

Paying Artists Case Studies Overview: Transparency in Action

Introduction

The foreword of the [Securing a future for the visual arts in the UK](#) – the manifesto for the Paying Artists campaign¹ – states that:

“Paying Artists is about transforming opportunities for artists, galleries, funders and policy makers alike. In removing the financial barriers faced by many artists, it will give publicly-funded galleries – and the public themselves – access to quality art which covers the spectrum of human experience.

It will bring value to the investment of all who fund it by encouraging diversity and equal opportunities for all artists. In doing so, it will play a direct role in ensuring Britain retains its reputation for supporting creative talent and delivering world-class art.”

An expectation for transparency on artists’ pay and terms of engagement within gallery policies, that demonstrate how publicly-funded organisations are recognising artists’ roles in their own success, is amongst the five actions identified within the Paying Artists campaign.

This short report deconstructs the Paying Artists case studies, published as part of our Paying Artists campaign evidence in 2014, to highlight emerging themes and show how some galleries are already demonstrating transparency. This will be useful for galleries wishing to develop their own fair pay policies.

Statements from arts councils

The following statements from the funding agencies in England, Scotland and Wales endorse notions of good practice that encompass payment of artists as a vital part of achieving equality and diversity across the arts within the organisations that they grant aid.

“Creative Scotland is supportive of the Paying Artists campaign. This campaign reflects the principle laid out in our 10 year Plan of encouraging better levels of remuneration for artists, in order to ensure that Scotland is a country where they can live and work and that their contribution to all our lives is recognised... we will be working to encourage the organisations that we fund to develop clear policies and to ensure that trained, practicing artists and creative practitioners are always paid fairly.” Kenneth Fowler, Director of Communications and External Relations, Creative Scotland, November 2014

“When we negotiate our funding, fair payment for artists is part of the agreement. It is one of the requirements we make of organisations... and we shall be monitoring it. We are also pleased to be working with a-n to establish a comprehensive set of clear guidelines which will give the visual arts sector a code of best practise ” Simon Mellor, Executive Director Arts and Culture, Arts Council England, April 2015

¹ Securing the Future of the Visual Arts, a-n AIR/DHA Communications 2014, download at www.payingartists.org.uk

“Our definition of diversity encompasses responding to issues around race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexuality, class and economic disadvantage and any social and institutional barriers that prevent people from participating in and enjoying the arts.” Arts Council England, What is the Creative Case for Diversity?², 2014

“...Arts Council of Wales is announcing its commitment to ensuring proper and fair payment to creative professionals living and working in Wales. In a recent meeting of Council, backing was given to supporting the Paying Artists campaign developed by a-n, The Artists Information Company... Over the course of the next 18 months over 2015-16, we will be exploring how our revenue funded organisations support Creative Professionals. We will consider, but not limit ourselves to, financial reward. We want to look at support to artists in the round. We will be clear in our funding guidelines that we expect artists to be paid properly for work undertaken. This, we hope, will support creative professionals to be able to earn a living in Wales.” David Alston, Arts Director, Arts Council of Wales, April 2015

Selection of case studies

Within the research phases of the Paying Artists campaign a number of case studies of publicly-funded organisations were identified. Choice for case studies arose either through self-nomination, following invitations to National Portfolio or Regularly-funded galleries to put themselves forward, or through artists’ recommendations. In all cases the galleries each received a set of questions to preface an interview, or to inform a self-submission. The aim was that the resulting case studies would provide a breadth and range of examples to learn about best practice principles regarding transparency of artists’ pay.³

The case study galleries are:

- Predominantly but not exclusively drawn from organisations that are regularly funded by arts councils (with grant aid ranging from £73,000 to over £890,000).
- Drawn from England, Scotland and Wales.
- Encompass organisations that are artist- or practice-led for whom exhibitions are part of a wider artists’ support programme, as well as museums and galleries with an international profile and significant education programme for children and young people.
- Located in both urban and rural settings with varying audience reach.
- Representative of a broad range of contemporary practices spanning crafts, photography, fine art and new media.
- By majority building-based, with one project-funded festival also included.

The galleries represented in the case studies are:

- The Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), Glasgow
- The Collection, Lincoln
- Fabrica, Brighton
- The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh
- g39, Cardiff
- Impressions Gallery, Bradford
- Modern Art Oxford, Oxford
- The Showroom, London
- Whitstable Biennial, Whitstable

² What is the Creative Case for Diversity?

www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/What_is_the_Creative_Case_for_Diversity.pdf

³ Full case studies can be read in the Appendix pages below.

Benchmarking and role modelling

Regardless of the scale of their financial operation, each study clearly demonstrates what good practice when working with artists looks like, setting this within each organisation's overall artistic ambitions and audience development policies and the expectations of public funding. Collectively, they offer positive and practical role models for the sector as a whole.

As a body of material the case studies are invaluable, not only for examination and adoption of good practice principles, but as learning and study material to ensure curatorial and arts management students can effectively join the visual arts sector and manage their relationships with artists with confidence and professionalism.

Credits

a-n warmly thanks each of the contributors to the case studies for giving so freely and generously their information, insight and time to the visual arts community, and to making possible this document that forms part of Paying Artists research and reports.

April 2015

Case studies analysed

“Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.”

Whilst aimed specifically at the activities and attitudes of members of trust and boards, the expectation for “openness” that is drawn from the Seven Principles of Standards in Public Life (Nolan Report)⁴ provides a reference point for a key ambition within the Paying Artists campaign, namely that: “Galleries should develop transparent policies that value the artist and demonstrate how they are recognising artists’ roles in their success”.

The aim in publishing these case studies from publicly-funded arts organisations is to show that it is possible to provide high-quality arts experiences for the public whilst also communicating to artists and to the arts-interested public with openness and integrity the artistic ambition and approach of the exhibiting venue and their financial terms for artists, in the same way they demonstrate accountability for public funds to their Boards and arts council.

The following sections demonstrate how each of the Paying Artist case study galleries have worked with artists and addressed fair pay.

Artistic vision and ethos

Case studies illuminate a venue’s artistic ambition and vision, contextualising this within their nation, location or community.

“Over the years, we have become more focused on philosophical or humanities-based themes than development of specific art forms... There’s a strong photography, film and digital scene locally and historically we’ve worked a lot with lens-based and interactive work using digital media.” Fabrica

“One of the aims is to curate a mix of work from emerging artists and more established names, and also to combine artists from Wales with artists from further afield. Since we started we’ve had a policy that every year, a minimum of 60% of our exhibiting artists will be Welsh or Wales-based artists.” g39

“Our starting-point is helping people understand the world through photography... We want our exhibitions to be relevant to contemporary life and our Bradford audiences... We have a long history and track-record of exhibiting artists from non-Western backgrounds. We want to work with people who may be thought to have marginalised voices.” Impressions Gallery

“We’re located in one of the world’s greatest cities for thinking and learning, and we have an international reputation for a programme that is innovative and ambitious.” Modern Art Oxford

Value and role of artists

Case studies illuminate how artists and contemporary visual arts practice are contextualised within each organisation’s work.

“We exist first as part of the infrastructure that keeps artists living in Glasgow, and not moving to London... half our exhibitions are aimed [at this group] and the other half are for international artists who we think will be interesting for our general and arts audiences”. CCA

“We provide a professional museum environment for our artists and allow them to show work to a very broad audience in a public context, exposing their work to new audiences, often alongside

⁴ The Seven Principles of Standards in Public Life, Nolan Report, Committee on Standards in Public Life, May 1995, www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2

national and international contemporary and historical work. We support them in making new work and often allow them to work with our collections.” The Collection

“We bring to Scotland the work of some of the world’s most important artists... We make exhibitions, commissions and publications directly in collaboration with artists.” Fruitmarket Gallery

“Working developmentally with artists is central to our ethos.” g39

“We often say our work is like an equilateral triangle: it’s about our vision as an organisation, the artists’ vision as creators and the audience experience.” Impressions Gallery

“Artists are at the centre of what we do, along with audiences. Everything we do centres around these two constituencies, and we see our work as mediating and creating insight between these two agencies... We believe that one of the best ways of supporting an artist’s practice is to give them the opportunity to make new work.” Modern Art Oxford

“We invest in artists at the beginning of their careers... Our Communal Knowledge programme invites artists to produce work that is specifically engaging with people in the local community.” The Showroom

“We see our role as supporting artists who want to make experimental work and by doing so, move their practice on. Our ethos is to work exclusively with emerging and mid-career artists based in the UK who are at a crucial point in their career.” Whitstable Biennale

Importantly, some case studies also recognise other ways in which artists bring value to the operations and governance of their organisations.

“The majority of the activity we run is delivered by artists. Many of our freelance team and production people are artists, as are a lot of our staff, and three members of our Board of Trustees.” Fabrica

“We have artists at every level of our organisation from volunteers all the way through to the Board.” Whitstable Biennale

Selection of exhibitions

Within the case studies overall, there are clear statements about how exhibition and commissioning programmes come about.

“We look at artists at all stages of their career. We look around Scotland and think ‘who is ready for this opportunity? Who would really benefit from the opportunity from doing a large show with us?’... We do a lot of studio visits and research who is doing what... We try to make judgements that are not based on taste, but on whether there is a significant body of work that would benefit from being exhibited in our space.” CCA

“Artists are selected for commissions because their practice relates to exhibition themes or addresses overlooked aspects of the collection.” The Collection

“We’ve also been involved in European partnership projects for twelve years which have largely been about curatorial knowledge exchange so artists have also been sought via that route... Other times there are specific artists we want to work with and we fundraise specifically to realise their projects.” Fabrica

“The curatorial vision that underpins the exhibition programme celebrates new thinking and embraces internationalism... Artists are selected whose work meet the standards of the gallery in terms of excellence in creativity and technical skill. The lead-in time for exhibition planning is

between two and three years, and as a result our exhibitions emerge from a long process of relationship building with the artists and curators.” Fruitmarket Gallery

“We look at whether artists have a serious intent about pursuing a career... It’s less to do with their track-record, their education or where they’ve exhibited previously. It’s what their aspirations are, and the clarity and depth of thought, or how innovative they are in interrogating their practice... Often artists are recommended, and we also actively look for talent, by going to degree shows.” g39

“We don’t differentiate between local, regional, national or internationally-based artists. It doesn’t matter where you’re from. It’s always about the practice.” Impressions Gallery

“Commissioning is a core part of our programme and is even a defining feature of our work with artists.” Modern Art Oxford

“I follow a lot of artists, do a lot of research and have ongoing conversations with artists. Usually, a ‘moment’ will emerge where it will make sense that a particular artist fits into the programme... usually the relationship is initiated by us. With our main exhibition programme, generally the artist shouldn’t have had a solo show in London before, and shouldn’t be commercially represented.” The Showroom

“There are three curators, myself [Sue Jones], Kate Phillimore and Emma Leach. We always have a long-list of artists we’re interested in and keep building up a picture of what they’re doing in their work. We visit exhibitions and studios across the UK.” Whitstable Biennial

“It’s a mixture of visiting exhibitions and artists’ studios, networking with colleagues nationally and internationally, knowledge gained through portfolio sessions and looking at unsolicited proposals.” Impressions Gallery

Some organisations also set out on their websites submission guidance for artists:

Fabrica

“The artists commissioned for Fabrica’s main exhibition programme tend to be mid-career with a track record of working on a large-scale, ideally with a site-specific approach. We have exhibited artists who are based in the UK, and those based abroad. We select these artists through a variety of methods, including open calls for submissions, limited calls through our curatorial networks, as part of a co-commissioning process (where we might be offered the opportunity to work with a specific artist through partnership with another arts organisation), and through following the work of a particular artist over a period of time until there is a relevant opportunity to fundraise specifically to work with them on a major project. Very occasionally we have commissioned artists as the result of an unsolicited proposal. If you wish to submit an unsolicited proposal please see [the guidelines](#).”

g39

“g39 invites submissions from artists throughout the year. We are interested in viewing and discussing work from contemporary visual artists – it helps us keep up to date with contemporary practice and to understand different standpoints. We have always tried to be responsive and open, supportive and risk-taking in our programme. As an artist-run space the way we programme reflects the ways artists produce work.

We encourage submissions that promote an artist-curator dialogue, rather than presenting us with a specific finalised proposal. Ideally your submission should give us an idea of your practice and projects over at least the next 12 months. Unfortunately some submissions won’t be right for us for a variety of reasons. However when a submission does engage us it may be acted on straight away or it may stay in our minds until it connects with another. That’s because we want our exhibitions to emerge from the work, rather than making the work fit a predetermined exhibition idea. That’s how it is with our submissions policy. We hold on to work until connections become apparent; it stays on record and is reviewed twice a year.

We also accept submissions from curators and groups, but these should be written in response to our curatorial policy. One of the aims of g39 is to curate a mix of work from emerging artists and more established names, and also to combine artists from Wales with artists from further afield. A clearer outline of the Artistic Policy can be downloaded [from g39's website].

Submitted materials will be reviewed twice yearly and copies will be held on file at the address above. Successful applications will be contacted after these curatorial reviews. We regret that we cannot enter into discussion about submitted proposals until that time."

Impressions Gallery

"Impressions Gallery welcomes exhibition proposals from photographers and artists, although please be aware that our programme is scheduled 2 to 3 years in advance. If you would like to submit a proposal to Impressions Gallery then please do so in accordance with [the guidelines](#).

Our programme: Impressions Gallery supports and exhibits the best in original contemporary photography and we show work that gets people looking, thinking and talking. The gallery has a mixed programme of exhibitions which are either curated in-house, produced in partnership with other galleries or toured from other venues. As we are proactive in going out to find, research and develop work, exhibitions originating from unsolicited proposals are not often included in the programme but we are happy to receive them and each proposal is given careful consideration.

Proposals: Impressions Gallery's curatorial team meets regularly to view all proposals submitted. Where appropriate, a number of these may progress to the overall Selection Panel Meeting, which is generally held annually and consists of the wider programming team plus those members of our Board of Trustees who are also photographic practitioners. There are no specific deadlines for submissions and we are happy to receive proposals on a rolling basis and keep them until the next meeting."

Qualities of successful exhibitions

Overall, the case studies articulate the context for mutuality and synergy between venue, artist and audiences.

"Having sufficient funds to match the ambition of the artist and produce what the artist wants. A good relationship with artists is when they feel happy and supported. If that happens, then it shows in our work and the audience can feel that." CCA

"A successful exhibition for all parties is based on trust and a degree of negotiation and compromise to achieve mutuality. The gallery must trust the artist to make the kind of work that achieves their artistic ambitions... and in return the artist must trust the institution to interpret and install the work." The Collection

"We believe in supporting the artist to present a body of work and in supporting the public to engage with it." Fruitmarket Gallery

"Some of the most powerful things we do are concerned with connecting the mind of the artist to the imagination of the visitor, and creating a climate of mutual respect in the gallery based on genuine curiosity and openness." Fabrica

"Number one: that the artist is challenged and they come up with something they are critically, intellectually and technically satisfied with. Two, if we are able to maximise exposure to new audiences. We look for partnerships with every exhibition and each partnership brings in new visitors." g39

“Artists and audiences are at the heart of what we do. When we programme we want to meet the aspiration and career development of artists, but also to raise the aspirations of our audiences.” Impressions Gallery.

“We really do value and assess our work as an organisation by the feedback we get from the artists we work with. We invest in the artist heavily and we are attuned to the messages that we get back and the quality of the relationship we develop.” Modern Art Oxford

“It’s the quality of the work that’s at the heart of it. It’s important that our visitors have a depth of experience.” Whitstable Biennale.

Payment to artists

Regardless of the level of grant aid or turnover of the organisation there is openness and clarity throughout all case studies when they are describing the detail of arrangements with exhibiting artists. This includes both stating their strategy for fees and what they are currently paying, and describing the nature of other support that is available.

“We have £16,000 for each solo exhibition. Around £5,000 - £6,000 goes to front-of-house costs. £1,000 is the artist fee, and the rest goes into production. There is generally about £9,000 to make the work and to provide the appropriate gallery context. We work fairly collaboratively with the artist and are upfront about the budget. The artist can influence how it is spent.” CCA

“We offer a set fee of £150 for loaning existing work or number of works and cover transport and insurance. An artist creating new work for a solo exhibition will receive a fee of between £300 and £3,000. If the work will be bought after the show for our collection, the fee will include the purchase cost... [For the biennial open show] all artists who are chosen receive a fee of £350 for taking part and a stipend for materials of £250 to create a new work for the show. We cover transport of work and all artists’ transport.” The Collection

“If we do an open call, we ask for a short expression of interest. We pay shortlisted artists £200-£300 to work it up. Artists get paid for developing the creative content of the work and the fee will reflect that, normally ranging £2,000-£6,000. Installation costs and materials are extra.” Fabrica

“Each artist is paid an Exhibition Payment Right of £1,000. Should new work be commissioned, the artist is paid an additional commissioning fee (currently £5,000) and production costs up to a mutually-agreed maximum are paid by the gallery. Should the nature of an existing work require that it be fabricated anew for the exhibition, these costs are met by the gallery. Expenses incurred during preparation of the exhibition and during installation are paid by the gallery, including travel, subsistence and accommodation. The gallery pays for work to be framed, packed, transported and insured.” Fruitmarket Gallery

“We always pay an exhibition fee – minimum of £100 and up to £600. We cover production and installation costs and technical support. For an artist’s talk, we pay fee, travel and accommodation expenses.” g39

“A commissioning fee... is never less than £1,000. We pay for all production costs... We pay travel and accommodation and we pay for an artist’s talk or other contribution to the learning programme. If the exhibition tours, we pay a fee of £300.” Impressions Gallery

“We work with artists in different ways but we always pay them. It would be inconceivable for us not to do so. We always offer a commissioning fee... we also cover the costs of a publication.... We commission and produce the work... We cover accommodation and expenses. A minimum fee is probably about £1,000 and a commissioning fee might go as high as £10,000....” Modern Art Oxford

“Our average fee is about £2,000 for a commission. We are always transparent about our fee and we show the artist the budget upfront. We also cover expenses, materials, installation and technical costs.” The Showroom

Our new commissions are usually £1,000-£5,000. We try to be transparent with the artists about the funding we have and how budgets are drawn up for their work. We always pay a fee and we work together with artists on apportioning budgets.” Whitstable Biennale

Why pay artists?

The case study organisations were asked to articulate why they believed payment to artists is important.

“I know that some galleries don’t pay artists, and I can’t see how that can be justified because we expect to pay for everything else. Not paying artists is not an option because it wouldn’t deliver quality projects, and it would be immoral because it wouldn’t pay the person who makes the creative content.” Fabrica

“Paying artists helps to ensure equality of opportunity for artists, however they are developing their career, and helps to ensure the widest possible range of art for audiences.” Fruitmarket Gallery

“It’s important that people understand that the publicly-funded galleries and the artists who exhibit in them are all professionals, with considerable expertise and years of experience.” Impressions Gallery

“Our overriding value is that artists have to be paid as professionals because they are producing forms of visual knowledge and experience in the world, and they have to be paid and valued for that.” Modern Art Oxford

“The key thing is time and in order to have that time, artists need to be paid. That really does transform the opportunity for artists.” The Showroom

Case Study Summary Table

Summary of financial and audience data gathered from case study galleries

Name	Audience reach	Annual grant aid *	Turnover	Fee range	Funding
CCA	296,000	£640,000	£ 1.01m	£1,000	RFO, Creative Scotland
The Collection	140,000	£71,411		£150-£3,000	NPO, ACE
Fabrica	42,612	£177,575	£530,091	£2,000-£6,000	NPO, ACE
Fruitmarket Gallery	154,000	£666,666	£1.04m	£1,000-£5,000	RFO, Creative Scotland
g39	6,500	£115,500**	£283,333	£100-£600	RFO ACW
Impressions Gallery	55,000	£202,281		£1,000+	NPO, ACE
Modern Art Oxford	100,000	£892,347	£1.5m	£1,000-£10,000	NPO, ACE
The Showroom	15,000	£127,894	£330,000	£2,000	NPO, ACE
Whitstable Biennial	40-60,000	N/A	£90,000 - £220,000	£1,000-£5,000	Project-funded, ACE

NB Where no figure was supplied by a gallery as part of the case study interview this has been left out of the table summary.

**Taken from most up to date arts council figures*

*** Includes revenue funding, lottery and other sources.*

RFO – Regularly Funded Organisation, Creative Scotland and Arts Council of Wales

NPO – National Portfolio Organisation, Arts Council England



a-n's mission is to stimulate and support contemporary visual arts practice and affirm the value of artists in society. Founded in 1980, a-n is the UK's largest visual arts membership body encompasses 19,000 practitioners and creative freelancers within fine art, applied art, live art and moving image, sound and text-based practices, digital and animation, curatorial, participatory, public and community arts. a-n publishes *The Code of Practice for the Visual Arts*, fees guidance and toolkits, and conducts on-going research into artists' practices and livelihoods. Through **AIR: Artists Interaction and Representation**, the professional needs and artistic aspirations of a-n's members are represented and impact on consultations and debate on developments in arts and cultural policy, arts education and social change.

Appendix: Paying Artists Case Studies

The Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA)

About CCA

The Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA) in Glasgow operates on what is now an unusual model. Established as The Third Eye Centre in 1973, it obtained a large building in 1975. Third Eye Centre closed in 1991 and CCA opened in 1992 in the same building, with a similar mission but focused more on contemporary visual arts. Finding the building too large for their own needs, CCA offered space to other arts organisations and now co-ordinates a range of events and activities, as well as its own core programme.

A Regularly Funded Organisation, CCA will receive nearly £2m from Creative Scotland over the next three years. Within an annual turnover of £1.01m, Glasgow City Council provides £78,000, with other income coming from rental income and trusts and foundations. CCA had 296,000 visitors in the last year.

“CCA is quite a large building and is a hub for a lot of activity that is coordinated by us. The building is much bigger than we are, and there is too much space for our programme so we give the space to other organisations that are compatible with the programme. Lots of organisations and people use the building and that is important to us. Mostly we give space to artists and organisations for free, which enables us to have a cinema, two shops, (one an independent art book shop, and the other a design shop), and a café. We also offer subsidised rent to seventeen other organisations, a mixture of bands, dance, and literature. It’s a mixed economy. We provide front-of-house and technical staff in return for their programme. We describe it as open source and it’s all not-for-profit.

We exist for several reasons. One is to provide part of the infrastructure for artists and audiences in Glasgow. We’re publicly funded so there is a clear commitment to provide momentum, activity, and the work to justify that. It’s also not a wealthy community so it makes sense to share resources, support each other and work in a way where we cross-fertilise each other. There is a lot of mutual trust and a lot of people working together on very limited budgets. Profit would destroy the whole system.

Creative Scotland is really supportive and understanding of our model, but as our public expenditure is spread across so many organisations it provides a real platform for support for the arts.”

Artistic programme

“We have our own core programme and we’re interested in contemporary visual arts. Between us and Intermedia Gallery, which is a gallery space on our top floor funded directly by the City Council, we do fifteen exhibitions a year, nine from Intermedia and six from us. There are continuous exhibitions throughout the year.

Our exhibition policy has different strands and we’re about to put some information about it on the website. We exist first as part of the infrastructure that keeps artists living in Glasgow and not moving to London. So half of our exhibitions a year are aimed at artists who live and work in Glasgow. The other half are for international artists who we think will be interesting for our general and arts audiences. We like to commission new work for each exhibition. This year when we showed ‘Speaking in Tongues’ with Susan Hiller, Pavel Bůchler and Sonia Boyce, we had some new works from them.

We look at artists at all stages of their career. We look around Scotland and think ‘who is ready for this opportunity? Who would really benefit from the opportunity of doing a large show with us?’ We can be a really useful platform for people because we have an international profile. We do a lot of studio visits, and research who is doing what. We try to make judgements that are not based on taste, but on whether there is a significant body of work that would benefit from being exhibited in our space. Our exhibition area consists of three galleries, so artists can really spread out and we can show a significant body of work. Our production budget enables artists to produce work to fill that space. Exhibiting with us is significant, especially as we have an international European profile.

We also have fifteen residencies a year and a flat where artists can stay, living and working in the building every day which is very important to us. We have an outreach programme which has been very partial due to lack of resources. We’ve been responding to the general health issues in Glasgow and have had a project of planting and growing in areas where people are too distant to come to CCA. We’re talking to people through food, using methods like guerrilla gardening, talking to pupils in schools, having artists doing residencies on allotments.”

What are the qualities and conditions that make a successful exhibition for artist, venue and visitors?

“Having sufficient funds to match the ambition of the artist and produce what the artist wants. A good relationship with the artist, where they feel happy and supported. And if that happens, then it shows in the work and the audience can feel that. Our audiences tend to like what we do.”

What deal do you offer to artists?

“If it’s a solo show, we have £16,000 for each exhibition. Around £5,000 – £6,000 goes to front-of-house costs. £1,000 is the artist’s fee, and the rest goes into production. There is generally about £9,000 to make the work and to provide the appropriate gallery context. We work fairly collaboratively with the artist and are upfront about the budget. The artist can influence how it is spent. We do three events per show and we ask artists what kind of events they would like. So for example, with the last exhibition we had a film screening for one event, and for another, we had three people come in to talk about witches and witchcraft. We try to produce an essay for each show, as well as interpretation. With group shows, say of three artists, we just divide everything into three – £350 fee per artist, and the £9,000 is divided into three. Within the total programme spend of £183,172, artists’ fees account for 22%.”

Is there anything you would like to do differently in the way you work with artists? What are the barriers to implementing any changes?

“I think the obvious thing is that we would like more money to pay artists, and to do more for our artists. I’d love to work with more artists – Glasgow has a very large artist population. We’d also love to work further afield and to profile our artists further afield, in Brazil for example. We’d like the quality of our artist’s shows to travel more, if only metaphorically. We need to get out there more, internationally, and tell people – curators, other artists and our peers - about ourselves. We need to start being part of a bigger world.”

Comment on Paying Artists Campaign

“I’m happy to put my name to this. But I think payment is only part of the bigger context, and you need to have other things as well to encourage diversity and equal opportunities. Pay is only part of a wider effective solution.”

www.cca-glasgow.com

Interview with Director Francis McKee, November 2014

The Collection

About The Collection

The Collection in Lincoln, that brings together the Usher Gallery and an award-winning archaeology museum, is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO). It shows contemporary fine and decorative arts exhibitions including the biennial OPEM that are presented alongside historic and local-interest exhibitions. A smaller gallery presents work by local artists. Last year, the gallery attracted some 140,000 visitors. The NPO grant for 2015/16 will be almost £72,000.

Artistic programme

“The exhibition policy which supports county council and Arts Council ambitions aims to widen access to and audiences for the arts. There are four major shows a year including a thematic show, a first museum show for a young artist, a collection-based show and a new media exhibition. There is a biennial open submission and a two-yearly rehang of the collection. Overall, The Collection presents work by 17-35 artists annually. The programme also includes education activities, tours, talks and practical workshops such as life drawing.

The Collection has a particular interest in new media work and is a key partner in the Frequency festival. We interpret this as work which could not have been produced without use of new digital technologies, rather than work which is displayed through technology. For example we have displayed a vinyl record for which the music was created using GPS location technology, and sculpture created with 3d scanners.”

What qualities make a successful exhibition for the artist, venue and visitors?

“A successful exhibition for all parties is based on trust and a degree of negotiation and compromise to achieve a mutual understanding. The gallery must trust the artist to make the kind of work that achieves their artistic ambitions and should give artists to access to the collections and to materials to produce the work in the way they envision.

In return, the artist must be able to trust the institution to interpret and install the art work based on a professional knowledge of the expectations and interests of audiences and in awareness of the security needs and risks attached to exhibiting in a public museum space. It’s important too that artists come to understand that although sometimes the texts produced may not deal with the nuances they see in their own practice, the institution does know the most appropriate way to interpret contemporary art for their audience.

The audience’s experience of the work is as equally important as the artist’s. The best show for the audience is one that enables people to access the ideas in the work and to come to their own understanding and opinions. Thus, we strongly support use of labels and interpretation materials within our exhibitions, and artists exhibiting with us do so on this understanding.”

How do you select artists to work with?

“The main selection criteria for the artists is the quality of the work and its relevance to an exhibition theme. Artists are selected for commissions because their practice relates to exhibition themes or addresses overlooked aspects of the collection. Themes may relate to local festivals and events such as Frequency and the Magna Carta anniversary. As we like to bring in different voices and opinions on topics, we often look internationally.

The small courtyard gallery specifically for local artists and community groups is offered as an opportunity-only basis. In the future, NPO funding will ensure a small budget to support artists to use this space.”

What are the benefits of exhibiting at your venue for artists?

“We provide a professional museum environment for our artists and allow them to show work to a very broad audience in a public context, exposing their work to new audiences, often alongside national and international contemporary and historical work. We support them in making new work and often allow them to work with our collections. We often work with them to create texts and interpretative information which may challenge their own opinions of their work and allow them to consider and reflect on how their work is presented to audiences.

For artists showing with us we offer a set fee of £150 for loaning existing work or number of works and cover transport and insurance. The fees for commissioned exhibitions depend on the nature of the work, scale of the show and our budget. For example, an artist creating new work for a solo exhibition will receive a fee of between £300 and £3,000. If the work will be bought after the show for our collection, the fee will include the purchase cost. The budget for material and presentation costs are also agreed before the commission has begun. In addition, we cover travel, hotels, a per diem rate £25 for installation days, technical support for installation and the promotion of the show.

If the artist undertakes workshops or public lectures, the fees are in line with art council rates either incorporated into the overall figure payable to the artist or – in the case of talks for students – paid by the educational institution.

In some cases, we undertake studio visits prior to mounting solo shows and provide critique throughout the making process.

Our main way of working with local and regional artists is the biennial open submission exhibition OPEM, which specifically aims to support talent development. The judges who change every two years select works solely from submitted images. All artists who are chosen receive a fee of £350 for taking part and a stipend for materials of £250 to create a new work for the show. We cover transport of work and all artists’ transport. Our technical team supports artists whilst work or projects are installed. Studio visits, being interviewed and filmed and commission of critical writing form part of the package of benefits attached to participation in the open. We work with a local trust to purchase work from OPEM for the gallery’s permanent collection and for presentation in other exhibitions, alongside international artists.”

Is there anything you’d like to do differently in the way you work with artists?

“We wouldn’t like to change how we work with artists but think it’s valuable to point out that when budgets are limited, it is flexibility and good planning that can make more resources available. For instance, willingness to reuse existing plinths or screens, understanding what systems are needed to display a work or openness to using one that is already available often present significant savings on a budget, which can be redirected into other areas such as fees, etc.”

Comment on Paying Artists Campaign

“We fully support the Paying artists campaign and the statement that artist working with publicly-funded institutions should be paid for their services, and that volunteers should not incur costs.”

www.thecollectionmuseum.com

Interview with Curator Ashley Gallant, October 2014

Fabrica

About Fabrica

Fabrica is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. An artists’ initiative, it opened in 1996 as an arts commissioning and exhibiting organisation. It operates from the Holy Trinity Church, a redundant chapel near The Lanes, a busy shopping and tourist area in Brighton & Hove. In addition

to Arts Council England support, Fabrica currently receives funding from the EU (about 30% of its total income), Brighton & Hove City Council, and generates income through venue hire.

Turnover in 2012-2013 was £530,091. In 2013, there were 42,612 visitors to the gallery programme, with audiences for Kaarina Kaikkonen's outdoor work, co-commissioned with Brighton Festival, estimated as reaching an additional 278,400 people.

"We're a registered charity with educational objectives. Our mission is to increase access to and understanding of contemporary art and craft for a broad a range of people.

We translate that as using our sensibilities and knowledge (from being an artist, or working closely with artists) to support other artists to make ambitious works for the space at Fabrica. We try to produce installations and a programme of related events that will appeal to as broad an audience as possible. To achieve this we collaborate closely with the artists we commission, so that their vision for the piece is never compromised. We have an absolute conviction that what artists do - how they think and that their approach is really interesting to almost everyone. Some of the most powerful things we do are concerned with connecting the mind of the artist to the imagination of the visitor, and creating a climate of mutual respect in the gallery based on genuine curiosity and openness.

There are five main threads to our work:

1. Commissioning installations for the space.
2. A programme of gallery events, including commissioned residencies integrated into our main exhibition programme.
3. A volunteer development programme
4. Provision of resources and events for artists' professional development.
5. Event hires, which brings in income but also uses the building as alternative point of engagement with potential audiences for our exhibitions.

There are several benefits for artists exhibiting at Fabrica. One is getting paid! The second is having a team of people who really work hard to realise an artist's vision. Each of our exhibition commissions cost around £30,000 to produce. It's quite a lot of money to find per project so once we take an artist on, we want the project to be the best it possibly can be. We want to ensure that the work looks great in the space, and that we reach the widest possible audience. That the artist doesn't have to fight to get the work presented really well."

Artistic programme

"We do three major commissions each year, which are interspersed with smaller projects.

We ask artists to respond to the space, rather than being guided by particular art forms. Over the years we've become more focused on philosophical or humanities-based themes than the development of specific art forms, although new work will always incorporate current technology and reflect art form trends.

There is a strong photography, film and digital scene locally, and historically we've worked a lot with lens-based and interactive work using digital media. Consequently we have developed considerable technical expertise in running quite complex projects.

We are also interested in sculptural work with a strong material presence, because this kind of work has the potential to engage people on an immediate level. Our partnerships with galleries in mainland Europe have introduced us to artists working sculpturally, on a large scale. We also have a long-standing co-commissioning partnerships with Photoworks/ Brighton Photo Biennial and Brighton Festival.

The other really important way we work with artists is through the artist residencies that run alongside the main exhibitions. Once we know what the main exhibition will be we put a lot of effort into finding an artist who will nestle with the work or its wider themes. The role of the artist-in-residence is not to interpret the exhibition but to follow their own line of enquiry in relation to it – to illuminate the key ideas in the exhibition through the lens of another artist’s perception and practice. There are no requirements to produce a piece of work with the residency - it needs to be an open-ended line of enquiry.

We also run ‘Making Space’, where an artist applies to use the space at Fabrica for something they want to do. We allocate three days between shows in a mid-week block. They apply and we make a selection, but we don’t pay fees for this.”

Fabrica’s [exhibition policy](#) is published online.

How do you select artists for your main exhibition programme?

“For the main exhibition programme, it might be through an open call. We’ve also been involved in European partnership projects for twelve years which have largely been about curatorial knowledge exchange so artists have also been sought via that route, through partner recommendation. Other times there are particular artists that we know we want to work with and we fundraise specifically to realise their projects. If people send in an unsolicited proposal we often don’t follow them up. There are only two occasions when we have shown work through an independent artist proposal.

In terms of what makes a strong application to an open call, ultimately it’s a written format, so good writing does come into it; how well an artist communicates their vision, although you can’t talk up weak work. Track record is also important. Has the artist previously worked at this scale? Have they worked on this theme before? Those that have are able to illuminate the subject in ways that others’ aren’t able to. Artists who are working with a particular subject become experts so they are able to talk with great knowledge about it.”

What is the deal you offer to artists?

“If we do an open call, we ask for a short expression of interest. We pay shortlisted artists somewhere between £200 and £300 to work it up. It’s hard to select somebody without interview and I don’t think I’d ever do that for an exhibition unless it was a re-presentation of an existing work that I’d already seen. Artists get paid for developing the creative content of the work and the fee will reflect that, normally ranging from £2000 - £6000. Installation costs and materials are extra. We give promotional support through social media and other marketing, and we ask artists to feed into that by providing or disseminating contacts that we might approach, particularly for press. We expect the artist to engage in a communications process with key people. We will also provide accommodation for the installation period or if they’re giving a talk. In some cases we commission people to write about the work, maybe an academic or other subject-based expert.

How do you select artists for residencies?

It’s not a cut-and-dried process but because our main exhibition programme is produced by artists not living in the region, or even necessarily in the UK, we’ve tried to make the residencies for artists living relatively nearby. It’s partly about developing relationships with a regional artists’ constituency, and positioning those artists, bringing a different sort of practice to the fore. I have an interest in gallery education and so invited artists I knew through that field but we now have a cohort of artists we can draw upon to suggest other artists. We haven’t advertised for the residencies yet.

We pay £150 a day with an overall budget of £1,500-£4,000, depending on the length of the residency, plus a small expenses budget. Residencies might span six weeks – four months, although residency artists work on a part-time basis.

What role do artists play in the life of the gallery?

“Without artists work we wouldn’t have an organisation.

We work with living artists for the exhibition programme and artists are key to the education programme. The majority of the activity we run is delivered by artists. Many of our freelance team and production people are artists, as are a lot of our staff, and three members of our Board of Trustees.

Comment on Paying Artists Campaign

“I know that some galleries don’t pay artists, and I can’t see how that can be justified because we expect to pay for everything else.

For a gallery like Fabrica we are commissioning artists to make large pieces of work. They need to be paid for their time, and to be supported. Not paying artists is not an option because it wouldn’t deliver quality projects, and it would be immoral because it wouldn’t pay the person who makes the creative content.”

fabrica.org.uk

Interview with Liz Whitehead, Co-director of Fabrica, May 2014

The Fruitmarket Gallery

About The Fruitmarket Gallery

Established in 1984 and based in Edinburgh, The Fruitmarket Gallery has a long track record of exhibiting the work of modern and contemporary artists. It presents three or four exhibitions a year, with accompanying publications and learning and interpretation programme. The Gallery regularly commissions new works from artists, and organises a dynamic programme of talks, seminars, panel discussions and learning events. It also runs a café and Edinburgh’s only specialist art bookshop.

The Gallery’s turnover is around £1.04m a year, of which around 50% is supported through Creative Scotland. The remaining amount is financed through fundraising from trusts and foundations, individuals and companies, as well as earned income from its café and bookshop. It attracts around 154,000 visitors a year.

“The Fruitmarket Gallery brings to Scotland the work of some of the world’s most important artists. We recognise that art can change lives and we offer an intimate encounter with art for free. We make exhibitions, commissions and publications directly in collaboration with artists. We celebrate new thinking, and offer an international platform for artists, curators and writers, whether they have made their reputation here or abroad. The gallery welcomes all audiences. We make it easy for everyone to engage with art, encouraging questions and supporting debate.

The gallery prioritises six objectives in two key strands within the creative programme – exhibitions, commissions and publications; and learning, interpretation, equalities and diversity.

Our guiding values are:

- To pursue a commitment to the presentation of modern and contemporary art, bringing art to a wide audience for free.
- To pursue a policy of innovation and excellence.
- To pursue a policy of interpretation and learning which makes it easy for everyone to engage with art, encouraging questions and supporting debate.

- To take action on equalities and diversity in all the work that we do at The Fruitmarket Gallery.”

Artistic programme

“The programme consists of a mix of solo exhibitions (balanced between Scottish, British and International artists), and group exhibitions, with one international and cross-generational group exhibition typically programmed each year. Solo exhibitions are predominantly of the work of living artists, with the work of ‘classic modern’ artists shown when the work is of exceptional interest to artists and audiences now. Most exhibitions are curated by Fiona Bradley, the Gallery’s Director, and are organised in-house, the exceptions being classic modern exhibitions and group exhibitions, which are curated by invited artists, curators and scholars, welcoming new voices into the programme to ensure vibrancy and diversity.

We aim to commission new work as part of every exhibition, when appropriate and when funds can be found. When an artist’s ambitions extend beyond the Gallery, temporary and permanent public works may be commissioned although these always require additional funding. Since 2003, The Fruitmarket Gallery has commissioned or co-commissioned substantial new work from Claire Barclay, Anna Barriball, Christine Borland, Ingrid Calame, Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, Nathan Coley, Martin Creed, Willie Doherty, Cai Guo-Qiang, Alex Hartley Louise Hopkins, Tania Kovats, Toby Paterson, Simon Patterson, Lucy Skaer and Marijke Van Warmerdam. Martin Creed’s *Work 1059, The Scotsman Steps*, commissioned by The Fruitmarket Gallery in 2011, has become a much-loved local landmark.

We always publish books to accompany exhibitions generated by the Gallery, recognising this as a vital support and resource for artists and audiences, and as a way to extend the reach and influence of the exhibition programme. The gallery runs an art bookshop, providing a context for its own publications and a resource for artists and audiences.

Learning is integral to the Gallery’s creative programme, and over 3,000 people each year take part in our learning programme which includes a weekly programme of art projects and events developed by and for young people, and programme of talks, seminars and panel discussions for adults. We offer a layered approach to interpretation, enabling visitors to choose for themselves the degree of interpretation they require. Interpretation tools include information panels, extended labels, a free education guide, an online film, an artist’s film, information assistants and exhibition publications.”

How are artists selected?

“The curatorial vision that underpins the exhibition programme celebrates new thinking and embraces internationalism, offering an international platform for artists, curators and writers, whether they have made their reputation here or abroad. Artists are selected whose work meet the standards of the gallery in terms of excellence in creativity and technical skill. The lead-in time for exhibition planning is between two and three years, and as a result our exhibitions emerge from a long process of relationship building with the artists and curators.”

What are the qualities that make a successful exhibition for artist, venue and visitors?

“We believe in supporting the artist to present a body of work and in supporting the public to engage with it. By presenting a consistently excellent and diverse programme, ensuring visitors can engage regardless of their level of knowledge, and by encouraging questions and supporting debate, we have a loyal and growing audience, who enjoy the intimate, informal and engaging experience of art we offer.”

What deal do you offer to artists?

“The Fruitmarket Gallery has a formalised standard agreement on artists’ fees. Currently, each artist is paid an Exhibition Payment Right of £1,000. Should new work be commissioned as part of the exhibition, the artist is paid an additional commissioning fee (currently £5,000) and production costs up to a mutually-agreed maximum are paid by the gallery. Should the nature of an existing work exhibited require that it be fabricated anew for the exhibition, these costs are met by the gallery. Expenses incurred during the preparation of the exhibition and during installation are paid by the gallery, including travel, subsistence and accommodation.

The gallery pays for all work to be framed, packed, transported by recognised fine art transporters and insured. Technical support and advice during the preparation of the exhibition is given by the Gallery Manager, an experienced art handler who runs an experienced team of art handlers. Should an installation require an outside specialist (for example, a film or AV specialist, or fabricator), they are engaged at the gallery’s expense.

The Press and Marketing Manager works closely with the artist on a promotional, press and marketing campaign for each exhibition. Typically, the gallery produces printed promotional material including a poster, preview card and gallery bulletin. We also produce a publication to accompany the exhibition, which is designed in-house in close consultation with the artist and distributed internationally. Writers for the publication are selected in consultation with the artist. The artist receives fifty complimentary copies of the publication, with additional copies available for sale to the artist at cost price. Professional photographic installation shots of the exhibition are also made available to the artist at no cost to them.

Any talks the artist may give as part of the learning or interpretation programme are subject to a separate agreement, and involve a separate fee.”

Is there anything you would like to do differently in the way you work with artists? What are the barriers to implementing any changes?

“As a publicly-funded venue, a key role is to support artists in their careers and to bring their work to audiences. Fruitmarket Gallery fundraises beyond its core funding to support its programming. Barriers include money (we are publicly funded for around 50% of what we do, and must raise the rest through earned income and fundraising); time and capacity (we are a relatively small staff, working to full capacity).”

Comment on Paying Artists Campaign

“Paying artists helps to ensure equality of opportunity for artists, however they are developing their career, and helps to ensure access to the widest possible range of art for audiences.”

fruitmarket.co.uk/

From material prepared by The Fruitmarket Gallery, November 2014

g39

About g39

g39 was initiated by artists in 1998, and has always been based in Cardiff city centre. In 2011, the organisation moved into a 6700 square foot space, making it one of the largest dedicated visual arts venues in Wales. It exhibits around twenty artists a year, 60% of whom are Welsh or Wales-based. Equally important to its operation is WARP (Wales Artist Resource Programme) for artists professional development, which is now in its sixth year and represents 50% of g39’s activity.

The organisation has been revenue funded by Arts Council Wales since 2004, and also receives Lottery funding. Together, this accounts for 60% of its annual £170,000 income, with the rest achieved from earned income and support from Trusts and Foundations.

“We describe ourselves as being part gallery, part resource, and part community hub. Those are the three basic ingredients of our practice. The exhibition programme is a very large strand of what we do, attracting about 6,500 visitors a year, but our provision of resources for artists is now about 50% of our activity. This incorporates WARP, our formal artists’ professional development programme which we’ve been running since 2008. It includes artists’ training and advice, discursive events like symposiums, training and talks, and also the Library. Our Library was just 30 books in 2008 but has grown organically and exponentially since then, especially when we took on the entire library of SAFLE [the public art development organisation for Wales] when it closed a few years ago. So it’s now pretty extensive!

The community hub aspect is the least tangible but particularly significant. Working developmentally with artists is central to our ethos, so it’s often the artists’ community that makes up g39’s core audience. They are the people who we’re exhibiting, and who we’re delivering to, and whose needs inform our direction.

But possibly the most important benefit for our exhibiting artists is encouragement to push their practice beyond their comfort zone. By doing that, we hope they are able to move their practice on. The overall working environment here is completely supportive and we are as happy with unexpected outcomes as expected ones when we work with artists. We also hope that an exhibition with us will be a stepping-stone to other opportunities.

We issue a formal contract to every artist we work with and always pay an exhibition fee – a minimum of £100 and up to £600. We cover production and installation costs and give complete technical support. If we programme an artist’s talk, we pay a fee, travel and accommodation expenses. In terms of marketing we start a campaign twelve weeks prior to the exhibition launch, with information given to press and listings facilities. We try to have an independent critical analysis of the show, through targeted relationships with journalists, websites and journals. We also utilise our website, social media and word of mouth, as well as producing a printed brochure.”

Artistic programme

“We have a structure of four seasons a year. Each season will comprise one main show, then a series of events, projects or other exhibitions that happen alongside that main show. We’re well known for our audio-visual work but that is less to do with a preference for that kind of work than reflecting what artists are currently making. I also have an ambition to see how we can put an emphasis on large-scale sculptural work as we have the space, and there aren’t any venues in Wales offering that opportunity to early career artists.

We try to be risk-taking in our programme and we also have a guest curator programme, with the aim of supporting independent artist-curators. We invite submissions throughout the year, with our [submissions and curatorial policies](#) published online.

Open submissions help us keep up to date with contemporary practice and to understand different standpoints. The most important aspect is that we encourage artists to submit projects in process. We’ve found the most effective way to support artists and maximise their benefit from working with us is to start the negotiation either while the work is in progress or at its very early stages. We want an ongoing conversation between the artists and g39. Doing it this way acknowledges that the artist’s strength is in the creative process, while the curator’s strength is in anticipating how the work is best presented and then interpreted to an audience. The times when we’ve felt most uncomfortable is when the artist comes to the organisation with a fait accompli and there isn’t any room for dialogue. We feel that works against the ethos of an artist-led organisation.

But submissions is only one way we source artists. Often artists are recommended, and we also actively look for talent, by going to degree shows for example. Our job is to know who is doing what and keeping our ear to the ground, and we have access to an extensive series of networks.”

How do you select artists?

“We look at whether artists have a serious intent about pursuing a career as a contemporary artist. That stands out a mile. It’s less to do with their track record, their education or where they’ve exhibited previously. It’s what their aspirations are, and the clarity and depth of their thought, or how innovative they are in interrogating their practice. We’ll look at their previous work and that will be how we make the judgements on the critical content and craft skills.

One of the aims is to curate a mix of work from emerging artists and more established names, and also to combine artists from Wales with artists from further afield. Since we started, we’ve had a policy that every year, a minimum of 60% of our exhibiting artists will be Welsh or Wales-based artists.”

What are your values?

“We really prioritise supporting artists’ practice as our core value. Everything else fits into place around that and it influences how we run the organisation. We have practitioners throughout the organisation at every level - artists volunteering with us, artists in internships and apprenticeships, artists in salaried posts, and the members of our Board are all practising artists as well.

Our mission statement talks about increasing awareness and understanding of contemporary art so we also have a responsibility to a wider audience than our artist community. We need to be erudite enough to talk about our work and the work that we’re showing in plain English. We always ask ourselves how we can encourage people to understand the sometimes difficult concepts that our artists are working with.”

What are the qualities that make a successful exhibition for artist, venue and visitors?

“Number one: that the artist is challenged, and they come up with something they are critically, intellectually and technically satisfied with. Two, if we are able to maximise exposure to new audiences. We look for partnership opportunities for every exhibition and each partnership brings in new visitors.”

Is there anything you would do differently?

“I would like to increase the way we work with artists beyond the exhibition programme, and to work on a more long-term basis with artists than we do. That would be a luxury. I am interested in how g39 might develop into an independent art school. It’s not feasible at the moment for financial reasons but it’s an exciting ambition.”

Comment on Paying Artists Campaign

“There needs to be this kind of statement and I both agree with and support it.”

www.g39.org

Interview with Co-Director Chris Brown, May 2014

Impressions Gallery

“When we programme we want to meet the aspirations and career development aims of artists, but also to raise the aspirations of our audiences.” Anne McNeill, Director, Impressions Gallery

About Impressions Gallery

Impressions Gallery was formed 42 years ago in 1972 as only the second specialist photography gallery in Europe. They were based in York until 2005, and then at the invitation of Bradford Council moved to a purpose-built building there, opening in 2007.

The gallery is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, and receives a rent subsidised by 80% from Bradford Council. The total spent on direct fees to artists varies from year to year. In 2013/14 it was around £10,000 within an expenditure budget of £211,615. The gallery attracts around 55,000 visitors a year.

“We’re a gallery that specialises in photography, formed forty-two years ago, and only the second photography gallery in Europe at the time, with The Photographers Gallery in London the first. I think we’ve succeeded in our advocacy for photography, which is now accepted as a mainstream art form. Major institutions now have a photography curator. Our starting point is helping people understand the world through photography. Broadly, we look at race, class, gender and identity. Our exhibitions have got to be challenging; they have to be thinking, intelligent. We won’t shy away from work that can be perceived to be intellectual or difficult. It’s the gallery’s role to build the bridge between the art and the audience.

It’s really important to us that everything we do is of high quality, professionally produced with expert knowledge, and interpreted in plain English. We want our exhibitions to be relevant to contemporary life and our Bradford audiences. We have high production values, which sometimes makes people think we are a wealthier organisation than we are, but we’re also committed to creating opportunities for artists.

Artists and audiences are at the heart of what we do. When we programme we want to meet the aspirations and career development aims of artists, but also to raise the aspirations of our audiences. We often give artists and photographers the first major show that they are known for. We work with them on a timeline where the artist needs to feel the work is ready, rather than working to our deadline. We work around 18-months ahead. I curate a show once every two years and we also have a Head of Programme.

We are based in a very poor city where for a large percentage of residents, English isn’t their first language. So we make real efforts to make the gallery friendly, welcoming and non-intimidating. That’s why our use of language is important. We’ve had an Arts Council England strategic touring grant where we’ve taken an exhibition around schools for two years, talking to pupils about photography. We’ve started tea in the gallery with talks about the artworks for the over seventies.”

Artistic programme

“We have a long history and track-record of exhibiting artists from non-Western backgrounds. We want to work with people who may be thought to have marginalised voices, and with new and emerging photographers, supporting them at key points in their careers. We have a new policy of revisiting mid-career British photographers and giving them a retrospective and maybe a place in the canon, for example Anna Fox and Paul Rees. We do four to five exhibitions a year, or fourteen within a three-year period.

A third of our exhibitions are commissioned and curated in-house, one third are devised in partnership with other organisations, and one third we host as touring shows. We want there to be a

diversity of curatorial voices. We have a written exhibition policy, [with a short version published online](#).

Our education and learning projects are always linked to the exhibitions. Our programme is called Look, Think, Talk, and Do, because that is what we that is what people do when they visit our gallery. It's aimed at students in further and higher and includes talks and other events. We also have the START programme for children and the arts, funded by The Princes Trust."

How do you select artists?

"It's a mixture of visiting exhibitions and artists' studios, networking with colleagues nationally and internationally, knowledge gained through portfolio sessions, and looking at unsolicited proposals. We have a programming committee where we put in recommendations, some members of whom are curators and artists. As a result of all that research, we might then approach an artist and start a dialogue. We don't differentiate between local, regional, national or internationally based artists. It doesn't matter where you're from. It's always about the practice. There are guidelines on our website about [how to submit a proposal](#).

We offer real benefits to artists. We're knowledgeable and expert – we really do know photography well. We give our artists time and we give them dialogue about their work and proposal. We are very supportive. Through our marketing plan, we try to get them press coverage. We also make 'meet the artist' films for commissioned work, and we introduce artists to other galleries, curators and photographers. We commissioned a young artist - Murray Ballard - from both his degree show in 2008 and his taking part in a workshop we ran for emerging photographers. This exhibition toured to Mexico and he was selected for the 2014 Brighton Photo Biennial."

What are the qualities/conditions that make a successful exhibition for artist, venue and visitors?

"I often say our work is like an equilateral triangle: it's about our vision as an organisation, the artist's vision as a creator, and the audience experience. We want the artist to be pleased with the work and how it has come to completion. For us, we're interested in the visitor experience as well as the quantity of visitors and their feedback. We want to think that we've done our best with the work, presenting it professionally and interpreting it well. We want visitors who live locally and regionally, as well as from further afield. We want good peer feedback and ideally, some press coverage. And in this day and age, good Arts Council sector assessments are important."

What deal do you offer artists?

"If we commission them, artists get a commissioning fee. It does vary according to the size of exhibition but it's never less than £1,000. We pay for all the production costs – printing, layout, design, framing and marketing. We pay their travel and accommodation, and we pay them to give an artist talk or any other contribution to the learning programme. They may participate in one of our Sounding Board events where photographers can ask questions and talk about their projects. We pay them for this as well. At times we've given money for pre-production. If the exhibition goes on tour, we pay a fee out of our own hire fee which is about £300. If we are bringing in an exhibition, we'll pay travel and accommodation for the exhibited artist/s to come to the opening, and if they give a talk we'll pay them £200."

Is there anything you would like to do differently in the way you work with artists? What are the barriers to implementing any changes?

"I wish we could pay them more! We want to do more exhibitions a year. The barriers are cash capacity and the fact that we are a really small team."

Comment on Paying Artists Campaign

“I wholeheartedly agree, particularly about transformational opportunities. It’s also really important that people understand that the publicly-funded galleries and the artists who exhibit in them are all professionals, with considerable expertise and years of experience.”

www.impressions-gallery.com

Interview with Director Anne McNeill, November 2014

Modern Art Oxford

“Our overriding value is that artists have to be paid as professionals because they are producing forms of visual knowledge and experience in the world, and they have to be paid and valued for that.” Paul Hobson, Director

About Modern Art Oxford

Founded in 1965, Modern Art Oxford is a visual art gallery which commissions and presents exhibitions of modern and contemporary art. It has a national and international reputation for the quality of its exhibitions and accompanying community and education programme. In recent years, it has expanded its programme to include film screenings, talks and music events. In December 2014 they will open “Love is Enough”, an exhibition curated by Jeremy Deller, which brings a major exhibition of work by William Morris and Andy Warhol to the gallery.

Funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation, it also receives financial support from Oxford City Council. Turnover is around £1.5m a year, of which around £600,000 is raised from private sources. In 2014, Modern Art Oxford spent around £500,000 on its artistic programming. More usually, the artistic programme costs £250,000 – £300,000, excluding staff costs and overheads. Of this, circa £25k – £30k is given directly to artists in fees; a figure that excludes all other exhibition expenses and costs.

“We’re located in one of the world’s great cities for thinking and learning, and we have an international reputation for a programme that is innovative and ambitious. We want to make contemporary art accessible to the widest possible audience through presentation but also participation. Artists are at the centre of what we do, along with audiences. Everything we do centres around those two constituencies, and we see our work as mediating and creating insight between these two agencies. We have about 100,000 visitors a year in recent years, but are aiming to attract 120,000 visitors this year. We will grow our audiences by 20% a year for the next three years.

Commissioning is a core part of our programme and is even a defining feature of our work with artists. We believe that one of the best ways of supporting an artist’s practice is to give them the opportunity to make new work, and a solo show in the gallery. We like to think that exhibiting with Modern Art Oxford provides significant benefits. Usually there is the opportunity to develop new work. We provide a fee for artists to make new work and help to realise it with our technical team. By exhibiting here there is access to audiences, and access to the professional development experience of working with an internationally acclaimed gallery, as well as the discourse and visibility around the world that goes with that. All of these are important to artists. We also try to think about an individual artist’s situation and needs, and, for example, we’ll target specific individuals like journalists, curators, gallerists or collectors to further benefit an artist, where this is of importance to them.

Within our main programme, we present about four or five exhibitions a year. We also programme smaller presentations from recent graduates and “new artists”, and sometimes from our archives, so in total we have between ten and twelve different scales of show a year.”

Artistic programme

“We consider ourselves to be primarily concerned with the visual art forms but we take quite an open idea of what that might be. As well as our exhibitions, we also do a wide variety of film screenings and gigs. We’re trying to get away from seeing contemporary culture as just exhibitions and are interested in co-authorship with audiences. We take a number of themes arising from contemporary social, political or cultural conditions to form a conceptual framework within which we devise our programme. For example, we might be interested in technology and surveillance, so then we seek artists who are interested in those things and whose work gives body to ideas around it. Then we look at the mix of gender, generation and location as well. We ensure that our programme is international, with mixed gender and age. We plan about two years ahead.

We are also part of the Platform project, which works in partnership with four other galleries in the South-East. Each partner venue selects from graduate shows, and provides a professional platform for the work and mentoring for the artists involved.

We don’t have a written exhibition policy but we do have a [programme statement](#).”

What are the qualities that make a successful exhibition for the artist, venue and visitors?

“We really do value and assess our work as an organisation by the feedback we get from the artists we work with. We invest in an artist heavily and we are attuned to the messages that we get back, and the quality of the relationship we develop. On a fundamental level, we assess whether an artist has been able to realise their plans. Occasionally budgets are an issue but we try to do whatever we can to make what they want to happen. Then there is a critical response to the show. We are concerned to have a wide range of different types of press for our show, ranging across local, national and international press.

We’re working often with new developments in contemporary art which can be challenging for the audience so we work hard with the mediation of the show to make it as accessible as possible. We survey our audiences all the time, and gain feedback from them via our invigilators who are specifically trained in this area to stimulate an audience-centred and empowered approach to the work. These are all things we measure when we try to decide if a show is successful or not.”

What deal do you offer to artists?

“We work with artists in different ways but we always pay them. It would be inconceivable for us not to do so. We always offer a commissioning fee to the artist, and we always budget so that we can realise the work in our space. We also cover the costs of a publication if one is appropriate; we commission and produce the work, and we cover accommodation and other expenses. How much we pay depends on the individual circumstances of the artist and we work on a case-by-case basis. A minimum fee is probably about £1,000 and a commissioning fee might go as high as £10,000. It’s unusual for us to pay £10,000; usually we pay around £2,000-£3,000 along with the other benefits. We usually require the artist to do a talk for the audience. Artists working in our education and public programme are paid separately from the main programme and on a different scale, but they are always paid.”

I think I can say in all honesty that we have a culture at Modern Art Oxford where the first thing we think about when we are looking at money is ensuring artists are paid as the highest priority. That runs across the organisation from myself to our exhibitions and programme teams.”

Comment on Paying Artists Campaign

“I’m very happy to add my name to that statement, but I feel we need other plausible messages too.”

modernartoxford.org.uk

The Showroom

The Showroom was based in the East End of London for twenty-five years before relocating to a new building off Edgware Road, London in 2009. A visual arts commissioning and exhibiting organisation, it has a very strong track record of supporting young and emerging artists who have gone on to become very successful. Artist Ciara Phillips was nominated for the 2014 Turner Prize for her installation Workshop (2010 – ongoing) at The Showroom in 2013. The organisation has also developed a reputation for consistently engaging with new thinking relating to urban issues through its programme of talks, events and book launches.

A National Portfolio Organisation funded by Arts Council England, The Showroom works collaboratively with a wide range of partners, including international peer organisations as part of EU funded projects.

About The Showroom

“The Showroom is now 31 years old, and in that time the key thing we’ve done is commission new art, and offer artists their first London exhibition. We invest in artists at the beginning of their careers, and we take risks as an organisation, because some of our projects don’t use conventional processes or forms, and the ideas involved can be complex. We are very supportive of the production of new work, and we give a lot of support and guidance to the artist. But we also trust an artist to develop something slowly, and come up with their own outcome. Our ethos is to make space for artists to work without pressure, with commissions taking place over a long period from start to finish. There have been some projects that have had almost three years lead in time although more usually it’s about eighteen months. What we can really do is forge partnerships around a project and we have a really strong network of national and international partners and peer organisations, with whom we work, co-programme and co-commission. A lot of our programme over the last few years has been tied in with European grants, and that has really allowed us to extend our knowledge of artists and debates.

We moved to a new building in 2009 that was double the size of our previous one. This enabled us to widen our spectrum of funding and activity. Having an events space has enhanced our programme as we can now have parallel activity that complements the exhibitions, and we can host events.

Our annual turnover is around £330,000. We’re an Arts Council England NPO, which gives us 40% of our income. We fundraise for the rest, with a couple of European Union grants and project funding. We also run a supporters scheme and hire out our building. Our Communal Knowledge project is supported by various trusts and foundations, including the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.”

Artistic programme

“Our programme draws around 10,000-15,000 visitors a year, and works often tour to other venues, this year expanding our audience to around 84,000. We have up to five shows a year, four of which are new commissions from artists. The fifth one is often a smaller neighbourhood commission, where we undertake collaborative projects as part of our Communal Knowledge programme. We invite artists to produce work that is specifically engaging with people in our local community. We allow a great degree of flexibility with this programme to see where it would go which might be a publication, an event, an exhibition.

With our main exhibition programme, generally the artist shouldn’t have had a solo show in London before, and shouldn’t be commercially represented. That’s something that our Board is keen to preserve. The Showroom is very conscious that our role should be about supporting artists who otherwise are not that well supported and who work with emerging practices and ideas. This is what

we did with the printmaker Ciara Phillips. What I think is particular about the show that we enabled is that there was an openness to it, to seeing what came out of the process.

What was significant about her commission with us is that she works in a very process-driven way. So she situated a print workshop in the middle of her exhibition, and produced part of the show while it was open to the public. We introduced her to the two women's groups with whom we already had a relationship and she worked with them during the exhibition to produce prints. And really amazing work came out, particularly from The Domestic Workers Union who made protest banners. She opened up conversations and she allowed other voices in. This is the show for which she is nominated for the 2014 Turner Prize.

We have started to represent certain thematics, ideas, and debates. We've done a lot of work around labour and power relations. We're involved as a partner in the Silent University which is related to asylum and immigration laws. Book launches are a way of tapping into current thinking, and we have worked with a wide range of authors and publishers. We've often launched books published by Sternberg Press, and with various departments of Goldsmiths College, for example. There's a strong audience for these and it creates lively debate. We're realising a big event in June called Re-Materialising Feminism in partnership with the ICA and Arcadia Missa."

How do you select artists to work with?

"I follow a lot of artists, do a lot of research and have ongoing conversations with artists. Usually a 'moment' will emerge where it will make sense that a particular artist fits into the programme. It's about finding the right moment for an artist when they are ready to make a more ambitious work and they can carry a show. Usually, the relationship is initiated by us. But lots of artists do get in touch and we try to get to know them over time, to test out a relationship with something smaller, such as a screening or an event. That helps us to know how best to support the work and artist.

We've worked with a lot of London artists on commissions. I'm very conscious of the need to represent artists who are local to us. Our programme is relatively limited in terms of commissions, but we can work with artists in different ways via our Communal Knowledge programme, and it's important to carve out space to do that. But I also think it's important to bring in international artists with different and fresh ideas."

What are the qualities that make a successful exhibition for the artist, venue and visitors?

I think it goes back to time, allowing as much time and engagement with the artist that you can, which enables them to grow their work in this particular place. It shows, for example, in the way that we introduced the women's groups to Ciara. Our programme co-ordinator worked very closely with her on the research and realisation of the project. It's also about being open to allowing artists to try things out, not to be too controlling over the process".

What deal do you offer to artists?

"Our average fee is about £2,000 for a commission. It's difficult to measure fee against labour especially as the amount of work put in by an artist really varies. But we are always transparent about our fee and we show the artist our budget up front. We also cover expenses, materials, installation and technical costs. We axed print marketing because it's so expensive but we do a mail out and use social media. If it's a big exhibition and the budget allows, we do an e-flux announcement, and we are also supported at various times by PR companies."

Is there anything you would like to do differently in the way you work with artists? What are the barriers to implementing any changes?

"I'd like to be able to pay our artists more. We would like a more stable economy within our organisation to enable us to be certain of actual project budgets in good time."

Comment on Paying Artists Campaign

“I agree. The key thing is time, and in order to have that time, artists need to be paid. That really does transform the opportunity for artists. It’s really important to make this issue of the artists’ economy visible. There is a lot of cultural production in this country but it seems like the people who are paid least within it are the artists. It really does need a big rethink.”

www.theshowroom.org

Interview with Director Emily Pethick, May 2014

Whitstable Biennale

About Whitstable Biennale

“We are a contemporary visual arts festival that happens every two years in the small fishing town of Whitstable. Our first biennale was in 2002, so 2014 is our 7th edition. Almost all the works in each biennale edition are new commissions. We see our role as supporting artists who want to make experimental work and by doing so move their practice on. Our ethos is to work exclusively with emerging and mid-career artists based in the UK who are at a really crucial point in their career. How you judge that is a good question! It’s a combination of instinct, experience, what artists tell you and lots of exhibition and studio visits. It’s something that is quite finely tuned, but hard to summarise in a document. Because of our track record, artists see exhibiting with the Whitstable Biennale as a good opportunity. We do get curators and selectors from other visual arts venues looking at what we are doing, and artists do often get picked up.

The Satellite programme is our fringe. There is no remit in the main programme to specifically work with artists from Kent, but a big proportion of artists showing in the Satellite programme are regionally based. We initiated the programme, and support it. It functions as a membership programme, with a subscription of £30 for two years. That entitles members to access to all events, and a page in the Satellite catalogue – although artists will also be listed without charge.

We deliver an education programme, and some Satellite events outside the festival. We’re moving towards having screenings and performance evenings in Whitstable year round, and a commissions programme that takes place in a wider geographic area. Outside the festival we can work more intensively with artists, on larger scale commissions.

We have a lot of support from the Arts Council, along with Kent County Council, Canterbury City Council and the University of Kent. Our turnover is £90,000 to £220,000 but it fluctuates because of the two yearly cycle and the availability of funding. In 2012 we had about 40,000 visits to the main programme and an estimated 20,000 for the Satellite programme. We count visitors to events as we don’t have a ticketing system.”

How do you select artists to commission and exhibit?

“We have about 25 commissions each edition. As we finish one biennale we immediately start to talk about who we might work with for the next one. The two-year turnaround is really good for developing new work, but we also need that time to get the funding in place.

There are three curators – myself, Kate Phillimore, and Emma Leach. We always have a long list of artists that we’re interested in and keep building up a picture of what they’re doing in their work. We visit exhibitions and studios across the UK. Sometimes we’ll work with an artist over a longer period, perhaps with a small intervention in one biennial before inviting them to undertake a larger scale commission for the next one.

We do put open calls out as well. It's great to see a whole range of different work, and it opens up our selection procedure. It's also a way of testing what artists are thinking about at the moment. We aim to ensure that we have a good range of diverse voices in the programme.

We don't set a theme, as some biennials do. Whitstable is a small town, which gives our festival a unique character, and I also prefer to look at individual works and individual artist's practice rather than selecting work to fit a theme. I like the works we commission to have as much breathing space as possible around them. We are a film and performance biennial, and every commission will have a film or performance element to it, but we work with artists across the visual arts. We want our visitors to see performance and film in as wide a context as possible."

What deal do you offer artists?

"Our new commissions are usually £1,000-£5,000. We try to be transparent with artists about the funding that we have, and how budgets are drawn up for their work. We are as flexible and responsive as we can be. We do always pay a fee, and we work together with artists on apportioning budgets. The processes of developing the work, seeking a venue, and then how to install the work, and the budget, are all tied up together, and they can be quite fluid." In 2014, the budget for two projects that were offered through an open call was £1,000, with the expectation that 'ideas would need to realistically reflect this'. This sum included fees, but the organisers provided equipment and installation support."

What makes for a good commission, and a good biennale overall?

"The chance to see a really exciting range of new work by artists that you may not have come across before. A good map! Nice weather, friendly informed staff, good accessible information that is well written. But it's the quality of the work that's at the heart of it. It's important to us is that our visitors have a depth of experience."

Is there anything you would do differently?

"It would be great to have bigger budgets! We always tweak based on our evaluations. As we grow, Whitstable itself is developing and changing too, and we need to keep taking account of that. Artists' work changes too, and we want to keep being responsive to that."

Comment on Paying Artists Campaign

"We wholeheartedly support the Paying Artists principles. It's important to us that we pay artists. We have artists at every level of our organisation from our volunteers all the way through to the Board, and we absolutely appreciate their value."

www.whitstablebiennale.com/

Interview with Director Sue Jones, June 2014