

A wander in the Sun



Mark Junor Johnston

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An exhibition by

Mark Junor Johnson

31 March – 16 May 2018

Rather than giving you some artist statement, I thought I would try to anticipate any questions you might have:

What am I looking at?

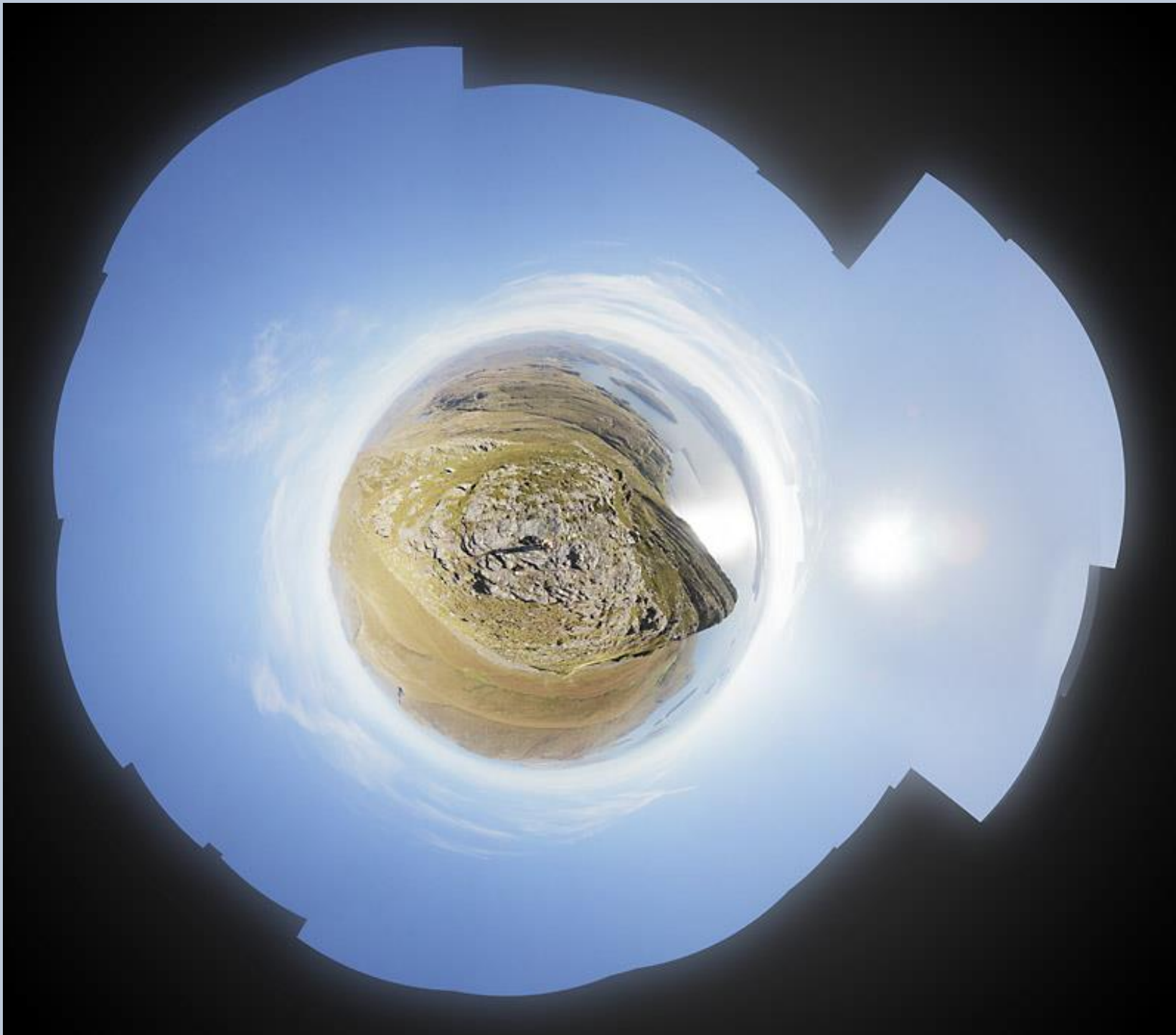
These are big pictures made up of many photographs stitched together in the computer.

Why are there 2 versions of each picture?

Once the computer has made one picture, it can change the geometric “projection” and give you another version. So here we use the Mercator projection for the linear picture, and the stereographic for the circular picture. It is incredible number crunching, overheating my poor computer, and requiring quite a lot of care and patience.

Stereographic by the way does not mean 3d vision here, it is a name for a geometric translation of 3 dimensions (i.e. our surroundings) onto a 2 dimensional plane (i.e. a picture)





Ben More Coigach Choireachan 26 Sept 2013 Stereographic projection

But why do you have 2 versions?

I have a sneaking idea that you have to use two ways of looking if you want to give a good feel for 3 dimensions. The mind and eye, can then appreciate the distortions inevitable in each type of projection, and make allowances for it. I enjoy going from one projection to the other and back again, just to appreciate the artifices involved in flattening 3 dimensional reality onto a 2 dimensional picture. Notice how the linear pictures distort the foreground, and one loses sense of direction. The circular pictures though do those things very well, but curve the horizon, and flatten out the sky. As the sky doesn't usually hold much information it works very well.

On top of that I'm enthusiastic about modern physics, and believe that the much touted “theory of everything” might be a compromise between general relativity, in the large scale, and quantum mechanics in the ultra small scale. These theories are, if you like, 2 geometric projections, this time of at least 4 dimensional reality, maybe even more than 5 dimensions.

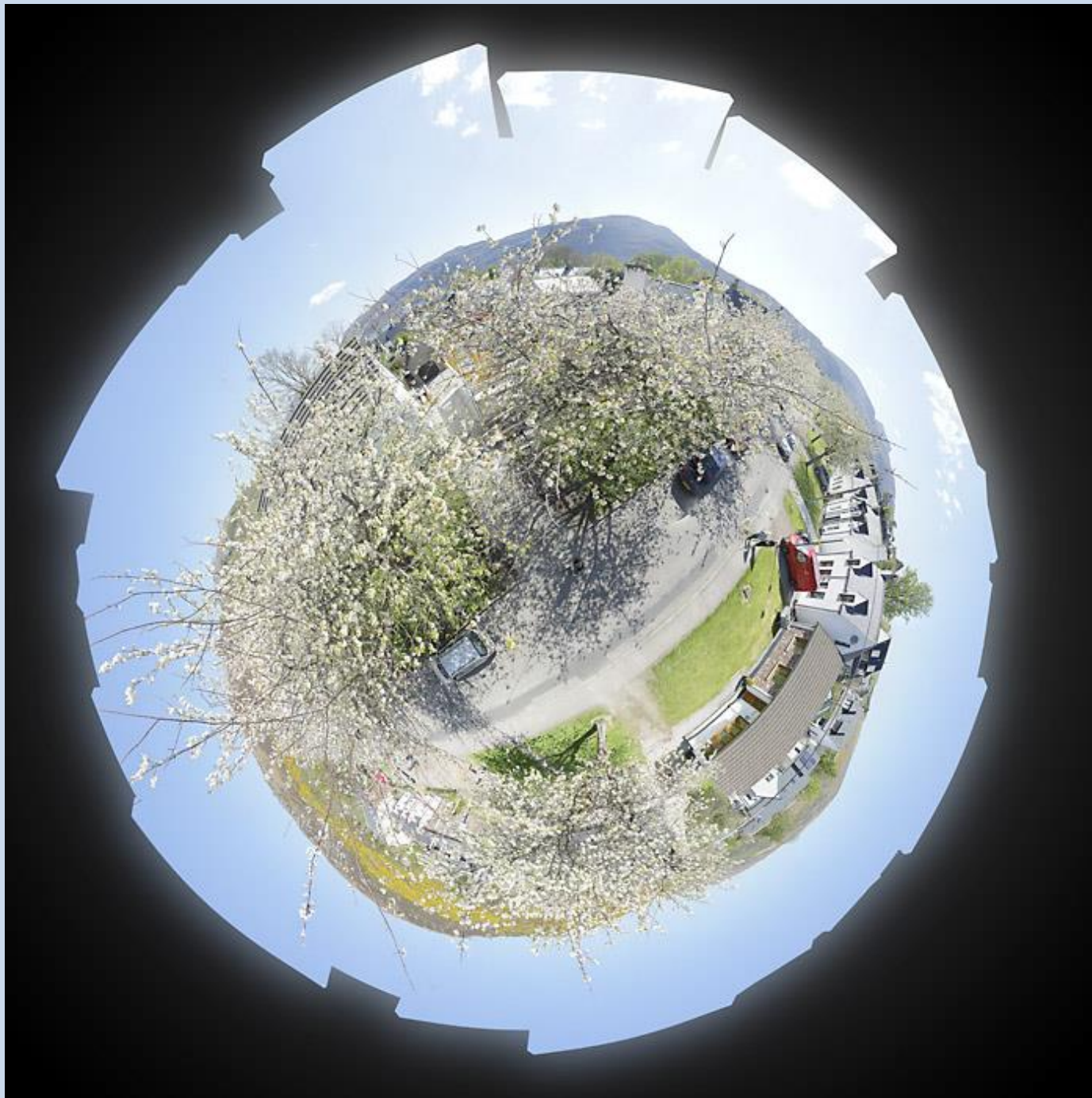
My pictures are a metaphor for a conundrum in the nature of the universe.

We are limited therefore in our understanding, and may have to juggle back and forth between the 2 theories. That doesn't mean to say the theory of everything is outside our grasp, just that it will be mathematical only, and we can but appreciate different “projections” into our world of 3 dimensions plus time.

If you are more down to earth, then think of it like buying 2 newspapers to find out about current affairs, hoping that you can get a better picture by making allowances for the internal bias of each paper.



Ullapool street 4 May 2017 Mercator projection



Ullapool street 4 May 2017

Stereographic projection

Why are you photographing from above eye level?

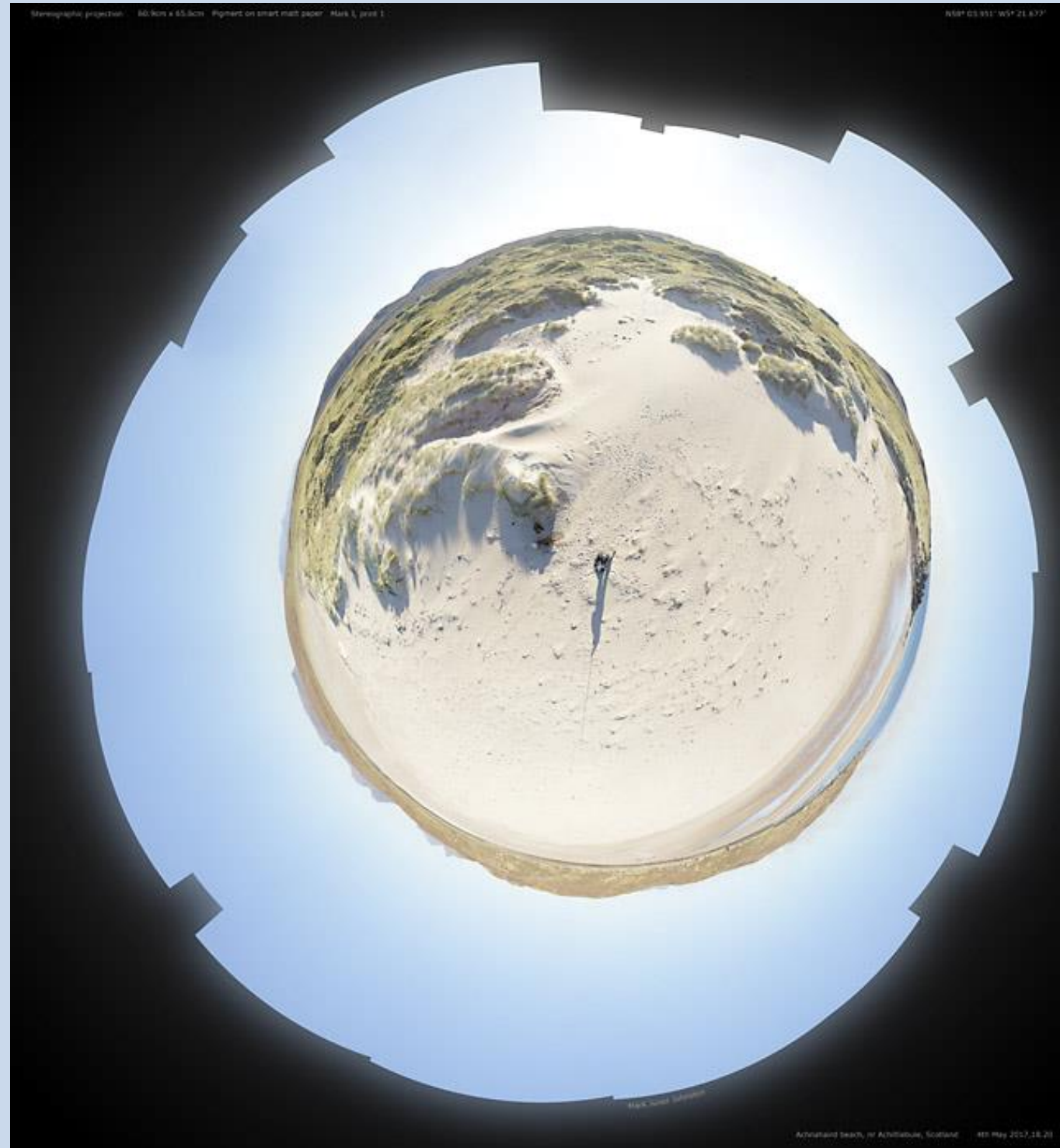
Well, when I graduated from Art school, a long time ago, before even the internet, I went back to the area I grew up in, and started to appreciate the large number of Stone circles there. So I aimed to try to capture their character, using the skills I had learned as an art-student. I didn't want to assume anything, and just look at them objectively, hoping then that some of their mystery might begin to show itself.

So I came up with the idea of photographing them from above, initially from the edge of the monument, but I developed the idea to stand in the middle and make 2 rings of photos with the camera on a 25 feet pole (made up of drain pipes), one series of photos of the foreground, going all the way round, and the other of the horizon. I then printed the horizon pictures scaled up so they would fit (with a bit of overlap) around the foreground circle. And the reason I could make the foreground series of photos a circle was because the camera was high enough off the ground. And so I hit upon a 360 circular panorama!

I count myself a pioneer, but I have to say I have since seen a 360 circular panorama drawing made way back in the 1700's. So there is nothing new under the sun really.

In fact panoramas were hugely fashionable up until film and cinemas were created.





Achnahaird beach

4 May 2017

Stereographic projection

So why do you still use this technique, there are no stone circles in this room?

Artists are compulsive beings. Once they develop a style they like to run with it. I still think about stone circles, a lot, most days. If you do that for over 30 years then something has to come out of it!

I liked to widen the subject matter to include architecture, engineering, and the landscape.

We then unfortunately got worried about people making detailed photographs about our infrastructure, and I thought it was better that I got out more, and headed for our open spaces. You can see this way of looking is great to convey the wide open views that we are very lucky to have in Scotland. On top of that I moved over to digital photography in order to work in colour. That was a lot more work than I thought it would be. A lot.

But something happened to me personally. I got out of the darkroom just in time, for my health and well being, and wandered, blinking, in the sunlight! So now I'm a bit of an exercise and sunlight nutcase. Don't get me started.

Mark Junor Johnson

March 2018





Stac Pollaidh 22 May 2017

Stereographic projection

MARK JUNOR JOHNSON

- 1963 born Aberdeen, Scotland.
- 1980–84 B.Sc. Biochemistry, University of Edinburgh.
- 1988–91 B.A. Fine Art Photography Glasgow School of Art.
- 1991– Part time artist. Living and working in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Pioneering landscape circular photomontage with the camera on a pole and rotated, taking multiple shots, placed by hand and mounted onto aluminium sheet.
- 2005– Continued working and photographing part-time since last exhibitions. Moving to digital colour, making use of panorama software. Developing the work; raising the value, and lowering the cost.

Solo Exhibitions.

- 2004 Corey Creek Vineyards, Southold, N.Y, USA.
- 2002 Peter Hay Halpert Fine Art, New York.
- 1999 “Curve” – The Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Queen St, Edinburgh
- 1998 Royal Museum, National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh.
- 1997 Archaeological Museum, National Museums of Slovakia , International festival of photograph in Bratislava, Slovakia.
- 1997 Petrified Garden, Stone circles and other Architecture’ – An Lanntair Gallery, Stornoway
- 1996 ‘Petrified Garden, Stone circles and other Architecture’ – Toured in Scotland.
- 1993 ‘Mother of Invention’ – Aberdeen Art Gallery, Scotland. Scottish International Festival of Photography,

Group Exhibitions (selection).

- 2005 Peter Hay Halpert Fine Art, New York.
- 2005 Kilmorack Gallery, Beaulieu
- 2004 Kilmorack Gallery, Beaulieu
- 2002 Kilmorack Gallery, Beaulieu
- 2003 “Scotland Calls” –Fichtberg Museum, Boston, M.A., USA
- 2001 “The Fine Art of Photography”–The Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh
- 2001 “Living the Land”–Duff House Gallery, Banff, Scotland.
- 1998 “MacTotem: Reviewing the Duke of Sutherland Monument” – An Lanntair Gallery, Isle-of- Lewis.

Public /Corporate Collections.

National Museums of Scotland.

National Galleries of Scotland. Deutsche Bank. State Street Bank. Scotia Pharmaceuticals.

Standard Life. Turcan Connell solicitors. BP Exploration. Michael Laird Partnership.

Historic Scotland/Archaeological Department, University of Reading.

Talks/ Workshops/ Publications.

2003 Scottish National Galleries, Ossian project, Nethybridge.

Collaborating with retired people.

2002 Scottish National Galleries, Alness photographic project, Lloyds TSB.

Collaborating with young mothers.

2001 Companion Guide to Photography in the National galleries of Scotland.

2000 Book cover art for “An Archaeology of Natural Places” Author Prof Richard Bradley. Publisher:Routledge.

1999 “Curve” artist lecture, lunchtime lecture, Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

1998 Stone Circles I, lunch-time lecture, Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

1998 Book cover art and brief introductory text contribution for “The Significance of Monuments” Author:Prof Richard Bradley .

Publisher:Routledge

1999 Portfolio Magazine (Issue 28)

1998 Project collaborating with medical scientists at the IMS, Forester Hill, Aberdeen.

1998 Interview for ‘Studies in Photography 1997’.

1997 ‘Premio Internazionale Romeo Martinez’ catalogue.

1995 ‘ Calanais: the Atlantic stones’ catalogue.

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