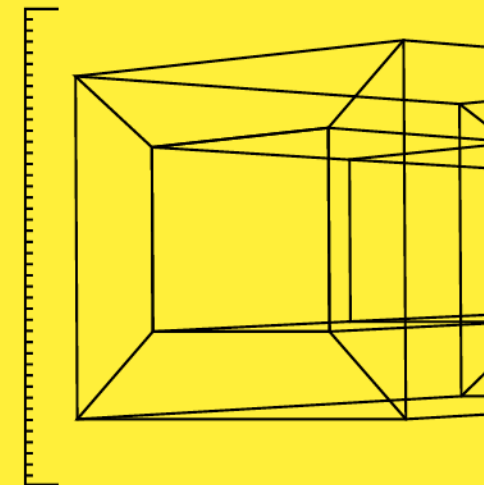
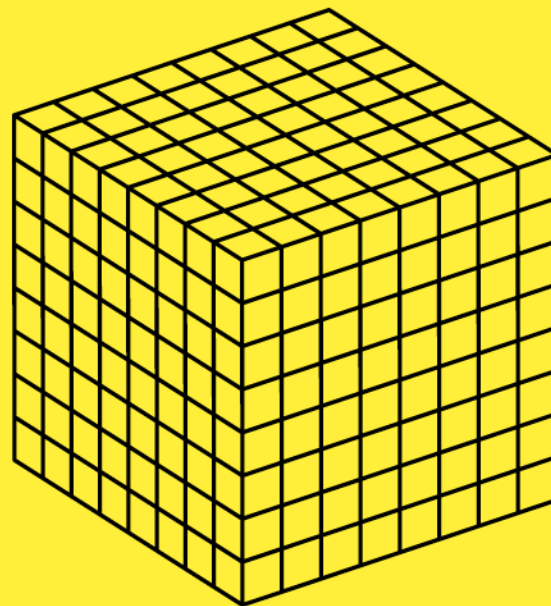
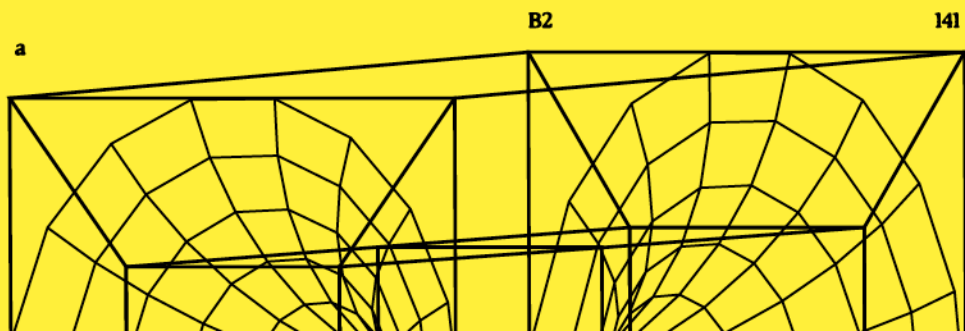
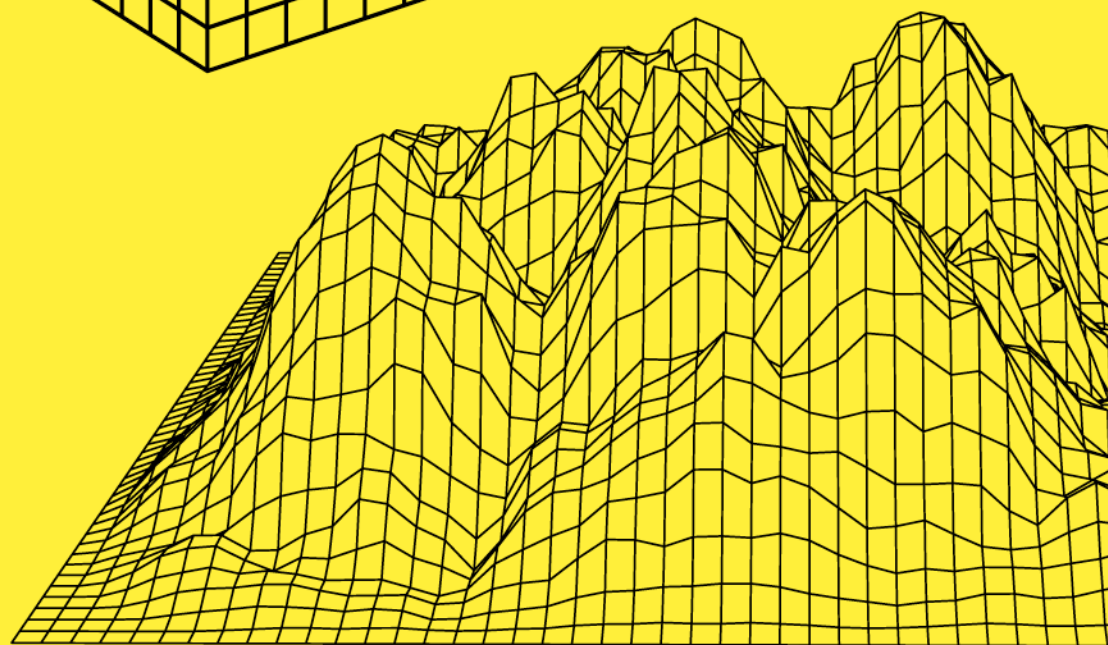


# SCAN SUMMIT 2025 The Grid



# Report



Eden Court, Inverness  
13 May 2025

## SCAN Summit 2025: Event Report

**Event:** SCAN Summit 2025 - The Grid

**Date:** 13th May 2025

**Venue:** Eden Court, Inverness

**Total Reach:** 147 participants

### About SCAN

SCAN is the member-led network for contemporary art in Scotland. Founded in 2012 by the visual arts sector, and still led by the sector through governance, scrutiny, and partnership today. We connect, champion, and cultivate Scotland's contemporary art community.

We create capacity for change. Our 118 organisational members are a network of free at the point of access galleries, community organisations, and venues, together with the artist-run initiatives, agencies, workspaces, and production facilities that support artists to pursue their livelihoods. Our individual members are artists and art workers, curators, researchers, writers, and educators. This network of over 350 organisational, individual, and "named" members within organisations, work at the heart of communities from Shetland to the Scottish Borders and from East Lothian to the Western Isles.

### About SCAN Summit

SCAN Summit is an annual in-person event that highlights thought leadership and best practice in the arts and beyond, placing our work in wider contexts. Bringing contemporary art practice together with writers, thinkers and experts from wider fields, for mutual learning to explore the world we live in today. It is an opportunity for art workers to come together to discuss the pressing issues facing the sector and beyond. Previous themes have included the Land Reform Act, Cultural Work in Violent Times, and 'Unsettled Status': Brexit, Borders and the Hostile Environment.

### SCAN Summit 2025 – The Grid

For our first summit in the Highlands, our chosen topic was The Grid; the systems, both visible and largely unseen, that distribute power, energy and communications in literal and metaphorical ways. Drawing inspiration from the Highland economy, currently at the forefront of new forms of energy generation, and old challenges about the distribution of power, The Grid focused on alternative energy, land and language, and the culture and politics of societies and systems in transition through artists' talks, screenings, hands on activities and readings.





## **Our Strategic Aims:**

Connect  
Champion  
Cultivate  
Create Capacity

### **Connect**

How has Summit helped us connect?

By looking outwards from the immediate concerns of the visual arts sector, SCAN uses a broader theme for Summit to bring our membership together. Connecting through adjacent fields such as literature, film and environmental activism, we were able to look beyond the day-to-day operations of our creative practices.

The majority of the respondents to our post-Summit survey (75%) selected ‘professional networking’ as a reason they attended Summit.

Over 95% of respondents answered ‘yes, lots’ or ‘yes, some’ to the question “Did you meet new people?”

When asked, ‘Tell us about how the topics explored at SCAN Summit - The Grid connected with your artistic or professional practice’ respondents said:

“A good and relevant topic to get people together to explore, reflect and meet up with others to share.”

“The topics connected with my personal practice by introducing new information/new links, and I welcomed the deeper look into how others were approaching challenges in this field.”

## Champion

How has Summit furthered SCAN's mandate to champion contemporary art practice?

The speakers at SCAN Summit 2025 were:

Harvey Dimond – artist/writer – *Entangled histories: the Highland Clearances and the transatlantic slave trade*

Les Bicknell – artist/lecturer – *Artist in Residence at Sizewell C Nuclear Power Plant*

Maria de Lima – artist/filmmaker – *in conversation*

Flick Monk – environmental activist – *in conversation*

Giulia Gregnanin – curator – *in conversation, facilitator*

Marianne Brown – author/journalist – *The Shetland Way*

Each speaker came with their own expertise in a niche field. Speaking on topics ranging from the connection between the highland clearances and transatlantic slave trade to the possibilities and limitations of working as artist in residence at Sizewell C. We mapped ancestral territories from the Isle of Skye to indigenous lands of Brazil. We watched interviews with offshore oil workers and heard their frustrations with their lack of agency and voice in the transition to net zero and from the activists trying to amplify those voices.

Invited speakers came from varying backgrounds and levels of experience. Though the majority are practicing artists, we also heard from academics, activists, writers and a journalist. We championed their work by giving them the opportunity to share their practices with peers and make connections between likeminded stands of research; most notably on the panel discussion between Maria de Lima, Flick Monk and Giulia Gregnanin, whose varied backgrounds and research methodologies but connected practices made for a lively and impassioned panel.

Lastly, each talk was accompanied by time for audience questions, empowering the audience and the SCAN network to share their thoughts, concerns and questions with the invited speakers and our team.



Breakout sessions on were facilitated by local groups:

Circus Artspace  
Feminist Bird Club  
Highland Zine Bothy

These sessions offered hands-on activities (birding, zine making, and an artist-led mapping session) and opportunities for closer, deeper and informal conversations around the topic of The Grid and chances to connect.

### **Fringe Programme:**

We also championed the work of 3 additional artists through fringe programming. SCAN was invited by Eden Court to programme a selection of artists' films on the Monday night before Summit. We selected titles that reflected the theme of The Grid by:

Ursula Mayer  
Emily Richardson  
Gair Dunlop

Funded by Film Hub Scotland, this event acted as a primer for the Summit the following day.

The programme included; Ursula Mayer's *Atom Spirit* (2016) set in Trinidad and Tobago, presenting a postcolonial vision of a techno-utopia; Emily Richardson's *Immaterial Terrain* (2023) documenting the singular and fragile landscape around Sizewell C nuclear power plant; and Gair Dunlop's *Atom Town: life after technology* (2011) exploring Scotland's legacy of nuclear power. Gair Dunlop also joined us for a post-screening discussion.

The event laid a fertile foundation for the conference the following day and forged connections between audiences and artists, notably, between Gair Dunlop and Les Bicknell, a keynote speaker at Summit and the current Artist in Residence at Sizewell C Nuclear Power Plant, during informal post-screening networking.

Read about SCAN Summit in the Inverness Courier: <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/80-artists-to-gather-at-eden-court-to-explore-how-shift-to-r-381796/>





## Cultivate

What did we hope to cultivate during SCAN Summit 2025?

In our latest business plan, we set out our mission to, “cultivate the ambitions, and support the workforce needs, of Scotland’s contemporary artists, art workers and art organisations. Our programmes and projects invest in equity, collaboration, peer support, skills, and critical thinking.”

SCAN Summit is our flagship opportunity to demonstrate this guiding principle through a diverse programme of talks, participatory events, screenings, Q&As and opportunities for informal networking. By siting the SCAN Summit in Inverness this year, we demonstrated that we actively listened to our membership and responded to requests for more Highlands-based programming.

Feedback has reflected this. Anecdotally, an attendee told a member of the SCAN team that they had attended the SCAN Summit at Glasgow Women’s Library in 2019 and asked for the Summit to come to the Highlands one day.

*“I enjoyed the day so much - so many great speakers, presentations and especially the films and Q&A in the cinema, and nice to catch up with more local pals too. Truly brilliant to see an event like this up in Inverness”*  
Alexander Williamson – Photographer

*“As an artist who lives and works (for SCAN) in the Highlands myself, having the Summit event locally felt like a real milestone in solidifying the importance of the region’s contemporary art activities.”*  
Emma Gibson, SCAN Member Development Officer (Highland)

When asked; ‘What would you like to see more of from SCAN?’ respondents said:

*“Just more community events.”*

*“Connecting in rural Scotland”*

Summit is a rare opportunity for the sector to gather with likeminded artists, practitioners, curators, administrators and other art workers to reflect on topics that connect us. We cultivate an atmosphere of peer support and mutual respect for curiosity and critical thinking to emerge.

## Create Capacity

Lastly, it is SCAN's strategic aim to ensure that "the contemporary art community is environmentally sustainable, well-supported and equipped to meet future challenges." By looking to the climate crisis, the networks of power and distribution through platforming the work of artists, curators, writers and communities addressing these concerns in various ways within their practices, we have shared tactics for how the sector can respond to society facing energy transition.

Within a sector continually being asked to do more with less, to take a day out of our busy schedules to gather together in person for shared learning, discussion and network strengthening, creates capacity and fosters resilience. The importance of gathering in person was repeatedly commented on within the feedback:

*"I felt it was valuable to hear how others were linking the political with the personal, how policy (or lack thereof) impacts how people live in and enjoy their environments. I really enjoy having the time carved out for me to listen to other artists speak about the links they are making in their practice to whatever is sparking their interest."*

*"I was engrossed and inspired by the speakers and meeting fellows from all over Scotland and some old friends."*

*"I know these full day events are costly of resources, money and time. But it was so nice to immerse myself in creativity and thought. I barely looked at my phone and felt really present. It was just great."*

*"the gathering together of likeminded people, the deep dives taken into others' work, the flagging of emerging concerns, the signposting to potential activism, the space to connect and talk (with a hearty lunch)."*



## Statistical analysis:

The audience was predominantly female identifying with the majority of respondents selecting that their role as 'artist'. A note here that the question 'What is your role?' was multiple choice, with many selecting more than one option, reflecting the nature of art working often requiring multiple income streams.

On ethnicity, there was a majority white identifying audience (85.45%) which leaves room for improvement but maps closely to the Highlands demographic according to the 2001 census (99.2%, Highlands and 98.1% across Scotland).

Proportionately to the Scottish population, Summit reached a higher percentage of LGBTQIA+ audiences. In the 2022 census, 87.8% of respondents reported being straight/heterosexual, while only 41.82% of our audience selected that option.

11.3% of the Scottish population reported living with a disability in the 2022 census. Whereas 35.92% of Summit attendee respondents reported a disability. It is welcome news that we have made our events accessible to audiences with additional access requirements and reflects the measures SCAN goes to, to ensure public talks are accessible:

- Live captioning
- Step free access
- Microphones
- Travel planning and bursaries
- Access information published in advance
- Hearing loops

[Link to statistics data](#)



## Conclusion:

As we look towards SCAN Summit 2026, what can we learn from this year's iteration?

**Format:** gathering in person remains a high priority for SCAN members and audiences, post Covid.

**Suggestion:** more opportunities for unstructured / informal networking and/or conversation starter exercises for breaks.

**Content:** peer learning and critical thinking play a key role in the success of Summit.

**Suggestion:** more panel discussions, perhaps pairing artists with thinkers working in adjacent fields.

**Connecting across geographies:** as our first Summit in The Highlands, feedback was overall positive about the choice of location.

**Suggestion:** as we will be in the central belt for the 2026 edition, we should ensure that the travel bursary budget is adequate, and marketing and comms around bursaries reaches rural and Highlands communities.

**Suggestion for future events further afield:** partnering with local organisation and building in meaningful working relationships in advance would enrich future events.

**Scale and ambition:** this was the first year we delivered 'fringe' events with a screening before and live event after the Summit. While this proved challenging in advance of the conference itself, the added value it brought to the day was worth the effort.

**Suggestion:** ensure adequate staff time and budget for fringe programming and healthy lead time for marketing ancillary events.

## Final thoughts:

Though each invited speaker brought a brilliant and nuanced perspective to the theme of The Grid in relation to their own practice, a real highlight was the panel discussion between Maria de Lima, Flick Monk and Giulia Gregnanin. This stood out because of the overlapping themes with each of their research practices but differing creative methodologies, drawing out from each other more complex and nuanced perspective on the topic than a single voice can achieve.

The theme of Human Rights, specifically 'The Right to Take Part in Cultural Life', offers an exciting opportunity to invite expertise from the fields of law, government and social sciences to Summit and the chance to curate dialogues between these experts and artists/art workers.

Sub-themes could include:

- Trans inclusion in cultural life
- Education
- Class and access to work
- Housing and gentrification
- Food Security
- Disability



**Final Expenditure:**

Description	Budget	Actual	Restricted spend		Unrestricted spend	
			PMC	FHS	CS MYF	in kind
Venue hire (incl AV and catering)	£2,500	£3,000			£3,000	
Speaker and facilitator fees	£3,150	£2,487	£2,487			
Film Programme	£1,250	£1,588		£367	£146	£1,075
Speaker travel and expenses	£1,362	£2,050	£154	£33	£1,863	
Documentation and sharing	£1,250	£1,181			£1,181	
Marketing	£1,300	£570			£570	
Access costs	£1,180	£1,160			£1,160	
SCAN staff travel and expenses	£473	£1,482			£1,482	
Presentation of 'Master Rock' by Dr Maria Fusco	£3,228	£2,055	£359		£1,696	
Contingency (5%)	£785	£703			£703	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£16,477</b>	<b>£16,277</b>	<b>£3,000</b>	<b>£400</b>	<b>£11,802</b>	<b>£1,075</b>

**Legacy:**

The SCAN Summit will be edited into a podcast of each presentation and shared via our website and newsletters. Providing access to those geographically unable to attend and as a means of archiving the day.

Read more reflections on the SCAN website: <https://sca-net.org/reflectingsummit2025/>

Read about SCAN Summit in the Inverness Courier: <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/80-artists-to-gather-at-eden-court-to-explore-how-shift-to-r-381796/>

Find us on our socials: ig: @scottishcontemporaryart fb: @ScottishContemporaryArtNetwork

If you have any questions or feedback email: [programme@sca-net.org](mailto:programme@sca-net.org)

**Attendee statistics:**

Pre-Summit Screenings:

6 SCAN staff

1 artist

16 audience

TOTAL: 23

SCAN Summit:

7 SCAN staff

61 attendees

6 speakers

7 breakout facilitators

TOTAL: 81

Master Rock:

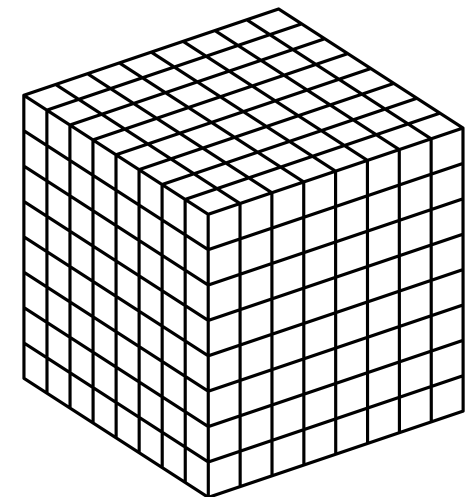
38 audience

4 SCAN staff

1 artist

TOTAL: 43

TOTAL reach: 147





SCOTTISH  
CONTEMPORARY  
ART  
NETWORK