



Scottish Artists' Union Annual General Meeting

6.30pm, 26th July 2005

Stills Gallery,
Cochrane Street,
Edinburgh

AGENDA

1. Registration and Apologies
2. Welcome and Review of 2004 AGM minutes
3. Review of past year: SAU President – Su Grierson
4. Executive Motions – Chris Kelly (motions raised by members)
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Elections to executive committee.
7. Cultural Commission – Where is the artist now? A response by Su Grierson
8. Studio Provision in Edinburgh – Fiona Pilgrim introduces presentations from Allan Kilpatrick of WASPS/Patriot Hall Studios and Irene Kernan from Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop. Followed by discussion
9. Refreshments

1. Registration and Apologies.

- **Present:** Registration list attached.
- **Apologies:** Chris Biddlecombe, Wendy Bibby, Lesley Evans, Mary Mortimer, Suzanne Davis, and N. Thallon.

2. Welcome and Review of 2004 AGM Minutes

Terry Anderson introduced the meeting and thanked all attending. After reviewing AGM minutes for 2004, there were no matters arising; these minutes are proposed by Terry and seconded by Chris Kelly.

3. President's Report

ON BEHALF OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME YOU ALL HERE TONIGHT.
THANK YOU FOR COMING.

The Scottish Artists Union has had a busy and successful year. Carrying forward from last year the two main issues were:

1. Joining another Union.

We held a meeting at STUC with BECTU & STUC and were advised that we didn't need to join the STUC prior to joining a larger Union as we had been informed. Currently, according to Union rules we'd probably have to join with BECTU, this might give us access to legal support and insurance and administrative support, but we would become a sub group within the larger Union and subject to their rules and conditions. We would not have a free voice and could face conflicting positions within the Union. We have taken the decision that at the moment to preserve our voice and continue as an independent small union. However this decision can be reviewed at a later date.

2. Our Rates of Pay document was updated at our last AGM and is now on our website as a free document. Our main role is now to promote its use.

3. The Cultural Commission has occupied a large amount of time this year. The Union have been represented at four 'sectorial' meetings (more by exec members in other capacities) submitting two major written reports.

4. Representing the Union: We gave an address at the SAC visual arts Forum, in September, after that meeting we were contacted by SAC to say that they were responding to issues we raised on EPR & professional development training. This emphasizes the importance of us attending such events.

SAU were represented at events in Inverness, Aberdeen, Perth, and Plockton. Articles about SAU have appeared in various newsletters and websites and Exec members have attended many meetings for example the OWN ART launch and the series of CCPR seminars on cultural issues.

5. International Issues

The new post of international development officer was established this year jointly by SAC and British Council. I met with Norah Campbell, the new officer, stressing the need for funding for international artists projects. She is well aware of this need, but is pressurised by much bigger political and organizational concerns. I phoned her last week for an update and she says that things have moved slowly, though they hope to go public with the new

strategy in September. There will be no new initiatives for artists at that stage, but the strategy will open up - through one of its five remits- the space in which artists' projects can be addressed. However there is as yet no funding available and nothing has changed.

6. Political Issues: We have had personal meetings at Holyrood with cultural convenors from The Green Party, SNP, Conservatives and Lib Democrats, on the basis that if MSPs are to vote on cultural issues then they need to be better informed. After our meeting with Donald Gorrie (Lib Dem), he raised two questions at parliamentary 'Question Time' regarding rates of pay for artists and funding for artists international projects. The Ministerial replies were bland and partly incorrect. However at least the issues were raised at the highest level. I think it is imperative that in the coming months we meet the Minister and her cultural advisors.

7. Members Issues: Perhaps because we now have a mobile phone, and our website is functioning (both of which we have spent time attending to this year) more members are contacting us with problems or issues.

We have written letters in support of artists, arranged meeting with legal advisors – through Cultural Enterprise Office, and generally used our contacts to access helpful information.

In every single case that involved a gallery or project, the absence of a contract had both created the problem and made it impossible to resolve. We feel that the most useful thing we can do is to raise awareness among artists and galleries for the importance of just HAVING a contract.

We have also made representations to both ACE and SAC to the effect that they should make it a condition of project applications that the applicant supplies a copy of their artists' contract. One positive step here is that the introduction of the 'Own Art' project by both Arts Councils has made the inclusion of artist's contracts part of the deal. However my recent request for more information about this revealed that this development is also going slowly!

8. Disclosure Scotland: Our enquiry was initiated by a member's enquiry about multiple disclosures. The need for this is specific to Scotland; it does not apply in England where it is currently under review in light of the Soham tragedy. Scotland says it will wait for that result and then reconsider but in the meantime multiple disclosures are still required. We have had much contact with VAGA, Engage, Voluntary Arts Scotland and SAC on this issue. The crazy thing is that the whole country is disrupted by a system which is failing to protect children, because the system has been set up to protect organizations from massive insurance claims, not to give the best protection to children.

9. Artists Galleries & Money: Also arising from members concerns, the problem with VAT raised at last years AGM. We hosted a symposium 'Artists Galleries & Money' at CCA in Glasgow during the Glasgow Art Fair; when we believed many out-of-town artists might be around. This was well attended and generated a good discussion.

Angela Bedie spoke about VAT and presented a very complex issue with great clarity. There is now a report of this meeting on our website.

10. Art Fair: Committee members manned a free stand at these years Glasgow Art Fair, kindly donated by UZ Events. We gave out information and leaflets but felt our main success was in raising awareness of the Union and what it does, rather than in attracting new members.

11. Members Benefits: Our Benefits list has been updated and posted on the website. An offer just in is from the owner of this website who is offering to do a group listing of union Members. And we will discuss this more fully at our next exec meeting. You can join anyway as individual members.

12. Housekeeping: We also have to keep our own house in order. This year we have completed the certification process for full 'Union' status and have adopted new accounting and administration procedures to accord with Union rules. Our internal system of membership processing is now running smoothly.

THE WAY FORWARD.

Increasing membership must be a priority in the coming year. If we are to remain an independent organization relying entirely on voluntary committee members who are geographically disparate, then we need more income to support these administrative demands and a full committee to undertake specific areas of research and provide for a rotation of the main exec positions.

For support given to us this year we would like to thank. Equity, CEO, WASPS, Stills for this meeting and the CCA for our symposium meeting room.

4. Executive Motions

All motions need to be forwarded in writing in advance. There are two motions to address at this meeting.

The first is a technical amendment to item 11 of the constitution, stating that 'We the Scottish Artists' Union Executive shall appoint as our auditors, independent chartered accountants....' The adoption of this new motion is required, in order to comply with our Trade Union status. Chris then proposed the motion, which was seconded by Jayne Taylor. Terry puts the motion to the vote and the vote is carried.

Chris then proposed the second motion 'to appoint Dansig and Co as auditors....' This was seconded by Su and put to the vote, which was also carried.

David Cook asks, 'Do we need to appoint auditors tonight for the next financial year?' Chris replies that the auditors have now been appointed until further notice.

Terry then invited Chris to make his financial report.

5. Financial Report (Financial Accounts attached)

I would like to thank David Cook and Paul Dansig for their support in the drawing up of these accounts. The information before us couldn't be sent in advance in this instance, as we needed to officially appoint our auditors first. Here we present our annual figures with comparative figures from the previous year. Note as follows:

1. There is a modest increase in membership income.
2. We have accrued more interest as we have more monies saved.
3. Our outgoing expenditure was lower this year, as we'd already invested a lot on promotional leaflets in the previous year.
4. Administration spending was lower as we are saving by using the Internet and web more effectively.
5. We have a healthy balance, which gives us a good financial basis on which to build.
6. Creditors due (see note 3), where some people have paid membership in advance and committee training have also been paid in advance.
7. We have seen a considerable increase in our funds, with restricted funds (i.e. Awards for All) being tied to the purchase of a laptop, mobile phone, training and web support, and a digital camera.

Overall our accounts are in a health state with opportunities there for us to provide resources for new SAU executive members in the future.

There were no questions.

Chris proposes the accounts and Su seconds the proposal.

6. Elections to executive committee.

Terry lists the members standing for election:

Su Grierson (President)

Terry Anderson (Vice President)

Chris Kelly (Treasurer)

Fiona Pilgrim (Secretary)

Guyan Porter

Chris Biddlecombe

Joyce McFarland

Jayne Taylor

Marianne Greated

Mary Mortimer

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Terry proposes that all are re-elected and Clare Seconds. A vote is taken and carried.

7. Cultural Commission – Where is the artist now? A response by Su Grierson

WHERE ARE THE ARTISTS NOW?

For those who have not caught up with the Cultural Commission report – this is it! 539 pages long. Since we didn't receive one of the 100 copies that were printed I had to download and print it out.

For anyone who isn't too clear on the cultural Commission at all, it was a Government sponsored investigation into the state of play in Scottish culture today with recommendations for a way forward.

To be fair the commission did an impressive job of consultation, gathering information and putting it into a basically understandable form in one year. They clearly did not have enough time to come up with the radical new directions that were promised. However this is what the Scottish executive will be considering over the summer

Without doubt we as a Union have benefited by taking part. We are better informed, better connected, and have been forced to decide where we stand on many issues.

Our voice has been heard and listened too; we have gained recognition from other organisations just through taking part.

But where does it leave us now. Are we as artists any better off or are we likely to be?

I have isolated some of the points we raised in our submissions to the Cultural Commission, and then looked at development both within the CC document and within the wider sector that have also seen and heard our points. Here are some of those points.

***WE asked for Support and value for artists at 'grassroots' level**

The Cultural Commission (CC) states that the creative individual is the cornerstone of cultural activity. They acknowledge their diversity and need for a wide variety of support. They also consider it important to raise their status.

They plan to do this by an annual speech from the First Minister recognizing the role of the 'creator'. They point to the previous St Andrews day speech in terms of raised profile.

Does newspaper coverage really mean status??

WE WANT Minimum rates of pay accepted across the sector

Not addressed by the CC

The SAC are still not willing to officially endorse a Rates of Pay standard or include it on their website as they agreed and the CC did not consider this issue.

However as a result of advocacy by ourselves, artists are better informed about what their entitlements are and many organizations seem keen to establish best practice. However this is a slow and piecemeal development.

WE ASKED FOR VAT - difficulty sorted out

VAT is a reserved issue. The CC did look at VAT rates on artistic output in other countries but any changes can only be promoted to Westminster.

We have spoken to VAGA about the possibility of addressing the gallery infrastructure to find agreement on invoicing practice

WE ASKED FOR Tax considerations for artists to be examined, including on art purchase

The Cultural Commission has suggested that 'Irish Style' tax breaks should be considered. The Irish are themselves now questioning that system which benefits the richest practitioners most and brings some 'tax exile' artists to seek residence in Ireland without actually having to contribute to the Irish cultural life. However the commission does suggest putting an income ceiling on tax breaks to avoid that and Irish figures do show that many low waged artists do benefit. But this is said to be for 'creative individual's' a term coined by the CC to mean the 'creators' AND artistic interpreters, which they define as a vast sector including part time librarians, music conductors, voluntary dance teachers, translators etc, I do think there would need to be a great deal more clarification here. Tax is also a reserved issue, so Scottish Executive can only 'recommend' this to Westminster and I imagine it would have to be considered as a UK wide initiative.

*** WE recommend that a form of best practice for the employment of artists be urgently considered**

SAC is currently working on an 'Artists Charter' but I was told progress is SLOW.

***WE SAID We do not need legal rights to culture; we already have intrinsic rights to our own culture. We need wider availability together with public education and encouragement.**

This is widely and effectively addressed in the CC document but entirely from the perspective of benefit to the community. We must have an equal measure of support for the 'free arts' and for artists own practice. WE believe these two aspects must always be linked.

****WE SAID Artists need on-going professional development training. However artists should also be employed to DELIVER such training.**

The SAC have agreed to positively promote this idea.

*** WE SAID Public Liability Insurance should be provided by the employer.**

No move on this as far as I know. Perhaps we need to approach COSLA

*** WE SAID Creativity involves risk. Without risk there is no creativity. Funders' must understand the true nature of risk.**

The Cultural Commission endorses this statement when they point out that keeping national cultural decisions at 'arms length' from local authorities and government is important for this reason. However it is worrying that support for individual artists is becoming and will become ever more local. Currently there is a huge disparity on arts spending between different local authorities. The CC suggests national planning to support more equal provision.

****WE SAID Artists should visit and teach in school environments as professional practicing artists and not as cheap stand-ins for non-existent art teachers**

This was indirectly approached under Education. The CC suggests revision of teacher training for the arts and more support for gallery education programs.

More funding for postgraduate places in the arts.

They say that artists need better education in enterprise issues.

The role of artists in education is addressed with this statement

'Artists will use various disciplines including dance, to help teach math's and history' and refers to 'the efficacy of the expressive arts as a delivery mechanism across the curriculum.

WE agree, but we point out that this must be balanced by support for the arts and artists own practice.

****WE SAID SAU believes that a Ministry of Culture separated from Sport and Tourism is essential that arts funding should be administered at arms length from Government with scope for local initiatives to respond to local need.**

CC has recommended a new post of deputy minister rather than a cultural ministry. This seems to be reduce the power that a ministry would hold, and to remove potential influence by local authorities and national arts institutions. I now think that is probably right.

Two new bodies are being suggested to administer the arts. The Cultural fund will deal only with finance, while Culture Scotland will develop strategy and policy making. Both will be companies with elected board members. Basically Culture Scotland would replace SAC and Scottish Screen and would be owned and administered by Governing Council of 25 representatives from Cultural organizations. Who will represent the artists then? It would have to be SAU.

The CC recommends that the National companies will also be funded through these bodies, but unless their cash is ring fenced we would be concerned that as artists we would be competing against these national bodies for funds.

****WE SAID Any international funding coming online in Scotland MUST acknowledge the activity of artists by having open applications funds rather than supporting only closed enterprise type initiatives.**

The Cultural Commission has addressed international expansion in some depth, but this is almost exclusively from an enterprise perspective and with an eye clearly on how Scotland will benefit from the inclusion of cultural activity in these 'promotional' events. However some artists will undoubtedly benefit from the increased exposure this would offer.

****WE SAID Artists require support and assistance, particularly at local Government level for the provision of reasonably priced studios in rural areas and in central urban locations.**

This was not considered in the report.

SAC does currently support WASPS and some independent groups. WE ARE THEREFORE PRIORITISING THIS ISSUE TONIGHT.

***WE SUGGESTED a central award-giving agency for artists, supported in its decision-making by artists representing all disciplines and geographic locations.**

Unfortunately the CC seems to have taken the word 'AWARD' to mean 'Oscars'. WE meant MONEY!

The CC is suggesting National Council for the Creative Individual (again note that this is for the wide ranging definition) whose members (restricted) are to be nominated and elected annually by their peers. CC says it should not exclude any discipline in the cultural field – interesting since no one has yet come up with an acceptable definition of what culture is. Or where its boundaries lie.

Membership should be based on excellence and achievement. With new members being announced on St Andrews day by the first minister - a kind of 'honors' list

What would it achieve beyond becoming an elitist group of individuals with little in common – remember this is a cultural group not an arts group- intent on validating itself by electing like-minded individuals.

Does it have any bearing on the Scottish way of thinking about culture or of life?

How does a group that might include a composer, an installation artist, a long serving swimming pool attendant, a translator or a scout leader become anything other than a rather weird club?

Personally I see that as an ancient outdated mode.

Artists need to be valued because the arts are valued and that need a sea change in cultural thinking from politicians, from media, from public and private support.

WHAT WE NEED is an intelligently informed community not an Oscar style honors list!

Terry thanks Su for her helpful summary of the CC Report and invites questions from the floor:

Guyan asks what will happen next? Chris explains that the report is being digested by the Scottish Executive and will likely lead to another round of consultation and research. In the meantime there may be a slow down in the support for practice and artists development etc. David suggests that administrative staff would increase in numbers with even less provision for artists. Su felt the report was on middle ground and still needs further 'translation' to work out the various ramifications of taking its suggestions forward. Brian Beattie and the reports 'cultural advisors' would be worth meeting with, as this would help us gain insight into the thinking behind the reports more 'contrary' and controversial ideas and how they fit with the 'existing agenda'. Chris asks when do we need to 'officially' respond to the report. Guyan says that we should be responding to ministers directly and on all fronts, from now onwards. David points out that it could be 3 to 4 years before anything significant might happen. The SAC will be under pressure to prove its dynamic enough to 'evolve' into the new bodies described.

8. Artists Studio Provision in Edinburgh

Fiona Pilgrim introduces Allan Kilpatrick from WASPS/Patriot Hall Studios and Irene Kernan from Edinburgh Sculpture Workshops, who will each be presenting their positive stories and strategies to inspire us. There has been an ongoing debate on artists initiative supported premises and tonight we are going to look at some of solutions they have found to solve problems they have faced.

1. Patriot Hall Studios

I have brought along this correspondence tonight to show you the huge amount generated in our efforts to save the Patriot Hall Studio. The background is that WASPS have been supporting the studios for the last 18-19 years but their lease was due for renewal in January 2005. During 2001 it became obvious that the landlord, Scotmid, were literally 'measuring up' the property with a view to future development. The tenants became concerned and started a 'save the studios' Petition. By 20th Feb 2003, when WASPS started negotiations with Scotmid over the future of the building, they had collected 3,400 signatures. By September 2003 Scotmid had agreed to sell the building to WASPS for £900,000. An application was made immediately to the SAC (for £500,000) but was refused. The deadline for the purchase was Jan 2004. So with only three months left to find the money the artist tenants had little choice but to campaign to save their workspace. The local (Tory) MP turned out to be an excellent ally who worked very hard to lobby and gave good advice; which was to make a balanced and constructive argument, be positive and knock on all the doors. The campaign involved writing letters, making documents about the artists-their links to the community, economic input at national and international levels. Once gathered together the statistics were impressive. They wrote to every single councilor, MP and MSP, with a follow up personal visit (which included areas out with the city centre). Studio tours were arranged and gradually understanding developed. Meanwhile the SAC had been bombarded with letters from individuals, organizations and councilors and eventually £250,000 was released. The Edinburgh City Council (ECC) found itself unable to give money as it didn't have a Visual arts and crafts strategy; which was required to gain 'lottery' funding. However pressure brought results with a special meeting at the council, which included a depute from the artists of Patriot Halls and WASPS, and the sum of £500,000 being secured. The Tories forwarded the amendment that the money should be repaid to the council should the building ever have a change of use, thus protecting its studio status. The Liberal group lobbied for an ECC Visual Arts Strategy Policy (still not delivered), as this would enable payments to other projects etc. The campaign has led to other benefits to Patriot Hall, The Lord provost opened an exhibition there and there have been positive developments in working relationships with ECC; who have said that Capacity Building and the studio gallery were both key reasons why they offered their support. The fact that the studios are actually effectively employing over 60 people was another significant factor. The whole process has resulted in winning over hearts and minds and substantial building improvements (including a new roof!) It is not necessarily the culture debate that won the argument to save the studios but the 'small business development angle'. There are now more studios in jeopardy at Albion Road, which is a space that is not so viable (rent increases etc.) so campaigning for affordable studios will continue to be an ongoing challenge in the near future at least.

Fiona thanks Allan and introduces Irene Kernan to talk about the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop (ESW) project to build a bespoke facility for sculptors.

2. Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop – Newhaven Project

ESW has recently received money from the Lottery and ECC for a purpose built building. It has taken six years to get to this point. Artists who needed space for their work; developed studios at Pentland Road established the ESW in 1987. Artists have been running this space voluntarily with 20 studios and 150 members. Membership is open to those from varied backgrounds with interviews for selection. There are independent selections for exhibitions and events. The program works on a circular system, where projects and work is developed which has been actively sought from studio members and put to advisory panel, which in turn provide support and technical advice for the selected artists. There is a definite focus on artists' professional development (with expertise behind them). The ESW have established an exchange-working program, which is growing from artist's experiences abroad. Inspiring workspaces and purpose build studios in other countries have led to a demand for a higher standard of provision at home. This is where the new build project has sprung. With a structure to support the project separating the Financial and Strategic Management from the Artistic Management in order to protect the vitality of the studios creative concerns.

The new building will provide 30 studios, some with limited lets of up to 3 months and other lets of up to 2 years. (Based on the Melbourne model).

There will be 3 workshops enclosed to support specific practice.

A Dedicated Education Space and a Project Space – documentation/practice set-up etc. (interestingly ESW where told that they would not get funding for an exhibition space)

2 Apartments to support international exchange programs.

There has also been a major consultation process with members resulting in a member's representative and three artists on the board. There will also be representatives of external bodies included.

There will be a member's forum twice a year and a planning committee with 6 artists involved.

An Artist lead Education Program will provide employment for artists.

Partnerships have been developed with Edinburgh Printmakers and Stills Gallery, Glasgow Sculpture Studios, Edinburgh College of Art and some international organizations. There has also been support and advice from Glasgow Grows Audiences.

Flexibility is key to the success of the building design (removable walls); to facilitate networking and social engagement the layout takes you through a reception and educational area.

Budget restrictions mean there are limitations but functionality and toughness are vital considerations.

Fiona thanks both Alan and Irene and invites the floor to ask questions.

Discussion

Terry asks what is the timescale on the new build. Irene explains they have 3 –4 years to raise a further £1,000,000, but are confident that this can be done.

David explains that the situation with WASPS is that there is a four-year waiting list for a studio and the situation is getting worse. We cannot underestimate the importance of affordable space. Artists' are being forced out of the city centers in order to find space.

Su's experience of living in the countryside is that it can be just as difficult on the rural front to find space and if found, even in a cluster of 4 or 5 it can be a challenge to sustain!

Jayne suggests more local in-kind arrangements could be looked at, especially with links to the voluntary sector and social economy.

Guyan makes the point that Edinburgh hosts the largest arts festival in the world, yet has no transparent Visual Arts Strategy (apparently in development since 1996). We should be pushing for clarity and worth looking at further, how many other councils and public bodies have strategies or 'cultural plans' etc. (and are they delivering?)

Su believes it is clear that supporting practice from the bottom up is the best way to successfully aid development and good practice for artists, communities and national and international excellence in our arts. There should also be more cross-sector working; she asks Irene how ESW are tackling this?

Irene replied that they were often the instigators of collaborations and actively and positively encouraged it!

Mary Mortimer has forwarded a question, asking why visual arts are being less supported than literature?

Su felt it was about finding ways to promote our work more positively.

Guyan asks if we can encourage a restructured arts council to support all artists with fairness. That currently they fund only 10-25% of all applications, while at least 75% are eligible. It appears to be a small number of artists who gain continuous funding.

There needs to be new policy and resources to support artists work in the Education, Social (Culture and Tourism) and Voluntary Sectors.

Su raises the concern that although it may seem that there will be a bigger pot of money for the arts, visual and applied artists will now be competing for funds along with national museums and libraries etc.

Rose Frain asks we get the SAC (or organization that replaces it) to define a funding policy for individual artists.

Guyan says there is a need to resolve untidy practice around employment issues involving rates of pay, artists contracts, policy, disclosure, insurance, tax and VAT.

Paul Dansig points out that is clear from the experience of Patriot Hall that inertia and failure in defining credible policies at a national level is holding us back culturally and economically. That this is an exciting time for the arts in Scotland. The SAU are in a dynamic position to define the issues and solutions in that debate. The opportunity and impetus are with us to move things forward. There is a chance to write our wishes on the new agenda.

Terry brings the meeting with a few points or order:

1. Please register your attendance, if you haven't already done so.
2. Please take some leaflets away, help us to recruit new members, please remember you are welcome to join the executive committee and can be co-opted at any time through-out the year.

In closing, thank you to our speakers Allan Kilpatrick and Irene Kernan. Thanks also to Clare and Norma, both standing down from the committee this year. Thanks to Su for her hard work and commitment through the year as our president.