



Media Release

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THE SPIRIT OF GAELIC IN GLASGOW TO BE CAPTURED ON CANVAS

He celebrated 20th-century Scottish poetry with his famous painting of Hugh MacDiarmid et al in an imaginary Edinburgh howff. He paid tribute to the Scottish folk revival with his fantastical depiction of Hamish Henderson carousing with musicians including Gael Dolina MacLennan and piper and Gaelic tradition-bearer Alan MacDonald.

Now, Alexander “Sandy” Moffat is set to capture Gaelic culture and what it means to contemporary Glasgow. The distinguished Scottish painter has been appointed artist-in-residence to the Royal National Mòd 2019, and commissioned by Glasgow Life in partnership with the Hunterian Museum and the University of Glasgow to create an original artwork marking the Mòd’s return to Clydeside for the first time in almost three decades.

The Mòd – Scotland’s premier festival of Gaelic music, arts and sport – was last held in Glasgow in 1990, during its year as European City of Culture. Some 29 years on, Gaelic – which has been spoken in the city for centuries – is flourishing. In fact, Glasgow is home to the largest number of Gaelic speakers outwith the Highlands and Islands and a growing number of citizens are speaking it, learning it and participating in Gaelic cultural events. In July this year, the revival was accentuated with Niall O’ Gallagher’s appointment as the first ever Bàrd Baile Ghlaschu (Glasgow’s City Gaelic Poet Laureate).

It is this important moment in the city’s Gaelic history that will be immortalised by Sandy Moffat OBE RSA, as the Mòd makes its return visit to Glasgow on October 11. During the nine-day festival, the artist will immerse himself in the atmosphere, observe events and research the city’s Gaelic past and present. Those impressions will feed into an original artwork, which will be unveiled in Glasgow in January 2020.

The Gaelic Poet Laureate and the Artist-in-residency bookend Glasgow Life’s contribution to Gaelic in the city during the Mòd with a programme of free screenings, talks, workshops and language tasters all taking place at the CCA (Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow).

The Mòd provides opportunities for people of all ages to perform across a range of competitive disciplines including Gaelic music and song, Highland dancing, instrumental, drama, sport and literature and during the week, a host of fringe activity will also take place.

Thanks to the new residency, Alexander Moffat's illustrious body of work will now be complemented by a brand new painting, which is destined, like his famous depictions of poets and folk musicians, Poets' Pub and Scotland's Voices, to be enjoyed by art lovers and Gaelic cultural enthusiasts for generations to come.

Sandy Moffat said: "I'm really excited about this opportunity to observe and make work during the Mòd. It's a unique opportunity to get close up to this great Gaelic festival."

Councillor David McDonald, Depute Leader of Glasgow City Council and Chair of Glasgow Life said: "The Mòd's return to Glasgow is a momentous occasion that will give many thousands of people the opportunity to engage with Gaelic heritage and culture through music, song, poetry, storytelling, sport and much more.

"It will be fascinating to see Sandy Moffat's take on this event. The late, great Gaelic bard Sorley MacLean featured prominently in his famous painting, Poets' Pub, while the contemporary piper and Gaelic scholar Allan Macdonald is celebrated in Scotland's Voices – and I'm looking forward to finding out how Gaelic culture in Glasgow, and the 2019 Mòd, will be depicted in his forthcoming new work."

Professor Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh, Professor of Gaelic and Vice Principal and Head of the College of Arts / Colaiste nan Ealain at the University of Glasgow, said: "We are delighted to partner with the city of Glasgow to help celebrate Gaelic culture in our city. It is an exciting time for the language in Glasgow as we have seen an increasing demand for Gaelic-medium education, music and culture, all of which will be celebrated in this year's Mòd.

"We feel that Sandy Moffat is the perfect person to take on this project. Over the course of his career, he has created a kind of 'history painting' capturing iconic moments in our cultural renaissance. This has included both the 1980 Poets' Pub of major poets and writers working in Scotland at that time including our own Edwin Morgan and its more recent companion painting called Scotland's Voices celebrating the oral tradition in Scottish culture.

"We look forward to seeing how Sandy Moffat captures Gaelic culture in contemporary Glasgow."

Notes to editors

- Glasgow Life, one of the delivery partners for The Royal National Mòd in 2019, delivers a year round programme of performance, resources, artworks, trails, participation opportunities and content within the city's major festivals.

<https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/glaschu-be%C3%B2-glasgow-life/ealain-g%C3%A0idhlig-gaelic-arts>

- Am Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail (The Royal National Mòd), the biggest and most important festival of the Gaelic language in Scotland, takes place in Glasgow from October 11-19. Organised by An Comunn Gàidhealach, it will engage thousands of international competitors in more than 200 events in Highland dancing, sport, literature and drama, as well as Gaelic music and song. For tickets visit www.ancomunn.co.uk/tickets

- The new artist in residency programme and artwork commission are organised as part of the Mòd Fringe, a packed programme of ceilidhs, concerts and other events, culminating in The Final Fling, an exciting evening of live music from outstanding traditional bands Skerryvore and Trail West at the Barrowlands on Friday, October 18.
- Full details of the 2019 Fringe programme can be found at <https://Mòdghlaschu2019.com/events-programme/>
- Glasgow Life's contribution to Gaelic in the city during the Mòd offers a programme of free screenings, talks, workshops and language tasters all taking place at the CCA (Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow) <https://www.cca-glasgow.com/programme#gaelic-events>

* The city's Gaelic Poet Laureate is delivered in partnership with the Gaelic Books Council

* **ABOUT ALEXANDER MOFFAT** As head of painting and printmaking at Glasgow School of Art until 1985, **Alexander "Sandy" Moffat** was credited with igniting the resurgence of figurative painting in the city by inspiring future greats such as Peter Howson, Alison Watt and Ken Currie. His own work was celebrated last year with the publication of *Facing The Nation: The Portraiture of Alexander Moffat*, a landmark book by art historian Bill Hare.

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