

**an open letter to Creative Scotland from Scottish Contemporary Art Network  
17 August 2012**

It is not just theatre which has commented on Creative Scotland's commitment to its sector. While the visual arts believe Creative Scotland is committed to identifying, supporting and developing quality and excellence in the arts and culture (Corporate Plan 2011-2014), we are deeply concerned that the tactics rolled out through the outcome of the review of Flexibly-funded organisations risk achieving the opposite effect on a vibrant and much lauded sector.

Contemporary visual art has played a vital role in the development of culture in Scotland over the last 20 years; both in contextual scene setting and reputation building internationally.

We are dismayed that at this difficult time – when local authority grants are diminishing and Trust and Foundation funds are shrinking – to see Creative Scotland replace the Flexible Funding strand with project funding which is making organisations feel insecure and does not appear to meet their organisational needs. These decisions potentially risk dismantling a healthy, successful sector that reaps significant return for general audiences and artists alike.

Visual arts organisations offer exceptional value for money, accomplishing extraordinary achievements on limited resources, and yet the viability of such small and medium scale independent organisations and their ability to deliver consistently good programming and develop new ways of working, are being jeopardised by the need to chase funds to maintain core activity which will be an inefficient use of already limited human resources.

We believe the best way to strengthen and help grow the cultural sector is through stability – a commitment to long term investment, allowing organisations to plan ahead – and we would urge Creative Scotland to clarify how project funding can help achieve this and ask you to reconsider the implementation of these changes.

We welcome your commitment today to creating the right platform for open, collaborative and face-to-face dialogue on these issues and we look forward to Scottish Contemporary Art Network assisting with the discussion.

Scottish Contemporary Art Network