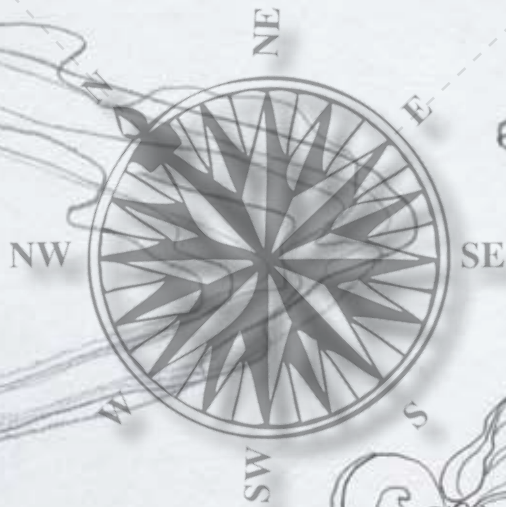


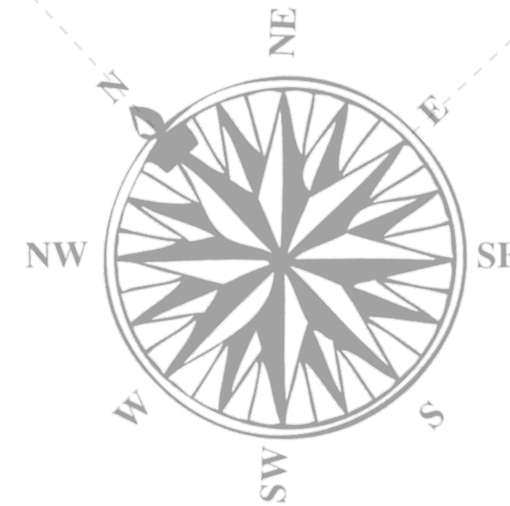
The Chronicles of the Straight Line Ramblers Club



James Hawkins 2009

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James **Hawkins**



James and Flick Hawkins would like to thank

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MAY 2009

The Straight Line Ramblers Club

The Straight Line Ramblers Club was first conceived when we were teenagers walking our parents dogs around the Oxfordshire countryside, membership was flexible, anyone could join and of course the one thing we didn't do was walk in a straight line. Many of us have kept in touch and when we meet up that spirit of adventure still prevails, there aren't any rules, but if there were they would be that spontaneity is all, planned routes exist to be changed on a whim and that its very important to see what's around the next corner or over the next top. Flick and I go daily into the hills to exercise our dogs and several times a year make more organised trips to parts of Scotland that we haven't visited before to explore, take photographs and video and research ideas for paintings. Last May we went to Knoydart. Blessed with the fine weather that stayed uniquely on the west coast of Scotland for most of the summer, we spent five glorious days exploring that remote peninsular in true SLRC style. We walked the coastline and found sandy bays with wind tortured trees clinging to the rocks above them, watched oyster catchers fishing in the shallows and seals basking on the offshore islands; we explored the hill lochs and glens and on one occasion were rewarded with the discovery of a disused mica mine, complete with a huge ancient rusty compressor, who's location 1500 feet up a rugged hillside defied comprehension. Another day our ascent of Ladhar Beinn saw us out for over twelve hours, the walk back to Inverie along the Aonach Sgoilte ridge, with views of the Cuillins on Skye and Rum and Eigg to the southwest was magnificent.

As a boy I read a lot of books and these were the early inspiration of my creativity; I read *Brendan Chase* by BB and imagined living in a wild camp in the woods, back then I would break bounds from school and take long walks through the Berkshire countryside, I remember well discovering my first scarp and dip slope. I graduated to Gerald Durrell, Corbett's *Maneaters* and then Gavin Maxwell who inspired me enormously, seeming to have a lifestyle that embodied all my aspirations. Later I read Thoreau's *Walden*, John Seymour's *Self Sufficiency* and within the whole mood of 70's idealism pursued the back to nature dream; we left Oxford and moved to a croft on the West coast of Scotland.

In 2007 a statistic caught my attention. A tipping point had been reached, 50% the world's population now live in an urban habitat, this struck me as a huge change to our collective unconscious. For millennia we have struggled and survived within the natural environment, now more than half of us were living in an artificial one with a whole new set of rules and strategies to be learnt.

Don't get me wrong, I am most enthusiastic about technology and its development; I am very happy to be writing this on my new PC that also helps me enormously with many aspects of my visual work. No it is more that, in our long evolution, at this point there now seems a danger of disconnection from the natural world. We have always been controlled by Nature, now we think that we can control it.

John Muir, whose writings I have discovered during the research for this exhibition, felt that he needed to experience the wilderness *"to find the Law that governs the relations subsisting between human beings and Nature."* After many long and often dangerous journeys into wild places he began to understand that their existence was essential to our well-being, *"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike"* *"..... Wildness is a necessity...mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life".¹* Later in his life he was instrumental in persuading President Roosevelt to set up the National Parks in America to preserve and protect wild places from exploitation by loggers, miners, ranchers and developers for the benefit of future generations.

Today, in a world threatened by climate change, unspoiled wilderness seems to be of more importance than ever. We must guard and cherish these shrinking places as never before; we all feel uplifted by them and our spirits nourished when we see their images or better still visit and spend time there. My own sensation is that, when I return from a few days walking and camping I am subtly altered for a time, my senses more alert, my inner harmony more balanced; like John Muir and many others I need to connect my nature to the wild Nature of the land at regular intervals. It is reassuring to know that there are organisations like the John Muir Trust raising money to buy tracts of land such as Knoydart and use inventive methods to help manage them in an environmentally sustainable way. These paintings are my Chronicles from some of the inspiring wild places that we've been able to visit during the last couple of years; they are born of an immersion in open tracts of wilderness and are a celebration of them. If there is a straight line running through the rambles of my life this desire to connect with Nature has been it.

You're all most welcome to join The Straight Line Ramblers Club; we look forward to meeting you on the hill soon..

¹ *Son of the Wilderness*, The Life of John Muir by Linnie Marsh Wolfe





Mist around Sgurr Coire Choinnichean
 16 x 23 ins
 acrylic on paper



The Rough Bounds 36 x 30 ins acrylic on canvas



Looking down from Sgurr Coire Choinnichean, Knoydart
 16 x 23 ins
 acrylic on paper



An Teallach and Ben Mor Coigach 36 x 48 ins acrylic on canvas

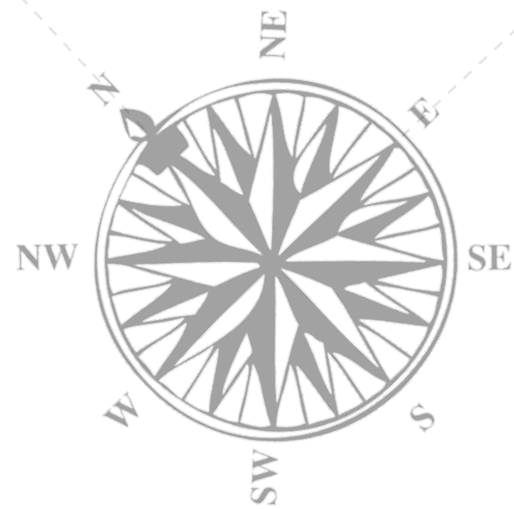


Stac Polaidh from the rocks on Cul Mor 36 x 48 ins acrylic on canvas

The Wood of Lettermore

This was a wood of birches, growing on a steep, craggy side of a mountain that overhung a loch. It had many openings and ferny howes; and a road or bridle track that ran north and south through the midst of it, by the edge of which, where was a spring, I sat down to eat some oat-bread of Mr. Henderlands, and think upon my situation.

Extract from *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson



The wood of Lettermore 63 x 43 ins acrylic on canvas



Gleann Meadail, Knoydart

16 x 23 ins
acrylic on paper



Gleann na Guiserein, Knoydart

11 x 16 ins
acrylic on paper



Ladhar Beinn from Gleann Guiserein 36 x 48 ins acrylic on canvas



A'Mhaighdean, Fisherfield
16 x 23 ins
acrylic on paper



Snowmelt waterfall, Inverlael 36 x 48 ins acrylic on canvas



Rum Eigg and Syke from Sgurr Coire nan Gobhar, Knoydart 63 x 43 ins acrylic on canvas



The Cuillins from Knoydart
11 x 16 ins
acrylic on paper



Loch nan Uidh, Scourie 36 x 48 ins acrylic on canvas



West from Sgurr a Mhadaidh Rhuidh

16 x 23 ins
acrylic on paper

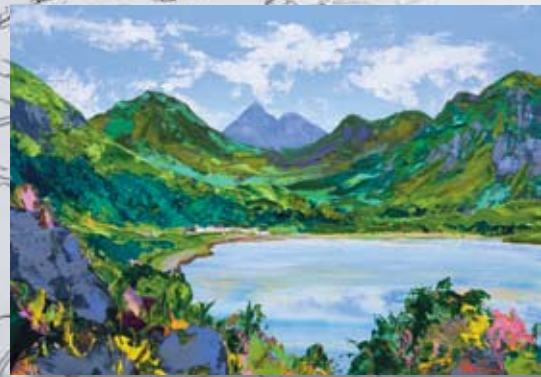
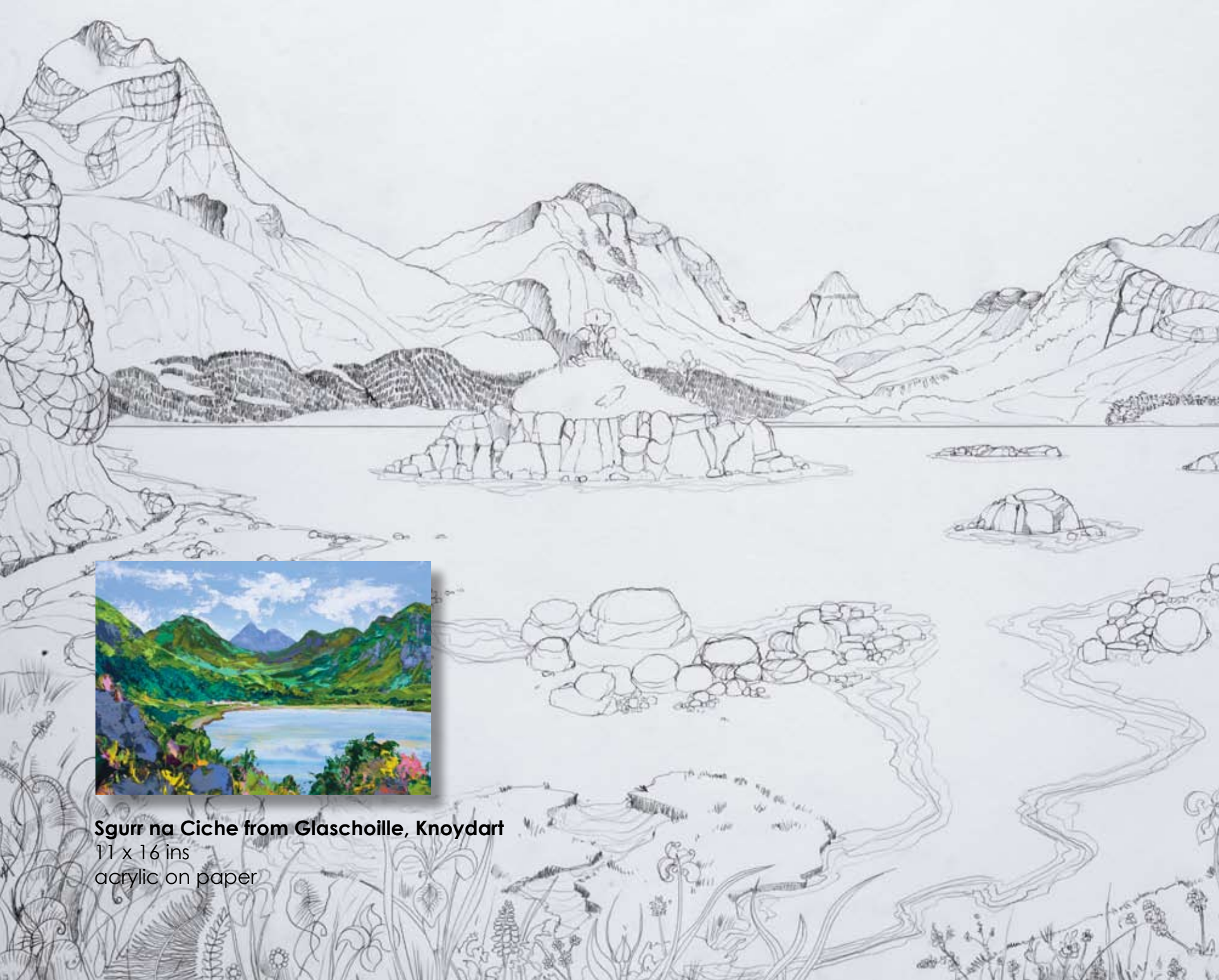


Inverie from Lagan Loisgte

11 x 16 ins
acrylic on paper



Sgurr Coire Choinnichean, Knoydart 36 x 48 ins acrylic on canvas



Sgurr na Ciche from Glaschoille, Knoydart
 11 x 16 ins
 acrylic on paper



Sgurr na Ciche from Rubha Raonuill, Knoydart 60 x 40 ins acrylic on canvas



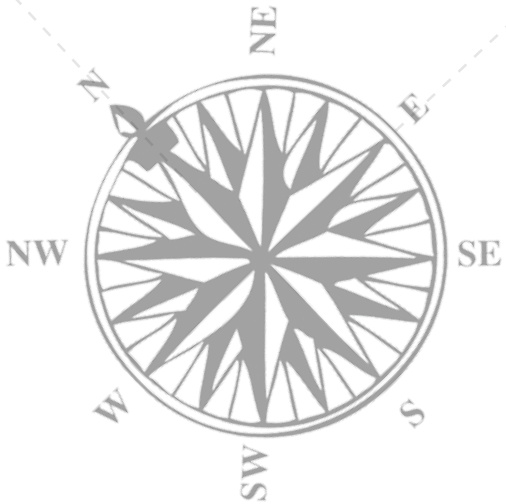
Beinn Bhann from Allt Loch Gaineamhach
36 x 30 ins
acrylic on canvas



Sgurr Ghaorachain from Sanachan, Applecross 63 x 43 ins acrylic on canvas

Wildlife on Knoydart

Our walks were full of surprises, coming up Gleann na Guiserein we saw a Sea Eagle resting on a large rock not far above the valley floor, he laboriously flapped off as we walked by; not long afterwards we startled a red fox standing in the middle of the track, maybe the warm sun in the late afternoon had made them less wary. A couple of days later I nearly trod on this young deer calf “hidden” in a peat hag. Sensing us and the dogs the rest of the herd had moved off across the hill leaving this young one behind, it stayed quite motionless as we looked at it, most strangely, although they were standing only a few feet away the dogs were completely unaware of it. Coming down from Ladhar Beinn Flick spotted this Dwarf Cornel, at approximately 2500 feet it was a little out of its normal habitat but appeared to be thriving.



Luinhe Beinn, Knoydart 36 x 48 ins acrylic on canvas



Arkle, Sutherland
 11x 16 ins
 acrylic on paper



Beinn Eighe
 11 x 16 ins
 acrylic on paper



Glen an Dubh Lochain 36 x 48 ins acrylic on canvas



Quinag from Duart Beag 63 x 43 ins acrylic on canvas



James **Hawkins**

BIOGRAPHY

- 1954 Born Reading
- 1972-73 Wimbledon School of Art, London
- 1974-75 W.S.C.D. Worthing
- 1975-78 Ruskin School of Drawing, Oxford University
- 1978 Moved to Ullapool, Northwest Highlands of Scotland

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 Chronicles of the Straight Line Ramblers Club, London
- 2007 Water, Wind and Light, Kilmorack Gallery, Beaulieu
- 2006 Atlantic Coast, Duff House Scottish National galleries, Banff
- 2003 Way Out West, Davies and Tooth, London
- 2002 Kilmorack Gallery Beaulieu
- 2001 Art on the Links, St Andrews
- 2001 Landscape, Colour and Light, Davies and Tooth, London
- 1998 A Journey in all Weathers, Davies and Tooth, London
- 1997 Inferences, Bellevue Gallery, Edinburgh
- 1996 Duncan R. Millar Fine Arts, Glasgow
- 1993 Coventry Gallery, London
- 1992 Sacred Sights, C.Boyd Gallery, Galashiels
- 1991 Sense of Place, 369 Gallery, Edinburgh
- 1990 Gallerie Van Alom, Berlin
- 1989 Gallery 202, London
- 1987 Landmarks, 369 Gallery, Edinburgh
- 1983 MacLean Art Gallery, Greenock

Gleann Meadail from Beinn Bhuidhe
11 x 16 ins
acrylic on paper



SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2008 Thompson's Gallery Aldeburgh, London
- 2005 Millennium Institute, University of The Highlands and Islands
- Kilmorack Gallery, Cork Street London
- London Contemporary Art fair
- Richmond Hill Gallery, Scottish Exhibition
- 2004 Thompson's Gallery Aldeburgh, London
- Kilmorack Gallery, Beaulieu
- 2003 Summer Exhibition, City Arts Centre, Edinburgh
- 2002 International Art fair, New York
- 2001 Art'01 London Contemporary Art fair
- 2001 Living the Land, Duff House, Scottish National galleries, Banff
- 1997 LINEART'97, International Art Fair, Ghent
- 1996 ART 96, London Contemporary Art Fair
- 1996 Glasgow Art Fair
- 1996 Heartlands, 20th Century Scottish Landscapes, City Arts Centre, Edinburgh
- 1995 Gulbenkian Foundation, 'Prints for the Western Isles'
- 1991 Mountain Experience, Highland Region Touring Exhibition
- 1989 Scottish Landscape, 369 Gallery National Touring Exhibition
- Into the Highlands, MacManus Gallery, Dundee
- 1988 Light and Space, Crawford Arts Centre St Andrews
- Tenth Anniversary Exhibition, 369 Gallery Edinburgh
- Artravaganza, Smith Gallery, Stirling
- 1987 Seven Artists' View of Iona, 369 Gallery Edinburgh
- 1986 MacLean Biennial, Greenock
- 1978 369 Gallery, Edinburgh
- 1975 Balliol College, Oxford

FILM and VIDEO

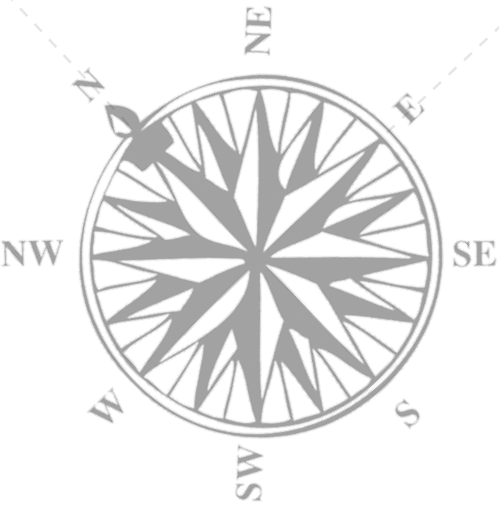
- 2008 ambiEnt Festival, Brescia, Italy
- 2007 A Series of Fortunate Events, Inverness City centre
- Royal Scottish Academy Summer Exhibition
- Water, Wind and Light, Kilmorack gallery
- 2006 Atlantic coast, Duff House Banff
- 2005 Dreaming Spires Video film
- 2001 Highland Festival "Elements" Animation Collaboration
- 1986 Biston Betularia, Video


AWARDS and COMMISSIONS

- 2004 The Great Glen, Inverness airport
- 1998 GlenFiddich Distillery, Scottish Art
- 1989 Painter of the year, Warwick Arts Trust, London
- 1986 The Brahan Seer, Eden Court Theatre Inverness

COLLECTIONS

- Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow
- City Arts Centre, Edinburgh City Council
- Prudential
- Warwick Arts Trust
- Flemings Collection, London
- Ross and Cromarty District Council
- Royal Bank of Scotland
- Wilde Sapte, London, Brussels, Paris
- Paintings in Hospitals, Scotland
- Highland Regional Council
- Buchanan Ingersoll, London





James and Flick Hawkins

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