

EVER-CHANGING MOODS

Storm-tossed waves and brooding skies, tranquil harbours and cooling breezes: if you paint Scotland's coastal waters, you'll never run out of inspiration, say five of the country's best seascape artists

Words **Jan Patience**

Lonely people are drawn to the sea. Not for this artist the surge and glitter of salons, Clutch of a sherry or making polite conversation. See her when she is free: – Striding into the salty bluster of a cliff-top.

From Edwin Morgan's 'Flood Tide: Joan Eardley'

These opening lines of Edwin Morgan's poem about Joan Eardley's famous seascape *Flood Tide* capture the essence of why artists down the centuries have been driven to the sea time and again as a subject for their work. It's not just the artistic challenge of recreating its ever-changing moods that compels artists to paint seascapes, but something deeper; primordial even.

Eardley's spiritual home was the village of Catterline on Scotland's north-east coast, where she owned a small fisherman's cottage on the cliff-top. Friends there would call her in Glasgow to alert her if there was a storm coming in, and she'd jump on her motorbike and drive the 130 miles to Catterline to capture it on canvas. It was not uncommon to see her down on the shore in ex-RAF overalls, palette on a tripod to her side, motorbike parked nearby, oblivious to the squall of the encroaching storm as she tried to pin it down on canvas.

Eardley's influence on the Scottish art scene over the last 50 years is reflected through the work of major contemporary artists such as John Bellany, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Joyce Cairns, Kate Downie, George Wyllie, Frances Walker, James Morrison and Will Maclean, to name but a few.

ANGIE BEE

With the East Neuk's fishing villages on my doorstep and a view of the Firth of Forth from my studio, the sea has become a natural subject for my paintings.

Being by the water gives me a sense of space and freedom that is difficult to find anywhere else. It's hard to beat big skies arching over stunning Scottish beaches. It also reminds me of my childhood, building sandcastles, paddling and ice-cream.

The beautiful crowstepped gables and fishing harbours of the East Neuk are a perfect example of a uniquely Scottish setting. The atmosphere of these Fife villages is what I try to convey in my work.

I would love to own Turner's *Yacht Approaching the Coast*. His paintings shimmer with light and emotion, and this one carries you along on a spiritual stream of reveries. It touches your soul.



There are days when I lock myself in my studio. I'll work from 6am until 7pm, only stopping to make cups of tea.

I switched from pastels to acrylics two years ago – the vibrancy of the colours has given me a whole new way of working.

I'm a colour junkie. I get carried away

with all the beautiful acrylic colours you can buy and the thousands you can mix from these. I mostly work from photos, often amalgamating elements from several different images as I try to convey feeling, mood and atmosphere.

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[Above] The East Neuk is the star of the show in *Brightening Up*. [Below, left] Colour rules in *Evening Glory* and [below, right] *Waiting for Gold*. [Opposite] Angie Bee in her studio, the walls of which are festooned with photographs that inspire and inform her work

