

CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

ARTS FUNDING INQUIRY

SUBMISSION FROM conFAB

What would a sustainable model of funding look like?

&

How should that funding be made available to artists?

Story One: the place of the arts

Spring 2015 and I have a vision for a theatre production. The show would open with an empty stage, on the back wall of that stage would be a paper backdrop of Glasgow. The show would begin when the hull of a ship would burst through the paper back drop. The sides of the ship would then open out to create a number of stages, at different heights and of different sizes. The vision was fleeting. I knew I would never be able to raise the funding for such an ambitious staging, that no company in Scotland could.

Winter 2015 and I visit a friend in Hamburg, Germany. We both work in the arts, so we decide to go and see some theatre. We choose a production in the studio theatre of one of the larger established theatres in the city. Running a little late we rush to our seats and there along the back wall of the stage is a paper back drop of Hamburg. As the house lights go down a steam train bursts through the backdrop and opens out to reveal a number of different stages, at different heights and of different sizes.

The Happy ending: we would welcome a Scotland

- that fully recognises, appreciates and values the integral and lifesaving role the arts play in the lives of everybody in Scotland be they scientists, medics, engineers, farmers etc.
- that recognises the potential of the creatives industries, the third biggest growth industry in the UK, with increased levels of funding more in line with other statutory services such as science, education, health, business etc.
- a statutory duty for local authorities to provide funding and support for the arts.
- incentives: financial and cultural for both the public and private sector to financially and culturally invest and recognise the arts more

Story Two: funding purpose

In the early 2000's I had my first experience of the Scottish Arts Council and it was transformative for me. Coming from London I could not believe that officers in the SAC would meet with me to discuss my ideas, help me with the application process and guide me appropriately as my career developed. There was a sense that the SAC was there to facilitate the arts and artists in Scotland.

Happy ending: we would welcome a funding model

- that seeks to facilitate and support opportunities for artists to make work
- delivered by an organisation whose principle identity is based on being a distributor and facilitator of funds

Story Three: process

conFAB was funded in 2004. We are multi-art form and produce, on average, 10 projects a year which range from one off workshops to large scale theatre productions with casts of 25+ people. We are project funded. We spend a lot of my time applying for funding from a vast range of different funders. We have over 15 years of experience of working with funders. Over the past 15 years, for the 150 or so projects we have delivered, we have been funded by Creative Scotland four times.

Happy ending: we would welcome a funding model:

- with clear funding priorities, developed through a vigorous consultation process with a transparent and robust open application process where all in the funding organisation have a clear and agreed consensus on what delivering on these priorities looks like

Story Four:

conFAB was founded by a group of writers who had been involved in a series of live literature events and saw the potential to take that work further by developing projects in a community setting. We couldn't apply for funding as individuals, so we formed conFAB. To this day the majority of conFAB's work is developed by working in collaboration with artists to support them to realise their creative vision. We are able to provide the structure for the project, so the artists can focus on what they do best, the art.

Happy ending: we would welcome a funding model:

- that has the creation of art as its core value and purpose
- where funding artists directly is part of and in addition to a broad range of funding options
- where financial and other incentives support artists to realise their creativity