





# **TURNING POINT**

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**ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND:  
A STRATEGY FOR THE  
CONTEMPORARY VISUAL  
ARTS IN ENGLAND**

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Arts Council England works to get more art to more people in more places. We develop and promote the arts across England, acting as an independent body at arm's length from government.

Between 2006 and 2008, we will invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and the National Lottery in supporting the arts. This is the bedrock of support for the arts in England.

We believe that the arts have the power to change lives and communities, and to create opportunities for people throughout the country.

From 2006 to 2008, we have six priorities

- 
- taking part in the arts
  - children and young people
  - the creative economy
  - vibrant communities
  - internationalism
  - celebrating diversity
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## CONTENTS

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### FOREWORD

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<b>1</b>	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	10
<b>2</b>	KEY CHALLENGES	14
	THE VISUAL ARTS MAP	18
<b>3</b>	A STRATEGY FOR THE CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ARTS	22
	Audiences, participation and education	
	Support for artists	
	Innovation and risk	
	Diversity and leadership	
	Places, spaces and partnership	
<b>4</b>	NEXT STEPS	44
<b>5</b>	ARTS COUNCIL: CONTEXT	46
<b>6</b>	REFERENCES	48
<b>7</b>	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	54

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# **FOREWORD**

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Contemporary visual art is a force for change. It interrogates our values, building and questioning our sense of identity and our understanding of other cultures. It crosses national boundaries. It helps create civic pride and a visually literate and confident population. It crosses disciplines and media, stretching from the established practices of painting, sculpture, photography and crafts to moving image, new media and live art. It engages with heritage, architecture, design, mainstream film and popular culture. It drives the creative industries.

Contemporary visual art has never been so popular nor so controversial. The power of the image has never been more potent. In a world where the real and the virtual have become less distinct, the object and its making gain new value and meaning. There has been a transformation in the way in which contemporary visual art is perceived and engaged with over the last decade.

This paper sets out our strategy for the contemporary visual arts in England for the next ten years. The strategy was developed with and informed by an advisory group of senior representatives from across the visual arts. Its starting point is the review of the presentation of the contemporary visual arts, which we commissioned in December 2004. This was the first major review that we have undertaken since the theatre review in 2000, and the first review ever undertaken of the contemporary visual arts in England.

More widely, the review makes recommendations for the development of the visual arts overall – arguing for greater linkages between the historical and the contemporary. The review gives us the mandate to assume a broader leadership role for the contemporary visual arts and, working with others, to make the case for integrated planning and investment to underpin the sustainability and growth of the visual arts. The ambition is to ensure that the large and growing audience for the visual arts has access to the widest range of contemporary art and the opportunity to see art from the past through the dynamic of the contemporary.

Sir Christopher Frayling  
Chair, Arts Council England

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Contemporary art is the art of our time. It is more a way of seeing than a defined art form; the practice is often interdisciplinary with a range of media including photography, new media, fine art, artists' moving image, live art, crafts, design and architecture. It is a driving force in popular culture, nurtured through creative innovation, entrepreneurial risk, new curatorial processes and critical debate. While the dictionary definition of 'modern' is synonymous with 'contemporary', in art the modern has a period—arguably 1860 to 1970—a style and a theory which is both absorbed and contested by the plurality of contemporary art. This breadth gives rich opportunities for artists, audiences and organisations to respond to increasingly global contexts.

*The context in which we live, create and work is inextricably global and therefore inextricably linked. Imagination combined with critical intelligence, shaped by historical knowledge, in conjunction with contemporary thought and practice is crucial to any attempt to create in a distinctive way.*

*Renée Green, artist*

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**1**

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**EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**

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This is a long-term strategy which builds on existing investment and the success and impact of the contemporary visual arts. It covers spaces and resources for production and presentation, including workforce and employment development, in order to meet the needs and aspirations of artists, audiences and participants.

The strategy will help deliver our mission to place the arts at the centre of national life and people at the heart of the arts. It will be supported by an action plan, developed with partners and the broader visual arts sector, up to 2008 and beyond. Its implementation depends on integrated planning and investment to underpin the sustainability and growth of the contemporary visual arts.

The strategy has five priorities:

- audiences, participation and education
- support for artists
- innovation and risk
- diversity and leadership
- places, spaces and partnerships

Its key outcomes will be:

- more opportunities for people to experience and engage with the contemporary visual arts wherever they are in the country
  - more opportunities for artists to make new work
  - a stronger culture of innovation and risk
  - a more diverse contemporary visual arts sector and more diverse audiences and participants
  - strengthened leadership and a stronger visual arts profession
  - stronger contemporary visual arts organisations with longer-term planning and less 'short-termism'
  - stronger regional, national, and organisation-to-organisation partnerships
  - greater engagement in, and understanding of, contemporary art in its historical and cultural context
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The strategy is underpinned by the review of the presentation of contemporary visual arts which focused on the presentation and public facing issues for the visual arts, recognising that artists' work is now seen and experienced in contexts beyond the gallery. The advisory group included senior national and regional representatives in the visual arts, lead bodies, private foundations and local authorities. Details of the review reports are listed on page 13 and in the references.

The Jackson/Jordan Report report, which was completed in December 2005, celebrates the recent success of the contemporary visual arts but demonstrates the price of that success – an unsustainable level of activity and a clear need to develop a new and more representative generation of leaders.

The report itself includes nine policy recommendations and 34 action points. These focus on structural fragmentation, regional imbalances, artistic programming, developing audiences, education and participation, maximising resources, developing the workforce, evidence and advocacy and our role at Arts Council England. The main emphasis is on linking contemporary art with art from the past and with the heritage. This is to be achieved through appropriate cross-sectoral partnerships strengthened by formal memoranda of understanding, regional development strategies and joint programmes.

We welcome the evidence presented in all of the review reports. We agree with the analysis of the impact of the visual arts and of the challenges facing the sector after a decade or more of significant growth and development.

## **Review of the presentation of contemporary visual arts: reports**

### **Overview and analysis**

The Jackson/Jordan Report, an overview and analysis of the review, which was commissioned from AEA Consulting (Marc Jordan) and International Cultural Development (Tessa Jackson). It draws on the reports detailed below.

### **Contemporary visual arts activity**

Burns Owens Partnership with Experian Business Strategies, carried out a survey in March 2005 of the extent and distribution of contemporary visual arts activity across England. The survey examines the spread and level of resources and the impact on programmes, audiences and artists. Additional reports looked at education and diversity, and included two case studies of the north-west and north-east London.

### **Employment conditions and diversity**

In 2005 the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research/Warwick Institute for Employment Research researched and analysed data about employment conditions and diversity in contemporary visual arts organisations. Comparator studies were undertaken in another art form – theatre; and in a related sector – broadcast and media and the visual arts in another European country, Germany.

### **Participation in higher education in art and design**

The Council for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD) made available data on widening participation in higher education in art and design as part of a research project commissioned jointly by CHEAD and Arts Council England. This gives data on the extent of diversity among students who might be expected to seek careers in the visual arts and creative industries.

### **The impact of contemporary visual arts in the public realm**

Prevista provided an analysis and a set of case studies to illustrate the impact of contemporary visual arts in the public realm. This is published separately under the title *The power of art, visual arts: evidence of impact in regeneration, health and education and learning*, Arts Council England 2006.

The reports can be downloaded from the Arts Council's website: [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

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**2**

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**KEY  
CHALLENGES**

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The review describes a sector at a turning point. The growth and impact of the contemporary visual arts, as well as the range of artistic practices and the sector's international reach are an undoubted success. The UK leads Europe in the status of its artists and the economic value of its art market.

The concerns in the review are not about lack of innovation, poor work or declining attendances, or even large deficits. What it shows is that our collective investment in the contemporary visual arts sector has not kept pace with the expansion in audiences and participants or the expansion in artistic practice. The growth of the last ten years and the exceptional contribution that the visual arts make is unsustainable.

### **Funding for the visual arts**

The survey carried out in 2005 by the Burns Owens Partnership and others – to map visual arts activity in England<sup>1</sup> – identified some 1,200 organisations which are regularly presenting contemporary visual arts across the public and private sectors, ranging from critically-engaged international practice to more traditional work. But, the survey concludes, the potential benefits of the breadth of the visual arts sector are not fully realised because the structure is vertical and fragmented.

The visual arts map (see pages 18–19) is made up of a complex web of national and regional, public and private, building and non-building based organisations, across the heritage and the contemporary cultural fields.<sup>2</sup> These organisations include the government-funded Tate and other national museums, other national heritage bodies, the regional museums – which are part of local authority leisure services, university museums and galleries, heritage agencies, private trusts and foundations and the commercial art market and art publishing.

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<sup>1</sup> Burns Owens Partnership in partnership with Experian Business Strategies, 2005, *Final survey report*, Arts Council England

<sup>2</sup> Jackson T, Jordan M, 2005, appendix 2 map, from *Review of the presentation of contemporary visual arts, part 2: Surveys of the sector and appendices*, an independent report for Arts Council England

There are connections with related public bodies such as the British Council, UK film Council, Design Council, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA).

While Tate, Arts Council England, and the commercial sector in London are the main promoters of contemporary art in England, Arts Council England, together with local authorities, is the major funder of the contemporary visual arts network of galleries and agencies in the regions.

- in 1998 we invested £20 million in funding 79 contemporary visual arts organisations. This excludes the Hayward Gallery, London and the ICA (Institute for Contemporary Arts), London, which are classified in Arts Council budgets as 'combined arts' expenditure.
- in 2008 we will be investing £38 million in funding more than 200 visual arts organisations promoting and presenting contemporary art in and beyond the gallery. This now includes funding for the Crafts Council (£3.12 million) and major new lottery-funded organisations, such as BALTIC, Gateshead.

Our investment is targeted at new work and includes the international venues such as the Serpentine Gallery and the Whitechapel Gallery in London, Modern Art Oxford and the Arnolfini, Bristol; large development agencies such as the Crafts Council and the Institute of International Visual Art (IniVA), and a wide range of producing agencies, artist-run groups and spaces and promoters.

- the public benefit from engagement with the work of artists and creative producers is significant and value for money is high. Arts Council England subsidy has dropped from 45% in 2000/01 to 42%
- earned income was up 23%, against 4% in Arts Council subsidy
- local authority subsidy to art galleries alone fell by 4%
- Arts Council subsidy per attendance was a low £3.80. This compares with £17.42 for music where subsidy of £71.4 million attracted 3.6 million attendances in 2003-04. Similar comparisons may be made with dance

However, the Jackson/Jordan Report argues that by focusing largely on the contemporary (unlike other art forms where both the historical and the contemporary are supported), we do not fully engage in or support the visual arts overall and this compounds the lack of mobility and diversity across the visual arts. It also affects the engagement of audiences and their understanding of the contemporary within the context of the past.

### **Workforce development**

The review also makes clear that the contemporary visual arts sector is not meeting good standards in terms of pay and conditions or workforce development. It is being supported by a predominantly young, white, middle-class, female and low-paid workforce.<sup>3</sup> A great many talented people leave the sector when they are at mid-career stage and this is creating a growing problem of leadership. In contrast to the theatre or broadcasting sector, there is no professional development body for the visual arts.

### **Audiences and participation**

While the attendance and engagement with the contemporary visual arts is growing, there is uneven access across England. The East Midlands and East of England are particularly poorly served. This has serious implications for audiences and artists and for the diversity of both in current and future communities. Limited resources for staff, artistic programmes, marketing, development and education are a constraint on income generation, ambition and innovation.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Present levels and quality of programming are unsustainable at current levels of financial and human resources': Jackson T, Jordan M, 2005, *Review of the presentation of contemporary visual arts, part 1: Analysis and recommendations*, an independent report for Arts Council England

REFER TO MAP

REFER TO MAP

REFER TO  
CHALLENGES  
DIAGRAM

REFER TO  
OUR PRIORITIES  
DIAGRAM

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**3**

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**A STRATEGY  
FOR THE  
CONTEMPORARY  
VISUAL ARTS**

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Our response to the review's recommendations is to set out a long-term strategy for the contemporary visual arts. This aims not only to make the most of the benefits of past investment but also to address the challenges which have resulted from success and growth. Putting this strategy into practice will require a detailed action plan; it depends on a combination of partnerships, new ways of working, and re-prioritising existing funds as well as obtaining considerable new investment. It also depends on the visual arts sector being prepared to change and diversify, to look at issues of leadership and governance, and to support new ways of working and new partnerships.

The strategy is built around the five priorities, to reflect the fast-moving practices of artists and producers and the interests of an increasingly diverse range of audiences and participants:

The priorities are:

- Audiences, participation and education
- Support for artists
- Innovation and risk
- Diversity and leadership
- Places, spaces and partnerships

## Audiences, participation and education

*Our ambition is to widen and deepen engagement with the visual arts and with contemporary visual culture.*

### The context

The sheer presence and proliferation of the contemporary visual arts in and beyond the gallery and across the public realm has increased participation and widened the audience for art in our museums. Arts Council England's 2006 report, *The power of art*,<sup>4</sup> illustrates the impact of visual arts in education and learning.

- 25% of the adult population in Britain visit art galleries
- 43% of the adult population in Britain visit museums, including their associated galleries<sup>5</sup>
- in five months in 2005, the north east cluster of the en-quire programme has provided 1,426 workshops for young people<sup>6</sup>
- 93% of teachers taking part in the Museums and Galleries Strategic Commissioning Programme thought that museums, galleries and archives were important or very important to their teaching<sup>7</sup>
- Tate attracted more than 6 million visitors in 2004/05 four million went to Tate Modern alone, making it the most visited modern art museum in the world
- BALTIC in Gateshead had more than 1,000 visitors a day for the British Art Show 2005 (total 100,000)
- in 2005, the Frieze Art Fair, London, had 47,000 visitors in just four days
- sales of contemporary art in the UK are at least £350 million and through the international market nearer £1billion<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *The power of art, visual arts: evidence of impact, regeneration, health, education and learning*, Arts Council England, 2006

<sup>5</sup> provisional Public Service Agreement (PSA) 3 figures 2005/6

<sup>6</sup> en-quire programme, engage 2005, Arts Council unpublished report to DCMS

<sup>7</sup> Hayton Associates 2006, *Museums and Galleries Strategic Commissioning Programme* to be published in Autumn 2006 by Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) / Arts Council England

<sup>8</sup> Buck L, 2004, *Market matters*, Arts Council England, page 19

Overall audiences for contemporary visual arts are relatively high, with 38% of organisations presenting contemporary art attracting audiences of between 10–50,000. London has the largest audiences, with 17% of building-based organisations attracting 250,000 or more people per year.

Artist-run spaces and open studio programmes have also attracted new audiences to the contemporary visual arts, by providing a more intimate and accessible environment in which to view art and an opportunity to meet the people who created it. This new activity has enhanced, rather than diminished the importance and authority of the museum and the gallery space. Artists and the public continue to want the experience of art that the gallery alone can give.

In 2003/04, 136 visual arts organisations, which we had funded, commissioned over 1,100 new works. Visual arts is the largest number of commissions of all artforms at 34% (theatre accounts for 18%) and with theatre accounted for 80% of all artwork in England that went on tour. The visual arts sector attracted 8.6 million visitors, a 10% rise in actual attendance at exhibitions and generated 20 million estimated viewings and readings through broadcast and publishing, including website usage.<sup>9</sup>

Education in galleries is a very distinct practice, benefiting from the professional involvement of artists as teachers, collaborators, activists and mentors. This has given gallery education a real edge and experimental quality. The work of education departments is the main route through which many young people are attracted to become involved in galleries as audiences and as practitioners. Through international contacts, collaborations and partnerships, many of them initiated by the independent gallery education agency, engage, it is clear that practice in the UK is leading the world.

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<sup>9</sup> Joy, A, *A statistical survey of regularly funded organisations 2003/04*, Statistical report 8, Arts Council England

## The challenge

Unsurprisingly, London predominates both in numbers, capacity and scale of building-based venues.

- 13% of London venues have exhibition space of 1,000 sq m, or more, while the average in England as a whole is 7%
- 34% of venues showing contemporary visual art in London have turnover of £1 million or more where the national average is only 16%

New research<sup>10</sup> indicates that the availability of and access to facilities has a direct bearing on regional differences in audience activity and participation in the visual arts. Compared to Londoners, respondents in the Midlands for example, where provision is low, are less likely to attend or participate. In the East Midlands, for example, half of the visual arts organisations surveyed attracted audiences of only up to 5,000 over the last 12 months.

While most organisations concerned with contemporary visual arts (78%) have or are in process of developing an audience database:

- less than 40% monitor their audience profile
- almost 60% of organisations have no dedicated budget for audience development and marketing

This lack has implications for the diversity of both audience and programme.

There is a strong commitment in the sector to education and outreach, especially for young people. Museums and galleries have 36%, the highest percentage, of all schoolchild visits to attractions. Education activity in individual arts organisations rose by more than 75% from 2002 to 2003 and overall attendance at workshops was up 19% in 2003 to 2004 alone.<sup>11</sup> Despite this:

- education was only 4% of total expenditure for visual arts organisations in 2002/03
- only a third of organisations have dedicated education staff
- the average number of dedicated education and outreach staff is just over one person per organisation<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Chan, TW and Goldthorpe, J *Social Stratification and Cultural Consumption: Visual Art in England*, Sociology Working Paper, Department of Sociology, University of London, 2005

<sup>11</sup> Joy, A, *A statistical survey of regularly funded organisations 2003/04*, Statistical report 8, Arts Council England

<sup>12</sup> Burns Owens Partnership in partnership with Experian Business Strategies, 2005, *Final survey report*, Arts Council England

## **Our response**

We believe there is real potential to increase visits to contemporary art venues. This is confirmed by the most recent research on attendance for the contemporary visual arts in Scotland.<sup>13</sup> However, we recognise that there is a lack of data on existing audience profile. A survey of venues in London in 2003,<sup>14</sup> where more than 50% of the audience were vocationally involved in the arts, indicates that there are still motivational barriers to participation. Building interest and confidence requires investment in physical and intellectual access, in staff, marketing, education, and learning.

It also requires galleries to be able to respond to their audience's needs and lifestyles. Our New Audience Programme initiative, Love Art Later involved nine London contemporary art galleries in late-night openings and significantly increased attendance, including 25% first-time visitors. The ability to extend opening hours is currently constrained by shortages of staff and money.

We recognise the importance of engaging audiences through the creative use of new technologies. Website and online initiatives can increase efficiency, enabling many millions more people to engage with the visual arts of all kinds. New technology can also create networks and partnerships for increasing provision in rural areas and regions that currently have few visual arts venues. We are developing a distribution policy to ensure we support organisations and encourage them to work in new ways to create greater access to their work.

The contemporary visual arts are making a distinctive contribution to the curriculum. Galleries and museums are playing an important part in helping schools to make their teaching methods more varied and to respond more effectively to the needs of individual pupils.<sup>15</sup> We will continue to support initiatives such as the Artist Teacher Scheme, coordinated by the National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD), which are providing creative opportunities for teachers and lecturers and are breaking down some of the barriers to teachers' engagement with contemporary art.

We will continue to encourage organisations to focus on education and learning to encourage 'intelligent' audiences, participants who will engage with art and artistic practice to develop their own creativity and reflective skills. We will continue to support organisations such as the independent gallery education agency, engage, which is pioneering innovation in participatory learning.

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<sup>13</sup> Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2005, *Visual Arts Audiences in Scotland, Current profile and barriers to attendance*, Draft Report, Scottish Arts Council

<sup>14</sup> Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2003, *Visual Arts Audiences in London, Current profile and barriers to attendance*, Final report, Arts Council England, p.29

<sup>15</sup> *Looking, Thinking and Talking* unpublished engage report for Creative Partnerships 2005

Learning in the gallery, commissioned by Arts Council England and published by engage in 2006, proposes a new framework that is applicable across the cultural sector. It reflects a contemporary approach to learning which is at the heart of the current Nuffield Review of education and training where the ability to get involved critically and the quality of the participant's experience is emphasised.

At present, with funding from both the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and from the Department for Education and Skills, we are jointly running a project with engage: called en-quire, it involves galleries and higher education institutions. It is clearly demonstrating the significance of gallery education. Our Artists' insights project aims to explore the impact of writers and visual artists working with young people and educators and facilitators in cultural sites and schools.

#### Our priorities

- work with our partners to build workforce capacity to implement the framework for contemporary gallery education
- create opportunities for professional development for gallery educators and teachers
- promote the roles of freelance creative practitioners and the artist as educator
- encourage organisations to build audience profiles and databases
- target new investment to help organisations extend opening hours
- development of online resources to expand and enhance audience profiling and participation, especially of culturally diverse groups and others for whom the arts are not easily accessible
- disseminate research and 'best practice'

#### Outcomes

- greater understanding of audience and participants leading to change in visual arts organisations
- increased participation and diversity of audiences
- wider understanding and engagement with visual arts and contemporary visual culture
- increased public acknowledgement of the value of the artist

## Support for artists

*Our ambition is to improve conditions and opportunities for artists.*

### **The context**

British visual artists are world class. Their power as cultural ambassadors is shown by the international demand and reception for their work. The work of our distinguished visual artists is represented in museums, galleries and biennales all over the world. This has been made possible by rapid growth of the commercial sector in London, which has become one of the world's largest and most dynamic contemporary art markets. New talent is brought on by the growth of artist-run spaces and emergent dealers and galleries, especially in London's East End, with links to artists and producers outside London.

London's Frieze Art Fair, which began in 2003, has been named the 'mother fair' by North America's Artforum magazine. It draws tens of thousands of visitors to London from all over the world every October and is the catalyst for an explosion of commercial and creative activity from performances by Stockhausen, to talks and film and video commissions.

It demystifies contemporary art for the public and contributes to the creative economy: Frieze visitors in 2005 spent £33 million on art and took more than 25,000 hotel beds in the capital. Frieze also gives a platform for the non-profit Zoo Art Fair, showing young emergent artists. The commercial market for contemporary art has invigorated London's cultural scene and provides unprecedented support for UK visual artists to develop international careers.

Our case studies show that the distinctive skills and approaches of contemporary visual artists and makers are being increasingly used in a range of social settings. This spread of visual arts activity through and across professional boundaries creates both challenges and tremendous opportunities for public policy.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Prevista, 2005, *The impact of visual arts: Interventions in regeneration, healthcare and education contexts*, unpublished report for Arts Council England

## **The challenge**

Contemporary visual arts organisations are offering a wide range of opportunities for artists in addition to exhibitions. Fifty-five per cent of them offer residencies, placements and fellowships and 39% offer education projects. Despite this:

- more than 50% of organisations cannot afford to pay artists for exhibitions
- artists' workspaces have been squeezed out of many inner cities, having played a major role early on in their regeneration
- artist-run studio and exhibition spaces, which often support emergent artists through networking and skills-sharing, are financially fragile
- there is virtually no market outside London for international contemporary art, although the UK is second only to the United States in dominance of the international art market, making a significant contribution to the UK economy

Our Own Art initiative, providing interest-free credit to buy new work, is effective in encouraging new buyers to purchase contemporary art. It needs to be supported by a more developed regional market.

## **Our response**

Support for new work and artists' development is at the heart of our ambitions for the arts. We will sustain and seek to increase our investment in artists' agencies and networks and in workspace development for visual artists.

In the last two years 1,500 visual artists have benefited from more than £9 million of awards through the Grants for the Arts programme. We will continue to support individual artists through this programme. We will also seek partners to help create conditions that ensure better pay and conditions for artists to make and show their work.

We will work with others to develop the market for art outside London. North West/Manchester and the North East, Newcastle/Gateshead are potential pilots. Both regions have strong artist groups and artist-run spaces and a publicly-funded visual arts sector. Manchester has vibrant creative industries in music, media, design and fashion and in Newcastle/Gateshead the arts are growing at an exceptional rate, offering potential for new markets and new collectors. Funding would be allocated when proposals have robust plans for business and for evaluation, as in a similar scheme piloted with success in Scotland.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> National Collecting Scheme for Scotland (NCSS) piloted from April 2003-March 2006 by Scottish Arts Council with the Contemporary Art Society

### **Our priorities**

- continue to invest in a programme of artists' development – focusing on law, workspace, innovation, financial security and professional standards
- continue to give priority to capital investment for the development of artists' workspace
- seek new opportunities for Black and minority ethnic and disabled artists who are currently under-represented
- invest in entrepreneurial individuals and organisations in areas which are favourable to presenting new work and growing new markets
- strengthen our partnerships with the higher education sector, to increase artists' research and development opportunities

### **Outcomes**

- improved conditions for artists working with venues and promoters
- increased partnership with local authorities, private investors and regional development agencies
- increased access for the public to see work and meet artists at artist-run spaces and open studios
- increased opportunities for artists working outside London to see new work and find new markets
- increased sales for artists and more new collectors a strengthened private sector outside London

## **Innovation and risk**

*Our ambition is to support the development of commercial expertise among arts enterprises.*

### **The context**

Visual artists and promoters show exceptional entrepreneurial ingenuity and the ability to take artistic risk. Many artists have eschewed the gallery in order to reconnect art with life – in the streets, on public plinths and piazzas, on mountains and in the oceans, even outer space, as well as in the digital domain, through the internet and mobile technologies.

Galleries are expanding their programmes online and off-site. Alongside producers and agencies they are developing their role, often in inner city and rural communities, and involving other people, usually non-artists, whose participation is essential to the meaning and value of the art process. Agencies such as Artangel in London, Locus Plus in Newcastle, and Grizedale in Cumbria have proved their capacity for risk, new ways of working and reaching new and diverse audiences.

Recent examples of this entrepreneurial spirit include Grizedale Arts working with the rural community to relaunch the Coniston Water Festival, in Cumbria, with Ken Russell at the helm, and Artangel's commission of the artist Wendy Ewald to work with young people from the Isle of Thanet, Kent, which launched the Margate Exodus, an event involving thousands of people from Margate and thousands more through its planned television broadcast.

The artist-run exhibition spaces and open studio programmes are further examples of the risk-taking and commercial skills of artists, often working collectively. These spaces are mostly in inner cities and have widely contributed to the growth of commercial galleries in London and to creative clusters outside London.

### **The challenge**

Contemporary art adds value to the UK's current competitive international edge in innovation and the creative industries. If the UK is to remain a world leader in the arts and creative industries, its artists and producers need the skills to adapt to change in the working environment and in technology.

There is recognition that the skills of British artists are an integral part of the knowledge economy. Sir George Cox's 2005 report to the Treasury on the UK's design sector<sup>18</sup> argues that, 'the great success of our

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<sup>18</sup> Cox review of creativity in business; building on the UK's strengths, HM Treasury, 2005

creative industries undoubtedly owes much to the quality of our arts education and the stature of our leading arts colleges', but that artists need exposure to other disciplines, especially new technologies. It is a paradox that visual artists are not included in the current definition of the creative industries. This masks the overall contribution that they make both in economic and social terms.

Agencies and independent producers are already working with contemporary artists, pioneering innovation for the visual arts and the creative industries. There is an opportunity for them to continue to do this in a more visible and structured way. *Beyond green: towards a sustainable art*, an exhibition in 2006 at the Smart Museum of Art, Chicago, USA, explores how international artists are embedding environmental concerns within bigger ethical, social and aesthetic ideas. The power of art, based on the study by Prevista on the impact of visual arts, demonstrates the significant contribution of artists and agencies in England to these agendas and their potential contribution to the government's £38 billion Sustainable Communities Programme.

### **Our response**

We would like to see the current definition of the creative industries expanded to include the visual artist, acknowledging the fluid nature of visual arts practice and the fact that in their working lives, artists develop a wide range of skills and many hold several jobs.

We recognise the valuable role that an agency or producer can play in realising the ideas of artists. Artangel and Locus Plus are examples of producers who have an international reputation for facilitating innovative artists' projects. These agencies can also address the knowledge and skills gap of visual artists, by brokering national and international connections in industrial projects, as well as research and development.

Blast Theory and the Mixed Reality Lab at Nottingham University are key partners in the European Integrated Project on Pervasive Gaming (IperG) project; along with partners such as Sony and Nokia, the group will create games that extend in time and space. The pilot project ITEM, run by media centre FACT, Liverpool, enables new media artists to work with leading digital technologists.

We will help develop a portfolio of commissioning and producing agencies, whose contribution complements and expands the role of established venues for the visual arts. These organisations and their curators, producers and educators, have a critical role to play in cross-disciplinary practice and across the public realm, especially in the unprecedented programmes for housing and new communities in the growth areas.

**Our priorities**

- support opportunities for artists and producers to work with other disciplines especially with technologists
- make it a priority to create opportunities that develop expertise and equip artists to engage with broadcast and broadband
- work with the Sector Skills Council and higher education to extend the capacity of existing agencies
- support new investment in visual arts producers and agencies

**Outcomes**

- increased innovation in new practice
- more impact and exchange, internationally
- increased economic contribution of the visual arts and a contribution to the sustainable communities agenda
- stronger links with government agencies, local authorities and private developers
- obtaining more funding from public and private sector bodies for artists' commissions

## **Diversity and leadership**

*Our ambition is to widen diversity and participation in the visual arts and to improve conditions to develop individuals and organisations.*

### **The context**

There is unprecedented growth in the numbers of young people studying art, design and media studies in higher education and large numbers who then seek work in the visual arts. However, few of them end their careers in the field. The representation of Black and minority ethnic groups in visual arts organisations is low at 5%. There are few black or Asian middle-level curators. This reflects the widespread use of unpaid staff recruited through exclusive social networks.

We recognise that the complex issues of diversity, especially in the context of artists and art practice, extend beyond questions of leadership, but without change in leadership in the visual arts wider impact will not be achieved. The findings of the research carried out by the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research/ Warwick Institute for Employment Research, referred to as the Warwick Report, focused on those involved directly in presenting and promoting contemporary visual arts, including artist/curators. The research involved 900 people, who were a sample representing 364 organisations, with a total workforce of 7,000. The workforce survey was completed by 523 professionals and 45 participants took part in group and individual interviews.

### **The challenge**

The findings of the Warwick Report are stark and of serious concern, especially for under-represented groups and for leadership in the visual arts. In summary, there is an urgent need to address fundamental issues associated with the lack of diversity, the nature of employment, reward, career development, talent management and leadership which threaten the visual arts future health.

Unlike the theatre and broadcasting sectors, there is no professional development body for the visual arts.

The workforce in visual arts is highly educated (47% with a first degree and a further 40% with a post-graduate degree or diploma). 90% are born in the UK.

- 93% of the visual arts workforce is white
- 75% is female
- 65% is aged under 45

- half have worked in the sector for three years or less
- for every three employees there are two unpaid workers and one freelancer
- 75% of the workforce has no pension provision attached to their current post
- around 60% earn less than the national median for all employees (£18,000 a year)
- only 2.8% of the workforce earns more than £40,000 a year

A great many talented people leave the public sector when they are at mid-career stage to seek better paid jobs elsewhere, especially in the burgeoning commercial arts sector in London and internationally. Young enterprising people are increasingly reluctant to move to or to stay in public visual arts organisations, especially in the regions, where there is less concentration of artists' spaces and no international commercial market, which creates the kind of rich networking and professional development opportunities that London offers.

Under-representation generally in the visual arts is one result of the complex barriers to inclusion in higher education. These are examined in the reports by the Council for Higher Education in Art and Design. There is a lack of research on widening participation specifically in art and design in higher education on key issues such as identity and student life cycle from aspiration to employment. This seriously affects not only the diversity of artists but also the wider visual arts workforce.

However interesting the work might be, because working conditions in visual arts are poor and perceived as such, it is difficult to attract a wider range of people into considering careers in the sector. The Warwick Report comments: 'high-quality cultural work can coexist with low value-added economic outcomes in ways that do not apply to most other sectors'.<sup>19</sup> The need to manage on low budgets encourages extensive use of unpaid labour and 'embeds creative activity within a static and socially conservative framework'.

The lack of diversity is compounded by the fact that the contemporary visual arts sector is not drawing in talented people from other areas of the visual arts or from outside the visual arts. Contemporary visual art suffers from uncompetitive salaries and conditions, which in turn makes it hard to find the capacity to train and develop staff. This, and the reliance on the availability of and fluidity of freelance curators, leads to 'short-termism'. The Warwick Report refers to: 'richness of creative commitment co-existing with poverty of business skills, exemplified by a tendency towards organisational amateurism'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research/Warwick Institute for Employment Research, 2005, *Working in the presentation of the contemporary visual arts - Key Challenges for the Sector*, page 3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, page 14

Talented people are rapidly being attracted away from the public sector to the commercial galleries, where the rewards are not only financial but also creative and supportive, offering focused and unencumbered working with artists. This has implications for widening participation and for the vitality and sustainability of the visual arts and the creative industries in England.

### **Our response**

The social and cultural background of the visual arts workforce inevitably influences organisational culture and the nature of programmes and participation. We are committed to increasing programme diversity and widening audiences and participation. We recognise that to do this effectively requires an understanding of both the differences and commonalities of cultures and perspectives. It is crucially dependent on a more inclusive visual arts profession and a more representative leadership.

We will work with others to achieve this over the long-term, by improving access to higher education and by improving employment conditions, with appropriately paid first-entry posts, which attract rather than deter less advantaged young people.

We will build on the good practice that currently exists in some parts of the contemporary visual arts sector and share this more broadly across the sector in order to create a more culturally diverse sector and workforce. For example, organisations such as Third Text, the journal of 'Third World perspectives on the arts', and agencies such as Autograph and inIVA (Institute of International Visual Arts) have exceptionally strong intellectual engagement with global concepts of identity. Some leading galleries such as Bluecoat Arts Centre in Liverpool, Modern Art Oxford, and Camden Arts Centre in London have a strong record of collaboration with artists and curators from non-Western cultures. The Back to Black exhibition at Whitechapel Art Gallery, London in 2005 and the Africa 2005 exhibition Africa Remix at the South Bank Centre's Hayward Gallery, London, drew large new audiences. Events such as this are an opportunity to attract a more culturally diverse workforce.

We will continue our curatorial fellowships and programmes for Black and minority ethnic practitioners in the national museums, evaluating the impact of these and making them available in more venues. Our Inspire fellowship programme in London currently has 11 curatorial fellowships. We can achieve long-term change through a sustained joint approach with higher education and with the museums sector to create more opportunity and to strengthen career development.

### **Our priorities**

- work with higher education (the Higher Education Funding Council England [HEFCE]), the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Creative & Cultural Skills (CCS) and the Council for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD) to act on findings of research on widening participation
- work with partners, including National Museums Directors' Conference (NMDC), the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), the Museums Association and local authorities, to set new guidelines for salaries, employment and career progression in the visual arts
- expand our support for fellowships, traineeships, artist awards and curator programmes for Black and minority ethnic practitioners, working with others in the sector
- use the opportunity of our Cultural Leadership Programme to develop both individuals and organisations

### **Outcomes**

- participation of people from a wider range of backgrounds in the visual arts workforce
- increase in Black and minority ethnic curators, producers and educators
- leadership which is more representative of the population as a whole
- improved conditions for the workforce overall
- more culturally diverse programming attracting more culturally diverse audiences

## **Places, spaces and partnerships**

*Our ambition is to achieve organic change and a greater common purpose across the visual arts through new investment in people and organisations.*

### **Context**

The landscape for the contemporary visual arts has been transformed by ten years of investment from the National Lottery. £426 million – including £230 million (17%) of all large-scale capital investment spent on the arts – has enhanced the presentation of the contemporary visual arts and enabled audiences to see more new work from around the world. This new investment has meant that more people are engaging with the contemporary visual arts and there is better access for disabled people and other disadvantaged groups.

National Lottery capital investment of £61 million in 33 artists' workspaces has enabled the public to see contemporary work and meet artists in spaces that are less formal than the gallery. In 2001 open studios in England attracted £1.5 million in sales and 250,000 viewers.

This unprecedented amount of money has enabled us to enter partnerships with local authorities to support new venues in areas which hitherto had little access to visual arts, such as in Walsall and Middlesbrough. Flagship new and refurbished venues, from FACT in Liverpool and BALTIC in Gateshead to Yorkshire Sculpture Park, near Wakefield, Milton Keynes Gallery, the New Art Gallery, Walsall and the magnificent De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, have given England a significant network of major exhibition spaces for contemporary visual arts. Together with Tate and the commercial galleries in London, these Arts Council-funded venues are the backbone of contemporary art in England.

Neighbourhoods, cities and regions have been transformed through this arts-led regeneration. The power of art provides strong evidence of the widespread impact of the visual arts across the public realm. In the north-east, investment in major new cultural institutions such as BALTIC and Sage – both in Gateshead – has been the catalyst for the £1 billion redevelopment of east Gateshead, leading to the creation of 10,000 jobs. BALTIC alone has resulted in the creation of 60 full-time jobs, plus a further 40 full-time jobs servicing the gallery's catering and bar functions.

## The challenge

Because the structure of the visual arts sector is not integrated, the benefits and impact of the sector have not been fully realised. Although local government is a major funder of the visual arts, contributing £600 million from the £3.2 billion a year spent on culture and leisure, the lion's share of that money goes to the collection-based museums and galleries, where the focus is predominantly on material from the past. The new Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) funding programme to museums, 'Renaissance' has not shifted this focus.<sup>21</sup>

The findings of the Final survey report by Burns Owens Partnership confirmed the relatively small operating scale of much visual arts programming.<sup>22</sup> While there is usually no box office, the sales and earned income are relatively high: for Arts Council funded organisations it amounts to 28% of total income. Programme budgets are very low:

- 39% of visual arts organisation have budgets of less than £5,000
- 58% have budgets of up to £10,000
- in London only 20% have budgets over £100,000
- most have no paid in-house development staff

Such low budgets are a serious constraint on international collaboration and on scale and ambition especially in the regions. The cost of an individual one-person show can average £200,000. The South-east and London have more than twice as many organisations receiving shows from other countries than the East and West Midlands. Organisations that have toured exhibitions to international venues are concentrated in London (36%). All the visual arts organisations we funded saw a steep drop in commissions of new work in 2003/04.

Regional collections in England do not represent the visual art of our time and cannot compete with the strong regional international contemporary art collections in Europe, especially in France and Germany. Regional museums lack resources to attract and retain the expertise in contemporary art that would encourage greater collaboration with other partners in this country and abroad. Contemporary art organisations are not motivated to forge partnerships beyond their peers. The opportunity to share curatorial expertise through commissioning new work, secondments and mentoring is not being realised.

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<sup>21</sup> Renaissance website: [www.mla.go.uk](http://www.mla.go.uk)

<sup>22</sup> Burns Owens Partnership in partnership with Experian Business Strategies, 2005, *Final survey report*, Arts Council England

The long-established relationship between the international commercial sector in London and the Arts Council funded network of venues and agencies to show and commission new work has deepened. The benefits are mutual: publicly-run galleries are able, especially in London, to show international work of scale and ambition to widen their audiences; private galleries and agents gain public endorsement. While this collaboration is to be welcomed, it has also shifted the fine balance of public and private interest. Public venues, which have traditionally supported artists and new work, now have to compete with commercial spaces in London that often have larger spaces to show work, bigger budgets and high profiles.

### **Our response**

The Jackson/Jordan Report focuses on the fragmented structure of the visual arts in England and recommends that this be reviewed.<sup>23</sup> However, it also acknowledges that the sector has no appetite for radical change and that many local authority owned and funded visual art collections and galleries are part of multidisciplinary museum services that bring benefits as well as constraints. While the growth of independent museum trusts is a helpful development, we do not see any bringing together of visual arts institutions under a single funding body as a realistic or desirable option.

We agree with the central theme of the review that there 'is the need to achieve common purpose... around a vision for the future that states clearly the value of visual culture of all kinds'.<sup>24</sup>

We support the proposal to achieve organic change and greater common purpose through new investment in people and organisations. The five priorities in our long-term strategy all seek to identify commonalities across sectors to support the visual arts overall and to gain new audiences from a wider range of backgrounds and greater participation.

The present structure needs to become more transparent to allow for greater critical engagement across institutions and disciplines. Contemporary visual arts engage and challenge not only the heritage, but the wider culture where artists, often using new technologies, are interrogating sound, language, movement and interaction as much as the visual. Contemporary art reaches new audiences through the synergies and tensions it explores, not least on the wilder shores of the performing arts. The artist's enquiries of art, the art system, media and idea, the original, author, producer, viewer, owner and value cut across all art forms.

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<sup>23</sup> Jackson T, Jordan M, 2005, *Review of the presentation of contemporary visual arts, part 1: Analysis and recommendations*, 5.00; and part 2: *Surveys of the sector and appendices, Appendix 2, map*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, Part 1 section 4.7 page 21

The Jackson/Jordan Report makes key recommendations for cross-sectoral partnerships to strengthen leadership and maximise public value.<sup>25</sup> It proposes formal links between the contemporary visual art network and the regional hubs<sup>26</sup> of the MLA's Renaissance programme. It envisages 'a long-term framework for joint activities between contemporary visual arts organisations and the museums and galleries sector', and 'a cross-sectoral programme of investment in the development of management competencies and leadership skills'.<sup>27</sup> We wish to take this forward with our partners through regional action plans.

This will develop the potential of the Renaissance investment in regional museums. It opens up opportunities in skills-sharing, developing wider diversity and leadership, in participation, education and learning and business development, from collections to earned income. The Renaissance programme has widened audiences from socio-economic groups C2, D and E and from Black and minority ethnic groups which have increased by 25%.<sup>28</sup> Audience crossover would significantly benefit the contemporary visual arts network. This has been demonstrated in Yorkshire where we already have a strategic regional gallery programme of support for collection-based galleries. A joint national strategy of regular funding would set a new agenda for the contemporary visual art, artists and audiences in England. It would need new investment.

We will ensure that we help develop a portfolio of visual arts organisations focusing on regional provision and programming including opportunities for contemporary visual artists and widening participation.

We will develop a long-term action plan to address the issues of:

- regional imbalance and provision raised in the survey by Burns Owens Partnership. The Jackson/Jordan Report makes key recommendations<sup>29</sup> in this area, particularly on the need for regional development strategies for the visual arts
- low programme budgets identified in the Burns Owens Partnership research. We recognise that one-off project funding is not an effective mechanism for addressing a gap in core funding and mitigates against cost-effective and creative planning, for collaboration and partnership, especially with other sectors and internationally

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, Part 1 sections 5,10,11

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, Part 1 sections 7,9

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, Part 1 section 10, page 85

<sup>28</sup> *A pocket Guide to Renaissance, A ground-breaking investment in England's regional museums*, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, 2006

<sup>29</sup> Jackson T, Jordan M, 2005, *Ibid*, Part 1 sections 6,10

We will work with others to develop contemporary visual art collections. We will build on the work of the Contemporary Art Society scheme, funded by the National Lottery, which brought over 600 new works into regional public collections, including major crafts collections. An exemplar is the new cross-sector partnership museummaker, an investment of £300,000 in 19 museums in the East Midlands, for new crafts commissions, supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

### **Our priorities**

- review our portfolio of regularly-funded organisations to ensure they are effective and have the commitment to work with us to develop and share new business practices
- ensure that they are appropriately funded, with the emphasis on support for partnership, artists, audience development and new media
- work with partners (local authorities, regional development agencies, NMDC, MLA and the Heritage Lottery Fund [HLF]) to create regional visual art development strategies in order to give priority to some areas for any new capital and revenue investment in contemporary visual arts
- work with our partners in the museums sector to develop joint visual art programmes and professional development opportunities
- consult with the visual arts sector on the benefits of establishing a new professional development body for the visual art
- work with our partners to develop a national strategy for public contemporary collections and make the case for lottery funding for them

### **Outcomes**

- stronger leadership and recruitment, enabling visual art organisations to be fit for the 21st century and able to compete in the international marketplace
- stronger national and international programmes, collaboration, touring and wider distribution, commissioning and collecting and learning programmes in regional museums
- increased knowledge, more professional opportunities for the workforce across the visual art, and mobility increased between national and regional organisations
- stronger and more united visual arts sector in the regions, attracting a higher profile and sponsorship opportunities

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**4**

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**NEXT STEPS**

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We undertook the contemporary visual arts review process on behalf of the broader visual arts sector of which we are part. We did this with the support of our partners and we recognise that implementing this strategy will require close working with them over the longer term.

We also recognise that this review has been undertaken in a challenging economic climate. This is a strategy with a ten-year delivery plan. It depends on a combination of partnerships, new ways of working, and prioritising existing funds as well as new investment. It is also dependent on the contemporary visual arts sector being prepared to change and diversify, to look at issues of leadership and governance, and to support new ways of working and new partnerships.

Over the coming months we will enter into further consultation with our partners and develop an action plan which will take us to the end of March 2008 – the end of the current spending period. The strategy will inform our contribution to the Comprehensive Spending Review and our financial strategy for 2008–2011.

- we will work with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the contemporary visual art sector to develop national and regional action plans to support the long-term delivery of the strategy
- we will host a national conference on the visual arts and invite key partners to collaborate on proposals to take the strategy forward

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**5**

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**ARTS  
COUNCIL:  
CONTEXT**

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We have had an historical role as a direct provider of the visual arts, running galleries and organising and touring over 1,500 exhibitions of art of all periods and cultures. Our Director of Art in the 1970s and 1980s, the late Joanna Drew, trained a generation of inspirational gallery directors and curators who now hold key positions worldwide. The Arts Council Collection is the largest national loan collection of modern and contemporary British art in the world. It is managed by the Hayward Gallery at The South Bank Centre in London. It supports artists and venues and develops audiences through regional programmes.

In the 1980s we adjusted our remit to focus on the development of contemporary visual art and helped establish leading organisations to represent artists, education and debate. We set up a significant ten-year funding programme to support the artist and contemporary visual arts within regional museums and took a strong lead in developing education and widening participation in the visual arts. Direct visual art provision was devolved to a group of funded organisations, from galleries to a range of agencies and producers across England.

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## **Key to organisations**

A&B	Arts and Business
ACE	Arts Council England
AICA	Association of International Art Critics
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
Bfi	British Film Institute
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CAS	Contemporary Art Society
CHEAD	The Council for Higher Education in Art and Design
CCS	Creative & Cultural Skills
DCA	Department for Constitutional Affairs
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government, formerly Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
FACT	Foundation for Art and Creative Technology
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GLLAM	Group of Large Local Authority Museums
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council England
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
ICA	Institute of Contemporary Art
inIVA	Institute of International Visual Arts
IXIA	previously Public Art Forum
MDC	Museum Directors' Conference
MLA	Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
MLAC	Museums, Libraries and Archives Councils (regional)
NESTA	National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
NSEAD	National Society for Education in Art and Design
NMDC	National Museums Directors' Conference
RDAs	Regional development agencies
RGO	Regional Government Office
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
RSA	Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce
VAGA	Visual Arts and Galleries Association

## **Key to Arts Council programmes**

*Artists' Insights*: the practices and the learning outcomes and impact of writers and visual artists working with young people in museums, galleries, libraries and archives.

*Artists Time, Space and Money*: is a portfolio of initiatives that consider the needs of artists.

*decibel*: an Arts Council initiative designed to support and raise the profile of African, Asian and Caribbean artists in England. It comprises a cross art-form programme of projects and events. It was launched in 2003 and is funded until 2008. It has had notable successes in the performing and visual arts, and literature.

*en-quire*: a gallery education programme managed by engage in association with Arts Council England. En-quire is funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of Education and Skills as part of the Museums and Gallery Education Strategy, [www.en-quire.org.uk](http://www.en-quire.org.uk)

*Inspire*: the Arts Council's Inspire Fellowship Programme is part of a strategic initiative delivered under section 37 of the Race Relations Act (1976) aimed at reducing the under-representation of Black African, Caribbean, Chinese, South Asian or South-East Asian curators in the museums and galleries sector.

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