

John Swinney MSP

January 30, 2023

Deputy First Minister
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
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Dear Deputy First Minister

Cut to Creative Scotland's Grant in Aid

Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) is the member-led network which connects and champions Scotland's contemporary art community. We are writing to you in your Finance and Economy capacity and calling on you to review and reverse the envisaged cut to Creative Scotland's Grant in Aid, currently proposed in the Scottish Governments 2023-2024 budget. We believe this cut places the 5000 jobs in the culture sector at significant risk.

Our network of over 300 organisational and individual members work at the heart of communities from Shetland to the Scottish Borders and from East Lothian to the Western Isles. Our members are a network of free at the point of access galleries, community organisations, and venues together with the artist-led initiatives, agencies, workspaces, and production facilities that support artists to pursue their livelihoods. These anchor local communities, drive the visitor economy, support artists to produce their work and open their doors and activities to their neighbours and visitors alike.

You will be aware that in recent months, a number of cultural organisations in Scotland including the Centre for the Moving Image in Edinburgh and the Nevis Ensemble, based in Easterhouse Glasgow, have closed their doors with loss of permanent jobs and of community capacity.

SCAN members are dismayed that the Culture Budget for 2023-2024 will dramatically weaken cultural provision for audiences in communities across Scotland, and place jobs and fair work for culture sector workers at risk. The proposed 10% cut to Creative Scotland's Grant in Aid represents a hollowing out of the culture funding after more than a decade of steady erosion. The fragile cultural economy, in the wake of the pandemic, and in the midst of a costs crisis, has memorably been described as experiencing the "perfect storm" by Creative Scotland's Chief Executive. This cut, which is targeted at the Regularly Funded Organisations, Scotland's nationwide network of core cultural infrastructure, leaves culture without a lifeboat.

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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. SCAN is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO): Charity Number SC043016



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The reduction means that Creative Scotland will have £6.6million less in 2023/24 to support RFOs for which £34m is required each year to maintain funding at current levels. Should elements of Scotland's arts infrastructure fall now they won't return. We know that the overall culture budget is a very small proportion of Scottish Government spend so reductions here will wreak havoc but not reap significant savings.

The RFO network as a whole, supports around 5000 permanent jobs and over 3500 freelancers every year. These are jobs that if lost will not return. The cut creates two stages of jeopardy for 120 organisations across the culture sector and across Scotland. In the year 2023-2024 Creative Scotland is now unable to provide planned additional funding to help RFOs mitigate the effects of around 14% real terms reduction in funding and support them with pandemic recovery. There has been no additional support to deal with the costs crisis. In 2024-2025 if there is no cost-of-living increase in support, if current cut results in a new low baseline for culture, or if Creative Scotland needs to pass on further cuts, many organisations report they will be unable to survive.

The RFO network must maintain permanent public buildings, meet high energy costs and meet pay settlements for their workers, including the increase in the living wage for their workers in Spring 2023, and for permanent salaried workforce, organisations need to meet the needs of their workers and benchmark increases against the Scottish public sector pay deal.

Policies in development, such as social prescribing, will rely on nationwide expertise and infrastructure to be implemented. With current timelines, such initiatives will come too late to prevent the depletion of expertise and the survival of core cultural infrastructure, and there will be significantly reduced capacity to deliver the cost benefit culture can deliver for Scottish Government priorities around health and wellbeing. Our Scotland-wide membership urges a re-think of the cut to culture.

If you or your officials wish to meet with representatives of the cultural sector, or require further information please contact me at moira@sca-net.org

Yours sincerely



Moira Jeffrey, Director, SCAN