

## P27 Artist in Residence



### Project Overview:

Over the lifetime of the project (until lockdown restrictions affected our plans) artists, selected through a process of recruitment and interview, spent time in the project area living and working alongside either a single project or possibly a number of projects, to explore how the project's processes and outcomes can be expressed and interpreted in artistic forms. The periods of the residencies vary according to the specific project(s) in question, the preferred medium of the artist selected, and wider community engagement outcomes identified.

The aims of the project are to:

- Engage the people of Coigach & Assynt, as well as visitors, through active participation in the creation and expression of ideas and concepts brought to the Scheme by artists selected to participate in the residencies.
- Enhance and develop Coigach & Assynt as a place of artistic and creative activity and bring together the many creative people living in the area.
- Engage viewers with different and original ways of thinking about, interpreting and understanding the living landscape of this area.

**Project lead organisation and other organisations involved:** Assynt Foundation for three residencies, Coigach Development Company (CCDC) for one residency

**Project Location:** Clachtoll Broch June to Dec 2018; Suilven June to November 2019; Red Deer May to July 2021; Coigach May to September 2021

**Dates:** June 2018 – September 2021

## Project Outputs

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
Artistic residencies held over the scheme life	4	4	Year 1: Clachtoll Broch, Julia Cowie, metalwork; Year 2: Suilven, Alex Mackay, sound art; Year 5: Clara Elliot, landscape artist; Year 5: Jess Phillimore, film maker
2 school trips held per residency	8	8	<u>Julia Cowie:</u> Sep-18 Clay moulds for beads/toggles; Pewter casting at Glencanisp; Beeswax carvings for to make moulds <u>Alex Mackay:</u> 25-Sep-19 School Workshop Primary; 26-Sep-19 School workshop Secondary. <u>Clara Elliot:</u> Jun-21 School Workshop Primary; Jun-21 School workshop Ullapool High School; <u>Jess Phillimore:</u> Sep-21 Achitibuie Primary

2 Workshops held per residency for members of the local community to attend	8	9	<p><u>Julia Cowie</u>: 06-Oct-18 Copper Smelting at Stoer; 16-Nov-18 Bronze casting at Glencanisp (50 people)</p> <p><u>Alex Mackay</u>: July 2019 Community Workshop; 26-Sep-19 Community Workshop (8 people)</p> <p><u>Clara Elliot</u>: 16-Jun-21 Community Workshop Glencanisp (10 people), 19-Sept-21 Installation opening (30 people)</p> <p><u>Jess Phillimore</u>: 22-May-21 (15 people); 25-Jun-21 Film/talk (16 people); 24-Sep-21 Meet the Filmmaker Event (50 people)</p>
Projects interpreted through artistic investigation	4	4	<p>Clachtoll Broch excavation – Iron Lintel and bronze medallions</p> <p>Access to Suilven (footpath restoration) – audio recordings</p> <p>Red Deer and community – textile installation</p> <p><i>sense of place</i> of Coigach &amp; Assynt - Filmmaker interviewed musicians and local people in Coigach documented in a film.</p>
Lasting artworks produced and installed / available to view in the local area	4	4	<p>Year 1: community bronzes and iron lintel.</p> <p>Year 3: collection of 5 sound pieces</p> <p>Year 5: Woven art work installation in deer larder</p> <p>Year 5: Film complete and will be available online</p>

## Scheme Outputs

How has the project contributed to the CALLP Scheme Outcomes:

	1. The key features of the Coigach and Assynt Landscape will better understood and restored with a fit for purpose system in place to ensure the benefits are sustained.
	2. Where appropriate the connectivity and diversity of selected habitats will be mapped.
Y	3. Increased awareness and understanding amongst all individuals and groups of what makes Coigach and Assynt special and the threats to the unique heritage. <i>The residencies have highlighted what the artists have found special about Coigach and Assynt and through workshops the artists have shared their insight with the local community.</i>
	4. Important elements of the built, cultural and natural heritage will be recorded, improved, made publicly accessible and celebrated by the local community.
Y	5. People will have gained new skills in researching, restoring and understanding their heritage. <i>The artist workshops allowed community members to learn more about issues identified by the artist. Often the residencies complimented other CALLP projects and increased the overall synergy.</i>
	6. Collected data, information and interpretation will be more accessible in the public domain including posting on appropriate websites.

Y	7. Local groups and individuals understand, enjoy, value and take action in the Coigach and Assynt area in ways they did not at the outset. <i>School children were given an introduction to filmmaking.</i>
	8. Increased access infrastructure at key strategic locations enabling people to enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of the area.
	9. Increased opportunities for informal recreation that promotes health and well-being benefits.

## Reflecting on the last 5 years, what's the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of CALLP?

### **Very popular residency**

Very positive response both by wider artistic community in terms of high numbers of applications, and the subsequent local interest in the activities of the artists. The workshops and other activities within the arts studio (as well as residence in 2021), have helped the development of other arts activities in this building as well as supporting the charitable purpose of the Foundation. Above all four original and worthwhile art works have been completed. In Coigach the final residency was a rich and rewarding project and Coigach Community Development Company hope to establish ongoing residencies.

## What difference has this project made to the built, cultural and natural heritage of Coigach and Assynt?

The art works have all been focussed on different themes of CALL, one relating to the Broch, another linked to improving access to Suilven through a soundscape, the third to relationship of red deer to the local community, and the fourth a film that show the heritage (natural, cultural and built) of Coigach and Assynt, along with the creation of new music about the area.

## What difference has this project made to People?

The Broch workshops enabled people take part in process of casting metals as might have been conducted 2,000 years ago. One outcome were the 36 bronze plaques now installed nearby the Broch made by schoolchildren and local people. Among the comments, was one *'that I never expected to actually get so close to process of melting and pouring liquid steel – very exciting'*

Similarly school children were enthralled by listening to the sounds under water, and adults in a workshop with Alex Mackay had their 'ears opened' to sounds in the landscape near Suilven in way one remarked as *'remarkable to have the opportunity to use specialist recording devices and become aware of sounds otherwise not noticed'*

Clara Eliot workshops have been completed and her final art piece was installed in the Old Deer Larder in Glencanisp in September 2021 and formally opened on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021 concurrent with the opening of the new deer larder.

The final Artist in Residence in Coigach, Jess Philmore gave an excellent workshop to the Achiltibuie Primary School children, teaching them about documentary and drama film making. They were

delighted to learn that one can have a job working on films! CCDC plan on running follow up workshops on filmmaking/editing.

## Useful Links

<https://www.coigach-assynt.org/project/artist-in-residence/>  
<https://coigach-assynt.org/2019/09/meet-our-suilven-artist-in-residence/>  
<https://coigach-assynt.org/2019/09/sounds-around-suilven/>  
<https://juliacowie.wordpress.com/2018/10/>  
<https://juliacowie.wordpress.com/2018/12/>  
<http://clachtoll.aocarchaeology.com/?p=704>  
<https://clachtoll.aocarchaeology.com/?p=808>  
<https://youtu.be/SKDJv0l1aI4>  
[Alex Mackay | Free Listening on SoundCloud](#)  
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17996724.ode-suilven-mountain-hailed-sound/?fbclid=IwAR3Jsuucc7c7aCWCnvl9Zt5nZ-jgaFNFLWZiXoMgK-wbZfPavjZReEBKrUY>

## Future Plans and Legacy

The 'project' for the Assynt Foundation is to further develop the use of the arts studio at Glencanisp to be a place of 'residence' for visiting artists, also as space for individual practice and for holding workshops. This to include courses for local people, and others wanting spend time in the inspiring and challenging land that is Assynt. In Coigach, CCDC hope to establish ongoing artist residencies.

## Lessons Learned

What are the three positive lessons gained from the scheme:

1. There is interest and significant numbers of people wanting to take part in arts activities in Coigach and Assynt – Coigach and Assynt attract the highest calibre of artists
2. Need to give attention to publicising and attracting participation and to have specialist assistance when working with schools
3. Bringing artists to work on a local matter of interest/concern is worthwhile way to focus creative energy and activity

What are the three negative lessons gained from the scheme:

1. Considerable amounts of organisation and administration are required behind all such activities and without CALL will be harder to take forward
2. Conversely need for external funding/resourcing is critical to enable such worthwhile activities to take place
3. It is very hard to reach beyond a certain proportion of the local population and that participation is not as extensive as one would have liked

## Funding Partners



## Photographic Evidence



Iron lintel cast from the form of an iron age lintel by artist Julia Cowie © D McBain



Artist Alex Mackay leads a listening and recording sounds during a workshop © K Martin/Scottish Wildlife Trust



Fabric installation by Clara Elliot © C Elliot



Copper nuggets broken from slag after copper smelting demonstration by artist Julia Cowie © B Alexander