

RELATIVES HELP TO PAY TRIBUTE AT CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Jewish artists honoured in Ayr

BY SHARON MAIL

A MAJOR festival showcasing Jewish artists and culture opened at the Maclaurin Gallery, Ayr, on Sunday.

Cultural Connections features the work of 20th Century Jewish artists working in Glasgow, Benno Schotz, Hannah Frank, Josef Herman and Jankel Adler.

It also includes international photo-journalist Judah Passow's contemporary photographic exhibition 'Scots Jews: Identity, Belonging and the Future'.

Cultural Connections, a collaboration between the Maclaurin Gallery, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, the Ben Uri Gallery, Adopt an Intern, Multicultural Homecoming 2014 and South Ayrshire Council, runs until Monday, September 22.

The Scots Jews photographic exhibition ends on Sunday, September 7.

Judah told the 200 guests: "This is an important occasion for me, as it is the first print version of the exhibition to be shown."

"It's an exercise in photo-journalism, telling a compelling story through photographs of how the Scottish Jewish community deals with its complex identity."

"I looked at how people expressed the relationship between their Scottish identity and Jewish culture. For example, in a wedding photo, the traditional culture is represented by the groom wearing a kippa and the tartan is the representation of the culture."

"I asked the question, can you belong without surrendering part of your identity and the answer was a loud 'yes'."

"One of the photos shows the piping in of the haggis on Burns Night in a synagogue in Glasgow — and it's a kosher haggis. It's a quintessential part of Scottish life and yet it's part of a synagogue's annual programme."

"A lot of these photos came about through me living with the people concerned. There's no way they could have happened if they hadn't let me into their lives and if I hadn't had the connection as a fellow Jew. The decisive moments couldn't have occurred without the cultural and emotional connection."

"It was a great privilege to have been given the chance to complete this project and I take great pride in it."

Scots Jews was devised and produced by Glaswegian Michael Mail, who told the *Jewish Telegraph*: "It's a lovely display here and they have presented it very well. It's really good to be part of this wider Scottish Jewish cultural exhibition."

"There had already been a lot of interest in the exhibition here and in the States where it's currently touring. And it will be visiting various venues in Scotland."

The Ben Uri Gallery in London had made the arrangements for the Josef Herman collection to be



GREAT START: At the opening of Cultural Connections: A Festival of Jewish Arts and Culture, from left: Maclaurin Trust chairman John Walker, South Ayrshire councillor Bill Grant, Ben Uri Gallery chairman David Glasser, Fiona Frank, Maclaurin programming curator Dianne Gardner, Chema Crome and Amiel Schotz

shown at the Maclaurin.

Ben Uri chairman Glaswegian David Glasser and Research and Cultural Fellow Sarah MacDougall were present at the opening.

David said: "Each show stands proudly on its own and together the cumulative effect is memorable and a triumph of engagement. I would actually have changed the title to 'Seamlessly at One'."

Also present were the children of sculptor Benno Schotz — son Amiel, who had travelled from Israel, and daughter Chema Crome.

Amiel said: "As you walk around this splendid gallery, you see dedication and innovation in abundance. I'm fully in accord with the theme for this exhibition."

"The influence of Scottish Jewish artists on Scottish art was considerable."

"The artists exhibited here exerted no little influence on their students, clients and the public at large. They never forgot their debt to Scotland as a country that welcomed them all and presented them with an environment in which they could flourish."

"My father took great pride in being known as a Scottish artist, but he never forgot his Jewish identity."

Celebrated artist Hannah Frank's niece Fiona Frank said: "Since my aunt died six years ago, we've been contacted by various galleries. I'm particularly delighted that her work is being exhibited here."

"I'm associated with the Ben Uri Gallery and also work for SCoJeC, which has helped co-ordinate this event."

"And thanks to support from Adopt an Intern, we've had help from five graduate interns who have done the most beautiful job."

The opening was introduced by Maclaurin Trust chairman John Walker. He thanked Sybil Berkley, whose donation of three works by Benno sparked curator Diane Gardner to research the sculptor and come up with the idea for the festival.

South Ayrshire Councillor Bill

Grant expressed his pleasure that the festival was being held in Ayrshire.

There is a full programme of events running throughout the festival, including a conference on 'Jewish Life and Arts in Scotland 1914-2014' on September 14 and 15.

<http://tinyurl.com/k55h26h>



IDENTITY AND CULTURE: Photo-journalist Judah Passow talks about his exhibition. Below, guests look at one of the exhibits **MORE PICTURES ONLINE**



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