

## CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

### ARTS FUNDING INQUIRY

#### SUBMISSION FROM ANGIE DIGHT

- **What are the major threats to sustainable funding of the arts in Scotland?**

The devaluation of the arts which is mirrored by the fact that it is becoming less important in education, less children having free access will make the arts become more of a class privilege, dumbing down, art as entertainment only, art valued only in terms of its social or economic benefits.

Austerity and councils and governments making cuts, the arts is not valued as important enough, it's viewed as a luxury. Artists are not valued as people trying to earn their living through it, having to self fund through other jobs will ultimately lead to less work being made and the possibility of less time being spent impacting on quality. Art in it's purest form should be valued, it ultimately filters down into everything, film, tv, social media, pop-culture, architecture, design of everything, fashion, books, radio etc. If it isn't valued at source it will ultimately impact on the future of all these mainstream commodities.

Too much need for strategic partnerships etc.

- **What are the main challenges for artists and cultural freelancers in obtaining funding in Scotland?**

The main challenges are the levels of administrative skills required, without the knowledge of how and what the funders want in the application – ie ticking the boxes, the Artist is severely disadvantaged. Artists are required to have additional skills, usually achieved through a university degree. This doesn't encourage accessibility for all. If the Artist uses another to write the application they need the funds to do so.

The day rate of a fundraiser is valued as much higher than that of an Artist. The Artist is stuck between two Worlds. The applications are written for the benefit of those evaluating rather than for the Artist. The time spent researching, creating and writing the application is unpaid, if the Artist is unsuccessful the Artist loses both money and time. For the less educated in such matters, writing funding applications is an onerous and lengthy task. Artists also feel that it is the project which should be valued more than the box ticking and this also makes the application writing difficult, as it does not seem as though that is the case for the funders.

Artists need to be constantly aware of what is available, they are also competing against each other. The amount of time spent on this type of work effects amount of time available to work on the art, with the amount of evaluation then required afterwards, including the audience feedback ( which I think is problematic )

Too much reliance on strategic partnerships, if one fails it impacts on the rest of the project, too many partners means the Artist has to try to please all.

- **What measures could the Scottish Government take to ensure a sustainable level of funding for the arts?**

Perhaps tax benefits incentives can be made to businesses who support the arts or creating an arts benefit fund that can include gift aid. Taxing business' like Starbucks and Amazon appropriately. Taxing American businesses at a higher tax level to support UK infrastructure which includes the arts. Creating arts funding pot which reflects the level of earnings created through the arts eg, theatres, tourism, outdoor events etc.

Creating positive public awareness around the value of the arts. Increasing arts funding and education in schools.

Perhaps creating a small Tourist tax, particularly so in the case of the Edinburgh festival, a tax which is paid by both visitors and to a larger extent businesses, eg, hotels, bars, restaurants, transport and landlords.

- **How could Scotland be innovative in attracting greater funding for the arts?**

Working with business and creating business incentives. See above. Perhaps the business funding could support the arts that is more charitable and can be measured in terms of social benefit, social impact, whilst public Arts funding is more risky and avantgarde, art for art sake. As we see with the fashion cat walk the garments are often extreme and apparently unwearable , but these ideas translate down into the high street and become mainstream a few years later. Perhaps it takes longer with the arts, but it does filter down, and the questioning of the status quo, throwing different perspectives on things, or the creation of a totally fresh visual language for eg, whilst at first appearing to be avantgarde, difficult even, also have the chance of filtering down and eventually affecting everything for the good of all.

The Tourist tax which should impact more on business rather than the Tourist, although charity/donation pots funding Scotland and the Arts in Theatre's, Streets, Galleries ....which are for all arts funding, rather than the specific venue.

A drive to encourage people to leave money for the arts in their wills.

Merchandise sold at the Edinburgh festival, something created each year a specially commissioned T-shirt, a crafted beer, a cake, a poem etc.

- **How should public money be made available to support artists and cultural freelancers in Scotland, including any relevant international examples of best practice?**

Perhaps the funding bodies need to be more active in their information gathering, they need to do more of the legwork, write more of the reports themselves, this will of course need more people and more money. They could also be more transparent in what they are looking for. One such example of bad practice is the recent RFO debacle where the creation of a new fund was only mentioned the day the results were given. If it had been

known a year and a half beforehand when the applications were made ( or even during the long wait ) Artists and companies would have had a much better idea of their future. I can't suggest any best practice ideas, but being more Artist centred is important, the funding bodies, producers, creative industry workers jobs exist because of the work of Artists, but it really does not feel this way at all. Artists feel that they are begging and bending over backwards as well as looking for the funding in the first place. The balance needs redressed.

In kind support needs to also be looked at, as I think it gives funders an unrealistic view of how much projects do actually cost.

One issue which seems to be particular to Creative Scotland is the requirement to be constantly creating something new, rather than redeveloping, honing and improving, which would improve the quality of work immeasurably. Longevity of projects is far more common in Europe where the quality of work is when it comes to the UK is excellent.

- **What factors should be considered and how should decisions be made about which artists or cultural freelancers should obtain public funding in Scotland?**

This of course is an extremely difficult question, quality and diversity of work, new work and supporting older established work .....perhaps the more established work should be supported more widely through business and public sponsorship ....ie theatre venues, but then they might also become more beholden to mainstream work, perhaps the funding bodies should be funding more risky work and the partnerships with business and public sponsorship could be more mainstream – tried and tested. A venue could have 2 x sources of income, a percentage of all successful funding should be more pure art, less box-ticking, with parameters not created by non-artists.

The issue of course is who chooses and what are the rules. Perhaps different panels – evaluating on quality of the art, evaluating on the wider benefit and then finally evaluating by the funding bodies criteria. Perhaps there are selection panels from the wider arts, venues and the general public. Applications should be shorter.

Perhaps artistic ideas are put forward first, if they are deemed of interest they are funded to facilitate the creation of budgets and the development of partnerships ( theatres, venues, locations, galleries , publishers etc with some guidance and assistance in finding these from Creative Scotland. When this has been created the final application can be made, if funding bodies know there will be a lot of competition they should also advise the applicants on the amounts of money, or advise a more realistic time to submit. Getting through to this stage however should not mean the project is guaranteed but at least the application process has been funded, and the art has been judged on its merit.

Of course more funding rounds, panels and hoops means more money required at an administrative level and this is definitely a problem, as too is waiting 10 months ( as in the case of the last RFO submission ) to hear.

Assistance with evaluation, data that might be relevant to different groups and can be accessed and inputted into the form would be beneficial. Less necessary evaluation would

also be good for eg, audience postcodes – which could be done by CS rather than Artists having to do this.

All Art, all Artists, less onerous and more assistance and understanding on a case by case basis – but I don't have the answer for how this can be achieved, except by having a widening, rolling more diverse funding panel.