

The online magazine for landscape photographers

on landscape

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on



Somhairle MacDonald

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

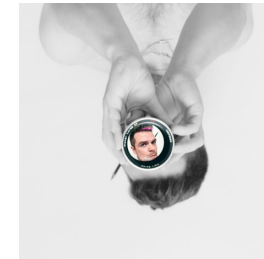
Somhairle MacDonald

Can you tell me a little about your education, childhood passions, early exposure to photography etc?

I grew up in the highlands of Scotland. Both of my parents were brought up in Lochaber and I enjoyed a free and adventurous childhood. I still walk up burns like I did when I was a child and still mountain bike, though not to the extremes I did as a teenager and in my twenties. I have explored vast tracts of land where I grew up on An Aird and my habit for exploring continues to this day. I have a deeply-ingrained tie to my home in the highlands and I am passionate about its landscape, people and culture. My Grandpa MacDonald was a shepherd in Glen Nevis at the foot

of Ben Nevis. He kept his sheep on the high pasture of Stob Bàn, a sizeable and rugged mountain which is 998 metres tall. He was raised in Torridon and like him, I am drawn to the wilderness. It is in my blood, it is my home.

I got into photography through my Father. He had a Canon FTb and we used to take photos at sporting events like Le Tour de France and the Scottish Six Day Trials. In my twenties, I played bass in an ethno-funk band called Croft No. 5 and through my involvement in the music scene I ended up designing album covers and taking photos for other musicians. I have done this for over twenty years now. I am also an artist and my photography feeds directly into my painting process.



Somhairle MacDonald

I am an Invernesian living in Glasgow, Scotland and I make pictures. I am a photographer, graphic design, illustrator, videographer and artist. I have been working as a professional image maker since 2001 and my experience is broad and wide ranging. My love of pictures started in early childhood and I was lucky to have a Mother and Grandpa who were exceptionally talented artists and nurtured and encouraged my talent. My Father was a keen film photographer and I learnt the technical facets of photography from him.
schmo.biz



Abandoned Subaru Legacy - Sjönarhraun - Iceland



Tell me about why you love landscape photography? A little background on what your first passions were, what you studied and what job you ended up doing

I love landscape photography because I love the landscape. Being outside and attentive is important to my everyday function, it's like some sort of cognisant lubrication.

- First passions... Black Sabbath, Mountain Biking, Bass, Heavy Drums, Art, Girls.
- I studied Graphic Design at Glasgow College of Building and Printing... HND
- I studied History of Art, Scottish History and Gàidhlig at Glasgow University... But dropped out after a disagreement about what Van Gogh was feeling when he painted 'The Potato Eaters' ...
- Played Bass for 7 years in Croft No. 5
- Quarter Life Crisis!!! Back to the Highlands. Tree Planter, Farm Loon, Live SoundCrew,
- Bike Messenger, Glasgow. 5 years.
- House Father to Brae and Struan... Part Time Web Design, Album Covers, Photography, Videography...
- Self Employed Artist.
- 2017- started painting again after a hiatus of 15 years.

BLEED

Audio-Booklet · T0002
Cyan Magenta Yellow Black



Kinarris Quintet, This Too

How easy – or difficult – do you find it to fit your photography around work and other commitments? When you travel for work, are you able to devote any time to either photography or researching new

places?

I lead a very alternative life, my economic dependency is fulfilled entirely by my creative endeavors. I do not respond well to systems of control. Being in a touring



band in my early twenties I grew accustomed to a very creative and free life-style. Traveling the world and banging out our original brand of high-energy ethno-funk certainly made the world of conventional work look a little daunting / boring / pointless. After the wheels fell off the band, I worked as a bike messenger for 5 years in Glasgow, which in itself introduced me to a band of hardy and talented people. There was a sort of magical subculture around Messengers at that time and a lot of my fellow Messengers are now also full time artists. From Contortionists, to boutique frame builders and pro-level international musicians the courier scene in Glasgow has produced some amazing careers, I feel blessed to have been involved in it and the punk attitude it instilled in me. My nickname (call sign) amongst the messengers was 'Teen Wolf' and I still howl at my friends in the street when I see them.

During this time I built up a client base of graphic design clients and worked a lot in building websites for musicians, festivals and businesses. Through the messenger scene I also got into making videos and even did gigs for Red Bull around their Mini-Drome event. My time at Red Bull was cut short by a video made for the 'European Cycle Messenger Championships 2012', which was deemed offensive by both them and Edinbvrgh council who were sponsoring the event. I have worked for a few big corporations in the quest for economic success, it's always made my skin crawl after a while and I try to avoid corporate work now, which is entirely to my own financial detriment.



White Wood of Rannoch



The dslr video boom was a big deal in the twenty-tens and my video work still relates heavily to what I do in other mediums. I have enjoyed being commissioned to make video and photographic works that accompany musical projects. I have even performed live visual mixing, on stage with harp and fiddle virtuosos, Chris Stout & Catriona McKay. Landscape has always played a big part in folk music and I have been commissioned by Fèis Rois twice to make visuals to accompany musical projects centered around Easter and Wester Ross.

This afforded me long periods of time out in the landscape finding compositions in historically relevant locations. I also had the luxury of making a music video for Bass genius James Lindsay, named 'Lewisian Complex'. An 11 minute jazz, folk, metal epic. A theme of deep time cut through this work and the collaboration and experience of making this video has influenced my photography and art work greatly. It was a beautiful opportunity to explore themes which had been bubbling up in my work for years. I will never forget the heavy weather I experienced on the 5 day trip in Assynt and Harris that made up the bulk of the footage.

[LEWISIAN COMPLEX](#) • James Lindsay (a film by @SomhairleMacDonald)

But to answer the question... My other work often allows me to be out in the landscape, my landscape photographs often inspire other artists and so it seems to work in a symbiotic, cyclical way, where one medium feeds the other.

*Glenshee - Svema 50 -
Lubitel 66 (broken)*



Am I right in saying that you work primarily as a painter? Or do you just see yourself as an artist that uses whatever medium makes sense?

I wouldn't say I am primarily any one thing. All aspects of expression interest me and I would like to be able to explore as many mediums and processes as possible. For me, drawing distinctions between genre, style and medium is degenerative and prohibitive. Although I respond well to imposing restrictions on my work sometimes, these are nearly always practical restrictions which engender pragmatism and refinement. Imposed ideological restrictions nearly always result in a rebellious and defiant reaction. I get bored of myself very easily and crave a constant flow of exploratory creativity. It has always been a struggle for me to 'sell myself' to the wider world as every attempt to ring-fence any particular field of specialisation stirs up a saboteur inside; an unruly little punk who sets about subverting this new-found 'profession', wilfully destroying the shackles of imposed control. The mainstream concepts of education and professionalism typically instill a notion that you should just do one thing and do it well... I wouldn't say I'm against this convention, per se as any approach can achieve good results. I greatly admire people who can plan meticulously and achieve specific goals, but it's just not for me. I'm unable to do it. I seek a wildness, to create work that is uncivilised, visceral and closer to my animalistic nature. I need the constant challenge and impetus of different mediums in order for one to inspire the other. Though my work may be delineated into various categories by others, for me it is one complete, multi-faceted thing.

Your paintings are bold and powerful - they look



Druim Bad a' Ghail

almost instinctive rather than planned. Painting allows all of these different physical approaches to the art, almost performances in themselves. Photography doesn't seem to have this performative aspect, do you think it matters? Is it possible to instill something of these aspects into a frame of film?

I do approach my paintings more like a performance. I find that if I plan out a painting and try to make it representational it just lacks any kind of magic. In the

early stages of a painting I rough-out a kind of template, which I follow until I've built up a reasonable visual representation of what I am trying to paint. Once I am happy with the layout of the composition I usually embark on a process of destruction and erosion. To me, this makes so much sense when trying to paint landscapes, which are shaped by eons of wear and tear. This process is frenetic and wild and often goes wrong; it cannot work with any kind of predetermined skill or practice.



Painting, Druim Bad A'ghail



I can't say that the more I do it the better I get at it, I have to surrender to the chaos or it seems not to be 'true'. I use water, gravel, rocks, rags, sticks, bits of bark... anything at hand, really. I have to go about it in a sort of reactionary dervish. It's verging on madness sometimes, a sort of chaotic force which I attempt to channel rather than control. At this point the painting either takes on a life of its own or it fails. If it is successful at this stage the reference images on which the initial sketches were based are usually disregarded and the painting itself directs how it progresses.

What attracts me to painting is that it is able to capture and maybe even project some sort of charisma. The artist is so intrinsically woven into its fabric that it becomes a palpable and lasting record of something more innate and universal. Music certainly displays these characteristics, though it is rare that these qualities can be preserved in a recording. However, in live situations this magic can be so lucid and transcendent that it shapes the future. For me, great paintings retain this liveliness, this spirit of creation.

I believe that in photography the performance comes more from what is in front of the camera. Although I must say I do enjoy the performative rigmarole of setting up and dialing in a camera. Folk like Ansel Adams and Bruce Percy certainly manage to superimpose their character on their images; strong stylistic choices in colour, contrast, composition, subject matter and post process all add to this.

Ceapabhal Not Pictured - Harris

Even with a photographer like Joe Cornish, who is very true to the 'eye witness' style of photography, I can discern a performative element, one that is quiet, with less bombast. This is a far more subtle type of expressive projection-of-self, which whispers "look at this" rather than "look at me". My photography has definitely moved more toward the 'eye-witness ideal', and this has certainly been because my painting allows the self-indulgent bombast to proliferate more freely. I no longer feel the need to impose my expression on photography as much as I did before I got back into

painting.

Are there any projects or ideas that have significantly changed the way you think about your work or that you've been excited about developing?

I have been developing a theme of 'deep time' in my work. This developed after spending a lot of time in Assynt, Coigach and Inver Pollaidh... The rocks there are some of the oldest on planet Earth, 3 billion years old, older than any recognizable life. Suilven has been through a lot in its long life and that mountain formed a

lot of the early inspiration for this concept. I have never climbed Suilven, but have walked around it a few times. I might never go to the top. I have yet to make it to Airigh Shomhairle (Sorelys resting place) on the side of Loch Gleannan a' Mhadaidh (loch in the glen of the fox) at the southern foot of Suilven. This is undoubtedly named after the Norse-Gaelic, 12th century warlord Somerled, with whom I share my name. History looms large in Gàidhlig culture and it can be found even in the darkest, most remote corners. It's this fascination with where I come from (both geographically and historically) that drives a lot of my work.

Through traveling in Iceland I have learnt a lot more about the ancient ties that bind Scotland more to the Northern sphere of influence. A recent genealogical survey in Iceland revealed that 62% of Icelandic women are actually descended from Scottish and Irish Thrall (tràilleán) - slaves. In Caithness and Sutherland, North Skye, the Outer Hebrides and of course Orkney and Shetland, the Norse runs very deep and is evident in music, art and place names. There are also emerging studies that explore the influence of the Gàidhlig language in Icelandic place names and the Norse language more generally. Iceland, like Scotland, has had its indigenous history smeared and manipulated by invading empires. Discovering these undertones of indigenous culture through the landscape has definitely proved to be my Epiphany.

Can you choose 2-3 favourite photographs from your own portfolio and tell us a little about them?



All While Norman Smokes His Cigarette, Sula Bheinn



ACHNAHAIRD BLUE

One of my friends' Mothers died recently, she was from Achnahaird. I thought about that whilst taking this photo, it was so calm, so peaceful. The sea quaking gently at the black, black rocks, the intense blue that descended from clear skies. On the horizon the mountains

keep look over all the people, those that have lived and those who have died, small dots on the land, weaving ribbons and moving water, tiny specs on the sand . The stag beetle rolls his ball of mud. Oyster Catchers chatter as the soap opera of West Highland deviance plays out once more. The tectonic plate whimpers

under the sheer weight of time gone by; and then, piercing the silence like the beak of a anti-social herring gull, the unmistakable klunk and slide of Volkswagen t5's barn door. I snap awake and phone my Father.



DALSETTER - YELL

This croft house is in the settlement of Dalsetter, North Yell, Shetland. There is a large house close by called the Easterhouse of Dalsetter, where I assume the laird lived. I have looked for information on Dalsetter and all I can find are the census records of the 52 people who lived there, the last recorded entry being 1871. The derelict settlements of Shetland are endlessly compelling and shrouded in a deep haer of mystery, the most notable of which is the Windhouse of Yell. Known as the most haunted

house in the North, this house is not only placed on top of a Viking graveyard but several bodies have also been found buried around it. Skeletons under the floorboards and in shallow graves in the back garden, the most chilling revelation was when workmen found the skeleton of a child wrapped in a sheepskin hidden behind a nailed up window shutter... Now me and my kids wandered up here and there was a distinct feeling of unease. Partly because of the ravenous dogs amongst the smashed up Vauxhall's on the track up the hill, partly because the ravens were

warning us off - most derelict buildings in Yell and Unst come with a pair of boisterous ravens. It's fair to say that the remote parts of the country have always been a haven for the maladjusted and demonic upper classes, was the laird behind all this? Wha Keen's? No me! Was this place scary? The answer is yes. Will I go back on my own? Probably definitely. This house was recently sold along with planning permission. Brave folk.

THE TORMENT OF MRS CHISHOLM

Taken on the south side of loch Mullardoch. It's a strange area, a kind of monument, a graveyard to a lost way of life. It's hard to explain without going there. The dead silver trees have a real presence as if they hold the secrets of this glen's feudal past. Lots of people used to live up here, all the homes drowned by the hydro or displaced by malevolent lairds. Glen Affric and Glen Cannich used to be two of the main routes across the country, linking the west coast and the Isles to the markets in Inverness. The only written record of life in these glens are in a book called 'Burn On The Hill: The Story Of The First 'Compleat Munroist'. Burn was walking through these remote glens at a time when they were still sparsely inhabited but on the cusp of a second Highland Clearance, as deer estates replaced sheep farming, and the First World War removed a generation of young men. It's clear that no one but stalkers frequent the south side of loch Mullardoch now, it is wild and deathly silent on a winter's night and is one of my favorite places to speak with the dead.





Do you get many of your pictures printed and, if at all, where/ how do you get them printed?

I am lucky in that I do still manage to sell prints. It's not big business by any means but I love to get prints made. I use Deadly Digital in Partick, Glasgow, who are excellent. I have exhibited photos in two solo exhibitions. 'The Rain In my Blood' The Ceilidh Place - Ullapool - 2018 and 'à làimh Shomhairle' - The Tolbooth - Stirling - 2022.

I have printed myself but owning and maintaining a Canon inkjet printer has been one of the most frustrating experiences I have ever suffered. Though their Lucia inks are super lush.

I release a calendar, which is a mammoth logistical task, although I only release 100 copies a year. When I started the calendar it was a 'stack it high sell it cheap' project. However it has evolved into a fairly premium product which I strive to produce to a high standard with the help of Johnsons of Nantwich. Through my work as a graphic designer I have been fortunate to have printed some beautiful books and album covers. I have a deep love for the printing process and the minutiae of colour, depth and texture. Show me a beautiful lustre paper and I will go weak at the knees. The smell of Litho excites me. Finishes and surfaces are an ongoing obsession and this also feeds heavily into my painting work.

Caileach 10000

Could you tell us a little about the cameras and lenses you typically take on a trip and how they affect your photography.

I am at the juncture of trying to move my main photography to analogue. Being part of Generation X means I grew up in an ever-evolving digital and computer-centric world. I have grown tired of doing

everything digitally and my painting has certainly reconnected me to the value of 'real things'. I want my photographs to actually exist and film makes this happen with such deft magic. I'm sure a lot of you reading this are familiar with the 'Velvia on lightbox' phenomenon and, well, I am smitten.

Due to this newfound addiction, I now carry around a

Mamiya rb67, three lenses and two backs, 6x7 & 6x8. This setup is neither light nor compact, it is certainly not the most practical tool. The heft is challenging but since I'm cooped up in the city of Glasgow most of the time, I tend to relish the extra exercise. It does undoubtedly slow me down though, both in my progress across the hill and in the act of actually taking a photograph. 4x5 is definitely calling me but I am addicted to the sound of that mirror slap on the Mamiya for now.

I do still have digital cameras and often 'sketch' with a Canon 90d. I also have a Nikon d800 with Zeiss ZF.2 manual lenses. Both these cameras are amazing and take great photos and I use them in my professional work which centres around Scotland's music scene. I also use the Canon 90d as a time-lapse and video camera. It's not the best by any means but it allows a lot of the modern features of a mirrorless camera whilst maintaining an optical viewfinder. I shoot a lot in low light and find having an illuminated viewfinder creates too much of a disconnect from reality (plus it destroys your natural night vision). The battery life is amazing and I've had tons of Canon gear over the years, all of it still works despite being thoroughly abused.

My most useful pieces of kit for landscape photography, other than a camera, are... Dunlop Wellies, a good hat that is Black and lens bags.



Rose The Boat, Cuidhitinis, Harris

Do you think you end up taking different photographs using film rather than digital?

Undoubtedly. When I'm shooting film my eyes are much sharper to subtlety and detail. The simple fact that each frame is using up finite resources focuses the mind and heightens the senses. When I'm out with the digital camera, I often don't set up a tripod, I will use autofocus and stability aids, expose for the highlights and then lift the shadows in post. I am lazy and approach the activity with a laissez-faire attitude. The results of this approach are nearly always compromised in some way and although many of these shortcomings can be addressed with laborious and tiresome digital post-production, these days I tend just to leave them half-assed, the imperfection somehow adding to the 'realness' of the image. My portfolio is still littered with over-processed digital images from the 'ever more epic' Instagram era; they remain there as a marker of that time. Just like in art and music, fads come and go. In my mind I can now point and laugh at these images but a lot of other folk seem to really love them. There is no accounting for taste and tastes change. I know for a fact that I do not see my creations the way any other person on Earth does. Digital certainly seems more convenient in the

inception but in the long run, it often ends up consuming more time and effort, not in the field but at the sharp edge of a computer.

I take far more photos of green things now that I am using film, digital greens just seem so lurid and fake. I developed such a strong hatred of green that I purposely avoided it; I wouldn't even attempt to take photos in the summer unless the scene was mainly sand or rocks. I understand that the human perception of green is complex and instinctual but film certainly does a better job of capturing it than digital. I prefer Fuji green over Kodak green but both are better than Nikon or Canon green. After shooting a roll of Portra 400 a few summers ago I actually challenged myself to do a small series of paintings called 'The Fear of Green', which alleviated this green prejudice and I am no longer scared of it or blue sky days.

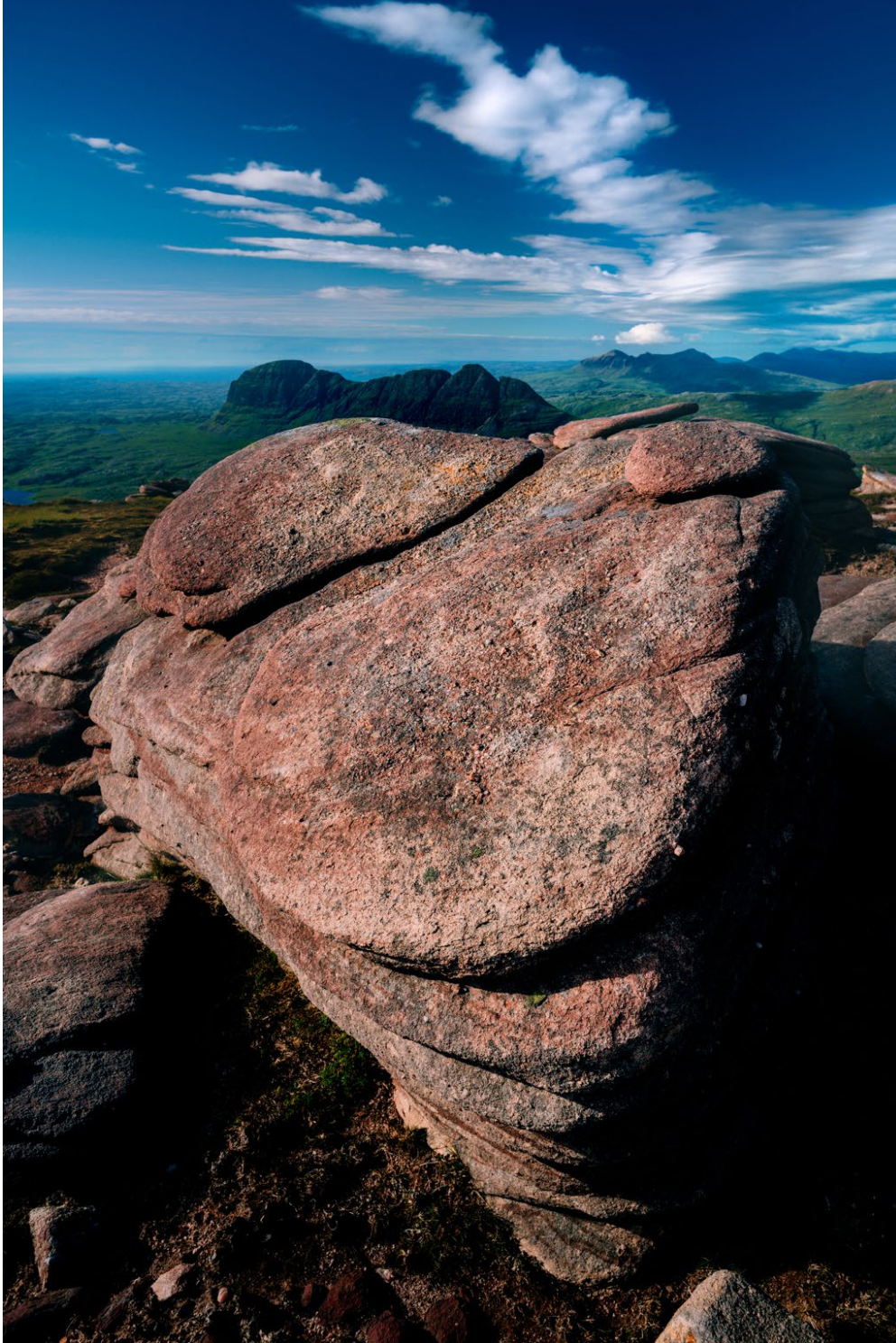
I am of the belief that analogue grain structure, which is chaotic in nature, helps impart a sense of depth to images, even when viewed digitally. I always add a layer of grain in my graphic design work that goes to print, usually some scans of middle grey, Ilford 3200. It really does enhance everything and offsets the half-toning

that most modern printers use. Through using many different types of canvas in my painting work, I have also noticed that the more irregular the grain, the easier it seems to be to impart front-to-back depth. But squarer, grid-like canvases seem to make this more difficult. I believe this paradigm exists between sensor arrays and film substrates too, though in double-blind tests I am often wrong and prefer the digital image. So perhaps it's all just imagined? Whatever the facts actually are, the process of using film certainly feels better. I find it easier to get into a flow state and nature feels closer in the final result.

Once again, the analogy to music rings true here. To record an entire piece of music, end-to-end with no mistakes and in one single take is very difficult. It requires an intense, subconscious zen. Most modern records are built up one section at a time, with each short passage being perfected and moulded to create a glossy, airbrushed representation of what a performance could be. Try quantising Jon Bonham's Drums and auto tuning Miles Davis's Trumpet and see where that gets you. Overall, film feels more like nailing the performance in one take.



Thicket In The Middle Affric



How do you like to approach your image making? Do you pre-plan and go out with something in mind, or do you prefer to let your photography flow from your explorations on foot?

Through all my creative endeavors there is one thing I seek and that is 'Flow State'. It is like a drug to me and I am an addict. I find this flow state in many different ways but it is an illusive property and impossible to control. I can find it in painting and drawing, I can find it clambering up a steep and slippery burn, sometimes the movement of water hypnotizes me or maybe I happen across a birch tree with a magnetic charisma. Often the subjects seem to find me but the process seems to stem from the quest of searching them out. I am reactionary, hap-hazzard and almost completely adverse to planning.

When I was younger I definitely found a rich seam of flow in Mountain Biking, it is quite the trip to be firing down a bealach or wooded ravine with no knowledge of what is in front of you, yet somehow picking your way through all the obstacles with lightning and effortless reactions. Just your brain and body working in harmony without any interference from the thinking mind. This Flow is also why I was so attracted to being a musician. Riding the moment with your band mates in front of a writhing audience is some rush, total locked synergy, ensemble. No thought, just body memory and an innate ability to predict what your band mates will do next.

The landscape is an absolute sanctuary for me and it is there that I find it most easy to tune out the fuzz and distortion of modern human society. To find a peace that allows my indigenous instincts to flourish. Action without thought, poetry in existence..

The Alien Pancakes of Cùl Mòr

What sort of post processing do you undertake on your pictures? Give me an idea of your workflow..

Currently Tim Parkin does my post processing and he is the fucking best!

Seriously, it is so freeing to give my transparencies or negatives to Tim and let him adjust them correctly off the scanner. If they don't feel right to me he shepherds me through a very gentle and insightful process that not only gets the images looking the way I want but also illuminates my own process and thoughts in a way that helps strip away my expectations, prejudices and ego. Though I very much extol a Punk - do it yourself - attitude, I have learnt over the years that collaboration and the help of people who really know what they are doing is invaluable both to the work and my personal development.

My workflow is quite random and chaotic. Usually I scout places with the digital camera, this gives me the chance to just roam around without thinking too much about actually getting a photo, I'd label it 'sketching'. Getting the feel for a place to me is so important, to learn the lay of the land and to follow your nose. Just aimlessly roaming outside is more important to me than the photograph itself; getting to know the boulders and the trees, the way the burn moves, how to cross the bog, all these things set off primal instincts in me and I feel connected and inquisitive. I have trees and boulders all over the place that I revisit like old friends. Once I know conditions may be good or a simple opportunity strikes I take the film camera out, often the conditions will not be good and the camera never makes it out of the bag, but occasionally the stars align and I'll press the shutter. I do suffer long periods of making no work at all, though I will often continue to grind away at it. Sometimes the muse is damp and floppy and I find it



Shaggin Caravan - Opinan Road

completely impossible to even take a picture, despite making great efforts to do so. Some sort of self inflicted, tantric torture. Thankfully my girlfriend Popes continues to coax me out of this strange, self-defeating behaviour and when the Muse comes back it often strikes with a frenzied maelstrom. Photos come thick and fast and often snowball into paintings or even album covers. Work that is truly inspired seems to have this tangible, positive magic that spreads amongst the community, it's such an

elusive quality but when it does happen it is glorious.

To me the magic of film far outweighs it's impracticalities, convenience has ruined most things in life: air travel, music, cinema photography.etc. Effort, time and sacrifice are qualities that give work weight. I know the photographs I produce on film are mostly the important ones.

Who (photographers, artists or individuals) or what has most inspired you, or driven you forward in your development as a photographer? What books stimulated your interest in photography?

Earlier in life, my life-long friend Misha Somerville definitely drove an appreciation of photography. Misha is an accomplished photographer and has gone to extreme lengths to make incredibly important photographs. He was at the EuroMaidan in Ukraine in 2013 and took some incredibly brutal and powerful photographs there. He has also traveled in Africa and has climbed some of the world's great peaks. We lived together for many years and he had a darkroom for a time, we used to try our hands at making prints and developing hp5 and tri-x. Misha made some really beautiful prints. I was less successful. mishaphoto.com.

Bruce Percy has been a huge inspiration visually and philosophically, his blog is a treasure trove of insightful and honest observations. I have a few of his books and find them very calming.

Joe Cornish and David Ward obviously. 'Landscape Within' and 'This Land' are books of amazing quality, beautiful objects. Joe Cornish is amazing at describing the landscape with a great deference and insight. David Ward's ability to abstract the fuck out of everything is so inspiring to me, he has such a keen eye for finding

nature's works of art.

I love the work of David Clapp, he inspired me to take photographs of the dark. I used to spend long freezing nights in Glen Coe trying to make nice clean star photographs like his. His infrared work is so cool and I loved the way he reacted to the social media phenomenon with such amusing bile. He was very vocal about what he thought it was doing to photography and I agree with him. He knows how to call a spade a spade. I like his instagram content much better now, he is an amazing banjo player. I am very jealous of his and Bruce Percy's synth collections.

But to me the absolute pinnacle of landscape art is the artist Beth Robertson Fiddes, her paintings are so 'of' the places they depict. They encapsulate so much more than the visual, conveying the feeling of the West Highlands with a velveteen magic that is so hard to describe but so discernible. Her paintings have very much inspired how I try to compose photos, with a strong front to back perspective as if the landscape is marching into the future. It is from her work I learnt that a soft background is often preferable to a sharp one.

I love Steidl photography books. They seem to exemplify the absolute top level of photographic print quality.

Ragnar Axelsson has been a big influence, especially with

indigenous subject matter. I have his book 'Last Days of the Arctic' and study it often.

'Tir A 'Mhurain' by Paul Strand is probably my most looked at book, it inspires as much as it incenses me, it presents the plight of the Hebrideans in such a sensitive and powerful way. I hope to make a book of such strong cultural significance one day.

Sigurgeir Sigurjonsson's Planet Iceland proves that you can make a book of cultural significance and also make money.

Outside of photography or landscape, I have almost infinite influences. I love the poetry of Norman MacCaig, the trumpet of Miles Davis, the lairy and offensive guitar solo's of Josh Homme, the way Bill Ward hits a drum. The work of the Glasgow Boys and the Scottish Colourists, The book of Kells, Pictish Carvings, Cup and Ring Marks. Man... I even find inspiration in the way folk speak, the way people walk, once I followed a white plastic bag round Dalarnock because I loved the way it danced in the wind amongst the bombed out wastelands of deprived, post industrial Glasgow. To list all my influences would take me a life-time, I literally bathe in art day in and day out, I see it everywhere and it is often hard for me to distinguish between my artistic imagination and my material reality.



What sorts of things do you think might challenge you in the future or do you have any photographs or styles that you want to investigate? Where do you see your photography going in terms of subject and style?

I have several ongoing projects.

- The ice-age woods of Scotland, in particular Glen Cannich / Mullardoch.
- The Brutalist Architecture and Public Art Works of Scotland.
- Shagging Caravans of the North West Highlands.
- The Street Mattresses of Glasgow.

I want to exhibit more, though in a more multimedia format where I draw on all the various mediums I use and combine them into a cohesive body of work. I try not to draw too many distinctions between genres or styles or mediums. I am open to everything and interested in it all. Combining my painting and photographs together more cohesively is certainly an aspiration and I want to find a cool way to exhibit slide film. Now that I have 185 mega pixel scans from 'Professional Film Scanning' I am itching to make 1.5 meter prints.

My photography is certainly becoming more narrative-based and making a proper heavyweight book would be a dream. I am definitely on the road to this but I appreciate it will take many years of persistence before I have anywhere near the body of work to make it as expansive and meaningful as I envisage.

The main challenge in the future is going to be making enough money to keep all of this going. Times are tough, there's a saying amongst the crofters 'diversification, diversification, diversification.'

Joy To The Core Of Maryhill



Which photographer(s) – amateur or professional - would you like to see featured in a future issue?

I'd like to see some new (film) work from Tim Parkin. He labels himself an amateur but we all know he's not.

Misha Somerville is worth talking to. He doesn't have many landscape photos online but he has lots in drawers at home and the mountaineering and photojournalism are super interesting, endless, insane, adventure stories. <http://www.mishaphoto.com/>

Dougie Cunningham

RAX would be good eh?

I am a big fan of **David Rothschild's** work.

And I would love to know more about Sigurgeir Sigurjonsson.



Interview by
Tim Parkin

Amateur Photographer who plays with big cameras and film when in between digital photographs.

[Flickr](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

*The Mechanics House -
Hafnarnes -
Iceland East Fjords*

on landscape

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Somhairle MacDonald

PORTFOLIO



Achnahaird Blue



Dalsetter - Yell



Featured Photographer |

Sombairle MacDonald

*The Torment of
Mrs Chisholm*





Abandoned Subaru Legacy - Sjönarhraun - Iceland



All While Norman Smokes His Cigarette - Sula Bheinn



Featured Photographer |

Sombairle MacDonald

Caileach 10000





Featured Photographer |

Sombairle MacDonald

Ceapabhal Not

Pictured - Harris





Featured Photographer |

Sombairle MacDonald

Dimurborgir





Druim Bad A'ghail

Featured Photographer |

Sombairle MacDonald



*Glenshee Svema
50, Lubitel 66
(broken)*



Featured Photographer |

Sombairle MacDonald



*Joy To The Core
Of Maryhill*



BLEED

Audio-Booklet · T0002
Cyan Magenta Yellow Black



Kinarris Quintet, This Too

Featured Photographer |

Sombairle MacDonald



Morag





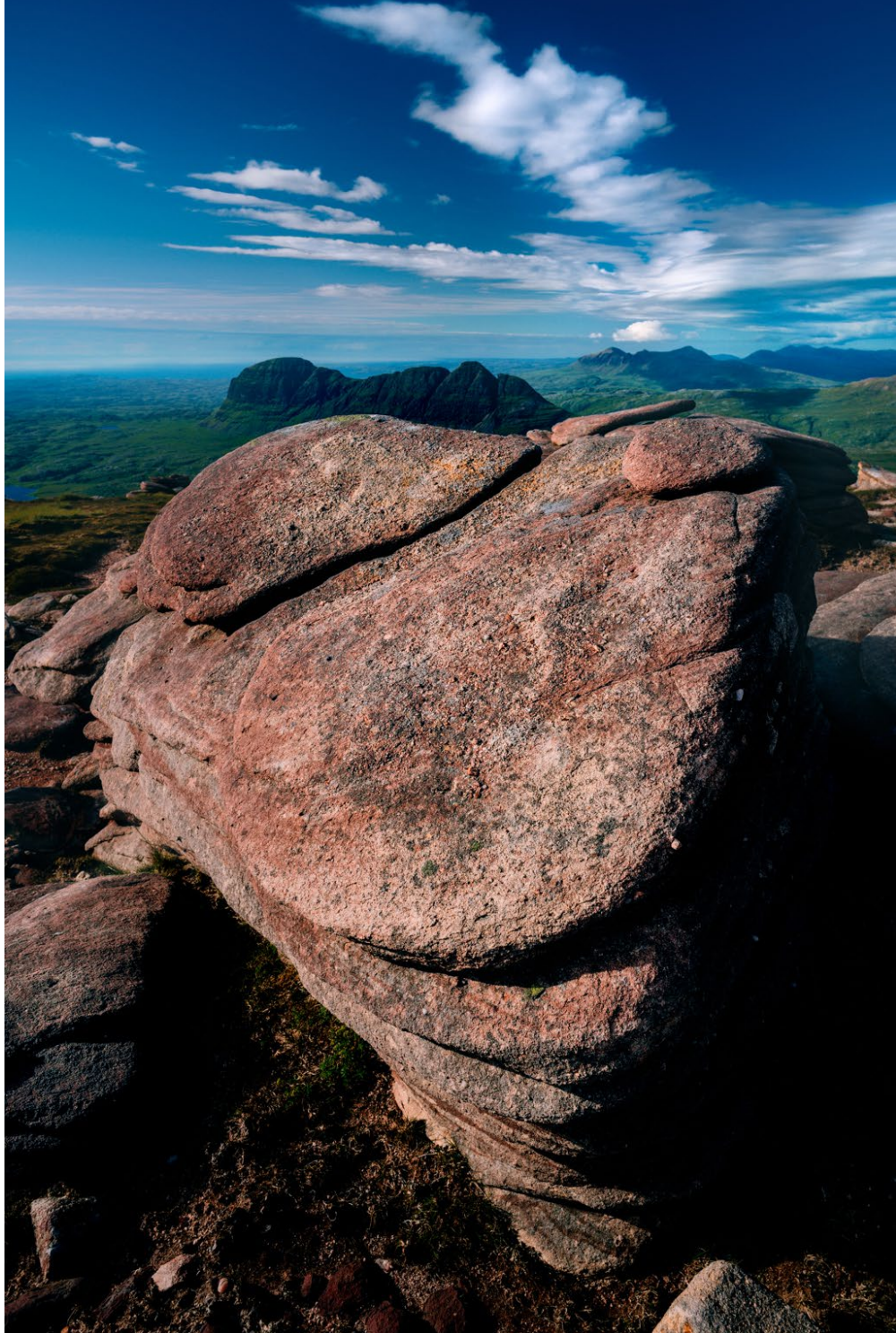
Painting, Druim Bad A'ghail



Rose The Boat - Cuidhitinis, Harris



Shaggin Caravan - Opinan Road



Featured Photographer |

Sombairle MacDonald

*The Alien Pancakes
of Cùl Mòr*



Featured Photographer |

Sombairle MacDonald



*The Mechanics House
- Hafnarnes -
Iceland East Fjords*





Thicket In The Middle Affric



White Wood of Rannoch