JOAN EARDLEY
in context
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6 AUGUST – 5 SEPTEMBER 2015

Front cover: Joan Eardley’s studio at 204 St James’ Road, Townhead, Glasgow. Photograph by Audrey Walker
Left: Two Glasgow Children, pastel on buff paper, 29.5 x 21.5 cms (detail) (cat. 7)
This exhibition seeks to illuminate two important aspects of Eardley. Firstly to explore how she came to paint what she did and secondly to tell the poignant story of how the example of her dedication to the life of an artist inspired a number of painters to form a loose colony at Catterline. That Joan Eardley was not a proponent of *belle peinture* and *colourism* should not be a great surprise. Her tutor at The School of Art in Glasgow Hugh Adam Crawford did have an influence (as he did on her fellow student Robert Henderson Blyth) particularly over her choice of low tones and subjects of social realism. She would certainly have been aware of the presence of JD Fergusson in Glasgow, Margaret Morris’s Celtic Ballet and the New Glasgow Group but there is no evidence that she was attracted to any radical agenda, grouping or movements as so many were in this period. Her choice of the streets and people of Townhead as her subject came from opportunism and a very personal compassion for the spirit of the people. Before she took her first studio at Cochrane Street she had completed studies at the Patrick Allan-Fraser Art School at Hospitalfield in Arbroath and a post-Diploma traveller in France and Italy. She famously clashed with Cowie who was Warden at Hospitalfield in 1947 but he reinforced for her the primacy of drawing, a habit entrenched by continual practice, wherever she was.
Her first subject in Glasgow was the street and very quickly her studio, always open, attracted the curious children of the neighbourhood who quickly became her new subject. She had already drawn and painted at Port Glasgow and attempted a few not entirely successful 'realist' compositions like The Mixer Men. Around Townhead, on Rotten Row, the tenement close mouths and back greens were immediately attractive but it was the people, the gangs of kids with a pram or the coal cart or peddler's stand which became her inspiration. The development of this subject, honest, direct with no deliberate sentimentality, became a unique contribution to British realist painting. From this time on she followed her own star with an intensity that is impossible to divorce from the short time allowed to her flame. Sure, her later ambitious scaled seascapes at Catterline have been compared to European Tachisme and American Abstract Expressionism and she was not ignorant of the emerging art-movements of the fifties but from now on her
subjects in both Glasgow and Kincardineshire was foremost expressionist: a heart-felt opening-up, emotional outpouring and expression of empathy that is self and subject in one.

Her discovery of Catterline came as she returned from an exhibition of her Glasgow work in the Gaumont cinema in Aberdeen in 1950. She had been invited to exhibit by Anette Soper, another painter, and then taken to recuperate from mumps at Catterline where Soper had enjoyed family holidays as a girl. The discovery was to be the most significant of her life. Clinging to the iron-bound coast of Kincardineshire was a landscape shaped by sea and storm, changing dramatically by day and gradually by season and with it a way of life at once simple and honest. In Catterline she would become part of a community, her work respected as if her painting was as natural and vital as howking the tatties or gutting the herring. She had already travelled a lot and might have adopted somewhere else as her ‘second’ subject. She spent several weeks on Arran in 1943, staying in a tiny cottage known as the ‘Tabernacle’ at Corrie on the south west coast of the island with her great friend from the School of Art Margot Sandeman. She drew and painted to the north of Glasgow (the family home was in Bearsden) where she was attracted to a gypsy encampment. She had drawn similar subjects in Lincolnshire and the Sussex of her girlhood where she returned at least once; she could have divided her life...
between Glasgow and France, like William Crosbie or David Donaldson and most of the generation that emerged from the School of Art in the sixties. But Catterline was the wild place she had been looking for and became her real and spiritual home and allowed the full flowering of her restless talent.

Throughout her adult life, her friends were mostly artists and she felt more comfortable with the idea of a shared vocation while being able to devote her energy to her own practice at the same time. Her early friendship Margot Sandeman lasted and was based on mutual respect and the same was true of her mature relationship with the photographer Audrey Walker. The former would not find the same intensity of response in Catterline but Walker loved the place like Eardley. Her home at Caverslee near Selkirk had inspired some haunting landscape work but was supplanted by Catterline where Audrey visited as much as she could and shot many fine landscapes and portraits of Eardley. It was Eardley’s own strength

Lil Neilson, Joan Eardley and Angus Neil outside Number 18, Catterline, c.1963. Photograph by Oscar Marzaroli
and conviction about her purpose on earth that attracted many other artists, some perhaps needier and less confident, into her orbit. A number of these were happy just to be in her company but others were more demanding and became fiercely protective to the point of possessiveness. Of these, the most significant was Angus Neil. They met at Hospitalfield and he followed her back to Glasgow where she had a post-Dip place and he enrolled for part-time classes. *Boy Reading* may well be his first painting exhibited at the RSA when it was shown in 1954, and undoubtedly the subject is Andrew Samson who was also painted by Eardley. Of the ten works he exhibited between 1954 and 1968 a different address is left and he was often homeless, sometimes sleeping, by Eardley’s own account, in her mother’s garden shed. In Catterline, where he followed again, he stayed with her at No 2 Catterline before he got his own place in the village where he was photographed by Oscar Marzaroli, who had also made the pilgrimage to the North East. Here Neil did odd

Photograph by Audrey Walker
joiner work for Eardley and she provided tea, understanding and patience along with others in the community like Dorothy Morrison. Their relationship was of an intimate but not sexual nature; he posed for her in the work *Sleeping Nude* (SNGMA), one of Eardley’s most powerful and controversial paintings and after her death his life spiralled out of control. In the immediate aftermath of her death he took it upon himself to ‘rescue’ work from her studio which could only be identified for return under the supervision of the local bobby, Angus having menacingly taken up his wood-cutter’s axe. He spent most of his final years in a mental hospital and had a poignant Memorial show at Aberdeen Art Gallery in 1994, two years after he died. Another friend from student days was Dorothy Steel; it was with Steel that Eardley had travelled to France in 1950 and she also came to work in Catterline on a few occasions. We know from the correspondence with Walker that their relationship had become awkward: Eardley was a fiercely loyal friend but almost above all else valued her working space.

Lilian Neilson, always known as Lil, would also make Catterline her home, buying a cottage at No 2 South Side after Joan’s death in August 1963. She was born in 1938 and studied drawing and painting at Duncan of Jordanstone Art College in Dundee and had met Eardley at Hospitalfield, where the older painter kept up a connection. It was she and her partner Reet Guenigault who nursed Eardley towards the end, which eventually came in a nursing home near her family at Killermont. Neilson was gay, attractive and clearly in Eardley’s thrall and perhaps caused some jealousy amongst Joan’s friends. She looked at the same subjects and used the same approach with perhaps even more emphasis of texture but was also to produce some monumental paintings with a broad brush approach, freely painted, perhaps owing much to her other profession as a set designer. Two other painters who had attended Glasgow School of Art in the early fifties and got to know Eardley and Neil well were Carole Gibbons and James Morrison. Both joined the new Glasgow Group in 1958. Gibbons forged a successful career and right into the eighties welcomed Angus to her flat in Glasgow. Morrison set out to paint the destruction of much of Victorian slum Glasgow as the planners began to implement the move to high-rise schemes and build motorways as part of the brave new world of the mid-fifties. He painted some of the same streets as Eardley, but deliberately left out the people, focusing instead on the poignant absence and nobility of the tenements. With his camera, the Italian Scot Oscar Marzaroli set out to chronicle the same territory with the sharp eye for a picture and an anthropologist’s sense of social relevance. Morrison, newly married in 1958, took teaching work in Montrose and then Duncan of Jordanstone in Dundee and moved to live at Catterline. His painting here was quite minimal using grey and brown colour washes and dark calligraphic lines to indicate the detail of a cottage or net-posts. Amongst many painters who worked in Catterline at this time Eardley’s presence and influence is palpable; she inspired others to look and respond as she did in a visceral way with all the technical freedom and innovation of the age. Her own strength combined with the fragility of life which is represented by her death at forty-two made and still make a compelling narrative, while the legacy of her work keeps the flame alive.

GUY PEPLOE, THE SCOTTISH GALLERY
Joan Eardley, *By the Fireside, portrait of Angus Neil*, oil on canvas, 57 x 77 cms.
Private collection, The Scottish Gallery, 2013
in context

3. *Agricultural Engine, Port Glasgow*
5. Angus Neil, *Boy Reading (Andrew Samson)*
6. *Head of a Boy*, c.1950
7. *Two Glasgow Children*, c.1959
8. *Boy in Blue Blazer*, c.1956
10. *Young Girl Sitting on the Ground*
11. *Girl in Profile*, c.1960
12. *Tenement Corner, Townhead*
13. *The Checked Jersey*
14. *Street Scene*
15. *Wrapped Up*
16. *Boy in Blue Trousers*, 1960
17. Lilian Neilson, *Catterline Cottages*, 1965
18. *Sea at Catterline*, c.1960
20. *Catterline Landscape*, c.1960
21. *Beehives, Catterline*
22. *Autumn at Catterline*
23. *Trees and Two Suns, Catterline*
24. *Cattle Beneath Trees, Catterline*
25. *Storm over the Sea, Catterline*

Joan Eardley, Catterline, Summer 1959. Photograph by Audrey Walker
James Cowie, RSA (1886-1956)

Head Study, Girl, 1925-30

chalk drawing, 29.5 x 26 cms

EXHIBITED

James Cowie, RSA (1886-1956)

2  *Girl's Head*, 1925-30
pencil drawing, 25 x 23 cms

EXHIBITED
Joan Eardley celebrates in multi-coloured, expressive pastel a Victorian agricultural monster, the traction-engine. As a child born on a Sussex farm in 1921, Eardley is likely to have encountered such steam-driven machinery even though it was soon to be made out of date by petrol driven tractors. Traction engines had in the mid-19th century offered mechanised alternatives to traditional draft horses. By the mid-20th they had become largely redundant objects of nostalgic history preserved by societies of keen enthusiasts.

Joan’s drawing is undated but it carries more weight than merely fond memory; it is observed with careful relish and energy. It belongs to a group of drawings in which she described artefacts in detail from a world rapidly disappearing – a broken wooden wheelbarrow, a field-wagon that has seen better days, old black cottage ranges, and craftsmen and women using tools for lacemaking, knife-sharpening, chair repair, a shipwright’s workshop. They represent a transient way of life, as her theme of slum children also does.

Christopher Andreae, 2015

This unusual subject tests to Eardley’s ‘realist’ concerns at this time. Her drawing is technically sound and further she has invested a certain nobility in the heavy steam engine.

Agricultural Engine, Port Glasgow
pastel on paper, 36 x 51.5 cms
This energetic, heavily worked drawing belongs to a summer visit to Cologne du Gers, in the *Gers Departement* not far from the Pyrenees where Eardley worked with Dorothy Steel in 1951. The pantile roofs are typical of the vernacular building of the area. Emotionally and stylistically it surely owes much to Van Gogh, whose major touring exhibition Joan would have seen at Kelvingrove in 1948. It belongs with the drawings she made in France and Italy on her travels but has a new maturity and ambition which looks forward to her expressionist engagement with the landscape already begun in Catterline the year before.

4  *Red Roofs, Trees and Cow*, 1951
mixed media on paper, 39 x 48 cms
signed lower left

PROVENANCE
The artist’s studio inventory number ED101

EXHIBITED
THE TOWNHEAD STUDIO

Townhead (Scots: Toun-heid) was an area of Glasgow which lay close to George Square and the City Chambers going towards Glasgow Cathedral and the High Street. Being so close to the city centre, the slums were hard to avoid. In the 1960's, Townhead was designated a Comprehensive Development Area (CDA), which meant that it would be largely demolished to make way for modern tower blocks and a controversial inner city road system. Today, a few surviving tenements are all that remain.

Joan Eardley took her first studio in Cochrane Street near the City Chambers in 1949, moving later to an old photographer’s studio at 204 St James's Road in Townhead in 1952. Eardley’s powerful drawings and paintings of urban dereliction in Glasgow during this period are poignant depictions of the character of the place, indivisible from the character of its people. Her studio was top lit and kept warm with a large stove; the interior and structure of the building was held up with scaffolding. She kept a camera in her studio to capture the surrounding street life, and her fast moving child subjects; these photographs were used as reference points for sketches and finished paintings.

Joan’s favourite models in Townhead were the Samson children. In 2010 film-maker John Archer of Hopscotch films interviewed four sisters from this large family and their mother. Looking at a film about Joan they reminisced:

‘...that was a treasure trove in the studio, there was always wee nooks and crannies everywhere to play...’
‘She’s lovely isn’t she?... She was a lovely, lovely person. She looks as if she’s attacking the paint in this one here...’
‘A lot of wee sketches up on the wall that she used to give us... and we used to take them home and make airplanes out of them...And my mother would kindle a fire with them.’
‘She’d sit you down and you used to sit and draw and she’d just sit and sketch you while you were drawing. Because I mean sometimes you were up there for four, five hours... And the chalks... well she used to say they cost a lot of money’... ‘Is that me and you?’
‘And the one that’s in the art gallery she actually got me to put my initials on at the bottom. MS.’
‘And it looks quite tiny her studio there but it was massive... Big. It was big... And it was sunny... Remember the single bed she had? ‘She was quite a mannish looking... She was great... She was very, very gentle... very quiet spoken and... She was very nice.’

*Joan Eardley* by Christopher Andreae, Lund Humphries, 2013, p26
As a student at the Glasgow School of Art, Joan was already heading, by her own account, for the slums that were to be the vital subject of her art. In her 1963 interview, she remembered this: ‘Even at the art school I used to wander away from the centre of town usually to the East because that seemed to be the quickest direction that I could reach the sort of back streets. To me, that’s the living part of Glasgow, where the people are. Something that’s real...’

The urban Eardley’s works, with few exceptions, are all about people, mainly children. Even the paintings of looming tenements usually have children in the street or gaping out of windows; the buildings are the setting and backdrop for the lives of the human subjects who were the main preoccupation of the urban Eardley.

Joan Eardley by Christopher Andreae, Lund Humphries, 2013, p66-68

'The front door to Eardley’s Studio, at 204 St James’ Road, Townhead Glasgow, April 1963. Photograph by Audrey Walker
Joan in her Townhead Studio, c.1959 – *Two Glasgow Children* (cat. 7), can be seen above easel. Photograph by Audrey Walker
In the early 1960s Eardley recorded a taped interview, and spoke of her enthusiasm for the back streets of Glasgow and the children who played there: “The community feeling is rapidly disappearing in Glasgow... I do feel that there is still a little bit left. I try still to paint Glasgow so long as there is this family group quality. I’ve known about half a dozen families well I suppose during the period of time I’ve worked in Glasgow... about ten years or more and at the present moment a family by the name of Samson. I have been painting them for seven years... there are a large number of them, twelve, so I’ve always had a certain number of children from this family of any age I choose... some children I don’t like... most of them I get on with... some interest me much more as characters... these ones I encourage – they don’t need much encouragement – they don’t pose – they come up and say “will you paint me?” There are always knocks at the door – the ones I want – I try to get them to stand still – it’s not possible to get a child to stay still... I watch them moving about and do the best I can... the Samsons – they amuse me – they are full of what’s gone today – who’s broken into what shop and who’s flung a pie in whose face – it goes on and on. They just let out all their life and energy... and I just watch them and I do try and think about them in painterly terms... all the bits of red and bits of colour and they wear each other’s clothes – never the same thing twice running... even that doesn’t matter... they are Glasgow – this richness that Glasgow has – I hope it will always have – a living thing, intense quality – you can’t ever know what you are going to do but as long as Glasgow has this I’ll always want to paint. Whenever I come back I get a new feeling – chiefly the back streets – I always feel the same – I want to paint them differently – but the same thing – you can’t stop observing, things are happening all the time – you are recognising them in your mind.

*Joan Eardley* by Fiona Pearson, National Galleries of Scotland, 2007, p.31
The demolition of Townhead, c.1963. Photo: www.urbanglasgow.com
It has been suggested that there may have been instances of Angus Neil paintings being confused with Joan Eardley. Here the shared subject, similar technique and tonality is striking. However, one must credit Neil; it is not a copy but an original, touching portrait by a brother artist working closely with Eardley and should be recognised as one of his most successful works.

Angus Neil (1924-1992)

5  Boy Reading (Andrew Samson)

oil on canvas, 76 x 51 cms

signed lower right

PROVENANCE
G.R. Durenberger, Antiquarian, San Juan Capistrano, California
Child portraiture has always engaged us from Velasquez’ *Infanta* to Manet, Bastien-Lepage, our own Glasgow Boys and Eardley herself. The child image contains the innocence we will all lose so carries a poignancy and relevance across the years.

*Head of a Boy* is framed in a simple home-made frame. Joan Eardley learned joinery during the War and worked with local building firm who made landing craft (Joan was also tasked with painting the camouflage).

*Head of a Boy* is likely to have been exhibited in her exhibition at the Gaumont Cinema in 1953. It represents Eardley at her most brilliant as an oil painter and closer to Lucian Freud than any other British painter.

6 *Head of a Boy*, c.1950

oil on panel, 27 x 17 cms

signed lower left

EXHIBITED

Joan Eardley had no family. Instead, as an artist, she represented slum children in Glasgow. Her drawings and paintings of these impoverished characters, full of life, she observed with a particular combination of realism and sympathy. Her children were quickly recognised as different from any other artist’s depiction of children. Rough tykes, but not caricatured. Grubby, sometimes wild, figures in a street environment but not uncared for. And, as can be seen in this pastel of two small children grasping each other’s hands, not without familial feeling.

Joan tried to capture the restless vitality of what she saw (correctly) as a vanishing urban life-form, almost another species, soon to be rehoused in outlying “new towns”, communities, however undesirable, disrupted once and for all.

In the background of a photograph of Joan at the easel in her studio in Glasgow’s Townhead, taken by her friend Audrey Walker, a number of drawings and sketches are attached to the wall, including this one [p.21]. All are of pairs of children, and this is clearly a project the artist was working on. Pairs. Their meaning quite evidently goes beyond simple depiction of child behaviour. It – with feeling – investigates the potency of relationships, childish or adult. Some of the pairs show a child with an arm round another. Eardley set herself a hard task: how to paint affection without sentimentality, or in this specific drawing how to convey that almost primitive sense of responsibility and belonging an older child feels for a younger.

Christopher Andreae, 2015

An obvious ruse to keep two small boys still for a few minutes would be to ask them to hold hands. This motif, alongside their somewhat glaikit look, the taller boy’s sooty face and their colourful well-worn clothes might have led to sentimentality. Indeed Eardley is sentimental but never mawkish and these poignant images are never made to please. Today they seem nostalgic of a more innocent time; then, they were realism.

Two Glasgow Children, c.1959
pastel on buff paper, 29.5 x 21.5 cms

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, U.S.A.

EXHIBITED
Art for Science, Canterbury, 1964 where lent by Mrs. Eardley

LITERATURE
F. Pearson, Joan Eardley, National Galleries of Scotland, 2007, ill.27. This drawing appears pinned to the top of the easel in Audrey Walker’s photograph of Eardley at work in her Townhead studio (p.21)
Many of Eardley’s most successful child studies are ‘on the move’: here a boy (most likely Andrew Samson) is caught moving naturally, clutching a poke of sweets.

8  *Boy in Blue Blazer*, c.1956

pastel, 26 x 14 cms

PROVENANCE

Cyril Gerber Fine Art, Glasgow. The artist’s studio inventory number ED665
Child Study would essentially have been finished in a few minutes; the time that the toddler would submit to sitting still. Eardley’s Glasgow paintings would develop texture and substance but the drawings have a truth which derives from their urgency unique in British painting.

9  Child Study, Boy in Blue Jumper, c.1961
mixed media on paper, 22 x 20 cms
signed lower right

EXHIBITED
in the studio

Joan and toddler in her Townhead studio, c.1959. Photograph by Audrey Walker
Young Girl Sitting on the Ground

pastel, 17.7 x 13.5 cms

PROVENANCE
The artist’s studio inventory number ED782
11  *Girl in Profile*, c.1960

pastel, 22.5 x 14.5 cms

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Lancashire; The artist’s studio inventory number ED906
children of no mean city

Miss Eardley runs ahead of the rest. This artist... is interpreting Glasgow to the world with an authenticity not achieved, perhaps, since Muirhead Bone, [who] in his own very manner, brought the shipyards and the city streets alive with line.

Her preoccupation is with the seedier streets, the pavements and the tenements, walls frescoed with chalk drawings and soot, and those whose barren playgrounds they provide...the main emphasis is on the children of no mean city. To depict these waifs with their knobly knees emerging stalk-like from flower-pot wellington boots, their clutched jammy pieces and their obstinately apple cheeks, the insouciant Andrew sublimely unaware that his stomach is showing between shorts and pullover, Miss Eardley commands line with something of the indignant vigour of Van Gogh in the Borinage.

12  *Tenement Corner, Townhead*
pastel, 12.5 x 10 cms

**PROVENANCE**
The artist’s studio inventory number ED400
13 *The Checked Jersey*
pastel, 25.2 x 20.1 cms

PROVENANCE
The artist’s studio inventory number ED761
14. *Street Scene*, c.1960

pastel, 14 x 22.5 cms

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Lancashire; The artist’s studio inventory number ED470
15 *Wrapped Up*
pastel, 47.8 x 32.2 cms

**PROVENANCE**
The artist’s studio inventory number ED698
This portrait is of Martin Macaulay and is one of several studies of the four children of Bill Macaulay the senior partner of The Scottish Gallery made in 1960. Eardley agreed, perhaps reluctantly, to paint the Macaulay children and began with individual studies. Boy in Blue Trousers is the most successful of the studies for its character, typical free style and nervous energy.

16  Boy in Blue Trousers, 1960
pastel, 45 x 33 cms

PROVENANCE
Bill Macaulay (senior partner of The Scottish Gallery), thence by descent; Private collection, USA
‘...The North East, – it’s just vast waste and vast seas, vast areas of cliff – you’ve just got to paint it. I very often find I will take my paints to a certain place which has moved me and I’ll begin to paint there and I find by perhaps the end of the summer I haven’t moved from that place. My paints are still there. I’ve worn a kind of mark in the ground – no grass left! – and I just leave my paints there overnight and eventually it seems to have built up this other table and generally a studio seems to have arrived outside and that seems to be how I work. Once I’ve started in a place I don’t find I want to move, because I’m trying to do something and you’re never really satisfied with what you’re doing, so you keep on trying and the more you try the more you think of new ways of doing this particular subject and so you just go on and on.’

Joan Eardley by Christopher Andrace, Lund Humphries, 2013, p57
Above, top: Catterline – From South Cliff outside No.1. Photograph by Audrey Walker
Above: The Watch House, Catterline March 1955. Photograph by Joan Eardley
“It’s night – and the fire is giving a great, flickering light – and the lamplight too. It’s a great wee house. The floor is all levels at once. And the table three tarry boards nailed together. There’s a great big bed, half wood and half spring. A Grannie’s pot, a bucket and a basin that’s about all except for three lovely wee chairs. I’m sitting looking out at the darkness and the sea. I think I shall paint here. This is a strange place – it always excites me.”

Joan Eardley outside the Watch House, Catterline, 1955. Photograph by Audrey Walker
Joan Eardley at the foot of the cliff in Catterline, October 1958. Photograph by Audrey Walker
Lil Neilson bought a cottage at No 2 Southside after Joan Eardley died in August 1963. In the next few years she painted many of the same subjects as Joan and with a similar approach. Her work is texturally rich, low in tone and always true to the place. She liked to work on rough boards or wooden fragments found on the beach. Neilson eventually was able to move onto other subjects but Eardley’s shadow was cast long and we can recognise that Neilson’s best work of the salmon nets, cottages and stormy coast result from her inspirational friendship with the senior painter.

Lilian Neilson (1938-1998)

17 Catterline Cottages, 1965
oil on board, 21.5 x 53 cms
signed and dated ’65, further signed and dated ’65 verso
‘Three large canvases all worked throughout the day from my front door or thereabouts. It has been a perfect painting day – Not as regards climate! (I wore a fur coat for the first time). But for beauty quite perfect – A big sea – with lovely light – greyness and blowing swirling mists – and latterly a strong wind blowing from the south, blowing up great froths of whiteness off the sea, like soap suds onto the field behind our wee house – And towards evening the sun appeared shrouded in heavy mist – and turned yellow and orange and red, with great swirls of mist obscuring her every now and again – I wanted so much to paint the sun but it meant turning round and leaving my sea – or else running round paints and all to the other side of the bay. And I just hadn’t time or energy to do this – Tomorrow perhaps there will be the possibility of this sun again and I can take up my position, the other side, by the minister’s house. I think it could be good there.’

Joan Eardley, extract from a letter, *Joan Eardley* by Christopher Andreae, Lund Humphries, 2013, p21
The cottages on the horizon, deep, rich autumnal tones, heavy impasto scored deeply with the end of her brush, make *Wheat* a perfect example of the urgent, moving work she made in the last year of her life.

19 *Wheat*, c.1962

Oil on board, 45.7 x 50.8 cms

Signed lower left

PROVENANCE

The Fine Art Society, London; Aitken Dott, The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh; Bourne Fine Art, Edinburgh

EXHIBITED

Like her fellow student Robert Henderson Blyth, Eardley painted the whole landscape from her feet to the roof of the sky. Her foregrounds hum with life and growth and sometimes she would press grasses and seedheads into the wet paint. Above, the skies are ever changing carrying weather, the promise of storms or clearing after rain. In the hours of painting the artist is part of a natural continuum working with instinct and intuition, making permanent an eternal truth.

20  *Catterline Landscape*, c.1960

oil on board, 87.5 x 85 cms

PROVENANCE

The artist’s studio inventory number EE292
Eardley was a prolific pastellist. She found the medium very immediate and practical for use in front of the subject. In Catterline the soft light and close toned landscape could be captured with deft strokes, rubbing and swift black marks to define a fence, beehive or cottage.

Catterline beehives, July 1959. Photograph by Audrey Walker
21  Beehives, Catterline
pastel, 21 x 20 cms

PROVENANCE
The artist's studio inventory number ED1121
22 *Autumn at Catterline*

pastel, 11.2 x 32 cms

PROVENANCE
The artist’s studio inventory number ED1209
23 *Trees and Two Suns, Catterline*

pastel, 18.2 x 17.7 cms

**PROVENANCE**

The artist’s studio inventory number ED 1217
24  *Cattle Beneath Trees, Catterline*

pastel, 20.3 x 25.3 cms

**PROVENANCE**

The artist’s studio inventory number ED 1387
25  *Storm over the Sea, Catterline*  
pastel, 25.2 x 20.1 cms  

PROVENANCE  
The artist’s studio inventory number ED1401
I always identify Joan with the sea, and it is a valid identification. There is the gentle sunlit sea one delights in, in the summer. And even in bad weather it is still a summer sea. This is the Joan that I think everyone knew. This is the sea most people know. But there is the magnificent winter sea, in all its indomitable grandeur and the wild, turbulent and terrifying splendour. This was Joan too...

This Joan was to me godlike, and her courage and triumph over the appalling conditions in which she painted these wonderful seas, when so often she was suffering physical pain, is something to make an ordinary creature very humble. It was good to be there, having the house warm and a meal ready, and hot water, when she came home at dusk after a long day’s work on the shore with this great white churning roaring sea and tremendous gale coming at her. For even when the tide turned she still seemed hell-bent on destruction. One night in Feb 1963 she came up and said the ice was too bad and the gale force too fierce so she could not bring any gear or boards up. We went down the cliff in the dark and roped the scooter to a boat which was pulled well up, and covered and fixed the rocks all the gear we could, and then struggled up with an enormous great board...

I have always used the term ‘compulsive painter’ of Joan. I did not consciously know it was a proper description, though I imagine I must have subconsciously absorbed it at some time. Anyway Joan was that before all else. And she used to say ‘If I couldn’t paint, it wouldn’t be me and I could not live.’

Audrey Walker, c.1963, quoted from Joan Eardley by Christopher Andrac, Lund Humphries, 2013, p15-16

Lonely people are drawn to the sea.
Not for this artist the surge and glitter of salons,
Clutch of a sherry or making polite conversation.
See her when she is free: –
Striding into the salty bluster of a cliff-top
In her paint-splashed corduroys,
Humming as she recalls the wild shy boys
She sketched in the city, allowing nature’s nations
Of grasses and wild shy flowers to stick
To the canvas they were blown against
By the mighty Catterline wind –
All becomes art, and as if it was incensed
By the painter’s brush the sea growls up
In a white flood.
The artist’s cup
Is overflowing with what she dares
To think is joy, caught unawares
As if on the wing. A solitary clover,
Unable to read WET PAINT, rolls over
Once, twice, and then it’s fixed,
Part of a field more human than the one
That took the gale and is now
As she is, beyond the sun.

Edwin Morgan, 1962
Waves at Catterline. Photograph by Audrey Walker
Our friendship with Joan began in 1958, when we went to live in Catterline. My wife Dorothy and I and Joan went to the village at about the same time. Joan had held an exhibition in the Gaumont Cinema in Aberdeen in 1950 and met Annette Stephen there. She owned ‘The Watch House’, a one storey building on a promontory to the north of the village, Joan visited regularly there until she bought a house on the south side of the village with dramatic views down to the harbour and the cliffs beyond. Although in recent years the village has become a mecca for many ‘artists’, when we were there this was not the case. Joan had Angus Neil to stay with her, from time to time and later Lil Neilson, but in no way could Catterline be called an artists’ colony. Our jovial conversations rarely touched on painting, but Joan took a lively interest in our family, our son and daughter were born during our stay in the village and I remember the first time Dorothy had John out in his pram. Joan stopped, duly admired the new village inhabitant and put two half crowns in his pram as a good luck token – a village custom at this time. Angus Neil, a very good painter, lived next door to us and asked us when John was three, if he could make a pastel portrait of him. He made an excellent start to the work, but Joan would not let him finish. She said he would overwork it and so we were given the fine but unfinished work. It hangs in my house to this day. Joan was a great artist, but I remember her as a soft-spoken kind lady, who loved the village and its people and who was loved in return.

James Morrison
7.1.2013
James Morrison RSA, RSW (b.1932)

26 Two Lamps (Catterline), 1958
oil on board, 91 x 69 cms
signed and dated lower left

PROVENANCE
The Artist’s Studio; Collection of Professor Ronald Mavor CBE, Edinburgh
James Morrison RSA, RSW (b. 1932)

27 Landscape near Catterline, 1963
oil on board, 61 x 122 cms
signed and dated lower right
James Morrison graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 1954, and as early as 1952 he had begun sketching and painting the buildings and character of Victorian Glasgow. He painted *Half Demolished Tenements* on his return to Glasgow in 1964, having previously relocated to Catterline in the late 1950s.

James Morrison RSA, RSW (b. 1932)

28 *Half Demolished Tenements*, 1964

oil on canvas, 32.5 x 154 cms

signed and dated lower left

PROVENANCE

The Artist’s Studio; Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow.
Joan Eardley RSA
(1921-1963)

1921 Born in Sussex
1926 Family moves to London
1938 Entered Goldsmith’s College of Art, London
1939 Moved with mother and grandmother to Bearsden, Glasgow
1940 Enrolled at Glasgow School of Art
1942 First stay at Corrie on Arran
1943 Diploma in Drawing and Painting, Glasgow School of Art
Sir James Guthrie Prize for portraiture
Enlisted as a boat-builder’s labourer until the end of the war
1946 Lived for a time in London
Studied for six months under James Cowie at Hospitalfield, Arbroath
1947-48 Elected professional member of the Society of Scottish Artists
Awarded post-Diploma from Glasgow with travelling scholarship
Carnegie Bursary, RSA students’ exhibition
1948-49 Travelling in Italy and France
1949 Working in Cochrane Street studio in Glasgow
Travelling scholarship work shown at Glasgow School of Art
1950 Painting in Port Glasgow
1951 Summer in France
1952 Moved to Townhead studio, Glasgow
1952 First work in Catterline where she later bought property
1955 Elected Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy
First visit to Caverslee, near Selkirk
1956 Increasingly working at Catterline
1959 Visited and worked in Comrie, Perthshire
1960 Guest tutor at Hospitalfield
1962 First signs of serious illness
1963 Elected Academician of the Royal Scottish Academy
16th August died at Killearn Hospital
SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

1949  Glasgow School of Art (Travelling Scholarship work)
1950  Solo Exhibition, Gaumont Gallery, Aberdeen
1952  *Eight Young Contemporary British Painters*, Arts Council (Scottish Committee) Touring exhibition
1954  *Six Young Painters*, Parson’s Gallery, London (organised by Col. Robert Henriques and David Cleghorn Thomson)
1955  *Aspects of Contemporary Scottish Painting*, South London Art Gallery
       *Edinburgh Festival Exhibition*, The Scottish Gallery (with Brenda Mark, Robert Henderson Blyth, William Burns, David Donaldson and Robin Philipson)
       First solo London Show at St. George’s Gallery
1958  Two–person show with William Gillies during the Edinburgh Festival, The Scottish Gallery
1959  Solo Exhibition, Edinburgh Festival, 57 Gallery, Edinburgh
1960  *Contemporary British Landscape*, Arts Council of Great Britain, Touring exhibition (into 1961)
1961  Solo Exhibition, The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
1963  Solo Exhibition, Roland, Browse and Delbanco, London
       *14 Scottish Painters*, Commonwealth Institute, London
       *Four Scottish Painters*, Edinburgh Festival, The Arts Council Scottish Committee

SELECTED POSTHUMOUS EXHIBITIONS

1964  *Joan Eardley RSA, 1921-1963*, Scottish Arts Council Memorial Exhibition, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow then Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh and subsequent tour of shortened version
1965  *Paintings by Joan Eardley*, Roland, Browse and Delbanco, London
1975  *Joan Eardley*, a Scottish Arts Council Exhibition at the Third Eye Centre, Glasgow
1985  *Joan Eardley RSA, 1921-1963*, Cyril Gerber Fine Art, Glasgow
1988  *Joan Eardley RSA*, Retrospective Exhibition concurrently at the Talbot Rice Gallery and the Royal Scottish Academy during the Edinburgh Festival. Subsequently shown at the Hayward Gallery, London
1992  *Joan Eardley, Paintings, Pastels and Drawings*, Mercury Gallery, London (jointly with Ewan Mundy, Glasgow and The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
2007  *Joan Eardley*, The Scottish Gallery
2007-08  *Joan Eardley*, Retrospective Exhibition, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh
Published by The Scottish Gallery to coincide with the exhibition
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www.scottish-gallery.co.uk/joaneardley

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