

What we learned about Visual Arts in Scotland

part of:

Mapping the
Visual Arts
in Scotland

SCOTTISH
CONTEMPORARY
ART
NETWORK



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

With thanks to:
Scottish Artists Union,
engage, Wasps

Introduction

This digest provides a summary of key findings from the two Mapping the Visual Arts in Scotland surveys undertaken by SCAN in 2015. SCAN was commissioned by Creative Scotland to undertake this mapping research as part of Creative Scotland's wider Visual Arts Sector Review. The digest draws findings from two reports compiled by researcher Rachel Blanche, a survey of individuals and a survey of organisations operating in the visual arts sector in Scotland.

The two surveys, one targeted towards individuals and the other towards organisations, provided a wealth of knowledge directly from those working in the visual arts sector. The surveys covered topics such as: demographics, artistic practice, working patterns, individual's income and expenditure, audience engagement, career paths, networks, perceptions and aspirations. For organisations the survey mapped similar topics, as well as staffing, operations and public funding. The questions in each survey were a mix of quantitative and qualitative – with respondents being given ample opportunity to leave further comments in all sections which were fed back to the research teams.

The individuals survey garnered a huge response of 680 returns and in addition 87 organisations completed the organisational survey. Although the number of organisational respondents is lower we feel it is still representative of the range of organisations working in the visual arts sector in Scotland (of those who identified their organisation; 17 are Creative Scotland Regularly Funded Organisations). We also know that a significant number of people who hold permanent

roles in organisations chose to complete the individuals survey, but left qualitative comments relating to their organisational contexts. The survey respondents include individual artists, directors and CEOs of Scottish institutions, institutional and self-employed workers in the visual arts.

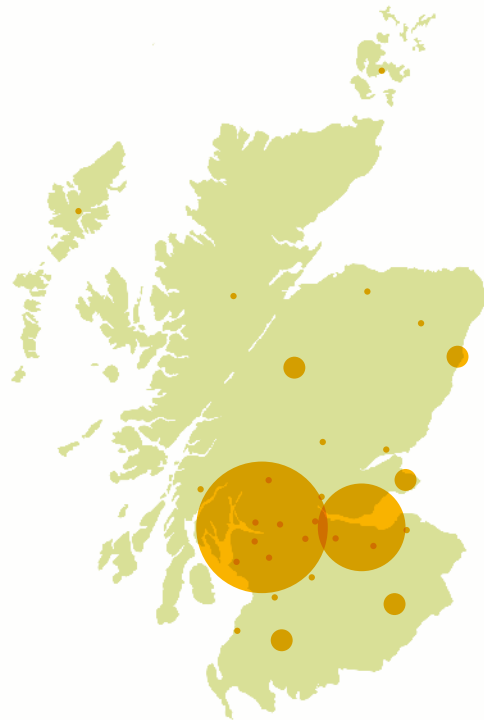
All written answers to open ended text questions have been read and analysed and will inform both the Creative Scotland Visual Arts Review and SCAN's ongoing development activity.

As part of the Mapping the Visual Arts project SCAN has also developed an online digital map of visual arts organisations in Scotland, identified in the survey and through further research. We have also created a visual representation of where artists and individuals are based for the digest below.

A snapshot of respondents

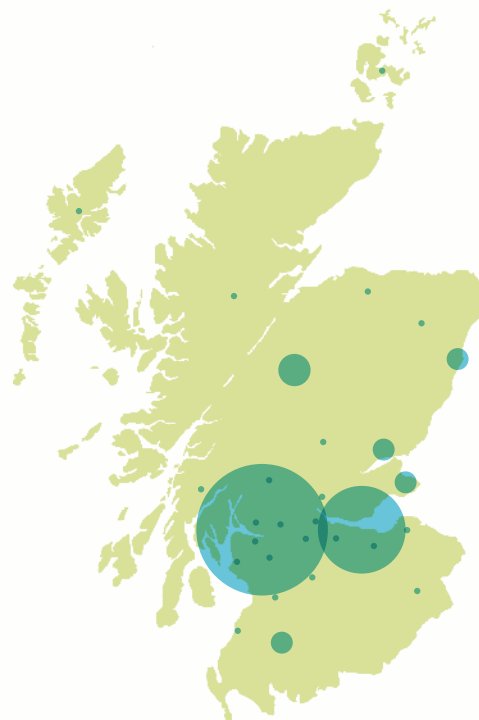
Artists and the wider workforce live throughout Scotland but are more likely to reside in the central belt

- Half of respondents live in Glasgow (30%) or Edinburgh (20%)
- The next highest responses were Highlands, Dumfries and Galloway, Fife, the Scottish Borders and Aberdeenshire (each had between 4-5% of respondents).



Organisations are spread across the country with the majority based in the central belt

- Glasgow (29%) and Edinburgh (19%)
- The next highest identified were Highland (8%) and then Aberdeen, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee and Fife (all 5%).



People who work within the visual arts are highly qualified

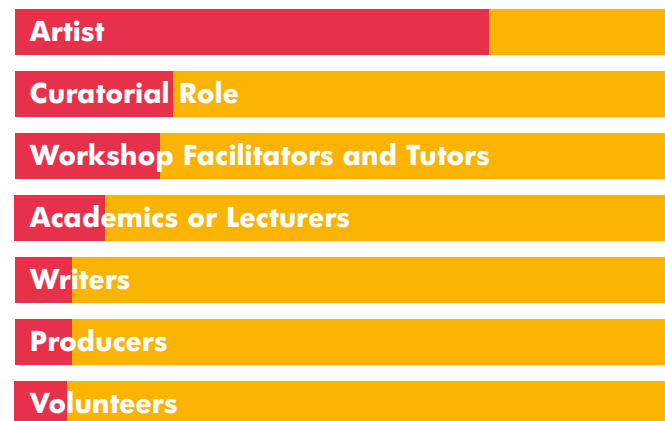
- Over 60% have an undergraduate degree in Fine Art or Design and 39% had a postgraduate qualification, including 31% with a Masters in Fine Art or Design. Only 5% of respondents reported having no formal training.



A snapshot of respondents

A majority of respondents to the survey hold multiple roles in the sector

- 72% of all respondents identified as an artist
- 24% of all respondents undertake a Curatorial Role
- 22% work as Workshop Facilitators or Tutors
- 19% are Academics or Lecturers
- 12% are Writers
- 12% are Producers
- And 11% have a role as a Volunteer



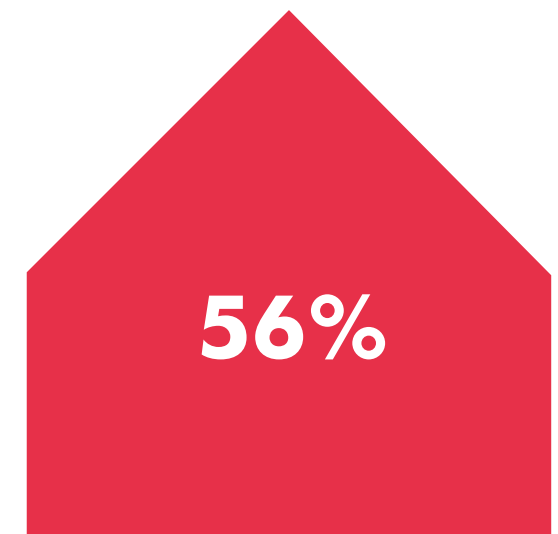
The majority of organisations are small in scale with small numbers of staff

- The majority (84%) report income of less than £425,000, with 58% reporting an income of £200,000 or less
- The majority of respondents report less than 10 members of staff and approximately one third have three or fewer
- Only 57% of staff are on permanent contracts
- 40 of the 87 responding organisations indicated they have a venue; 15 own these premises and 25 rent from a local authority or cultural trust, private or Government landlord.



More than half of individuals work from home

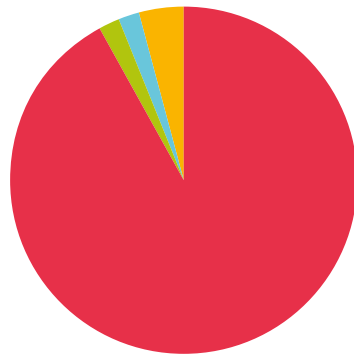
- Of those who need a designated studio or workspace for their work 56% work from home. A further 12% of all respondents also make their work in situ
- 61% stated that they paid for studio space or premises
- Individuals accessing studio space mainly do so in the central belt. 60% of those with external studio space were based in Edinburgh (19%) or Glasgow (41%).



About equality, diversity and inclusion

92% of respondents identified as being white

- 92% White
- 2% BAME
- 2% Other
- 4% Prefer not to say



Our responses suggest more women than men working in the visual arts*

- Male 29.4%
- Female 68.3%
- 2.4% preferring not to state gender

*This represents a bigger contrast to the UK visual arts workforce as a whole where females only represent 54% with males making up 46%. Source: Creative & Cultural Skills, Visual Arts Statistics 2012-13.

Although women outnumber men in the sector, men earn more money

- Across all employment types men working in the visual arts earn 45% more (total median earnings) than their female counterparts
- For those who spent more than 35 hours on their visual arts work females were on average earning 56% less than men from their visual arts work.



3% of survey respondents were in receipt of disability living allowance.

Visual Arts UK statistics report that 20% of the UK wide workforce identifies as disabled. In Scotland 58% of responding organisations offer full disabled access, 37% have partial disabled access and 5% currently provide no disabled access at all.

High numbers of organisations have equalities and environmental policies

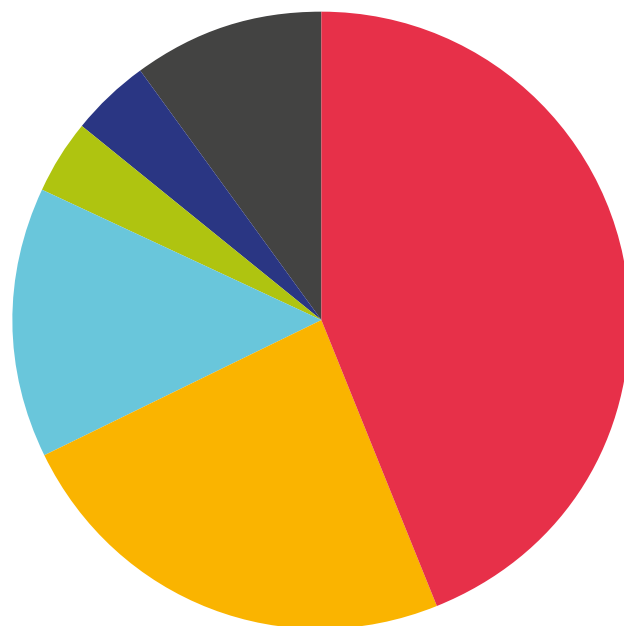
- 94% of respondents to this question had an existing Equalities, diversity and inclusion policy
- 61% had a sustainability policy
- 33% had an audience development policy.



About what we do

The creative programme is the largest budget commitment for organisations

- Artistic and creative programme 44% of expenses
- Administration (24%)
- Building costs (14%)
- 4% for Learning and Education
- 4% for Marketing and Communications
- 10% other



Individuals also invest financially in their practice

Respondents were asked about their operating costs and expenses, including materials, premises, etc. A total of 42% of respondents spend £1,000-£5,000 each year as part of their work or practice. Almost a fifth (19%) pay out between £5,000 and £10,000 annually. These sums reduce net income from already low earnings across the sector.

Organisations indicated they worked with or supported around 168 artists per year

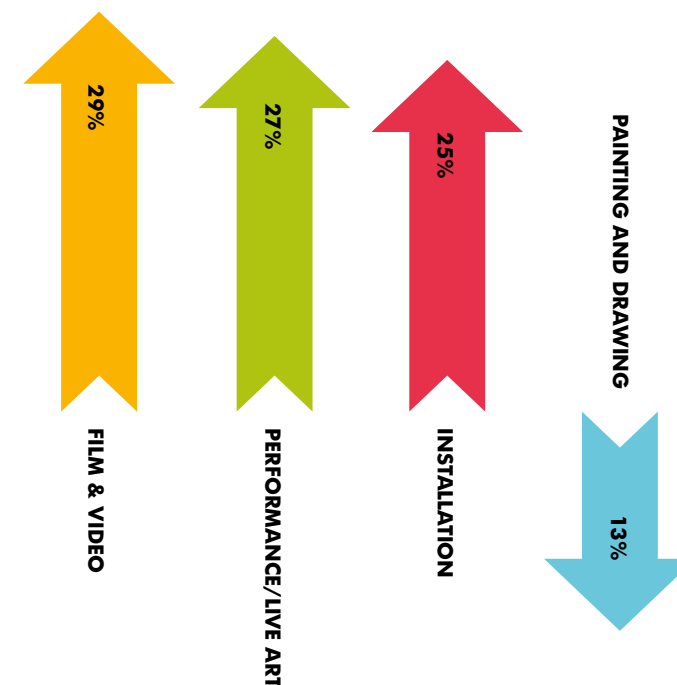
Organisations support artists in a variety of ways, including:

- learning and engagement activities (working with on average 70 artists per year)
- exhibitions (44)
- other in kind support (43)
- performances and events (27)
- residencies (11)
- new commissions (8)

Artistic practice is diversifying

Comparing historic existing data* on artform specialism on the visual arts in Scotland there has been a clear diversification in artistic practice.

*2003 *Making Their Mark* report.



About working conditions and pay

The visual arts community is highly qualified but personal income levels are low

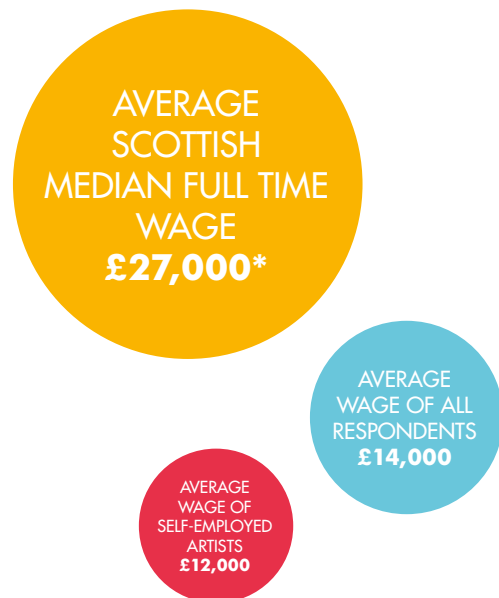
- The average (median) income (from all sources) for all respondents was £14,000 which is well below the national average of £27,000*
- 86% of organisations reported that they pay staff and artists the living wage and/or union rates, with just over half of the remainder having no paid staff at all.

Earnings from visual art work alone are similarly low

- 63% of self-employed respondents work up to or more than 35 hours per week in the visual arts
- 55% of self-employed respondents earn less than £10,000 from their visual arts work with 31% earning less than £5,000 in their best year. Reported earnings are even lower in leanest years.

45% of respondents estimate that over half the work they do is unpaid or voluntary

The nature of unpaid work reported by all individuals centres on visual arts practice (73%), although other significant activities include independent advisory and consultancy (29%), independent curatorial projects (27%), art writing and blogging (27%) and work in artist led committees (24%).



*Scottish Parliament, 2015

About working conditions and pay

Organisations are supported by high numbers of volunteers and the majority of workplace opportunities are unpaid

- Data provided by 45 organisations shows that the hours contributed by volunteers averages 1,102 hours each per year, an average contribution per volunteer of over 30 hours per annum
- Nearly half (41) of organisations offered placement, apprenticeship or internship opportunities. Of these, over two-thirds were offered on an unpaid basis.

The visual arts sector is supported by freelance practitioners and part-time workers

- 61% of respondents said they were self employed
- 31% of respondents have either a permanent or fixed-term employed position in the sector
- More than one third of all reported permanent posts were part time
- The vast majority of contractual staff reported were part-time.

Professional Development is not guaranteed in employment and usually self funded

- Over half of organisations (53%) do not have a Continuous Professional Development plan in place
- Respondents report that the majority of professional development opportunities are self-funded.



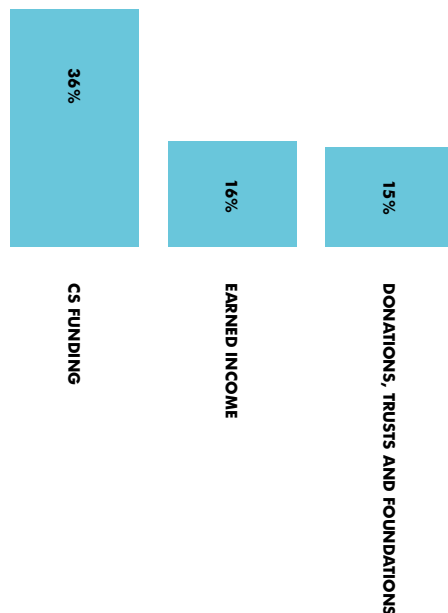
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About income sources

Public funding is an essential part of organisations' income

- On average, 62% of organisations' income derives from public funding. There is a broad spread of income levels and sources
- Earned income constitutes 16% of income
- Creative Scotland funding is on average 36% of income although it is higher for 'publicly funded galleries'
- Together, grants from trusts and foundations and donations, gifts and legacies account for less than 15% of income.



Salaried work is the most important source of income for individuals

Respondents individually ranked the sources of income they relied upon which showed that salaried work came out top, followed by sale of artworks/royalties, fees, grants, workshops, consulting and commissions.

Nearly half of all artists have to supplement their visual arts income with outside sources

Many artists rely on sources of income outside their art practice or wider visual arts work. 42% of respondents are also working outside the visual arts, of which a third are working four days or more. 41% of respondents stated that their visual arts earnings were less than half of their total income.



40% of individual practitioners have not applied for public funding in the last five years

- However 34% have made up to five applications in the last five years
- 19% have only applied once in this period
- A small minority report making regular applications
- Public funding was considered most valuable for producing work (61%) compared with research (49%) or exhibitions of work (45%).

Individuals are not reliant on welfare support

The majority (72%) stated that they received none of the standard welfare benefits listed in the survey; of those who did receive benefits the most common were working or child tax credits (up to 15%), and housing benefit (4%). Around 3% of the respondents receive Disability Living Allowance (or equivalent).

About exhibition, distribution and audiences

Exhibitions are still the key distribution channel for artists, but online is significant

Exhibitions and gallery talks emerge as the most important distribution channel with two-thirds of individuals stating it was a main distribution channel; online platforms were ranked second, with 45% using these.

When asked about the most effective ways of engaging the public 83% of respondents saw exhibitions as effective, online was ranked second with 59%.

Respondents considered their own websites the most effective online platforms, followed by Facebook profiles, with other platforms used including Twitter, Instagram and blogs.



Visual arts organisations reported over 1.5million attendances

Organisations reported a wide variety and range of public facing events with high numbers of participants.

However, of the 53 organisations that responded to the question, only one third have a formal plan for creative learning, education or public engagement and a staff member dedicated to this area. Reporting organisations spend on average just 4% on marketing/communications and 4% on education and learning.

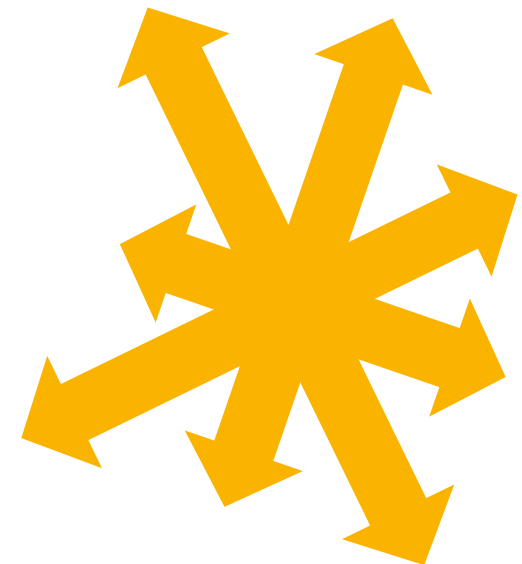
Peer review is very important

When asked to indicate any priority or specific audiences besides the general public for their work, Peers/Other Artists/Arts Professionals were ranked highest. Local or geographic communities were next highly ranked followed by international audiences then buyers and collectors.

Individuals work in and value a variety of settings and contexts

44% of individual respondents stated that they worked within artist-led spaces, 49% with publicly funded galleries. Next highest were Arts & Heritage Organisations (38%) then Commercial Galleries (30%).

Notably artists, curators, gallerists, producers, directors, workshop facilitators and learning specialists all ranked artist led spaces and publicly funded galleries number one and two in importance in developing their work.



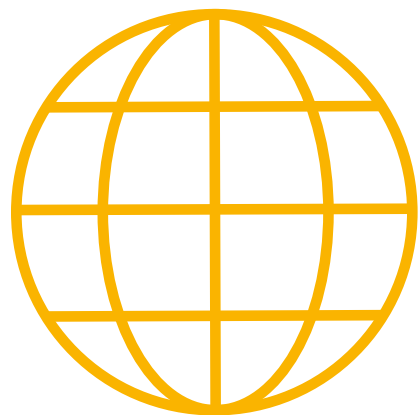
About connections and networks

The visual arts sector is active internationally

82% of organisations indicated that international work is important, and the type of work they engage in includes:

- One-off curated exhibitions (65%)
- Conferences and seminars (57%)
- Co-commissioned international projects (38%)
- Touring Exhibitions (19%)
- International Art Fairs (11%)

Scotland's visual artists work both nationally and internationally; 30% of respondents said their work had an international reach (a further 25% described having a UK-wide reach).



Peer to peer connections are important

Artists rate other artists as their most important connections closely followed by curators, gallerists and academics. Curators rate artists as their most important connections, closely followed by other curators, producers then gallerists.

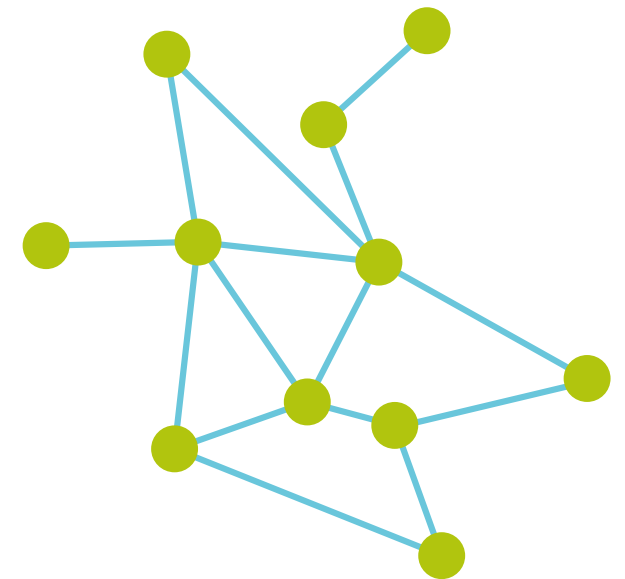
Staying connected

Individuals and organisations were asked about the most effective means for finding out what is happening in the sector and sharing good practice. The most commonly cited by both groups were:

- Online
- Informal peer to peer communication
- Attending gallery events programmes and private views
- Conferences and seminars
- Networks & membership organisations

Collaborative working is valued

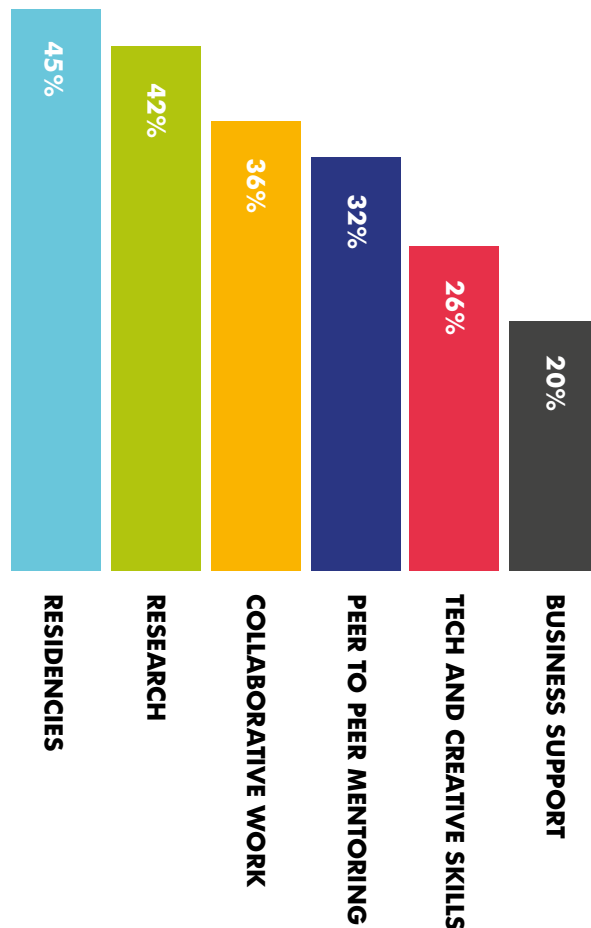
- 56% of individuals stated that partnership working was very or extremely important while only 17% stated that it is of limited or no importance to their work
- The majority of organisations felt that partnership or collaborative work is extremely or very important (39% and 23% of respondents respectively) to their work
- However funding, time and staff capacity and skills were listed as barriers to more effective organisational collaboration.



About development needs in the sector

Individuals need space and time out to develop their practice and projects

Respondents were asked to identify what type of professional development would be most useful at the present point in their career:



Only 30% of visual arts organisations see sales development as a priority for publicly funded support.

Organisations want funded support for:

- Exhibition making or curatorial projects (71%)
- Outreach, participatory or education and learning projects (71%)
- Research and development (67% of the sample)
- Training or development for staff (59%)
- More residency programmes (59%)
- International projects (57%)
- Promotion and marketing (57%)

Research and Residencies were also the top professional development activities ranked as having been very or extremely beneficial to individuals practice in the past.

- Research scored very beneficial or extremely beneficial 83% of the time
- Residencies (81%)
- Collaborative work (77%)
- Peer to Peer Mentoring (74%)
- Skills Sharing (71%)



About development needs in the sector

Scotland is considered a good place to work in the visual arts but there are clear development needs.

When asked about what aspects of the visual arts could work more effectively nearly 350 responses were received from individuals and organisations. For individual respondents the top three cited areas for development were funding (accessibility/limited range/transparency), fair pay and finally supporting activity and practice outwith of the central belt.

For organisations funding (protection from cuts, increased levels to support growth, better sector wide strategy, regional challenges) and advocacy were by far the top cited topics followed by support for marketing/pr and audience development.

'There is clearly a demand for funding for projects that Creative Scotland can't fulfill – more transparency from CS would be positive and create a better relationship with artists and the organisation.'

'There needs to be a better funding system to identify priority areas and identify critical projects for artists careers and curatorial projects that have both a public role and impact in the sector.'

'Equality of pay for cultural workers at all stages of their careers... An end to unpaid internships and implementation of at least the living wage in exchange for any labour. More clarity and guidelines on artist fees.'

'I live in a particular 'black spot' when it comes to funding through the national agencies and there is no longer support from the local authority within my area.'

'Opportunities for rural artists, of all ages, to have routes in to a city presence, or much more funding support and expertise delivered to under developed rural communities. Or More connections between remote communities/arts organisations and those in the central belt.'

'Greater strategy from funders for non-regularly funded orgs.'

'Guarantee to, at minimum, maintain current levels of public funding for the visual arts in Scotland.'

'Increased advocacy around benefit/impact of visual art across all sectors, more media coverage/presence in the media.'

'Clear communication across the sector, with a recognition of visual arts in the cultural sector on a par with theatre, music and film.'

About development needs in the sector

When asked to highlight particularly positive or supportive aspects of the visual arts in Scotland nearly 350 comments were received from individuals and organisations.

For individual respondents most comments referenced supportive peer networks (artist to artist, through organisations or grass roots collectives). This was followed by funding (supportive funders), strength of artist led activity, artistic quality and direct support to artists from organisations and production facilities.

The top positive aspects cited by organisations were the strong and supportive network of organisations across the country and the range and excellence of the artistic community.

'Wealth of good artists and passionately committed professionals working with them. Relatively good government support in relation to rest of UK.'

'...the people working within the sector, my peers, fabrication facilities, international practices on your doorstep and inspiring and pioneering art.'

'There is a small and generous, collaborative arts community in Scotland and I feel like I really have a context here and a community to contribute to.'

'I cannot state emphatically enough that without this kind of support from Creative Scotland (Artist Bursary/Open Project) I would not be able to make work. There is no way I would have reached the level I am at now.'

'There is a big movement just now in Scotland with lots of collectives and start up organisations forming.'

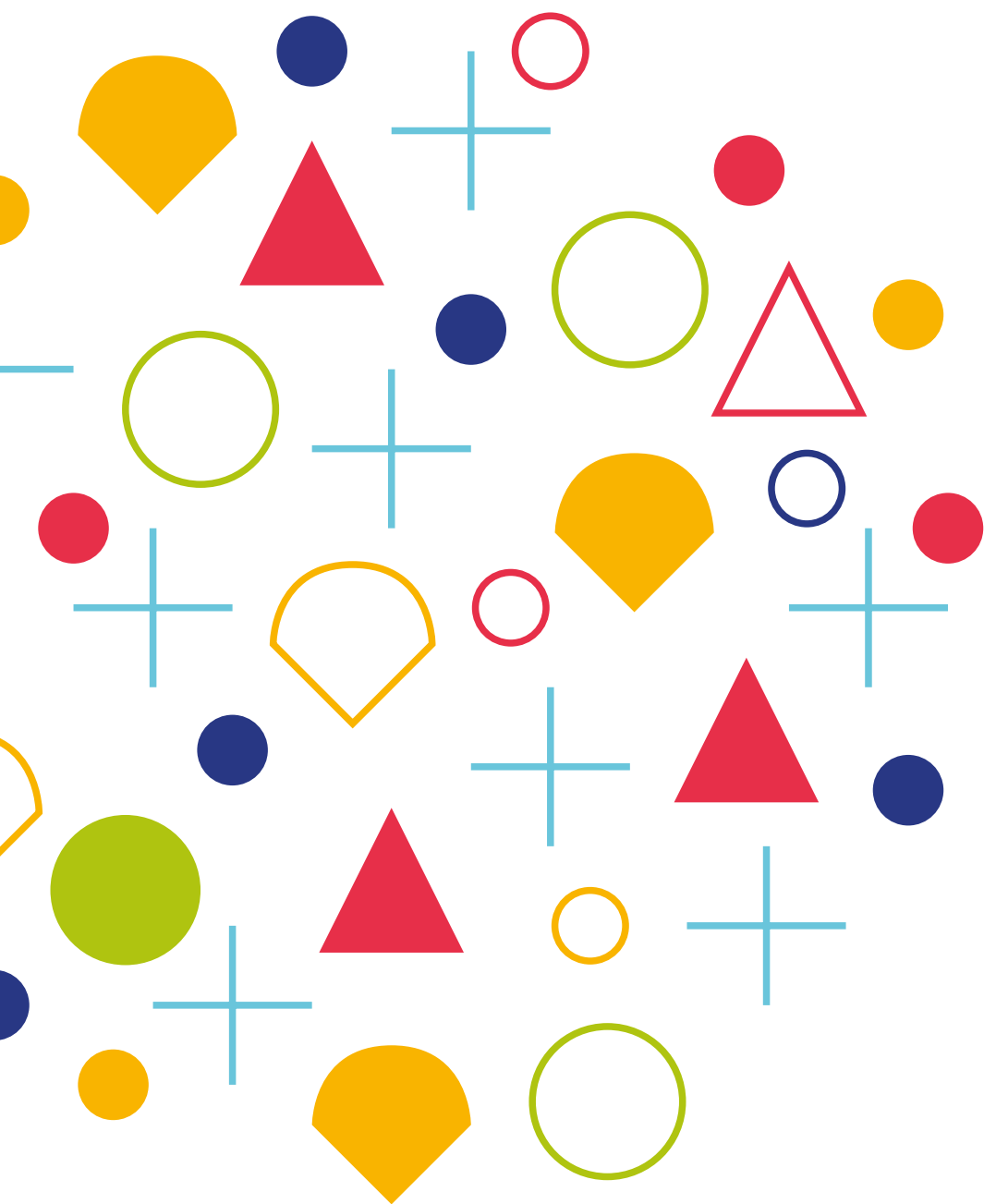
'...quality of our practitioners and the way in which they continue valiantly to try and make opportunities for themselves and others, often putting their peers before themselves.'

'The network of visual arts across Scotland is inclusive and supportive. Whilst there is competition for funds and organisational support, there is also a strong peer to peer community.'

'The community and audience in Scotland is incredibly supportive meaning that you can carry out activity and people will have interest.'

'I think that the sector is generally very networked and supportive as well as having an international outlook and profile.'

'...it is a very supportive community in general both at a personal and organisational level. It is well understood and supported by the main public funders and there is a very robust and sophisticated visual arts infrastructure in place.'



FOOTNOTE:

Some of the headline findings reported above also pull from secondary analysis of the raw data.

Both surveys were designed to allow respondents to skip questions which they did not feel were relevant, or they were not comfortable completing. The full reports clearly state the number of respondents to any given question and any headline findings in this digest can be cross referenced against that report for further detail.

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