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From: Beverley Hart [bmhart@btinternet.com]
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To: info
Subject: Comments[Scanned]

Hello,

Having been laid low by pneumonia I haven't been able to give your remit my full and considered attention. But here are my starters for 10 on 'cultural rights for the Scottish citizen, and those of its creative community':

The thing about having rights is that you know they exist for, in the main, your benefit. We want them because we need them: they are something to be desired. Would cultural rights be as keenly treasured? I wonder. Clearly any social shift that sees 'culture' rise up the pecking order is to be lauded but education is the only way you'll achieve it. Take architecture. Compared to continental Europe the general public's opinions of architecture and architects is both anachronistic and woefully ignorant. We welcome the box-building developer with open arms and an empty imagination. The noddy box has, for many, become the pinnacle of domestic architectural achievement (a fact slowly being countered by the spate of design and development TV progs on Channel 4). We don't teach architecture in schools. We don't even expose children to the everchanging wonders of the built environment on a local or global scale. That hole in our cultural education also contains advertising, sculpture and art in varying degrees. We need people to think and know that these things are important. How? Now there's the question. I'm not going to attempt to answer it because my response will probably be glib and unhelpful. Still, I'm going to have a go. If we concentrate on advertising the chief creative void we need to fill is one of training; there are too few courses in Scotland that focus on the creative side of the industry. We might shout about how successful our agencies are but 90% of our creatives hail from south of the border. Here in Scotland we don't train our people to be creative we import them from elsewhere. That's actually quite a scary thought when you consider that that 90% has the responsibility of communicating directly with Scots. Surely they can't fully appreciate the nuances and idiosyncrasies of being Scottish, can they? The reality is that even for a small country like ours we have to give people the opportunities to follow as many creative paths as possible. Do that and they might not head for London.

Michael Hart