

PRESS RELEASE

Monday 17 August, 2020

**Leading artists join calls for dedicated emergency funding for visual arts in Scotland as Scottish Contemporary Art Network launch new digital campaign #KeepArtInAction**

*"Scotland was once of the best places for contemporary artists to live and work and now without urgent support, it's world-famous art scene is teetering on the brink,"* says Clare Harris, Director of Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) as it launched the digital campaign #KeepArtInAction. Scotland's contemporary art world is facing a cliff edge without a rescue package from the Scottish government, says SCAN, the member organisation advocating for contemporary visual art in Scotland.

Award-Winning artist Jacqueline Donachie said:

*"The crisis for visual artists might be harder to see than in other sectors. It doesn't become visible through mass redundancies, but it is unemployment. Artists are signing on, there is a huge loss of freelance work. So many artists fell through the net on the assessment of freelance income through the government's schemes."*

Turner Prize winner Duncan Campbell, part of Glasgow's eminent artist-led community said:

*"Covid, for younger artists and artist initiatives in particular, has opened up a huge void...It seems to me that we are at a breaking point. Without a radical effort to support younger artists and artists run spaces – now – the basic ability Glasgow has to produce and reproduce artists is on the line."*

Nathan Coley who was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2007 said:

*"We need to acknowledge what artists give to the community and support them better or they will be lost for a generation. Without artists there will be no new visual art being made to reflect our changing world - no exhibitions displaying the wealth of discourse around identity and nationhood, and no new culture to help educate and invigorate our people. Creativity could be the way out of the crisis we are in, but if the artists aren't kept alive, then their voices will be lost forever."*

Turner Prize 2020 Bursary recipient Alberta Whittle said:

*"The Scottish arts scene is rooted in community, care and innovation. Through bypassing support for contemporary artists, galleries, studios and production facilities, the dynamism that cements Scotland at the vanguard of European contemporary creative thinking diminishes every day. We have moved past the time for complacency and without urgent support recovery becomes a dream."*

The Scottish Government has provided welcome commitment to the culture sector, including relief funds for the nation's performing arts venues, its grassroots music venues and some museums and

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Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) is a member led network committed to championing and supporting the contemporary art sector in Scotland.

Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO): Charity Number SC043016

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permanent collections. But funds have not yet been confirmed for the network of artists' studios, production facilities and contemporary art galleries that artists rely on to make their work and earn a living. Now leading artists are adding their voices to the call for urgent support for contemporary art to avoid a crisis that will impact thousands of workers, both staff and self-employed.

One of the most recent casualties is Studio Pavilion at House for an Art Lover in Glasgow's Southside which closed during lockdown and has not re-opened. Activity at the venue has been paused and their arts officer role was made redundant on July 31. A landmark building by ZM Architecture, in the grounds of House for an Art Lover in Bellahouston Park, it opened to the public in 2014 and provided classes and workshops, artists' residencies and exhibition opportunities. Nicola Sturgeon visited the venue in 2019, in her role as a constituency MSP as part of SCAN's Art in Action campaign, which showed the wide and lasting impact art has on the wellbeing of Scots from all walks of life.

SCAN recently issued a set of proposals for a visual art emergency stimulus to the office of Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture. These proposals include moves that SCAN believes would protect visual art organisations from immediate and medium-term insolvency, as well as safeguard and increase opportunities for commissioning and employment of freelance artists and creative practitioners. It also urged the establishment of a fund which would help artists to sustain their livelihoods in the immediate term.

Jacqueline Donachie is an award-winning artist based at Glasgow Sculpture Studios. During lockdown she had extra caring responsibilities for three family members over 80, her disabled brother in Glasgow, who has muscular dystrophy and learning difficulties, and her sister and her two children who all have muscular dystrophy and were shielding in Edinburgh.

*She said: "The crisis has really shown the difference in people's lives, between people who have caring responsibilities - such as elderly parents, young children or disabled family members - and those who don't. It has shown quite a deep division. In normal times these responsibilities already have an impact: artists who are carers have to work harder. But as soon as your caring responsibilities are ramped up, your ability and time to work is limited, and you have little chance to be creative. The crisis will have a long-term effect on particular communities. Carers have lost a lot of ground. Those that are the lower end of the income spectrum, we know they will tend to be women and people from BAME communities, they are already lower down in the ladder in terms of economics and are feeling the impact."*

Harris added: *"The urgency is clear. Artists continue to face loss of income on a wide scale. For organisations, the outlook is just as concerning. Lack of earned income coupled with necessary social distancing measures and capital spend on Covid-19 safety measures mean some face a cliff edge as early as November, with others fearing for their future beyond 18 months."*

*We're launching our #KeepArtInAction campaign to show how vital contemporary art, and all of those whose livelihoods are supported by it, are to the future of this country as we rebuild."*

For further details, images and interview request please contact Owen O'Leary on 07815 992 658 or email [owen@ohreally.co.uk](mailto:owen@ohreally.co.uk)

View and download hi res images here:

<https://app.box.com/s/wibhlw6yguf83ylzkvgawyfnq1glgm4w>

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### Notes to Editors

Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) is a member-led organisation which exists to connect, champion and cultivate contemporary visual art in Scotland.

SCAN's 180-plus members include national institutions, publicly-funded organisations, commercial galleries, education, voluntary collectives, production facilities, artists and individual workers. Our membership spans two thirds of Scotland's local authority areas from Shetland to the Borders. See more at [www.sca-net.org](http://www.sca-net.org)