

# Out & About

## Putting Papay in the spotlight

LEAH SEATOR

The second Papay Gyro Nights Art Festival is about to begin in Papa Westray, taking place from February 6 to 13.

Featuring examples of video, art and music, from all over the world, the festival is expected to draw an international audience, putting Papay in the spotlight.

The festival is a contemporary art festival, which is deliberately positioned in the unique and remote setting of Papay, and in the time of "extreme winter weather conditions."

The idea of the festival originated from the ancient Papay tradition of the Night of the Gyros which, until the beginning of the 20th century, was celebrated on the island on the first full moon of February.

The event is a reflection on folk tale, the island's landscape and heritage and an interpretation of tradition and ritual through new developments in art, music and architecture.

Organisers, Ivanov and Tsz Man Chan who live together on Papay said: "The festival is a research lab, and the place for a discussion about interaction between new media and ideas in relation to tradition and ritual."

"During the festival, the island will be transformed into an art space, and artworks will be screened and exhibited in old farm buildings, boat house, workshops, ruins and open landscape."

Critics have taken a wide interest in the event, *The List* magazine describing it as "a visual art festival to sort the men from the boys."

Ivanov said: "Gyros inhabited our landscape for 1,000s of years, and nobody knows since when the Gyro Nights celebrations were taking place in Papay — we just know when the tradition ceased — in 1914, as officially recorded."

"Now we can say: the Gyro Nights are back in Papay! Back,

with some changes — we are not going to chase bairns in the night and to 'weep them with a tangle under the full moon's light,' but we'll keep the sense of extremity, and will smash long dark Orcadian nights, with beams of video projectors."

Like last year, the festival will be started with the torch-lit procession and a bonfire, keeping the festival akin with its roots.

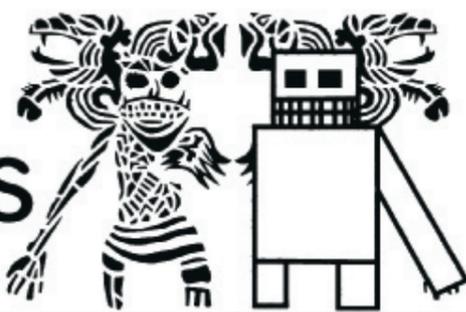
Tsz Man added: "This is to get a good feeling of the roots of the festival and to experience the place like it was 100 years ago, and to take a leap from the real fire, moonlight and Merry Dancers (if we're lucky), to the light of film and video projectors; to the new experimental works of art which are rooted and inspired by ancient traditions, rituals and landscape and searching for the language: not only to take it all into the future, but what is more important to make it very present, very actual, belonging to this very moment."

Over 30 artists, from Japan, Iceland, Denmark, France, Faroe, Germany, Mexico, Switzerland, China, Norway, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Finland, USA and UK are taking part in the festival.

"If, a few months ago, most of them could not point to Orkney on the map, now all of them know exactly where Papa Westray is and that it's locally known as Papay," said the couple.

This year's festival programme

PAPAY  
GYRO  
NIGHTS  
2012



Ordos Museum, Inner Mongolia, China, by MAD Architects who will feature in the architecture section at the Papay Gyro Nights Festival.

includes feature films, short experimental films and video art, live music, storytelling, painting and architecture.

For the first time, new sections — Papay artists in residency, documentaries and a book launch — have been incorporated into the programme.

The couple added: "It's a programme the island of Manhattan would die for! But the most amazing thing is, it's happening in remote Papay, with a fluctuating population of around 70."

"Sometimes we're questioned:

how many visitors are you expecting?"

"Around 100 maybe? The number is maybe not so impressive in the festivals' circuit, but think of an impressive quality: its the entire population of Papa Westray, and brave visitors who venture across the sea to come to Papay in February, when one can't even see the island in the dark, but can feel it well, and experience art as in no other place."

"Who knows, maybe some selkie folk from Papay Holm and a few Gyros will come

along too, attracted by new sounds and images projected in the dark."

"The festival is new, but we're getting a very good reception in Papay, in Orkney and beyond. From art professionals and well-established art festivals, we're receiving a very good response regarding the quality of the programme and curatorial concept: the way in which the festival is connecting new experimental artworks with an ancient place and its folklore and heritage."

"Later this year, the selection of Papay Gyro Nights 2011 will be presented at an experimental video festival in Iceland, and more collaboration and screening opportunities are coming," they added.

"We're very proud to have the Orkney Storytelling Festival and NOVA as our partners, and we're happy to see an increasing support for

the festival, especially in Orkney. We'd like to say thank you to the Pier Arts Centre for the help with equipment, and Littlejohn Removals for the great professional logistics assistance."

"A very special thank-you to all on Papay — without the support of our own people, it would not be possible."

"We're grateful for help which is coming from every individual Papay household, and Papay Community Council, Development Trust, Co-op and Community Association."

"We have only a limited amount of self-catering accommodation in Papay but, during the festival, hot meals and extra rooms would be available for our visitors."

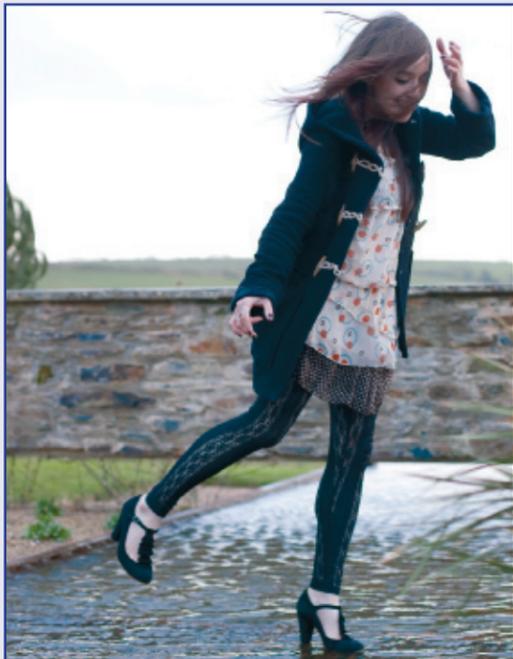
"The festival's programme is challenging and we especially appreciate the reception and response it has at home, in Orkney and Papay."

"We're looking forward to the results of the Knap O' Howar Art Prize 2012: an art prize by Papay people."

"We'd like to say thank you to our sponsors: this year, part of the festival is sponsored by the French Institute in Scotland and Danish Cultural Institute, which both recognised a high artistic value of Papay Gyro Nights."

For more information and updates, and a full programme list, log on to [www.papaygyronights.papawestray.org](http://www.papaygyronights.papawestray.org).

## Grand final for Dounby musician



Catriona Price.

The Grand Final of the BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician 2012 competition will be held this Sunday, February 5, at Celtic Connections in Glasgow.

Orkney violinist, Catriona Price from Dounby, is following in the footsteps of last year's winner, Kristan Harvey from Birsay, competing in the final line-up of six.

Catriona is a fiddle player, singer and composer, and most recently made the headlines when she appeared as a musician on popular ITV talent show, *The X-Factor*.

Her roots are in both traditional and classical music, and she was a member of Hadrigan, under the guidance of Douglas Montgomery.

She is currently studying for a Masters degree at the Royal Academy of Music, and is one half of popular harp/fiddle duo, Twelfth Day.

As a finalist of the prestigious competition, Catriona will perform pieces of her choice for 15 minutes in a concert setting, in Glasgow City Halls.

The winner will be announced on the night, and will be awarded a recording session with BBC Scotland, a performance at the Scots Trad Music Awards, one year's membership of the Musicians' Union and a springboard on to the thriving Scottish music scene.

All finalists get one year's membership of TMSA plus the opportunity to take part in the TMSA's annual Young Trad Tour.

Catriona previously made it to the semi-finals of the competition in 2004, and has said she is delighted to get as far as the finals this year.



Filippos Tsitsopoulos' *The Madrigal of the Explosion of the Wise Whale 2010*. This exhibit is a video monologue, described as video theatre installation.

**BBC RADIO ORKNEY**  
93.7FM

Weeknights at 6.10pm

Thursday, February 2 —  
*Gansies for Goalposts.*

Friday, February 3 — *The Request Programme.*

Monday, February 6 —  
*The Bruck Programme.*

Tuesday, February 7 —  
*Tuesday Folk.*

Wednesday, February 8 —  
*Whassigo.*

And Monday to Friday, at 7.30am: *Around Orkney* — 30 minutes of news from around the county.



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