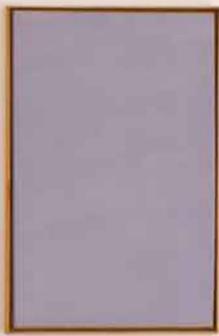
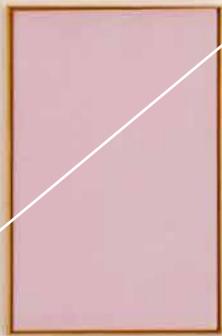


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# Visual Arts

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## Visual Arts

At the heart of Scotland's reputation for excellence and experimentation are the artists who live and work here. Qualities of experimentation, imagination and vigour have characterised the work of Scotland's artists since the founding of the first art school in 1760.

An independent spirit and connectivity to the wider world has led artists to make work informed by the local and inspired by the global. Successive generations have built on past achievements, bringing their own distinctive, and often challenging, contribution to the fore.

Artists and institutions have earned the respect of peers nationally and internationally and the country, and Glasgow in particular, is viewed as a centre of excellence in and for the visual arts.

Many artists have trained to degree level (and beyond) and the quality of Scotland's art schools has been critical in encouraging students to take risks and explore new forms and ideas. A strong grass-roots and DIY spirit has contributed significantly to the growth of the art form.

Artist-led initiatives and collectives have enabled successive communities of artists to self-organise and to assert a high degree of autonomy in the production and presentation of their work. Historically, this activity has been prevalent in the larger cities, but more recent initiatives are emerging in other parts of the country. Models and ways of working that respond to local context ensure relevance, diversity and sustainability.

Artists have the ability to engage and inspire us, testing out new ways of thinking and challenging us to see the world through different eyes. Traditional forms of painting, sculpture, printmaking and photography continue to be strongly represented and artists demonstrate a strong appetite for new forms including sound, text, installation, animation, film, digital and

moving image. As the field of practice expands, new demands are placed on existing facilities. There is a need to ensure a balance of resources so that it is possible to make work of quality in any media.

Artists consistently demonstrate enterprise and resilience in sustaining their practice and benefit significantly from properly resourced opportunities to support the ongoing research, development, production and promotion of their work. These opportunities are often made possible through the growing network of public and private galleries, workshops, collectives, studios and residencies Scotland enjoys. In recent years this network has grown in reach, ambition and achievement. And while there is a concentration of resources in some cities more recent developments have emerged from and taken root in places much further afield.

Success has possibly masked the fact that many organisations have limited capacity to fully achieve their ambitions to maintain and develop the quality of their work. The visual arts sector would benefit from coming together to share knowledge and ideas to identify what is required to achieve a more sustainable and resilient future. Building on the strengths of the present there is a clear need to encourage fresh perspectives for the future.

The profile of contemporary art in Scotland is higher than at any other time assisted by the success of artists in achieving major awards. Add to this the growth of Scotland and Venice, the GI and Edinburgh Art Festivals, the impact of Artists' Rooms and the Travelling Gallery, and an embedded approach to audience development in galleries and arts centres across the country.

However, too many people still feel intimidated by the idea of contemporary art and many face specific barriers to involvement. There are some good examples of inclusive practice and public engagement to build on, but more work needs to be done to broaden participation and deepen engagement. It would be invigorating to see a new generation of diverse artists and audiences inspired through learning from Generation and the work being developed to engage young people more effectively.

We look forward to working with the sector to build on their achievements and to secure Scotland's position as a significant international centre for the visual arts. We aspire to build a healthy infrastructure for the production and presentation of work, where artists are professionally rewarded and the public take pride in their work.

## Opportunities for the Visual Arts and how it can contribute to *Unlocking Potential, Embracing Ambition*

**Excellence and experimentation across the arts, screen and creative industries is recognised and valued**

Artists at every stage in their career have well-resourced opportunities to research, develop, produce and promote their work.

Support is given to push the boundaries of practice and ensure that artists have the space and time to experiment and test ideas that may not have an immediate financial benefit.

Professional networks to develop knowledge, skills, and experience are established to provide opportunities for the continued sharing of ideas, expertise, and collaborative working.

Artists have access to world-class facilities for the production of their work that take into account the changing needs of their practice, and effective support across different forms and media.

Galleries are encouraged to present new work that extends the imagination and perspectives of audiences and provide a context for art work to engage with the widest possible publics.

**Everyone can access and enjoy artistic and creative experiences**

A broader range of organisations is enabled to consolidate their work and build new ways to develop new audiences for contemporary art, building on the work of some publicly funded organisations to embed education and outreach work in their programmes and develop clear and targeted audience, access and participation plans.

Organisations build on achievements in growing attendances and high quality visitor experiences through more connected approaches to joint working, and more effective sharing of knowledge and ideas.

More effective networking is put in place to strengthen the sector's approach to public engagement.

The development of clear links between primary, secondary and higher education are supported through the encouragement of stronger partnerships between the art colleges and the professional infrastructure so that graduates are best prepared to pursue their careers.

High profile initiatives such as the Edinburgh Art Festival, British Art Show, GI Festival, Scotland and Venice and GENERATION build the public profile of contemporary art through increased national and international press and media coverage.

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**Places and quality of life are transformed through imagination, ambition and understanding of the potential of creativity**

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Visual artists continue to enhance our buildings to support the regeneration of towns and bring fresh perspectives into landscapes building on the long history of public art in Scotland.

Artists work within communities to imagine new futures and possibilities. Socially engaged practices enable artists to generate new ways of working within, and for, communities.

Models of working respond to local contexts and enable artists across the country to achieve their ambitions without always needing to relocate.

Places that offer a range of facilities and resources that can easily support an intensity of collaboration and critical discourse are supported to work collectively to ensure best use of resources. Connections into larger population centres and artists' communities are encouraged and promoted to provide opportunities for peer learning, collaboration, and networking.

A lively dynamic for the development of practice that supports artists' mobility and that opens up new opportunities and contexts for the development of work is encouraged. In areas where there is no permanent gallery or venue, models of residency and socially engaged practice are particularly relevant.

Building public engagement and participation in all parts of Scotland requires strong, local infrastructures and touring models. Partnership working between and across venues is used to support models of co-production and sharing of knowledge – and ideas across the sector help extend opportunities for learning and collaboration.

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**Ideas are brought  
to life by a diverse,  
skilled and connected  
leadership and  
workforce**

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Professional development opportunities are available to ensure visual artists have access to informed and intelligent curators, gallerists, producers, directors, and technicians.

Leadership development and succession planning is in place to address diversity and support career progression, Continued support to travel in Scotland and further afield to keep informed of recent and new developments in practice ensures that excellence and experimentation can be achieved.

Key partnerships are strengthened to develop a clear, sector-led vision that will identify future development priorities and opportunities.

Artist-led initiatives and workspaces provide peer learning and mentoring and enable early career artists to work alongside more established artists resulting in greater collaboration and mutual support.

Better terms and conditions are applied into the visual arts to ensure that artists are professionally rewarded and respected for the work they do, in recognition of the fact that artists are often expected to take on quite complex roles within different settings or are commissioned to produce significant work for the public realm.

Creative industries opportunities are explored that could benefit some artists and arts organisations.

Opportunities to develop sales both nationally and internationally are nurtured.

A sector review is put in place in order to devise a sector-led vision for the visual arts in Scotland.

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**Scotland is a  
distinctive creative  
nation connected  
to the world**

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Scotland is positioned within the growing international market for sales building on its significant international reputation for the strength and diversity of work being made and presented here.

Opportunities to develop practice that is shaped by, and reflect, the wider international discourse in contemporary art continue to be supported.

Commercial galleries continue to successfully promote sales and develop new markets abroad. Galleries and workspaces continue to be involved in the co-production of exhibitions with international partners bringing international artists into their studios and exchange programmes.

Initiatives such as GI and Edinburgh Art Festival continue to attract international audiences to the country and showcases such as Scotland and Venice continue to strengthen the profile of work to encourage new partnerships and collaborations.



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Waverley Gate  
2-4 Waterloo Place  
Edinburgh EH1 3EG  
Scotland UK  
F +44 (0) 131 523 0001

249 West George Street  
Glasgow G2 4QE  
Scotland UK  
F +44 (0) 141 302 1711

Reception +44 (0) 330 333 2000  
Enquiries +44 (0) 845 603 6000  
[enquiries@creativescotland.com](mailto:enquiries@creativescotland.com)

[www.creativescotland.com](http://www.creativescotland.com)

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Photo: Courtesy of the Artist Kendall Koppe.