

## Gallery



### Newsletter

APRIL 2017

Hello!

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**April and May Jill Holmes Solo Exhibition**

**Submit work in any medium for the Summer Exhibition**

**Wild For Colour Information at [www.lochtorridoncentre.co.uk](http://www.lochtorridoncentre.co.uk)**

**last date for submissions 15<sup>TH</sup> April 2017**

### TORRIDON GALLERY INTERVIEW with Aileen Grant

#### Background

I feel so fortunate to be living and working in Wester Ross. My early years were spent in Fife, with holidays in Perthshire and far-flung parts of Scotland. I always drew and painted (my mother was an amateur painter in oils). Many childhood holidays were spent somewhere along the route of North Coast 500 in the days when tourists were few and far between. At art college in Dundee I studied town and regional planning and then worked as a planner in Edinburgh and Fife. However, I yearned

for a more creative life, and got back into painting at Leith School of Art. I have always been fascinated by printmaking and learned about various techniques at Edinburgh Printmakers.



Gleamings/Photopolymer Gravure



Beside The Lochan/Mixed media...

#### Interests

I've been a hillwalker since my early teens, but I've still not done all the Munros yet. I love to be out of doors sketching, walking and just being in the natural world. Sketching is really important to my work; when I sit, and observe and then sketch what I see, I feel as if I'm absorbing something of nature, getting closer to some invisible layer in the landscape – like a form of meditation. I like to read about the artists of the past, what they thought about and what insights they can give to

unlock the secrets of creating a picture. I'm also one of the three partners in the Lochcarron Gallery.

### **Making Pictures**

I try to take my sketchbook wherever I go. Sometimes I might be looking for a tree, a hill or a shoreline that I want to draw or paint. At other times, I'm open to anything that catches my eye – an interesting juxtaposition of colours, a quirky-looking tree, or an unusual pattern in the landscape. I sketch in charcoal or graphite, pastel or watercolours – sometimes a combination of these. The only rule is there are no rules. It's important to set myself challenges and keep fresh.

Back in the studio I redraw things from the sketchbook at different scales and in different media and I play around with the composition. I have to engage with a picture and work through it until I feel something special emerges. All I'm trying to do is to say, "This is how I see the world." It might be moody, it might be quirky, it might be delicate, it might be joyful or it might be disturbing – whatever feeling has emerged.

I also like to experiment with materials – for example, making paint out of graphite, beeswax, pigments and other materials. And all the time I'm learning new things.

### **Printmaking**

Drawing underpins my work. As a printmaker as well as a painter, I think a lot about line and tone and how to reproduce these on a metal plate. If I create a traditional etching plate, I have to make different types of marks to make it interesting. I also like the more modern technique of photo-etching: I make photopolymer plates by drawing in ink on film and exposing the image onto a photo-sensitive plate, using a light box. The process of aquatinting is more of a brain-teaser as it is a double-reverse – working back to front and making marks for the lightest areas rather than the darkest. And even though I plan what I'm going to do, the fun is when you get a random element.

What am I trying to do when I make pictures? I'm trying to express something about what I see and share this with others – for example, my enjoyment of the landscape and the sometimes not-so-obvious details. They say that artists see things that others don't see.

The longer I live here, the more I absorb the colours, textures and moods of the landscape in Wester Ross. I hope my paintings reflect this. Email [aileengrant99@googlemail.com](mailto:aileengrant99@googlemail.com)  
web [www.aileengrant.co.uk](http://www.aileengrant.co.uk) Twitter@aileenpix Fb aileengrantartist

### **SPOTLIGHT**

- **Monique Bervoets:** Willow grower, basket maker and teacher.

All my baskets start with a willow cutting put in the soil, grown outside in this beautiful land. It needs to go through the seasons: rain, sun shine, winter cold and also hands that look after it and then crop it when the leaves have fallen. I love to be part of this cycle of the year. The natural coloured willow rods are bundled, stored, dried and re - soaked when needed.

My traditional and contemporary basket makers' skills have been passed on from Master Basket Makers, fellow crafters and books.

I am very grateful for their generosity, sharing their knowledge, handed down through history. So, I could embark on my own willow weaving journey and develop practical and beautiful baskets.

I like the fact that baskets are embedded in people's lives: log baskets for homely fire sides, shoulder bags or tool baskets, for bread at Manuela's Wee Bakery, a Skye Weavers' scarf display.

Historic baskets at Festivals are also popular: (lobster) creels, a coracle and the public joining in to weave frame baskets.

My hands shape the willow and feel the natural material.

My eyes developed looking at shapes and colours, inspired by the landscape around me: The Highlands of Scotland.



- Passing my willow weaving skills on is one of my passions. Teaching means I must translate *every step* of the basket making process into patterns which every individual can pick in their own way. This is a very interesting challenge. During my willow weaving workshops I experience how the participants find it very satisfying to use their hands and craft their own personal basket by learning new skills and face their own way of processing these. I enjoy embarking on this journey of discovery with young and adults. I adjust the workshop to the ability of the participants and use other materials if needed, like rush.

A willow fish, a plant support, a log basket or platter - every handmade basket is unique and special to the maker. It is strong, made with natural, environmentally friendly material and can last a life time.

But when it disintegrates and composts back to nature, you can make a new basket with next year's willow crop!

[www.willowweaving.com](http://www.willowweaving.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/MoniqueBervoetsWillowWeaving/>

### Summer

1<sup>st</sup> April – October 31st  
Monday to Saturday  
10am – 4pm  
Closed Sunday

### Contact

Email:  
manager@lochtorridoncentre.co.uk  
Tel: 01445 791 361  
Website:  
[www.lochtorridoncentre.co.uk](http://www.lochtorridoncentre.co.uk)

### Address

Loch Torridon  
Community Centre  
Torridon, By  
Achnasheen  
Ross-shire, IV22 2EZ