

HIGHLAND HOSPICE IPU MODERNISATION ART AND DESIGN INTERVENTIONS

BACKGROUND

During the design phase of the new Highland Hospice Inpatient Unit, funding was sourced from Creative Scotland to develop an Art Plan for the Hospice. This plan was researched and prepared by arts consultant Robert Livingston and sculptor Helen Denerley. The plan led to the Board of Highland Hospice adopting an Arts Policy in June 2014. The objectives of the Arts Policy are to:

- Enhance patient care and facilities by placing a premium on the visual aesthetic of all aspects of the Hospice building.
- Offer patients an ongoing range of opportunities for consolation, celebration, comfort and stimulation, either through participating in, or through experiencing, the arts.
- Explore the means by which the arts and artists can aid a coherent and accessible expression of Highland Hospice's ethos and philosophy.
- Programme and commission work of the highest quality – in all art forms – and include all aspects of the Hospice community in the process of selection and creation.
- Express the Hospice's Highland identity through working – primarily but not exclusively – with artists and arts organisations strongly linked to the Highlands.
- Ensure good practice by seeking external guidance; benchmarking against models of good practice, and developing policies for maintenance, donations of artworks, and temporary displays.
- Providing a framework for integrating arts in the delivery of Hospice services and enabling and enhancing grant applications to support delivery of the Hospice's Art Plan.

The Art Plan was circulated to board members in the summer of 2014. The overarching theme adopted in the Art Plan for the Hospice was 'making space for the natural environment' and within this context the plan proposed a range of potential interventions including interior design, craft installations and artistic commissions which would bring the colours, images and materials of the Highlands into the new Hospice.

In December 2015 the Senior Management Team engaged Arts Consultant, Susan Christie to support delivery of the Art Plan in the new Hospice. Susan has brought together a team of artists and designers and the SMT have approved the following interventions:

- A unifying colour scheme for the whole building based on a winter scene of Glen Affric
- Coloured glass panels inset to windows in one of the visitors lounges and the Sanctuary
- Hand-crafted oak reception desks for the main entrance and the Netley entrance
- A mural for an 8m high wall in the patient lounge
- A specially written poem shown in full on the outside curve of the tower staircase in our main entrance and words and fragments repeated throughout the Hospice to create flow and points of interest/discussion
- A commissioned abstract watercolour printed to vinyl wallcovering and establishing a feature image on a long stretch of curved wall within the Unit
- The artists are also coming up with a unifying approach to decorating and furnishing the Sanctuary

GLASS PROJECT

The Glass Project is being delivered by Highland-based artist Erlend Tait. Two rooms have been chosen for Erlend's work – a Sanctuary space for quiet reflection and a Visitors' Lounge for families and friends. The new glass designs will relate to the Highland-inspired palette of colours, and it is envisaged that in the Sanctuary some painted details will highlight specific aspects of the landscape – for example, the mountains of Coigach (including Suilven), and the tree rings of ancient Scottish woodland.

An underlying understanding and sensitivity to the Highland landscape percolates throughout Erlend's work, and the new windows will be important features in the hospice. The new glass designs will soften and warm the spaces, and they will enhance the way in which the light enters the interior spaces. Erlend's work will address the Highland theme and will also closely intertwine with the other designers' work. Each artist is working actively as part of a team and all the projects inter-relate.

The Text Project, for example, will focus on Suilven with a new poem being commissioned by award-winning writer Melanie Challenger and it is intended that the Sanctuary be named after this iconic mountain. Suilven and its neighbours will be a subtle element within Erlend's designs for the hospice windows.

ERLEND TAIT

Erlend trained at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen and is based in Fortrose on the Black Isle.

His practice spans a range of media from stained glass to painting and highly detailed monochromatic portrait drawings. Initially these different strands of Erlend's practice may appear distinctly separate but on deeper examination, there are threads that interconnect the work. The portraits, for example, oftentimes contain areas of decorative patterning and abstracted details which have been influenced by nature. The way in which these stylised patterns are formed echoes the deliberate flatness of the stained glass work. The contrast between the repetitive patterning and the highly detailed pencil portraits provides a counterpoint; one plays off the other. The more you interrogate the work, the more the similarities emerge and become apparent.

The other running theme is Erlend's work is the landscape. Being a keen cyclist, he spends a considerable amount of time being in the landscape. From floral images to repeated abstracted mountain forms, nature is often represented and a respect for the environment is something that comes across strongly in much of his work.

His forthcoming show in Germany is evocatively entitled *Path of Most Resistance*.

Erlend's desire to vary and deepen his experience of being in the Highland landscape is documented in a blog which was written during a residency in the Bothy, a residency space initiated by artist Bobby Niven and which is located in the Cairngorms. Many of the other artists who have been resident in the Bothy have come from central Scotland hence Erlend's choice may have seemed unexpectedly close to home. However, being deep in the mountains during a snowy winter was more intensive than he had anticipated and provided a valuable period of creative immersion.

<http://www.thebothyproject.org/erlend-tait/>

For Highland Hospice, Erlend has been invited to join a small skilled team of professional artists and designers who are working with a Glen Affric inspired colour palette developed by one of the team, Donna Wilson.

EXAMPLES OF ERLEND'S WORK

The windows shown below are examples of Erlend's previous commissions. The final design of the Hospice windows is not complete but they are expected to be less literal in their representation of the colours and landscape of the Highlands.



COST

The cost of producing and installing the three glass panels in the Hospice is £18,000.

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