**CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SCOTLAND’S CULTURE AND TOURISM SECTORS**

**SUBMISSION FROM SCOTTISH CONTEMPORARY ART NETWORK**

Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) connects and champions Scotland’s contemporary art community. Our 297 organisational and individual members work at the heart of communities from Shetland to the Scottish Borders and from East Lothian to the Western Isles. They include Scotland’s leading galleries, artists’ studios, workshops and production facilities and a highly skilled workforce of artists, art workers and creative thinkers. They sustain a network of free at the point of access galleries and venues, responsive and flexible institutions that anchor local communities and open their doors to their neighbours and visitors alike. Given the right support and investment art organisations and artists can be at the heart of the national recovery and our wellbeing economy and bring new thinking and perspectives to what will be a complex and difficult path to recovery

**1.SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION**

Access to furlough and to a range of Scottish government support schemes has made a critical difference to both organisations and individuals during the pandemic. Since March 2020 many organisational members have continued to provide public value wherever possible under the guidance. Some organisations have worked through the crisis without pause, others have relied on furloughing some staff while still providing some services. Many of our organisations have re-opened buildings when guidance allowed or have provided digital artistic programming. Not all our organisations are building-based. Engagement with young people, well-being programmes, mental health support and school learning programmes have continued contributing directly to wellbeing and combatting social isolation of vulnerable groups. Ongoing development for artists has continued in many cases. Studio and production facilities have provided covid-safe environments to allow creative tenants to continue to earn a living.

However the ongoing loss of earned income, the impact on capacity, and the toll on the visual arts workforce both self-employed and PAYE is clear. **Our Covid Recovery Report to the Scottish government in August 2020 provided a detailed case for an overall £12 million in recovery needs to prevent job losses, mitigate the impact on the self-employed and ensure organisational stability and adaptation by March 2021.**

**Artists and freelance creative workers are now experiencing “invisible redundancies” through income and opportunity loss, permanent exit from the sector, moving on to universal credit or seeking part time or temporary employment outside the creative sector**. This loss is not limited to the impact on highly trained individuals and their dependents, but on their social and economic contribution and the investment made in them to date. **Members also identify deep structural issues of long-term fragility, and uncertainty around future planning and funding scenarios at Creative Scotland and local authorities, as critically weakening their ability to continue**. This position which has been exacerbated by the unavoidable stop/go pattern associated with the necessary public health measures during the pandemic.

Many public buildings can re-open swiftly when guidance allows but capacities and income will be reduced. Extensive work around adaptation for visitors has been done but needs some further resourcing particularly in shared workshop studio settings with equipment access. This position is unsustainable without appropriate investment.

**Additional investment is needed across the cultural sector including both urgent and longer-term measures. Emergency support should be provided within a planned, strategic and transparent framework for recovery. Clearer information about timelines and future planning cycles for Creative Scotland funding is critical. Within an overall framework the visual arts will require some sector-specific remedies, including a visual arts fund, along the lines of the SCVO Adapt and Thrive programme. A critical element of this is an understanding of the continued work organisations undertake with the public and opportunities for individual artists. Longer term investment should be linked to fair work, equalities and form part of the wider agenda of recovery and wellbeing.**

**2. SCAN RECOMMENDS THE FOLOWING RESPONSES**

**Urgent**

* Emergency Support to address the end of furlough and ongoing loss of income
* A dedicated fund for Visual Arts for development, digital and organisational sustainability
* Additional support for individual artists channelled through Creative Scotland
* Clear timelines and processes now for future funding to reduced burden and uncertainty
* An equalities emphasis in funding to urgently address the unequal impact of Covid both within the cultural sector and wider society

**Short Term**

* Five Year stabilisation plan for the sector including clear strategic context and longer funding agreements in relation to the Creative Scotland funding review
* A nationwide revenue and capital investment programme for studios, production and workshop facilities including stabilising vulnerable facilities and further adaptation.

**Medium to Long Term**

* 1% of the Scottish Government’s total budget to cultural spend to allow the cultural sector to contribute fully to the economic recovery, implement the aims of the Scottish Government’s Cultural Strategy, rebuild the workforce based on the principles of fair work.
* A pilot for Universal Basic Income as part of which the impact on artists and creative freelancers should be measured and evaluated.

**3. IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON WORKFORCE**

Bridging Bursaries and Hardship Funding have provided vital support for artists. SCAN remains concerned about the impact on our workforce across both creative freelance self-employment and PAYE. We have worked with our partners at Scottish Artists Union to provide an up to date snapshot of the impact on the visual arts workforce. Independent researcher Ruth Stevenson designed, managed and analysed a web survey to gather this information.

**Negative Impact on Life and Career:** When asked to rate how various elements of their lives and careers were now compared to how they were pre-Covid, more than half of the visual arts workforce in Scotland felt that each of these elements of their life/career were worse just now. Most negatively affected were income (worse for 72%), new opportunities available in the visual arts (worse for 71%), financial stability (worse for 69%) and mental health (worse for 66%).

**Falling Through the Cracks:** 28% across the sector said that they felt they had “fallen though the cracks” and been ineligible for adequate financial support during Covid-19.

**Uneven Impact of covid on cultural workers:** Groups most likely to anticipate a loss were: zero hours workers, sessional workers, self-employed workers, artists or makers, disabled people, and those with caring responsibilities.

**Reduced Opportunities and income for self-employed workers:** Overall, 92% of those in self-employed roles told us that Covid-19 had an impact on their self-employment working conditions. The impacts were most often working fewer hours (54%), having contracts cancelled (51%) and having contracts postponed (47%). The impact of Covid-19 that affected most self-employed respondents was around income, with 65% expecting to make a loss compared to their pre-Covid expectations. Overall, 22% across the sector estimated that they would lose more than half of their expected income in 2020 due to Covid-19.

**“Invisible” and Actual Redundancies across the sector:** Across self-employment and PAYE 10% received Universal Credit or other similar Government benefits where they otherwise would not have done so, 5% of respondents are now working in a different sector and 2% have been made redundant, as a direct result of Covid-19.

**4. IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON INFRASTRUCTURE**

Across the cultural sector in the UK the latest research suggests that the full force of impact may still be to come. According to the January 2021 “snapshot” from The Centre for Cultural Value,

*“…the worst impacts may have been masked or delayed…organisations are likely to require continued support for business development, financial and strategic planning, to build strong leadership, to maintain and grow networks, and to enable digital innovation”*

**Case Study on closure and adapatation:** Dundee Contemporary Arts has provided a detailed case study in an associated submission.

**Sources of Recovery Funding**: While responsive in the emergency, Scottish Government recovery funding was announced incrementally and varied widely in scope across different parts of the cultural sector. The visual arts sector has not received a dedicated package and is underfunded in emergency support.Visual arts support was largely channelled through the Cultural Organisations and Venue Relief Fund (COVRF) Visual Arts Craft and Design Organisations received 18 awards, a total of £980, 403, representing 8% of the total funding award of £11,751,844.For comparison, from this fund, nightclubs received 33 awards, a total of 3,151,288, representing 27% of available funding. The COVRF could only be used to address job losses and insolvency and eligibility was based on risk of insolvency by March 2021.

In performing arts, 59 venues across Scotland received a total of £4.74million from the open call for applications to the Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund (PAVRF) through Creative Scotland and 20 venues received £7.5m through the targeted part of the fund. PAVRF allowed for support to address insolvency, job retention but also sustainable financial planning, the development and delivery of activity, commissioning and employment opportunities. PAVRF targeted awards ranged from £100k – £750k. COVRF support was up to a maximum of 150k with exceptional cases up to 250k. Average awards for visual arts, design and craft were £57,891.

According to member feedback: *‘COVRF only addressed jobs and lost income rather than giving an opportunity to really address value or how to renew and recover.”*

**Current Covid Impacts on Workforce and Welfare:** Members report a significant impact on wellbeing, this is both with regard to funding and delivery challenges and a concern about wider impacts of the pandemic. This is particularly strong among organisations that are still providing ongoing community programming and public facing activities.

*“The challenges are really about sense of cohesion, mental health and focus. We are all fatigued by online and by constantly having to adapt our projects - especially since so much emergency funding has to be spent quickly. Our core concern are artists in our communities who are hugely affected by the drop in tourism income (many artists rent out rooms etc) and the extreme isolation imposed on rural communities is very hard to cope with.”*

*“Precarity of funding (our last grant was for just 4 months!) Well-being of the team (stress and anxiety has been a real issue over the last year)”*

*“Changes have caused staff working conditions to continually alter and with a pressure on the organisation to keep going, has resulted in core staff working beyond their funded hours and well into what I can only describe as deepening burnout.”*

**Concerns For 2021-2022:** As regularly funded organisations await funding decisions from Creative Scotland, dependent on the forthcoming Scottish budget, the uncertainty is challenging and these concerns have been exacerbated by Brexit. Many believe they will face the cliff edge after March.

*“Since autumn 2020 it has been clear that the biggest challenges we face lie in 2021/22. With budgets not confirmed by Creative Scotland until the start of March and no understanding of whether there will be any further government support for this year and a certainty that our earned income will continue to be negatively impacted again in 2021 and the additional as of yet unknown impact of Brexit, 2021 will be a tough year.”*

**2022 onwards, concerns about the Future for Creative Scotland Funded Organisations** All responding organisations expressed anxiety about timelines for the Creative Scotland funding review

*“ We need to understand the new funds replacing RFO and the timelines for applying to these. I am very worried about this. With many smaller organisations such as ours we do not have the capacity to apply to such funds whilst also working at capacity/ continuously responding to the ever-changing situation - we are currently rescheduling our programmes blind to the understanding of when we can work on these applications,”*

**Submission to the CTEEA**

**Appendix to submission by Scottish Contemporary Art Network 20/01/21**

**Organisational Case Study: Dundee Contemporary Arts**

**Beth Bate Director, DCA**

**Summary**

This case study shows the role of a thriving visual arts organisation in supporting artists, working with communities and audiences and a summary of Covid Impacts. The case study shows the complex network of guidance applicable and adaptation steps undertaken in lockdown, the use of furlough, and need for emergency funding and additional charitable support, over the last 10 months. It helps understand the ongoing and future challenges. At Tier 3, when the gallery could open, the restrictions on income generating-aspects of provision meant it wasn’t financially viable. At Tier 2, DCA welcomed 25% of its usual visitors, and 28% of usual cinema users dues to covid distancing regulations.

**Audiences**

DCA is central to Dundee’s visitor offer while also firmly rooted in the city. Prior to lockdown we welcomed 380-400,00 visitors a year, who made use of our galleries, cinema, print studio and learning programme. These are an incredibly broad range of audiences: local, regular visitors with very strong connections to the venue, artist communities in the city, the wider creative community, students, as well as tourist and visitors.

**Our work with artists**

We support artists in many ways. We work with the artists whose work features in our group shows and solo exhibitions over long periods of time – up to a couple of years – to help them develop and realise their projects with us. We have a publications programme where we ask other artists and writers to contribute, and a dynamic public programme of talks, performances and special events, which bring in new audiences as well as repeat visitors. These might be poetry, music or specialists in related subjects, or artist Q&As. Learning activity is key, a big focus on families and working with children and young people. Our targeted Create space for younger visitors, unpacks the big themes and ideas of the exhibitions in a friendly way. We work with artists and creative practitioners to help us both design and deliver learning and engagement work, both in the DCA building and across the city.

Our exhibitions programme explores vital social, cultural and political themes. For example, our exhibition with the Glasgow-based artist Alberta Whittle, who was born in Barbados and has lived in Scotland most of her adult life, touched on spirituality, climate justice, the impact of colonialism and slavery, and Scotland’s role in both. Our activities for children related to this exhibition looked at weather and climate justice, ideas of love, of different kinds of families and healing.

Our Print Studio is key to the way we support many artists, at all stages of their careers, providing affordable access to world-class equipment and skilled expertise. Many of the artists we work with on exhibitions also spend time in the Print Studio and make an edition with us as part of our wider programme of creating limited edition prints for sale. Such work and the relationship developed with the Print Studio team changed Alberta Whittle’s art practice in a fundamental way. She will now make work with us for her forthcoming projects representing Venice Biennale and the British Art Show, so this impact will be felt in the rest of the UK and internationally. She also worked with our Cinema team on choosing some films to screen alongside her work, as we invite all exhibiting artists to do. This interdisciplinary approach, with multiple programme areas all working together, is one of the things that really sets DCA apart, providing artists and audiences with an incredibly rich and varied experience.

**Covid-19 closures**

We closed DCA to the public on March 17, 2020. We very quickly moved to assure all freelancers we would honour their contracts and reassured staff they would continue to be paid throughout closure. We have made heavy use of the furlough scheme and have continued to top pay up to 100%: it was a priority to ensure that incomes were not hit at a time when so many people were struggling.

The building was completely closed except for routine safety and security checks. We moved much of our programme online, including learning activities, a film club, and exhibitions reading group. Our digital offer was used by participants from further afield, including overseas. We had schools from across Scotland using our resources, and we will ensure this this type of digital activity and its potential for broader reach is continued. Our Learning team also developed family art packs which were distributed to groups across Dundee. These were initially developed as part of our Art at the Start project for children aged 0-3, which is a collaborative PhD between our Learning team and the University of Dundee’s Psychology department. We have worked with a range of groups to distribute packs, including Dundee Bairns, the city’s hunger support group, and Dundee International Women’s Centre. We also have a similar project aimed at connecting with older, isolated people across the city, coordinated with the help of Dundee Pensioners’ Forum. We have been really on the ground and connected with these groups, responding to direct need and demand.

**Re-opening at tier 2**

We opened on September 4,2020, in full compliance with the varied guidance for each programme and operational area: cinema, production, catering, retail, workplace etc. We introduced rigorous new cleaning regimes and detailed risk assessments developed by our leadership, programme heads and health and safety committee. We presented a new exhibition by Stuart Whipps, installed and visited in line with new regulations. Using a booking system to ensure safely managed capacities, people returned to our create space and exhibitions. We were open for about two months during which we saw around 25% of typical gallery visitor numbers, and cinema activity at 28% of our usual levels thanks to heavily reduced capacity. Many screenings were selling out, with people visiting from within the city and beyond as guidance allowed. Our Print Studio re-opened with reduced capacity and booking systems for equipment cleaning. We asked for feedback from everyone who visited and saw overwhelmingly positive results, with consistent ratings of 4.5-5/5 on a range of metrics, from welcome to safety, cleanliness and visitor information.

**Closure under Tier 3**

When Dundee moved into Tier 3 the cinema was required to close, and our café bar offer was severely limited, restricting or removing income from two major sources. After a week of operations it became clear that it wasn’t financially viable to stay open to the public and we reluctantly concluded that it made more sense to close and use furlough where possible. We continued some work with community groups that was allowable under the rules, for example providing learning activity for adults with mental health issues or particular youth groups. We installed a new exhibition as the guidance allowed and await re-opening.

**Activities under current guidance**

Our building is closed to all staff apart from essential building checks. We continue online activities and schools work and are working with V&A Dundee as they develop their own work with schools. Our programmes are being pushed back and remain in a state of flux as we wait for further announcements about restrictions. We have been very lucky to have additional support from the charity Art Fund for our exhibitions, providing additional tech support for social distancing, and to support activities, exhibition and interviews online. Scottish Government recovery support through Creative Scotland came via the independent Cinema Fund, and we also received funding from the BFI.

We have also continued to produce and distribute Family Art Bags to in need families across the city, working with our partners.

**Future Needs**

We need to accept that digital and digital provision is here to stay, and organisations need to be supported in these platforms. Ensuring organisations have financial support is vital. The flexible support we have had from Creative Scotland, and the same from the local authority, to deliver as we can with what we have has been essential. That confidence and commitment from them has been invaluable and we would have folded without it. We are one of the most creative, innovative sectors but the exhausting and inefficient established model of constantly trying to demonstrate new ways of doing things in order to access support, rather than receiving long-term funds to support proven areas of success and long-term plans, is not feasible on current capacities. We need longer funding agreements, with appropriate risk management.