



# BULB MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2025 ISSUE # 15

ART, CULTURE, SCIENCE & MORE ....

FREE

**WELCOME** to BULB Magazine # 15. We continue to feature new and original writing and artwork with local, national and international interest. We would like to thank all our contributors for their support.

Cathy Bell (editor)

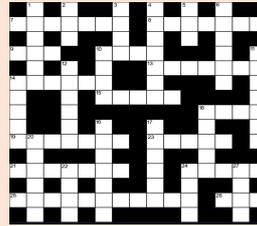
Contact us at – [mylastboard@outlook.com](mailto:mylastboard@outlook.com) View all issues of **BULB Magazine** at [www.mylastboard.com](http://www.mylastboard.com)



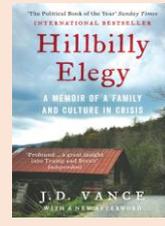
page 7



page 12



page 13



page 17

## FEATURES

3. Ready For Take Off! – Graham Clark on the theory of flight (part 1)
7. All Things Bright and Beautiful – The Art of Damien Hirst (part 1)
9. Art, What is Art? – Carol Evans questions the meaning of art
10. Màiri Mhòr nan òran - The Highland rebel songstress – David Hutchison
12. An Interesting Day – Running the Edinburgh half-marathon – Gordon Weir
13. Crossword

## FICTION

14. The Old Bank (part 2) – The continuing story of a strange building

## COMMENT

15. Censorship? – Robert McCubbin on unfair YouTube practice

## ARTIST AND SHAMEN

16. Joseph Beuys – A brief look at the influential artist – Robert McCubbin

## BOOK REVIEW

17. Hillbilly Elegy – A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis by J D Vance

## GALLERY

18. Summer painting 2025 by Edgardo Gastini

## ARTIST IN FOCUS

19. Paskale Allani – A photographer in Paris

*Cover Images – Paskale Allani*

# FEATURES

## READY FOR TAKE OFF!

Ever wondered how a 640,000Kg all up weight aircraft can get off the ground?

From the dawn of the first steam powered flight to the modern-day jet, aviation has enthused and excited for well over a century but it is still amazing to see a heavier than air machine overcoming the forces of gravity and fly.



The first piloted machine, built by a French Aeronautical Pioneer Clement Ader, was the steam powered Ader Eole, named after the Greek god of wind, Aeolus. The Ader Eole left the ground under its own steam on October 9<sup>th</sup> 1890 achieving a height of 25 centimetres and a distance of 50 metres. Although the flight was uncontrollable and not repeatable, it was the first time a heavier than air machine left the ground.

There were many experimental designs and flight attempts after this first flight but it was not until the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 1903 at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina where Wilbur and Orville Wright managed to achieve repeatable pilot controllable flight in "The Flyer" achieving distances of 36.5, 53.4, 61 and 260 metres.



Airframe design and limitations restricted the maximum take-off weight (MTOW) of these aircraft to around 330KG. The MTOW is the maximum weight allowed at take-off. This designed maximum weight must never be exceeded for the aircraft type. Aircraft now have far greater maximum take off weights with the top three shown below.

Antonov AN 225 @ 640,000 Kg



Airbus 380-800 @ 575,000 Kg

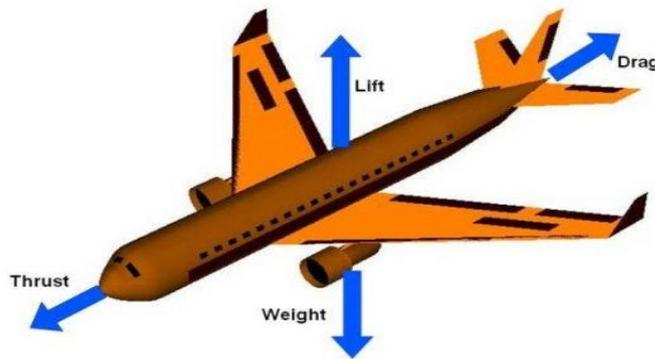


Boeing 747 – 8F @ 447,7000 Kg



The Maximum **Permissible** take-off weight can vary dependant on the flap settings, altitude of the runway, air temperature and length of runway but the permissible take of weight will never be greater than the MTOW.

So where do we begin to get a heavier than air machine off the ground? Let us first look at the four main forces acting on the aircraft: **Weight, Lift, Thrust, Drag**. These forces are shown as vector quantities as they have magnitude and direction.



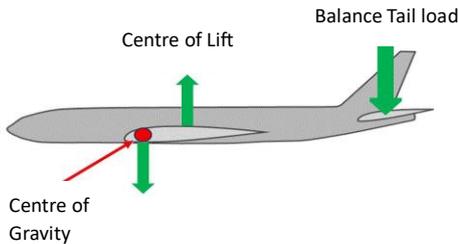
### Weight

Weight is created by the mass of the aircraft and is directed downward towards the earth. Weight depends on three main components.



- Aeroplane and its parts;
- Fuel load;
- Passenger load and freight load.

Weight is distributed throughout the aircraft but is collected and acted through a single point known as the centre of gravity. The weight is effectively evenly distributed around this point.



As fuel is consumed during the flight, centre of gravity could move however, automated trimming systems can adjust the aircraft or fuel can be moved around the aircraft to redistribute the weight so the C of G remains at the designed position.

Some modern aircraft such as Boeing 787 or the Airbus A320 have solid state weighing systems built in to the landing gear (Undercarriage) so the actual all up weight can be measured. Also, at the extreme rear cone of the aircraft, a jackscrew with a very heavy weight is fitted so the C of G can be adjusted after the cargo is loaded. The passenger weights do not create too much of an issue however the automatic seating allocation system will distribute passengers around the aircraft particularly if the flight is not full.

**Lift** - The opposing vector to weight. Every part of the aircraft can contribute to lift however; the main wings create the majority of lift. The lift component must overcome the weight of the aircraft in order to effectively make the aircraft lighter than air. When lift > Weight, the aircraft can leave the ground.

**Drag** - A mechanical force trying to resist the motion of the aircraft and is created by the solid body of the aircraft making contact with the air as it passes through it. Many factors affect the magnitude of the drag force - the shape of the aircraft, the "stickiness" of the air, and the velocity of the aircraft. All the individual components' drags are combined into a single aircraft drag magnitude directed along the length of the aircraft.

**Thrust** – Generated by the aircraft propulsion system, i.e. the jet engines or propellers depending on the aircraft type. These propulsion systems generate the thrust. (Which pushes back from the aircraft causing an opposite and equal reaction (Newton's Third Law of Motion) which, when thrust is greater than drag, will move the aircraft forward. The thrust forces act upon the aircraft centre line in opposition to the total drag forces.

For jet engines, the thrust is a reaction to the hot gas rushing out of the rear nozzle of the aircraft. The more fuel to the engine, the greater the thrust. In an aircraft with propellers, the air is drawn in at the front of the propellers and forced out the rear. The greater the pitch and speed of the propellers the more thrust is created.

The purpose of the propulsion system is to provide forward motion to overcome the drag but not to lift the aircraft. The wings are designed to create the lift and get the aircraft off the ground.

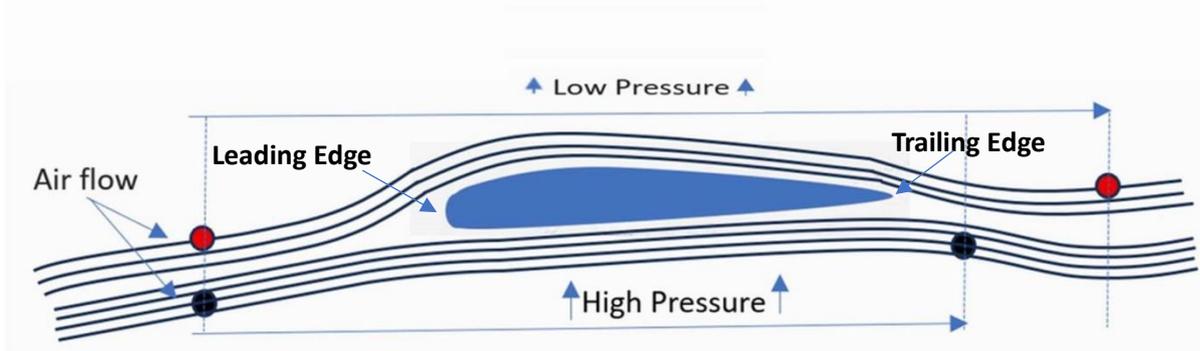
Once the aircraft is moving forward, fuel to the propulsion system will be increased to generate more speed until the aircraft reaches an appropriate safe speed for take-off, this is when the lift has overcome weight and the aircraft becomes lighter than air.

## Aerodynamics – Wings

The aircraft wing is designed in a specific shape in order to achieve the maximum amount of lift this wing is known as an aerofoil. The aerofoil has a longer surface on the top, which is cambered, and a flatter surface on the bottom.

Lift occurs when the air pressure above the wing decreases and creates a pressure differential between the upper and lower surfaces of the wing. The higher pressure under the wing creates a lifting force on the wing. In order to create lower pressure on top of the wing, we need to increase the speed of the air flowing across it.

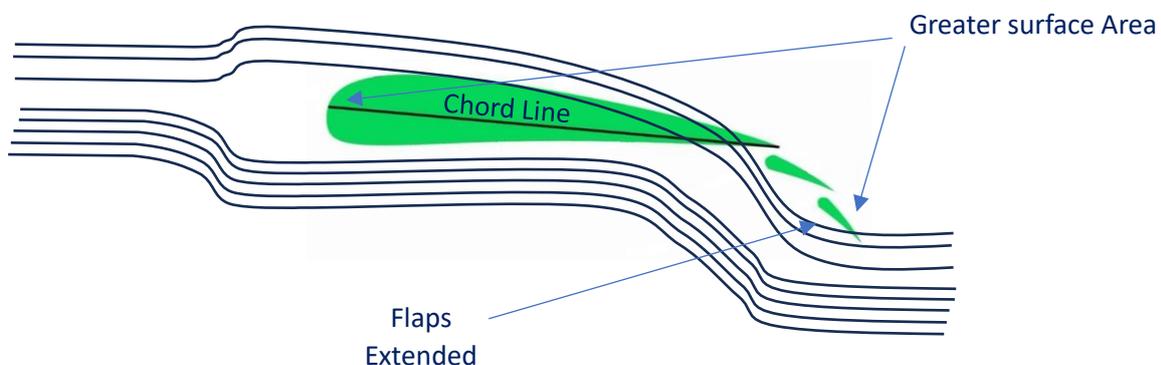
The pressure differential is achieved by the shape of the wing and the way the air flows across the wing surfaces as the aircraft moves forward and accelerates – see below.



The distance from the leading edge to the trailing edge of the wing is greater above than it is below therefore as the aircraft moves forward, the air flows faster across the upper surface which pulls air molecules away from the wing surface creating a lower pressure and thus creates a differential between the surfaces of the wing. As the aircraft accelerates, the pressure above the wing decreases further and with a higher differential pressure, creates lift.

In order to generate lift, the aircraft has to generate enough pressure under the wing to overcome the weight and start to lift the aircraft off the ground. In most cases with larger aircraft, if the wing shape was of a fixed camber, a much longer runway would be required to create enough pressure for lift however, the shape of the wing can be changed in order to increase the surface area across the top and thus create the conditions for lift at a slower speed. This extended surface area is also required for landing so the aircraft can approach the runway at a slower speed and a steeper angle.

**Flaps** – The wing surface can be changed by using movable wing sections called flaps which are situated at the trailing edge of the wing. These can be lowered to a specified angle for a shorter take off run. When extended, the air flow across the top of the wing increases as the surface area above the wing has increased however this does create additional drag. With an increase in air speed, we develop a further decrease in pressure above the wing and therefore a higher differential between the wing surfaces. This increased differential pressure generates lift quicker.



As shown above, with the flap at the rear lowered, the distance from the leading edge to the trailing edge across the camber has increased therefore lowering the pressure even further. Some drag is created due to this but the pressure differential over and under the wing is increased.

Some aircraft do not use flaps for take-off and some use a small amount of flap, it depends on the design and the length of the runway. Some aircraft could achieve take off speed on longer runways without flaps. When flaps are used during take-off, the pilot has to take into account the additional drag created and if used, the flaps will be retracted once the aircraft has established a positive climb.

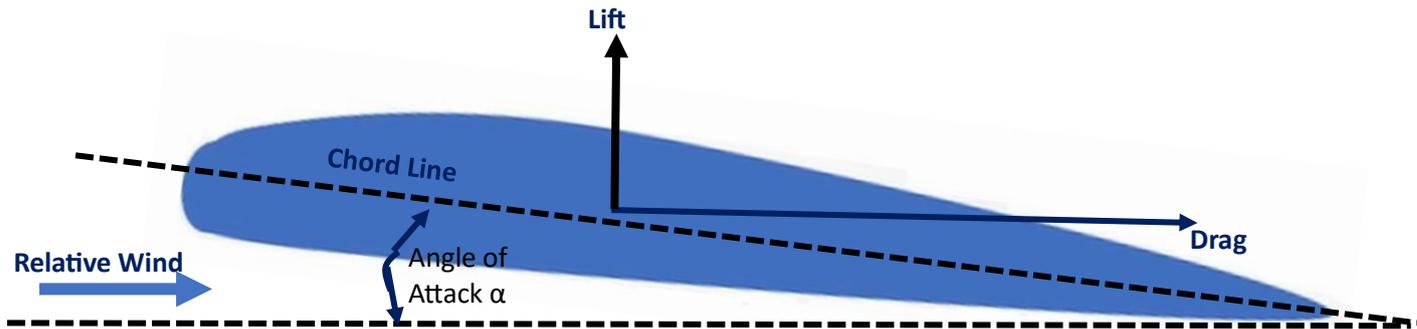
With large or high-performance aircraft, the operating procedures will specify the use of flaps and the angle required for all take off scenarios and may well specify the flap retraction point. The retraction point is important to ensure the aircraft can accelerate during climb but also to ensure the flaps are not over stressed as they will have a maximum speed setting for each flap.

You may not always see flaps extended for take-off as some aircraft are approved for take-off without flaps such as the Airbus A300 and the Boeing 767, this happens regularly but certain other parameters must be taken into consideration, such as no runway crosswinds, the aircraft type, the all up weight and most importantly a long enough runway for the take-off run. Take off without flaps can provide a better climb gradient.

Flaps will certainly be used for landing as this will allow the aircraft to fly at a steeper angle for the landing approach but at the same time maintain lift at the slower speed and thus be able to land with a reduced speed.

We now have control over the speed the air is flowing over the wing and the lift pressure being created under the wing. The second factor now required to get the aircraft airborne is the relative angle of the wing in relation to the air flow, this is known as the angle of attack.

The Angle of attack is the relationship between the wings chord (line between the leading and trailing edge) and the relative wind direction.



The greater the angle of attack, the greater the lift due to the further distance the air has to travel across the top of the wing and the ram pressure exerted on the underside of the wing as the air pushes against the wing creating the lift.

The angle of attack must be controlled as if it increases above the critical point, the aircraft would stall and lose lift. Modern aircraft are fitted with measuring devices to monitor the angle of attack and the inflight computer will automatically prevent the aircraft from increasing the angle of attack any further when the maximum angle of attack has been reached.

### Take off Run

The aircraft, when ready for departure, will taxi to the start of the runway, flaps are set to the take-off position and clearance for take-off requested from air traffic control. When clearance is granted, the pilot will increase the throttle for the engines and select the brakes off. The aircraft will start to move down the runway slowly at first and then gather pace as the throttles are moved towards full throttle. As the speed increases, the pressure decreases above the main wings and this continues until the aircraft reaches a check point on the runway known as  $V_1$ , at this point a decision is made to continue with the take-off run or abort take off. Assuming the correct speed has been achieved at  $V_1$  the pilot will be clear to go on and the aircraft continues down the runway until we get to a designed take off air speed and we reach  $V_r$  (Rotate – initiate a take-off). The pilot gently pulls back on the control column (Yoke) which will move the elevators up, the tail will push down and the aircraft nose pitches up and the angle of attack (Angle between the chord line and the air flow) increases and take off is achieved. Shortly after the aircraft leaves the ground, the pilot will retract the undercarriage (Wheels) which will reduce drag and allow the aircraft to climb quicker to the designated flight altitude.

So far, we have looked at how we achieve flight and get our aircraft airborne but when we take off from the ground, we need to be able to position the aircraft on a correct heading, altitude and direction. Additional flying control surfaces on the wings and tail help the pilot manoeuvre the aircraft and control the position.

Now we are airborne; to manoeuvre the aircraft we use a wide range of flying control surfaces which control three positional movements.

1. Roll
2. Pitch
3. Yaw

*In part 2 we shall look at how the aircraft is controlled in flight. G.C.*

## ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL – THE ART OF DAMIEN HIRST (PART 1)



### AN ESSAY WRITTEN IN THE 1990s BY CATHY BELL

In the late 1990's I was interested in the art of Damien Hirst, in fact the British contemporary art movements in general. I thought I had perceived something in Hirst's work that was not being commented on by other art historians and critics so I wrote the essay ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL - THE ART OF DAMIEN HIRST. Obviously times have moved on since then, however, I believe my essay is still relevant today. I have not followed Hirst's work that closely since then but I do rate him as an important artist of the period and think that his name will outlast some of his contemporaries. In a time when artist's such as Banksy and Grayson Perry have captured the popular imagination, Hirst remains in the background in some ways, however, I believe he has contributed something more lasting to art history and will endure beyond this time in a way the other artist's will not.

### ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL- THE ART OF DAMIEN HIRST CHAPTER 1 - MORE THAN A MEMENTO.

The art of Damien Hirst has constantly been linked to vanitas or memento mori images. This idea is bandied about time and time again, that Hirst deals with life and death, most especially the transience of life and the inevitability of death. This is not a wrong assumption to make, Hirst's art does engage with these ideas but surely there has to be more to it otherwise it would not be particularly interesting art. However, it is interesting, it seems to have struck a chord, it is populace in a way in which much contemporary conceptual art is not, it seems to mean something to people. So, what is it about Hirst's work that makes it so important? What is the component that causes it to rise above the fatalistic banality of memento mori? I would have lost interest in his work quickly if it had only communicated the trite message that we are born to die. I doubt also if the musician Dave Stewart would have felt the urge to implore Hirst (in the lyrics of a song) to "save him and be his guide" if he had not been aware of something life affirming and spiritual in Hirst's art. "Cut me in half and I'll let you see/what this whole world has done to me", goes the song suggesting that Stewart expects something more from his artistic mentor than a crude moral message such as an hour glass running out or you will soon be reduced to pile of bones. Although there is truth in this and memento mori have visibly (in a kind of kill-joy fashion) attested to this (fig.1), fatalistic messages are not the stuff inspirational art is made of. That is why there has to be more to Hirst's work since it does inspire, it is not fatalistic, on the contrary it encourages the viewer to question rather than accept the inevitable.



Fig. 1

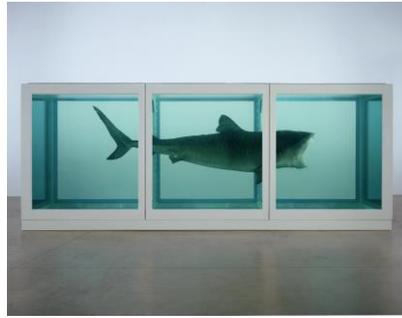


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Probably the most often quoted phrase attributed to Hirst is when he claims that there has only ever been one idea in art, “what the hell are we doing here and what’s it all about”? This does not sound like a resigned intellect, this sounds like a man in search of an answer to a big question, fascinated not so much with the phenomenon of life and death as with the mystery of creation. Somehow, in trying to explore this mystery his work has become side-tracked so ideas about life and death are present but not as integral as many interpretations of the work suggest. The ancient Greek sophist philosopher Protagoras is claimed to have said “about the Gods I am unable to discover whether they exist or not, for there are many things preventing knowledge, the obscurity of the subject and brevity of human life”. This seems like an apt description of the aims and side-effects of Hirst’s art since it appears that, in the process of his search for an answer to what lies behind creation, he has stumbled upon obscurity and the transience of human life. That does not detract from the fact that in fig. 2 and fig. 3 he is looking, like Protagoras he is aware of the limitations, however, he is not in the business of giving up on the search. As far as answers are concerned it is difficult to say, once again, Hirst is like Protagoras – searching but unable to commit himself to a given answer since no proof can be found, no certainty available on the subject. Hirst’s engagement with the unanswerable, or at least debateable subject of creation is what makes his art so potent and meaningful. It is also crucially relevant to its time since it throws itself into the middle of the science versus religion battle with great vigour. Hirst is an expert stirrer, he seems to relish posing obscure puzzles which undermine modern man’s capacity to be sure of anything. Nevertheless, he remains a neutral observer waiting himself for proof one way or the other of how creation occurred, was it a God-given phenomenon or did we evolve? This tension between religion and evolution is certainly at the heart of Hirst’s work. It is my intention to discuss certain aspects of Hirst’s art and also where it stands in terms of art history in order to come to some kind of conclusion about why it has had such an impact on the late twentieth-century psyche. His art often works at a subliminal level, entering the consciousness and posing questions which have not been asked in such a relevant way in art for many years. Religion has not been given much importance in recent years, whereas in previous centuries it was almost the sole reason for making art. In this respect Hirst is a religious artist and in many ways he is a traditionalist who has links with much art from the past. I hope to be able to show here that, through his work, Hirst is responsible for a contemporary revival of religious themes which are tempered with the preoccupations of the present but can also be traced back to earlier centuries. However, I am not suggesting that religion is the main subject of his art, I am merely drawing attention to the fact that it is a crucial element of it. This needs to be acknowledged in order to fully understand Hirst’s importance as an artist and the underlying reasons why his work occupies such a significant place in contemporary art.

## ART, WHAT IS ART?

*Art, What is Art, by Dr. Carol Evans in loving memory of the late Andrew McClintock (Artist and regular Bulb contributor and mentor to Hannah Evans, young, disabled Artist).*

Art, what is art? This is a question Andrew McClintock would ask, and in asking, he opened my eyes to the wider appreciation of art. What is art is a long-debated question. Is art the fine masterpieces that we see from Van Gogh, Renoir, Dali and the masters who have studied how to draw and paint through art school and years of study and practice? Do you need a qualification in Art to be an artist? Do you need to have worked hard and earned your stripes to be a respected artist? Picasso studied, learned and proved he could draw and paint in the traditional sense, but it is his abstract art that he is famous for. Without proving his worth would his art still be as valuable? Yet his early works before he studied now sell for thousands. Why does future study, make your previous work valuable? Is the work in itself not valuable regardless of the route to get there? If the art itself has value, then is art an accurately drawn, representative masterpiece or is art just some marks on a piece of paper or is art marks using any medium?

What is the difference in art terms, between something someone would hang on the wall costing £100 and something you would never hang on your wall, never display and by its very design is temporary in nature like sand in an art Gallery in London priced at £1,000,000? Yet both are called art. And if a simple mark on a piece of paper or some sand on the floor is art, is not the whole world around us art? The trees, the flowers, in fact human beings themselves could be called art? In my opinion, I think we are all unique artworks created for our own unique purpose in the world, you do not need to be qualified, you do not need to be skilled, you just need the beholder to appreciate the creation. So is art, hype or just everyone's own appreciation? Is a £1,000,000 piece of art any different to one of £100 other than the money attached? I'm not sure in this short article I can answer any of these questions in fact I'm not sure anyone can fully answer these questions.

So I'd like to think that maybe art is what we make it. Everyone has the potential to be an artist and everything around us has the potential to be art. What makes art different from non-art is the emotional investment the beholder places on it and the value they place in their heart of the artwork to them. So, if you do have a £1,000,000 original on your wall or an artwork that you bought for £10, both are art and both have value to you regardless of what anyone else thinks. With this in mind, we all are all artists. We all have it in us to create artworks and discover the joy of expressive, artistic process. Maybe what makes art, art is just the expressive joy that the artwork brings to you when you see it and when you appreciate it. If art lights up a life, or gives some sort of joy, emotional connection or even provokes a thought or reaction in someone, then it can truly be called art?

Let's for now enjoy the art we see around us, the colour of the expression and enhancement in our lives that art brings (art of any kind under any definition). While we are still human, and we are not taken over by the AI world let us enjoy human expression through art in all its forms, mediums, and definitions and let's not get too hung up on the definition or the monetary value. In the end, true art appreciation is in the eye of the beholder. Please enjoy our humanness through art.

Please see the Images –The multi million pound classic masterpiece's, contrasted with Picasso's famous works from his childhood before his studies art vs his art after art school education as an adult. Finally, Hannah Evan's Art from age 4 to 16. Hannah does not do art at school, but is Scotland youngest ever professional member of the Scottish Artis Union. Her age 4 marks on the stool can be seen as a toddlers mess or as art, similarly her drawing, art or scribbles. – Which of the pictures included do you think are art?



Picasso – adult



Picasso – Age 2-5



Famous Masterpieces worth £1,000,000+



Art By Hannah Evans - Age 16



Age 10



Age 12



Age 4

Please come and see Hannah's full range of talent in her exhibition in the Livingston Designer Mall – August 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> (over 100 of her artworks) followed by her solo exhibition in The Kirkintilloch Gallery Create Ed, 6<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Hannah Evans is an 18 year old, visually impaired, neurodiverse artist from West Lothian.

## Màiri Mhòr nan òran - David Hutchison

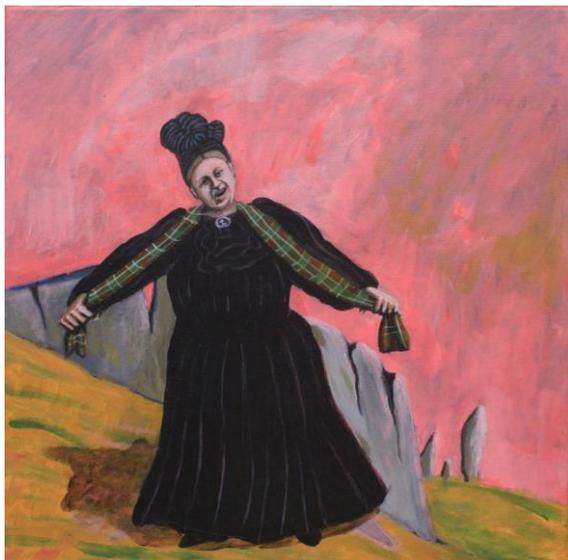
I was brought up with the music of Màiri Mhòr nan Òran and I am also interested in land reform, having originally come from Assynt. My late aunt Marlene MacKenzie won the silver medal at the MOD for her rendition of Eilean a Cheò. Her and my mother Joan also used to sing Soraidh le Eilean a Cheò. There is a line in Soraidh le Eilean a Cheò describing the sunrise on the Storr.

In Assynt we have a sea stack that is called the Old Man of Stoer, rather than the Old Man of Storr, but that always felt like a connection between Skye and Assynt.

Soraidh leis an ait' an d'fhuair mi m'àrach òg  
 Eilean nam beann àrda far an tàmh an ceò  
 Air a moch a dh'èireas grian nan speur fo ròs  
 A' fuadach a neul na h-oidhche Soillseachadh an Stòrr

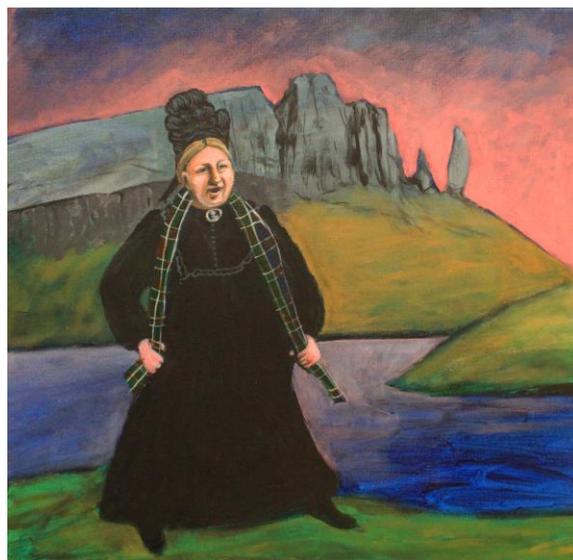
*Farewell to the place where I spent my youth  
 Island of the high mountains where the mist rests  
 On which rises early the rose coloured sun in the sky  
 Chasing away the clouds of night Illuminating the Storr*

I made several paintings of Màiri singing in the Skye landscape with the Old Man of Storr in the background. As she was accused of stealing her dead employer's shawl and then later designed the Blackie tartan I wanted to feature a shawl, as that depicted her transformation into a composer and bard....an image of her defiantly holding out a Blackie tartan shawl, whilst singing.



*Màiri Mhòr 1 40.5x40.5cm, acrylic on canvas*

I kept her dress to a simple black to emphasize the shawl. I tried having her against a rose coloured dawn sky, as in the song. I gave her a MacDonald crest brooch (her maiden name was MacDonald).



*Màiri Mhòr 2 40.5x40.5cm, acrylic on canvas*

I experimented with her slightly angled, lower down and further away from the Old Man of Storr.



*Màiri Mhòr 3. 40.5x40.5cm, acrylic on canvas*

I tried her front on and closer to the Old Man of Storr. I liked this version better but felt her head and the Storr were too aligned, although I did like one of the peaks showing over her shoulder, made her look even more connected to the landscape.



*Màiri Mhòr 4. Acrylic on board, 102 cm x127cm*

This is a rough version of the final painting.

## **AN INTERESTING DAY – RUNNING THE EDINBURGH HALF MARATHON**

This year, I entered the Edinburgh half marathon. I should explain that it wasn't something that just came to me, such as to demonstrate to myself that I am still as fit as when I was a lot younger, a sort of mid-life crisis if you will but instead, and as a runner for over eleven years, I needed to make running more interesting again. So, as I began to train seriously, running did become interesting again and some of the early excitement began to return.

First, I bought the bouncy shoes and then the watch. Then I read about the benefits of rotating your running shoes and so a second pair of bouncy shoes were bought. The obsession had begun.

Up to that point, late last year, I had been using running shoes that were several years old combined with whatever shorts and top came to hand at the time. This, however, was still a big improvement on my first ever run. On that occasion I wore an old pair of trainers that had seen better days and had recently been confined to use in the garden, an old pair of tracksuit trousers and a cotton t-shirt. I remember setting out with a feeling of great self-consciousness and planned a route where, if I was lucky, nobody would see me. I also wasn't sure about how fit I was. Would my legs give way or would I end up needing oxygen? Doubts flooded my mind but after a good look around to see that the coast was clear, off I went. Surprisingly, I felt ok and after around ten minutes I returned home victorious. I have to say that the buzz I got from this first run has never been repeated despite my distances and pace improving massively over the intervening years.

For the next eleven years I went out regularly without really thinking about doing anything more than just jogging along at my own speed, on my own and without any real aim other than to keep reasonably fit. And then, around the end of last year, it all changed.

Eleven years older and now semi-retired, I began to get serious. The date of the race was the 25<sup>th</sup> of May and I decided to give myself around four to five months of well-thought-out training. My aim was to run at least three times a week – a short fast run, a medium run (10 to 12km) and a long run (up to 20km). Quite quickly my body got used to this pattern and, with the aid of my first pair of bouncy shoes – Asics Novablast 5's – my km per hour times began to fall. My diet during this period had also changed as crisps and cakes were thrown out in favour of nuts and fruit and the importance of carbohydrates as a source of energy became another minor obsession. I also tried energy gels for the first time, although it must be said, that the first couple didn't sit well in my stomach. In the week before the race, it was all about gentle runs, rest, and carb-loading. I have to say that I think I did all this remarkably well as when I eventually arrived at the start line, I felt fit and full of energy.

And so, to the race day itself. Up at four in the morning (or middle of the night whichever you prefer!), I got ready with a cup of tea, some out-cakes and a banana. At ten to five I left the house and headed to the bus stop – too early for trains on a Sunday morning – arriving in Edinburgh at just after six. I had a plan as what to do next and had found out that McDonald's on the Waverly steps would be open and so another cup of tea; this time with a single hash-brown. I spent around half-an-hour relaxing, almost meditating before setting off to Bristo Square next to Edinburgh University where the race would begin.

As I left McDonald's, I was aware of more and more people heading in the same direction. At this point some of my old worries re-emerged as most seemed a lot younger and fitter looking than me. The reality was that I would be one of the older runners with many, possibly students, less than a third of my age.

Once I had got to the start area, observing the huge number of port-a-loos, I got race ready and handed in my rucksack – which would be taken to the finish area for re-collection. I was in the green pen with, to be honest, some impressive looking specimens, many doing various stretching exercises which had I tried would have left me in a heap, still in the green pen, until at least noon the next day. I was also convinced

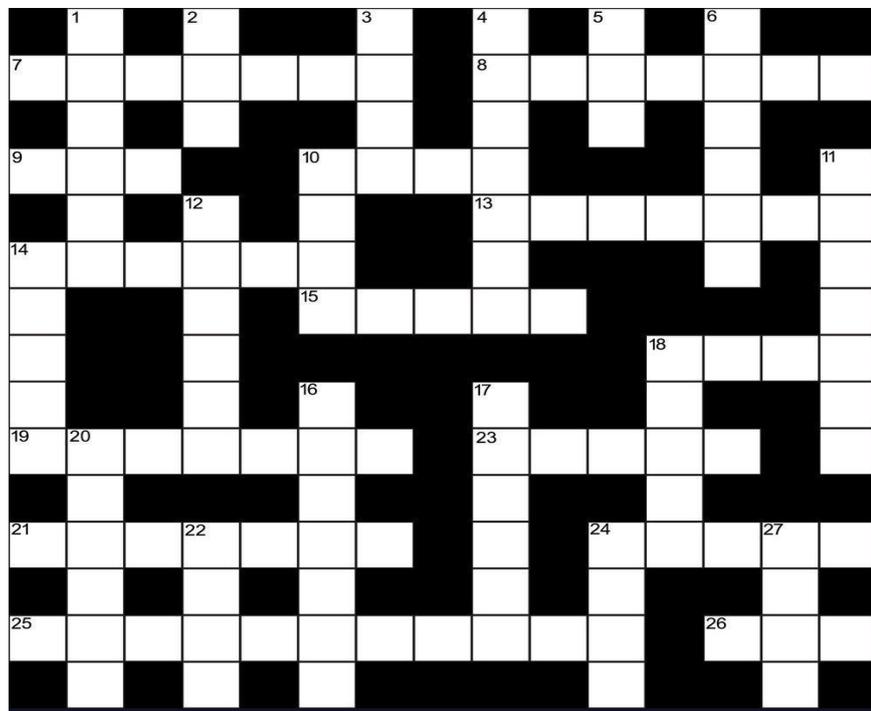
that they would all quickly run away from me as soon as we crossed the start line. At eight o'clock the race began or at least it didn't. Instead, we all waited until around ten minutes after eight when we suddenly began to move forward. To be honest for the first few miles it was all a bit congested, even stopping a couple of times due to bottlenecks where too many people were determined to force themselves through too small a gap.

On we went, past Meadowbank and then onto the sea-front at Portobello. This was the part I had been most looking forward to as I imagined a bracing breeze off the sea and a flat road and, for the most part, that's how it was. Even as we headed towards Musselburgh, narrower parts of the course still got a bit congested and by this point I had learned that getting bumped was all part of it. Strangely, when men bumped me, nothing was said, however, female racers always turned round and apologised before disappearing into the distance. Finally, the finish line approached but instead of turning into the park and finishing we kept going, now heading out of Musselburgh.

I have to say that this was the worst part of the race as, already tired and with my right calf beginning to tighten up badly, we just seemed to keep going on and on, ever aware of the fact that when we eventually turned round, we had the same distance again back to the finish. To make matters worse, throughout the course there had been very few mile markers due to them being removed earlier due to strong winds. Eventually we turned back towards Musselburgh. Strangely, it didn't feel as long to the finish line as I thought it would be and so at around ten minutes past ten, I crossed the finish line. My time? 1 hour, 59 minutes and 28 seconds. **G.W**



### CROSSWORD (solutions on page 16)



#### Clues Across:

- 7. Dimension and shape of land (7)
- 8. 1960's TV Western (7)
- 9. Employ in a confused state (3)
- 10. St. Andrew's main competition (4)
- 13. Accuse of treachery (7)
- 14. Alter for required fit (6)
- 15. Term of endearment or sweet treat (5)
- 18. Big difference of viewpoint (4)
- 19. Special \_\_\_\_\_ (used a lot in films) (7)
- 21. Any identifiable utterance (7)
- 23. Disorder (5)
- 24. Redish, brown dye (3)
- 25. Industrialising (11)
- 26. Wonder found in seaweed (3)

- Clues Down:** 1. Aware? Almost endless (6) 2. Car (anag.) (3) 3. Break suddenly (4) 4. Made one wood look like another (7) 5. Finish in pretend? (3) 6. Native of sub-continent (6) 10. Truthful undertaking (3) 11. Lightweight fabric (7) 12. This? (6) 14. Overhead (5) 16. Way something is made or designed (7) 17. Seafood – includes SI unit of current (6) 18. Spherical object (5) 20. Turned to ice (6) 22. Pain suffered by Zachery? (4) 24. Of great vertical extent (4) 27. Noteworthy information (4)

## FICTION

### THE OLD BANK (PART 2)

It had been about six months since the incident. Nancy and Greg had almost forgotten about it when something happened to bring it all back. Greg took a local newspaper out of his pocket which was all crushed and crumpled. He opened it at a page and showed it to Nancy, she squinted at it.

“What is it?”

“Read it” said Greg.

Nancy concentrated on the newspaper article while Greg shifted nervously around on his seat.

“Oh my goodness”, said Nancy, “are you thinking what I’m thinking?”

“You bet I am but I’m not sure what we should do. What do you think?”

The article was about a sudden mysterious spate of disappearances. Random townspeople had gone missing for about a few hours but had no recollection of where they had been or what had happened. Nancy turned pale when she read that the people interviewed had all experienced the same thing before their recollections went blank. They all remembered seeing green, red and a bright white light and then hearing a high piercing noise which lasted for about a minute. After that they remember nothing.

“Listen Greg, we thought all this had stopped but obviously what we witnessed before has got worse, or changed in some way. This is serious.”

Nancy was talking about the time they went to observe the Old Bank building in the town because she thought there was something weird about it. On that occasion they saw the lights and heard the noise. Then without warning a lone passer-by fell over for no apparent reason.

“Yes”, said Greg, “and now I’m a bit freaked out myself. What should we do?”

Nancy had previously thought they should keep quiet about it, she had hoped it was a one-off incident. Now, her instinct that drew her attention to the Old Bank in the first place made her realise that this was not the end. Greg lit a cigarette,

“I think we should find someone to speak to about this.”

He blew a puff of smoke out of his mouth which Nancy wafted away.

“Please Greg, not yet, we have to get this right, not rush into anything.” Greg took another puff. “What do you suggest we do?”

Nancy thought for a few minutes. She looked worried knowing that she was out of her depth. What she really wanted to do was to tell someone in authority, the police maybe? But something was keeping that thought at bay.

“OK Greg let’s do what we did last time and check out the Old Bank.”

“Why” said Greg, “what do you think that will achieve?”

“I don’t know but there might just be something we can go on. We can’t just go to the police and tell them that the Old Bank has something to do with it without any evidence. They’ll just tell us that they’ll look into it.”

“Fair enough, let’s go.”

They left the café and drove straight towards the building which was, as in every season of the year, surrounded by dead trees. As they approached they noticed that a sense of otherworldliness, of alienation hung over the whole area. They both thought that this strange atmosphere had become stronger since their last visit.

Against her better judgement, Nancy said, "I think we need to try to get inside."

Greg was wary but Nancy was up at the window with a brick in her hand, she mustered all her strength and threw it at the window but it just bounced off. As quick as a flash, Greg appeared with a large boulder and threw it with force at the window. Same again, the stone bounce off with not a mark made on the window glass. Greg was determined now to get into the building, it was as if it had silently challenged him and he was up for it. He almost took it personally. Nancy thought she better calm him down.

"Wait a moment Greg, let's think rationally about this. Do you have any tools in your car?"

Greg came back with a drill and started having a go at one of the thick metal doors. "Nothing, it's not making any impact at all."

They both tried various tools, an enormous mallet that Greg struck against the doors, the walls, the windows, yet nothing could make the tiniest mark on the fabric of the building. Exhausted by the effort, they flopped to the ground looking at each other in disbelief.

"What's going on?" said Nancy, "this is surreal!"

Greg who was usually sceptical about anything that was out of the ordinary, paused for a moment deep in thought. What was going through his head? Nancy had never seen him look this way, both shocked yet with a knowing certainty which surprised himself as much as Nancy. He turned, looked at her and said

"This building is not made out of anything you will find on Earth."

They got in the car, the night was creeping in. It was a calm night, very still with a clear bright starry sky. They drove away knowing life had changed nothing would ever be the same. They both felt strange and quite numb. They had a million questions buzzing in their heads.

## COMMENT

### CENSORSHIP?

I have been a member of the UK-based, artist-led platform Axis since 2005. Recently, YouTube deleted their channel and 14-years of artistic content without prior warning or any opportunity for discussion or redress. Reasons given were oblique: infringements of policies and procedures relating to content and dissemination of material, specifically depiction of sex and nudity being cited. YouTube's use of algorithms to filter content is nothing new, but art has always been alert about challenging boundaries and assumptions relating to what constitutes art practice in a contemporary setting; albeit set within acceptable boundaries and codes of practice. Axis promotes inclusion and support to artists and education for all, bringing art to a wider audience. The stifling of art and art debate by the use of monitoring systems by big tech platforms is a slippery slope indeed, where ultimately individual and collective creativity will be the loser along with the greater society. Can we only await more developments of a similar kind? **R.M.**

## ARTIST AND SHAMEN

### JOSEPH BEUYS: THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND.....

Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) German Sculptor was highly influential, with his practice underpinned by concepts of humanism, sociology and anthroposophy. Whereby he attempted to redefine art practice as a 'universal' saviour for all and was a professor of sculpture at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (1961-1972). There he developed theories surrounding 'social sculpture' (art for all, art is everything) citing that anyone has the potential to be artistically creative and that the political and social milieu could be reformed to meet the contingencies of the moment (his *raison d'être*) utilising his 'extended definition of art'. His famous claim to have been saved by nomadic Tartar Tribesmen, in the Crimea in a WW2 plane crash, and being wrapped in fat and felt by them to keep him warm, set the scene and materials of 'choice' for his future career.



His pioneering performance art or 'action happenings' and installation assemblages became his trademark, with such works as: "I Like America and America Likes Me" (AKA) 'Coyote' (1974) (see above) where he spent a week in a cage with the animal in live debate (action) is typical of his approach.

In the (1970) piece 'Pack' we see a conceptual installation comprising elements of his choice (noted above – see right) relating to a 'survival kit' for the preservation and protection of life at play.

**R.M.**



### CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

**Across:** 7. Terrain 8. Bonanza 9. Use 10. Open 13. Impeach 14. Adjust 15. Honey 18. Gulf 19. Effects 23. Chaos 21. Vocabale 24. Henna 25. Mechanising 26. Awe

**Down:** 1. Sensed 2. Arc 3. Snap 4. Ebonised 5. End 6. Indian 10. Oath 11. Chiffon 12. Puzzle 14. Above 16. Styling 17. Scampi 18. Globe 20. Frozen 22. Ache 24. High 27. News

## BOOK REVIEW

### HILLBILLY ELEGY – JD VANCE

JD Vance did not write this book recently; it was written in 2016 when he was in his early thirties. Featuring a new Afterward, the updated edition was released in 2024. Clearly, the Afterward is designed to put the success of the book into context, that is, when Vance first penned it, he was not the Vice-President of the United States or Trump's running mate. So, this is perhaps why he declares that he has not done anything extraordinary, rather that he has achieved something quite ordinary – but not for a poor, white Hillbilly boy like himself. He goes on to describe his background, his life as a child was not easy. Coming from a family of Scots/Irish immigrant descent, he grew up in Middletown, Ohio and the Appalachian town of Jackson in Kentucky.

In the main body of the book he revisits his childhood, a fairly sad saga of family troubles. Alcohol, drugs and neglect all seen through the lens of a young schoolboy trying to keep some sense of equilibrium in a chaotic world where life was never stable for long, moving from one situation to another. There is a sense that without his mother's parents – his Mamaw and Papaw, as he called them, he would not have made anything out of his life. However, young JD, helped by his loving grandparents, showed what he was capable of against the odds. He joined the marines serving in Afghanistan, he then attended Ohio State University and then on to Yale Law School, a career move that was almost unheard-of for someone from his background.

From a political point of view, this book has been cited as an important record of what has been happening in America over the last several years, for example, why Trump has become so powerful. Quotes from the beginning of the book testify to this. The Sunday Times (Book of the Year) states "Essential reading for all yankophiles, politicians and anyone interested in how Donald Trump won over the rust belt to arrive at the White House." David Aaronovich writing in the Times calls the book "a tough-edged elegy for "white trash" hillbilly America."

And this is true. Vance describes his forefathers' characters as being the most pessimistic of all the ethnicities, even more than black Americans or Latinos who probably had a harder time so more reasons to be that way. Vance seems resigned to the state of affairs whereby the poor white exists in a kind of Catch 22 situation driven by the inability of his kind to change. He also identifies a problem with young people who have a similar background to his. He observed this while working in a tile factory to raise funds for his education. Seemingly a fair proportion of the youngsters did not like hard work and were expert shirkers. When they were fired, they saw it as an insult saying "how could you do this to me?" Vance obviously sees this as a wrong mind-set that exists among some young, white Americans – otherwise why mention it?

This suggests that he was not content to go down the same route and, as mentioned, with the help of his grand-parents, he chose to work hard and try to be a success. As noted, his grandmother (or Mamaw) was a big influence in JD's life and his fondness for her comes across in the writing. He makes no attempt to hide the fact that she was extremely foul-mouthed and as rough as they come, she was like a cross between Ma Baker and the grandma from the 1960's comedy The Beverly Hillbillies. The book is peppered with entertaining stories about this formidable woman who took no prisoners. However, it is heartwarming to read that she had her grandson's back and, because of her tenaciousness, he never fell by the wayside (although it could be argued that he has). That kind of devotion to family is motivated by love in any language.

So, what about JD Vance Vice-President, arguably the second most powerful man on Earth? This is quite a jump from the vulnerable child who grew up in one of the most deprived areas of the massive land-mass that is the USA. Much has been said and discussed about his sudden lurch from being an opponent of

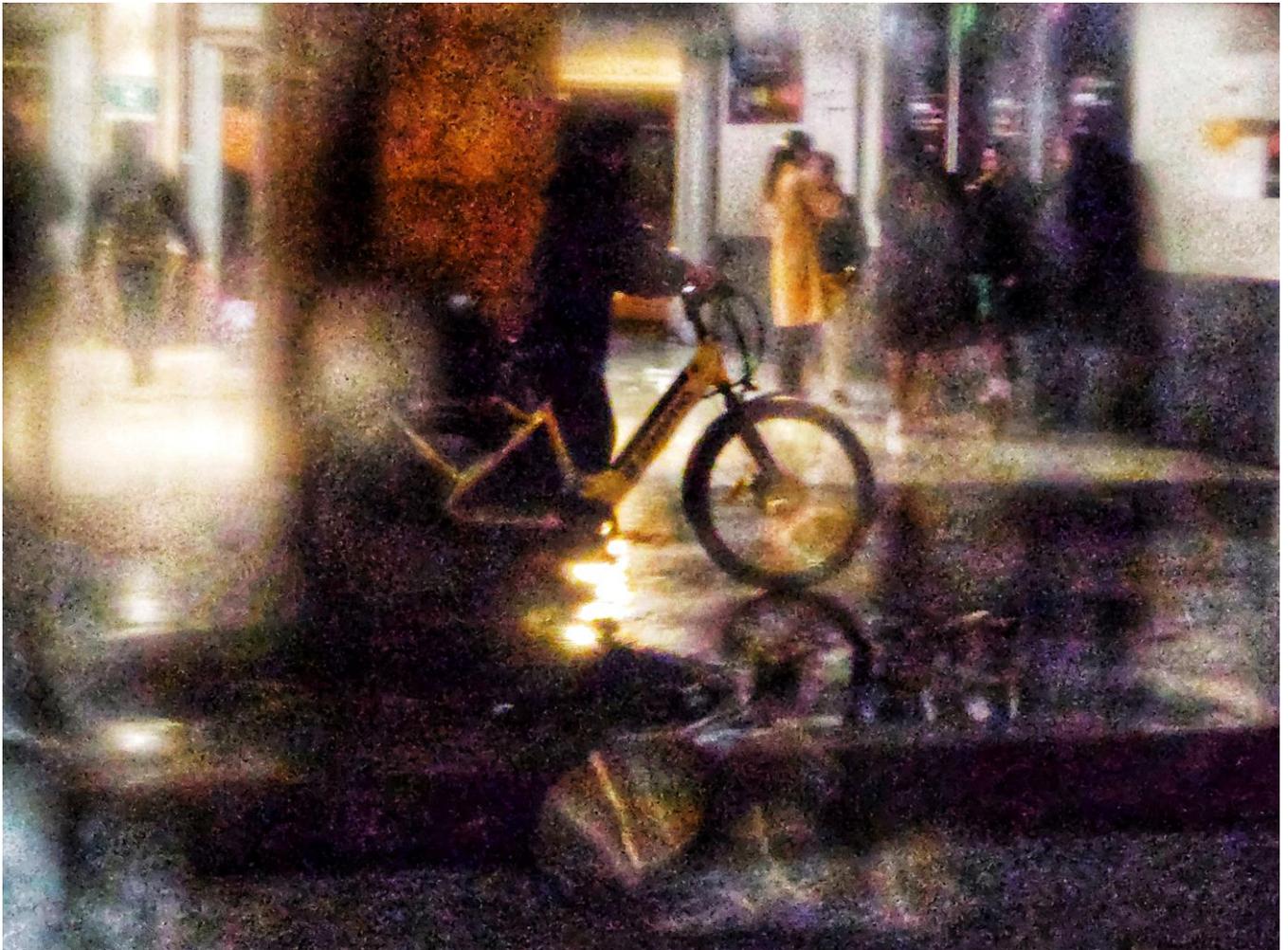
Trump and previously running against him. No matter what his achievements, his behaviour since becoming the VP has been what one would expect from a Trump ally. His stance on several issues, notably Ukraine is not worthy of someone with a supposedly good heart and his disrespect towards President Zelensky in the Oval office is a nasty performance that will hang over him for many years to come. Commentators are wondering which way he will go in the future; will he revert to his down- to-earth persona as witness in Hillbilly Elegy or will the opportunity for power and wealth keep him on a path that follows the likes of Trump? At the moment, it seems like JD Vance is a kind of split-personality. **C.B.**

**Hillbilly Elegy by J D Vance. Published by William Collins 2016. Pages 265. Price £10.99.**

## GALLERY



Painting by  
Edgardo Gastini



## ARTIST IN FOCUS

PASKALE ALLANI  
PHOTOGRAPHER

## A PHOTOGRAPHER IN PARIS

*We are delighted to welcome artist/photographer Paskale Allani to BULB Magazine. Below are written texts which will introduce Paskale, with a short personal biography, an observational piece by art history student and critic Matis Leggiadro and, finally, a question & answer/discussion between myself Cathy Bell and Paskale. Also, these will be accompanied by examples of Paskale's compelling photography.*

I was born on June the 7th 1961, so I'm pretty close to be 64 (which I can't figure out) and raised in the wealthy 17th district of Paris. Even if my childhood was far away of a fairy tale, I have seen museums, exhibitions, walked all over Paris, made family road trips and if you add my greedy curiosity of the so-called normal people to try to behave like them ... with hindsight, I have a perception of what fed my eyes on the land of my wounded heart and body

When I was a teenager (11) I did lot of baby sittings to allow me to buy my tube of oil paint and pay the development of my films. It was when I firstly enlarge a picture that I like something of me for sure (14) so I kept shooting for 50 years with some breaks related mainly to financial aspects and sometimes because I had no inspiration.

When I was 21, I stayed two months in California that changed me , I learned there I was worth something. When I finished my law studies and couldn't get a job, I worked in an art gallery for tourist where I met somebody who asked me to run her gallery in the States, she brought back some of my paintings and you know the story of my name created by Mrs Rhoda Lehman

Before and after this experience I work as a free-lance photographer beside Jean Louis Foulquier for 7 years, he had the most listened radio show and created the festival name Francofolies in La Rochelle but I was not able to talk to the artists to sell my pictures ... LOL At night I was shooting, in the morning going to a laboratory to have my films developed and was doing the enlargements in the afternoon ... I had a good level by that time ... silver print was a passion ... I was expressing my feelings through the intensity of the exposure, re-modelling the frame exactly what I am doing now with my digital pictures in colour,

I dared to show my work after the islandic great aunt of my treasures of sons (she is surrounded by art , mainly masterpieces) told me very seriously "until now I had no idea why some people were buying pictures, but now I understand", that sentence gave me a feeling of legitimacy it was in 2020 ... we created then an art foundry with my amazing elder son Sacha, my no less talented younger son Stanislas is working there too and I'm in charge of the visual part

I had my first Insta account in 2021 and had to create another one in 2023 by which I have been in touch with Matis because of a post he made about your magazine Bulb ... amazing ...

In summary, I am an old self-taught photographer, considering my practice of photography as a form of survival now gathering photography and painting in my pictures. As I told Matis My photo is animal, instinctive; I mainly see with my heart. **P.A.**



**Paskale Allani is light. Paskale Allani is disturbance.**

Her photographs are manifestos of a restless radiance — the very light that shapes her.

It is at the bend of a street, at the level of a flowerbed, in the awkward beauty of a smile, that her world begins to emerge.

I've only known Paskale for a short time, but I've come to cherish these flashes of survival. Her photographic practice seeks nothing but the experience of the living.

Where many would long to capture the tidy harmony of a well-ordered bookshelf, Paskale Allani draws closer — lingers on the spines — then frames, delicately, with her smartphone screen, catching a vanishing composition, the epiphany of a dreamlike pattern.

And then, there is this attentiveness to the impossible.

The impossible reality of the Other.

How many times have I seen her invest herself in the suffering of lives she does not know?

The impossible vision. Could I even recall an afternoon without the unraveling of the real, without the traffic jam of perception?

Paskale Allani's photography is hallucinatory.

And all of Paris sees her, tireless, traversing the city to harvest the faces and bodies that inhabit her.

We're always a little surprised to discover ourselves in the images she sends, with a gentle message: smile, think, die, be reborn, imagine.

All of it, offered without demanding anything in return.

To understand her is to grasp what drives her: birth — of a friendship, a bond, a hue, a constellation. Among the thousands of shots flooding her hard drive, certain images rise to the surface — striking, uncanny, unforgettable.

There is no deceit.

But colour grading is her final, crucial gesture — where she weaves the skin of her photographs the way her own skin sheds, textured by transcendent horizons.

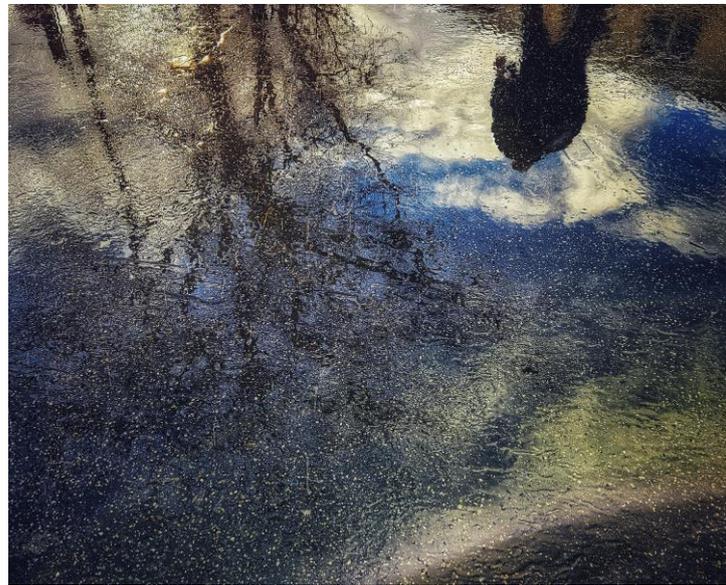
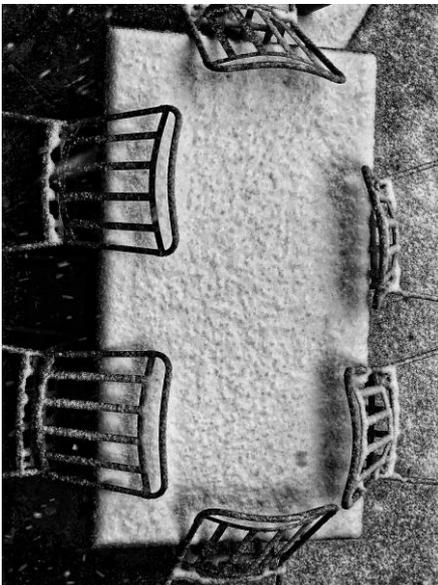
It is her way of naming existence: against forgetting, against the misreadings that distort human connection, against the silences haunting the secret rooms of the soul.

Her eyes, always scanning, are drawn to the theater of contradiction — a world of oddities and deep feeling, our world.

Paskale Allani is unmoved by what merely pleases. Never.

And I love that.

**M A T I S    L E G G I A D R O**



**1. Welcome to BULB Magazine Paskale. You were born in Paris and you have lived in the city most of your life. Do you think that having such a diverse environment as subject matter for your photography is a good thing? Or do you find that too much choice can be unhelpful?**

First of all, thank you for the honour of inviting me and my answer is definitely yes. For my avid eyes and mind, Paris is a diamond and its multi-faceted aspects is a fabulous playground for photography as media to express your inner thanks to the opulence of diversity. My mother (painter and ceramist) took me all-over Paris to discover it, it's big art show and museums; I kept the addiction of wandering night and day to feel and keep on discovering. Even if you're broke, Paris offers to dive in contemporaneity thanks to the galleries giving the feeling that nothing is impossible.

**2. Having said that – has it taken you long to settle on a style, to narrow down subject matter (or themes) or does this matter to you?**

A style ... hum, I could summarize this as an emergency of truly, sincerely being. Showing my picture (which is not an easy task) is my way to say I care about people mainly because I deeply think that feelings and arts are the essence of life. By creating an emotion which can either be peaceful and/ or disturbing, with the recurrence of melancholy, even spleen, those fragments of my lived story, I have the intermittent feeling I am worth something. My "style" is anchored in the here and now looking for pieces of humanity I am coexisting with.

**3. Can you tell me what kind of subject/subjects attracts you? Is the subject important or is it more about visual effect? Or both?**

The subject of subjects target the wide land of my self-questioning of legitimacy as a photographer. The starting point is my inseparable tandem eye-heart who takes the picture in an essential emergency to capture an emotion with my mobile as a raw material, then comes my mind when I rework it accentuating a line, the light, the intensity, the depth, of the potential and by potential subject, I mean that the visual effect can turn out to become the subject because of the kind of music it carries, creating a kaleidoscope of my humanity; I am shooting as I live and breathe.

**4. You are also a painter. Do you paint now as well as taking photographs? Did you start painting first or were you painting in tandem with photography when you first began?**

I used to paint and by reworking all my published picture I am pretentiously reinventing the reality, as much as I would do with a paint palette because I have the dream to go back to my tube of paint. Painting has ever been Mom's affair and arrived in my life after photography which was my territory; after my first son's birth I was totally unable, as we say in French, to "touch any painting brush". I have been doing both for about twenty years and I am ready for a restart as I now have "A room of one's own".

**5. Are you paintings similar to your photos or completely different? What medium do you prefer when you paint? Can you describe your painting style?**

My approach is both the same and different. Melancholy, poetry prevails as much as light and line like in my photos. The main difference is that there's never a subject that will be tough as in real life. I often expressed the theme of the wait in the eyes of a person or in a "scene" with window or doors widely opened, the outside is not blurred contrary to photography and you have a shadow ... will that person will pass by or come in? ... My palette was mainly with pastel colours and the used media will depend on my mood , I sometimes used them all-together.

**6. Your bio tells us that you have worked in galleries and as a freelance photographer among other interesting jobs, you also studied law. Can you tell me more about what you do now alongside your sons Sacha and Stanislas?**

Stanislas and I are working alongside Sacha with who we created an art foundry 4 years ago, the Fonderie Saint Lubin, located in Chevreuse nearby Paris. I am in charge of the visual part: photographs and videos of sculptures and the craftsmen. The light aspect is very challenging in order to magnify the patina as much as the volumes. We also created the Association Culturelle du Domaine de la Chapelle Saint Lubin to share culture where I take part in the conception of the poster and in guiding our visitors for the Journées Européennes du Patrimoine.

**7. Do you feel inspired in these times? Do you think that 2025 is a good time to make art – I'm thinking mainly about the tech side of things and the advent of social media, like Instagram, for example.**

I'm mainly answer yes but those troubled times are sometimes eroding, paralysing my inspiration. at the same time, because of the tension art is essential as art is life and I feel that creation is as a kind of civic duty. In that context social media are helpful as favouring communication and solidarity as it happened with the generous Marianne James and Bulb magazine not to mention the fairy tale I am living with the poet Matis Leggiadro. As much I am suspicious about IA, the algorithm are fed by human so we have to be aware of it and have a responsible behaviour...

**8. Finally, which artist/artists have been your greatest influence, especially who influences you now? Also, who is your favourite artist if you have one?**

For a long time I was influenced by my mother's tastes which were mainly painters such as Modigliani, Matisse, Van Gogh, Chagall, Monet Valadon, Lautrec, Picasso, Foujita but she also make me discover Doisneau, Lartigue, Boubat, Cartier Bresson who had in common a Parisian poetry. I also like Martin Parr, Peter Hugar, Prisca Lobjoy, Vivian Maier but my favourites are Edward Hopper, William Kentrige and Madame de Saint Orlan who have a wider conception of creation and are linked both to photography and painting. Too bad women were removed from the scene for such a long time!

**Paskale ALLANI**



paskaleallani2