

Ian

From: Joyce Gunn Cairns [joycegunn@cairns01.fsnet.co.uk]
Sent: 11 September 2004 14:38
To: info
Subject: LOOK AHEAD !!![Scanned]

Dear Mr Boyle

It's difficult to "think radically and look ahead" when one has to spend most of one's energy cooking up ways to merely subsist!

You could call me a fairly "successful" artist. I have three works on show, currently, in the SNPG, have had an exhibition this year in the Talbot Rice Gallery (Drawing David Daiches), have an exhibition touring in the Highlands about to show in Edinburgh and Paris (curated by the SNPG and Highland Council), have an exhibition in the Writers Museum next spring (to coincide, hopefully!, with the City of Literature Award), and have just been awarded an MBE last June! And what is my weekly income. It is £50. And that is no exaggeration!!! If I do not sell work at my Openings in October (Edinburgh and Paris) I assure you I will feel suicidal, and that is no exaggeration either. What about just giving artists a living wage. Why is it, why, that artists are "despised" insofar as complete lack of remuneration is a form of contempt. You may have another name for it?! My hunch is that it is because artists of my calibre are, implicitly or explicitly, seeking to challenge social values which judge a man/woman by his market value. That's simplistic, I know, but there's some truth in it.

I'm about to write to Ian Rankin in the hope that he will agree to let me draw him. He earns a lot of money. I don't grudge him that. A few artists and writers are in this category. The majority - and not necessarily less able - are not, and have to subsist by begging, borrowing and stealing. If we did not have to focus every day of the week, every week of the year, on just subsisting, then it would be easier I assure you to "take the citizen's perspective". You try it on a certain income of £50 per week! All we ask is subsistence income, which could surely be gauged against a CV which would be evidence of responsible and committed application of our vocation as artists. I could survive comfortably on, say, £150 - £200 a week. Very comfortably.

Best regards, Joyce Gunn-Cairns MBE