

Mother of the Sea 海の母
Surf & Turf
Seaweed on Sunday

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Mother of the Sea 海の母

An Orkney Japan Association exhibition across two venues for Orkney International Science Festival.

Ingrid Budge, Alison Clark, Mollie Goldstrom & William Arnold, Joanne B Kaar, Julia Lohmann, Nancy Macdonald, Paul MacPhail, Rebecca Marr, Maya Minder & Ewen Chardronnet, Alison Moore, Judith Nixon, Julia Parks, Frances Pelly, Rosey Priestman, Ami Robb, Dawn Stevens, Ingrid Stout, Megumi Barrington-Uenoyama, and Miek Zwamborn.

Seaweed offers us food for humans, animals and the land and provides shelter to many creatures. It encourages creativity and curiosity. We have yet to fathom the ways in which seaweed can enrich our lives and help mitigate our destructive behaviours. And how is it that women and seaweed have an affinity? Seaweed can bring us in to a non-human relationship with an underwater world of interconnectedness. It is a family we are unfamiliar with despite meeting members of it everyday. A strange world of slipping realms where the shore is neither water nor land and we have to admit we are all at sea.



Algae links all coastal dwellers and we look here for particular connections between Orkney and Japan, both have experienced the hard won and easy lost fortunes of seaweed industry. One unexpected and delightful linkage surfaced - the family of Dr Kathleen Drew Baker, revered as the Mother of the Sea in Japan for her research that ultimately enabled the Nori industry, live in Orkney. Twenty artists who work with seaweed share their fascination and awe in an exhibition of algal art that leans close in to the structure, material, social and ecological significance, and beingness of seaweed.

For over 50 years on April 14th in Uto, Kumamoto, Osaka, Japan, Shinto prayers are given up to ask if the 'Mother of the Sea' will watch over the seaweed harvests. This honour is held by Dr Kathleen Drew-Baker (1901-1957), founding president of the British Phycological Society (phycology=the study of algae).



Kathleen studied botany at Manchester University and Berkley College in California. Her research post was withdrawn after she married in 1923, when it was common for universities to deny paid work to married women. She continued her research at home using her seaweed herbarium collected on the Welsh coast. Drew-Baker studied the species laver, well known in Welsh culture and used in the traditional recipe laverbread. *umbilicalis* is known in Japan as nori.

In her paper '*Conchocelis*-Phase in the Life-History of *Porphyra umbilicalis*' published in Nature in 1949 she revealed the secret life of nori. What was thought to be different species of seaweed, she identified a growth stage of nori. Nori farming had always been unpredictable and susceptible to weather related crop damage. Japanese botanist Professor Sokichi Segawa of Kyushu on reading her paper realised that this revelation had the potential to save the industry. Her life work is celebrated at the Drew-sai Festival.

The social history of seaweed in Orkney is a series of tangled tales of food, fodder, fertiliser, fuel and folklore. There is little to be found in the historical record about eating seaweed despite a wealth of seaweed food culture in the nearby celtic regions. There is however many accounts of seaweed being fed to animals, even some of the Orkney names hold this memory. In North Ronaldsay today the celebrated seaweed eating sheep provide a link to earlier farming practices when pigs, hens and cows were encouraged to forage on the shore.

Feeding the land with ware was a common sight across the islands, caisie loads of rock weeds enriched the Orkney soil for centuries. Not only did the seaweed provide nutrients but the shell sand carried on the ware brought minerals too.

Seaweed swims through Orkney folklore, as part of the creature itself such as the seaweed hair of the sea trow Tangy or as colourful decoration for the undersea gardens of the Finfolk. Nuckleavee visited his wrath on the islands so angered was he by the kelp smoke but it is the calming spirit of the Mither o the sea that we reference in this exhibition bringing renewal, growth and harvest.



More at Orkney Seaweed Stories



Anna Atkins (1799-1821) created the first photography book. Each image was hand printed using the cyanotype process. Her subject? British Algae. She preserved her seaweed collection in a sea like blue that has inspired artists ever since.



Kelp-making in Orkney began in 1720 in the north isle of Stronsay. It was a divisive industry loathed by the workers and highly lucrative for the lairds. The initial period of the kelp industry was for the production of soda and potash, used as a source of alkali in the glass and soap industries and for bleaching and as an alum in dyeing factories. In this phase the kelp was made with tang, rock cut wracks of the fucus species, and was carried out in summer.

In the later phase, from the 1830s, kelp provided a source of iodine and relied on ware, the larger brown low water seaweeds such as *Laminaria digitata* & *Laminaria hyperborea*. This meant a shift to multi-seasonal work, gathering the tangles driven ashore by winter storms. The work was hard, winning seaweed from the shore, stacking it to dry and tending the kelp pits for hours. The demise of the kelp industry came, brought about by alternative, cheaper sources of soda and iodine, and by the lifting of trade restrictions leaving the islands with the very real problem of increased population and decreased employment.

Background Image: Anna Atkins c.1843 Uto Lattissima cyanotype

Thank you to the exhibiting artists, Yvonne Harcus, Northlight Gallery, Ship of Fools Gallery, Pier Arts Centre, Orkney International Science Festival, Ebuki and Fragile Correspondence. This exhibition is funded through the OIC Culture Fund and The Japan Society of Scotland. Exhibition team: Megumi Barrington-Uenoyama, Ruta Norieka and Rebecca Marr.



Mother of the Sea 海の母

Northlight Gallery Graham Place, Stromness

THU 05 - SUN 15 SEPT 11am - 5pm Closed Sun 08

Also on show in **Surf & Turf** at **Ship of Fools Gallery, Kirkwall 05-12 Sept**

Ingrid Budge, Alison Clark, Mollie Goldstrom & William Arnold, Joanne B Kaar, Julia Lohmann, Nancy Macdonald, Paul MacPhail, Rebecca Marr, Maya Minder & Ewen Chardronnet, Alison Moore, Judith Nixon, Julia Parks, Frances Pelly, Rosey Priestman, Ami Robb, Dawn Stevens, Ingrid Stout, Megumi Barrington-Uenoyama, and Miek Zwamborn

An Orkney Japan Association exhibition across two venues for Orkney International Science Festival.



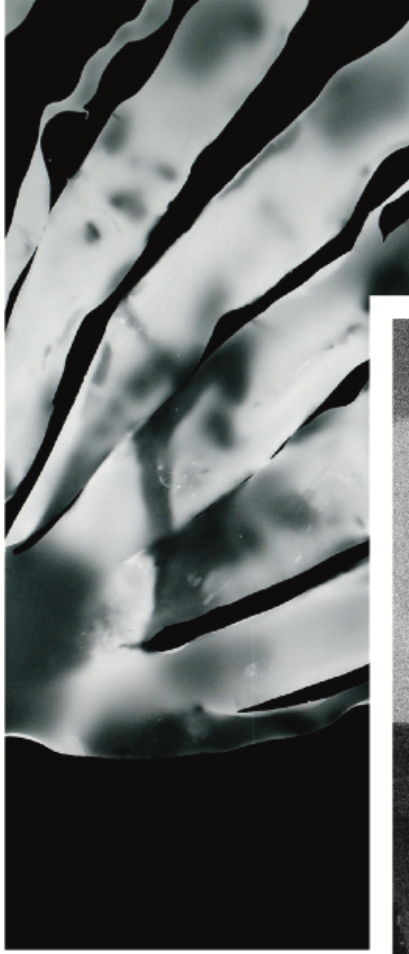
image: Joanne B Kaar



Mother of the Sea opening on the 5th September, Northlight Gallery, Stromness







SURF AND TURF

SHIP OF FOOLS
BRIDGE STREET,
KIRKWALL

05.09.2024 -
11.09.2024
11:00 - 17:00

CLOSED
08.09.2024

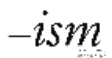


MOTHER OF
THE SEA
海の母

A FRAGILE
CORRESPONDENCE



EARTHBOUND
ORKNEY



Ship of Fools gallery, Kirkwall

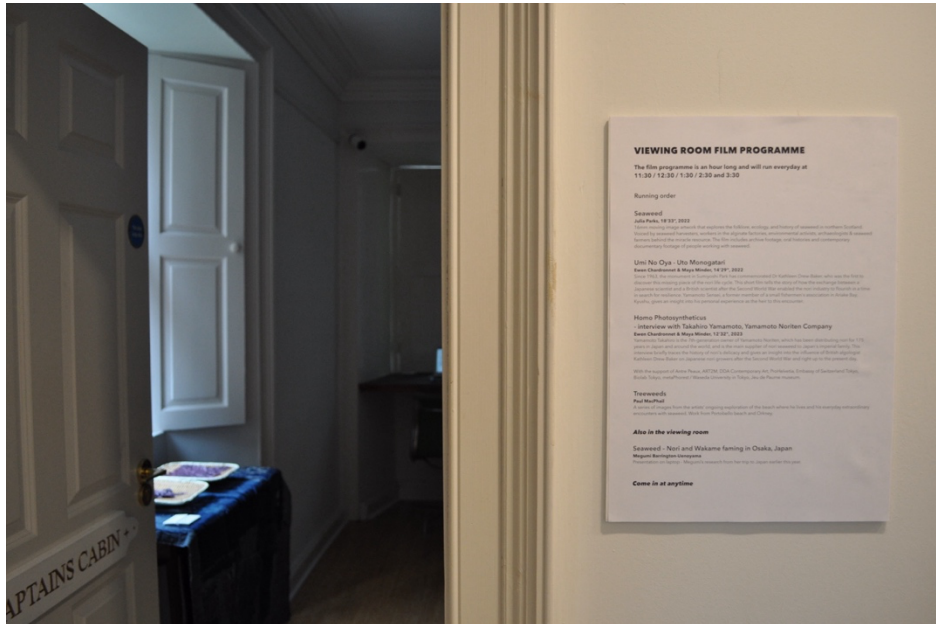


Surf and Turf opening on the 4th September 2024, Ship of fools gallery, Kirkwall











A Fragile Correspondence



Earthbound Orkney

5-11 SEPTEMBER 2024 #ORKNEYSCIFEST

Data and Art in all its Beauty SEPT 10

By Kyle Adam
looking across the coast and seeing these three lighthouses all with different flash-light patterns. And there a few years pass and I was back in Westray at Neve Head and noticed there was a code which is a light characteristic of that lighthouse.
The lighthouse just basically has been coming out of the light which is supposed to look like the light except every few seconds a different light-house, and the line also indicates the flash-light pattern.
In addition to this, she also showed an image based on data on bird populations taken from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).
The data I used was from a survey that I ran in 2019 in which their volunteers go and observe their ten different bird species within that, and the numbers of those bird species. So I just extrapolated all those up to look at the hundred most recorded birds across the entire of the UK.
I wanted the visual of a bird further but I allow the data to say how long each of the hundred most recorded birds are, largely because they're varied birds, it creates quite an organic pattern.
The lighthouse print shows a line graph taken from the most recent survey on one side, with data from 40 years ago on the other.

Orkney Japan Association

By Niska Mahon
"WE OFTEN think the material is separate from our life, our self, our husband but actually they can all be very integrated" — Dr Hannah Gray (Marine Biologist).
Embracing an interstitial zone, where sea and land meet, is fitting when examining the two tangled exhibitions organised by Orkney Japan Association for this year's Orkney International Science Festival. On an imaginary interstitial zone arrives from spaces in Orkney, three separate projects and over 30 practitioners' works exploring the relationship between sea and land as well as human and non-human, sea.
Just like interstitial spaces, they then started to adapt their perspectives, become each other's shelter, and create a new ecosystem to survive collectively under a changing climate.
First exhibition is Mother of the Sea (MOTSE) at both Northlight Gallery in Stromness and Ship of Fools in Kirkwall. This group exhibition is being led by artist Lisa Hadden, the original 12 in 12, and the idea for following projects are already being spoken about. All the contributing artists

of which reflects the exhibition itself. The second exhibition is Surf at Ship of Fools in Kirkwall. Here, Mother of the Sea (MOTSE) is joined by two more exhibitions. A Fragile Correspondence is a 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale. It challenges visitors and researchers the traditional idea of "architecture". To do so, the project brought writers, artists and architects to look together at language and landscape in three different geographic areas in Scotland: including Orkney's sandstone and Neve Head Island. In Northlight (Orkney), film-based architect Tom Mackenzie and artist and builder Brock Little explored over three years the day made apparent during the last for Age, used in traditional craft and construction. The project signals an imperative to reassess built forms, and regain traditional and more sustainable building materials and skills in response to the climate emergency. Hope this review gives a sense of what an active interstitial zone their exhibitions represent. These projects could not have been possible without funding from Orkney Recovery Fund, for which the Orkney Japan Association is incredibly grateful.

STENNESS FUN DAY • STENNESS FUN DAY • STENNESS FUN DAY • STENNESS FUN DAY

Third Stenness Fun Day a great success

THE THIRD annual Stenness Fun Day was a resounding success, despite a few rain showers and a moderate breeze.
Spirits were high as many came through the doors to enjoy the festivities.
As always, the cafe was bustling, serving up hot drinks and homemade treats that kept everyone going throughout the day. The race were a highlight, with participants of all ages competing in a series of fun events.
Liana's face painting (Liana's Face & Body Art) was a popular attraction, with children eagerly lining up to transform into unicorns, animals, and even Star Wars characters.
The cat ball was also a hit, offering families a chance to create their own keepers.
Entertainment was in full swing, kicked off by a band performance from the West Mainland Seaquay and local business, Orkney Dance and Fitness led a fun filled line dancing session, with more joining in. The Kirkbanger Drummers served the crowd with their highland dancing and the Stromness RSL Pipe Band closed out the day with a rousing performance.
Rae's Lynn, chairman of the Stenness Community Association



Winners of the sack race, clockwise from top left: Edgar Hays, Elnah Lynn, Connor Muir, Malcolm Kelday, Taylor Mackay Brown and James Lillis.
The winners of the bottle and spoon races are, clockwise from top left: Oliver Lillis, Niskey Brown, Connor Muir, Harvey Gray, Taylor Mackay Brown and James Lillis.
The running race winners, clockwise from top left are: Louis Kelday, Marco MacVine, Connor Muir, Harvey Gray, Samuel Karyson and Andrew Adames.
Face painting at the Stenness Fun Day by Liana Hadden with model (top to bottom): Mollie Woolley.
The bottle stall is always a firm favourite at any fundraising event.
Line dancing at the fun day.

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