATIONAL GALLERY COMPLEX, The Mound, Edinburgh, EH2 2EL



Roger Mayne, *Children playing on a lorry, Glasgow* (1958)
© Roger Mayne, Scottish National Photography Collection, Scottish National Portrait Gallery

25 YEARS OF PHOTOGRAPHY CELEBRATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL COLLECTION

14 February - 19 April 2009

NATIONAL GALLERY COMPLEX, The Mound, Edinburgh, EH2 2EL

Telephone 0131 6246 6200; recorded information 0131 332 2266

www.nationalgalleries.org

Admission free

The enormous contribution of Scottish photographers to the development of their medium will be celebrated this spring, in a special display marking the first quarter-century of the Scottish National Photography Collection. Since 1984, nearly forty thousand photographs – dating from the beginnings of the art-form in the 1840s to the present day – have been acquired for the collection, which is housed at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. Comprising a selection of 38 works, both historic and modern, 25 Years Of Photography will document the remarkable growth of the collection in its short history, and highlight the vast wealth of material in its holdings.

In 1984 the National Galleries of Scotland took the decision to build upon the Portrait Gallery's existing collection of works by the pioneering, Edinburgh-based photographers David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, and formally established the Scottish National Photography Collection. Its remit is to collect, research and exhibit photography, and to produce publications on the subject, with a Scottish bias to its energies. Scottish photographers have been internationally renowned since the very earliest days of the medium, and the collection now offers an unrivalled archive of their work and achievements.

Highlights in the display will include Hill and Adamson's engaging portrait of The Misses Farnie with Brownie (about 1845); J Craig Annan's stunning highland landscape The Dark Mountains (1890);

Alfred Buckham's breathtaking aerial photograph of Edinburgh and the Forth Estuary, *Sunshine, Wind and Rain* (about 1918); and the collection's most recent addition, Iain Stewart's richly atmospheric landscape, *Erribol* (from the series *Darkedden*), which was purchased in February 2009, and has been printed specially for the display.

25 Years Of Photography will bring together the work of historic and current photographers working in similar areas, to see how they echo, reflect or react against each other, and to explore three broad themes: *People*; *Land and Stone*; and *Staged and Constructed*.

The first of these will illustrate the strong tradition of social documentary in Scottish photography, with examples such as Grace Robertson's *Mothers' Pub Outing* (1954) and Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert's *Calderari Gypsy Children* (1994). It will also explore different strands of portraiture, with fine examples by Pradip Malde (*Richard Walker* (1985) and *David Williams* (*Six form girl, primary 1 girl, St Margaret's School*, from the series *Pictures from No Man's Land* (1984)).

Land and Stone will examine the response of Scottish photographers to the country's rural and urban geography, including Raymond Moore's spare and beautiful *Raes Knowes* (1980); Thomas Annan's *Close No. 101, High Street, Glasgow* (1868-71); and Patricia Macdonald's remarkable aerial photograph *Castle, Island and Cracking Ice, Loch Leven* (1987).

Staged and Constructed will feature the work of photographers who have a more direct hand in arranging their subject matter, or constructing images, such as Calum Colvin (untitled image from the series *Constructed Narratives* (1985)) and Andy Wiener (*Separation*, from the series, *Love Scenes* (1989)).

25 Years Of Photography will also highlight the important work of the National Galleries of Scotland in commissioning modern prints of historic photographs that currently exist only as negatives. Using photographers who are particularly sympathetic to their predecessors' work, or who are working in a similar area of practice, the collection has helped to revive the beauty and impact of lost images such as George P Lewis's *Corporation tram-driver and conductor Glasgow* (1918), and Fred Bremner's *River Crossing, River Jhelum, Kashmir* (1900).

The display will also reflect the international collection, which includes the work of distinguished European photographers, particularly those whose practice (exemplified by Roger Mayne's *Children playing on a lorry, Glasgow* (1958)) was of particular importance in Scotland in the mid-twentieth century.

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For further information and images, please call the Press Office
on 0131 624 6247/ 325/ 332/ 314

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www.nationalgalleries.org

Notes to Editors

To coincide with exhibition, there will a conference on 28 March, when the newly-revised edition of The Companion Guide to Photography in the National Galleries of Scotland will be published.