

Chronicles of the Straight Line Ramblers Club

Submitted by: InProCom

Wednesday, 29 April 2009

4th – 9th May 2009

James Hawkins (<http://www.rhueart.co.uk/>) will be exhibiting new paintings at the SW1 Gallery (<http://www.sw1gallery.co.uk>) during the first week in May. This is his first major exhibition in London for six years; several of his short videos exploring abstract details of nature will also be shown.

The exhibition will feature Hawkins' work based on the wild and beautiful landscape of the Northwest coast of Scotland with a special emphasis on Knoydart. It is ten years since the formation of the Knoydart Foundation and their Community buyout; the exhibition, part of which will later travel to the Knoydart peninsular, features in the Foundation's yearlong festivities.

The John Muir Trust who helped finance the Knoydart project and work to protect wilderness areas in Scotland are also supporting the exhibition with a talk by their outgoing Chief Executive. The intention is to celebrate these remote places and to raise awareness of their need for protection and sustainable management.

Hawkins, "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. 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 we all need the experience of wilderness. Muir writes, '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' ".

"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 it's very important to see what's around the next corner or over the next hill."

The Chronicles exhibition features condensed visual experiences from these walks that capture the essence of each particular day and the landscape travelled. "These paintings are not a frozen moment but a synthesis of the many aspects of the journey – drifting clouds and light that momentarily confuse distance and space ... the changing scale that makes a tree no bigger than a flower ... a path winding toward a distant summit like an assault on Everest."

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Visitor Information:

Exhibition opening hours: Monday- Saturday 12-6pm

Admission: Free

Nearest tube: Victoria Station

SW1 Gallery

12 Cardinal Walk

London SW1E 5JE

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www.sw1gallery.co.uk

Notes For Editor:

- James Hawkins graduated from Ruskin School of Drawing in Oxford and Wimbledon School of Art. He lives and works in Ullapool, where he began exhibiting his work in 1978

- The exhibition, The Chronicles of The Straight Line Ramblers Club; works 2007– 2009. A catalogue accompanies the exhibition

- James Hawkins has produced three limited edition prints for the Knoydart Foundation, available during the exhibition; priced £50-£80

- Nigel Hawkins (no relation) Outgoing Chief Executive of the John Muir Trust will be Guest Speaker (7pm) 6th May

"... one of the best contemporary landscape painters in Scotland."

SCOTSMAN

"A varied mesh of conflicting textures provide movement and life conveying the fierce power and changeability of the Highland weather."

SUNDAY TIMES

"A romantic expressionist bringing burn and bracken, fern and boulder, waterfall and wild flowers to startling, explosive life."

SCOTLAND ON SUNDAY

"An abstract realist who invests his work with limitless energy which seems to bounce back off the multi coloured canvas. James Hawkins of Rhue is the man who has come the closest to the impossible task of capturing the essence of a landscape that is like trying to paint the colours of the wind."

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John Muir Trust is the leading wild land conservation charity in the UK. The John Muir Trust works with people and communities to conserve, campaign and inspire, to ensure that wild land is protected and that wild places are valued by everyone. Iconic mountains, including Ben Nevis, Schiehallion and the Cuillin on the Isle of Skye, are protected by the Trust, as well as properties in Knoydart, Assynt and Sutherland. We work in partnership with communities across Scotland, and also seek to influence government and business to protect wild landscapes. Our educational initiative, the John Muir Award promotes awareness and responsibility for wild places across the United Kingdom. You can become a guardian of wild land as a member of the Trust.

www.jmt.org

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The Knoydart Foundation is a community owned and managed organisation based on the West coast of Scotland. The foundation took ownership of the remains of the Knoydart Estate in 1999 with 2009 celebrating the tenth anniversary of community ownership. Local residents are guardians of over 16500 acres of land and manage several residential properties, a guest bunkhouse, other properties and Knoydart's hydroelectric scheme. The aim of the Foundation is to preserve, enhance and develop Knoydart for the well being of the environment and the people. Knoydart is traditionally known as the rough bounds because of its remoteness and it is a national scenic area. It's a haven for hill walkers, mountaineers, sailors, and wildlife enthusiasts and for those who just want to get away from it all for a while.

Tenth anniversary celebrations and events can be found on the website.

www.knoydart-foundation.com

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