

National Galleries of Scotland

Cultural Commission: Response to Phase 1 Consultation

Introduction

The National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) welcomes the Cultural Commission.

- NGS is committed and passionate about the visual arts and believes it makes a profound contribution to the cultural life of Scotland through:
 - Direct access to the nation's collections (free of charge).
 - Broadening understanding and deepening appreciation of the visual arts.
- NGS has dynamic plans for the future which will be achieved through the dedication of staff, trustees, and supporters from the private and corporate sectors.
- NGS would like to see the Commission create an environment which encourages an imaginative and entrepreneurial approach to the visual arts.

The Nation's Collections

For over 150 years the National Galleries of Scotland has demonstrated unequivocally that it can provide the people of Scotland and beyond with some of the finest examples of western painting, sculpture and graphic art in the world. The collections are of outstanding international importance and are held in trust for the Scottish people.

In recognition of the cultural rights given to the Scottish people, access to all of NGS's collections is free on a seven day week basis. In order to ensure that its collections are not only of the highest international standards but also provide an accurate reflection of Scotland's culture, achievements and aspirations, the national collections must continue to grow and expand. Recent acquisitions demonstrate that Scotland is a confident, self-assured and outward looking nation.

NGS, which is situated in a number of listed historic buildings, has an extraordinary range of artworks in its collections, including:

- Paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture from the Gothic period to the end of the 19th century. This collection, which is housed in the National Gallery on the Mound, includes works by Raphael, Holbein, Cranach, Titian, Velázquez, Vermeer and Constable as well as by Impressionists and Post-Impressionists.
- Scottish art 1600-1900 with masterpieces by Ramsay, Raeburn, Wilkie and MacTaggart (National Gallery of Scotland).
- Photography collection (Scottish National Portrait Gallery).
- Portraits of eminent Scots from 1530 to the present day and the greatest examples of portraiture by Scottish artists (Scottish National Portrait Gallery).
- Dada and Surrealism (Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art).
- Scottish and international art from 1900 to the present day, including works by Matisse, Bacon, Hockney, the Scottish Colourists, Beuys, Paolozzi, Hirst, Douglas Gordon and many other prominent modern and contemporary artists. (Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and Dean Gallery.)
- Outdoor sculpture by Moore, Hepworth, Bragg, Hamilton Finlay and others in the landscaped gardens of the Gallery of Modern Art.

A Vision for the Arts

The National Galleries of Scotland is a major contributor to the cultural life of Scotland. It promotes Scotland's visual arts on the world stage and enables Scottish people to enjoy art of a truly international standard. Enabling the community to participate in the arts in the broadest sense is a mark of a civilised society and will be of growing importance in a globally competitive and more highly visually educated world.

The vision of NGS for the next decade is to:

1 *Continue to strengthen the collections.*

Our aim is to continue to acquire the greatest works of art for the Scottish people and enable the widest number of people to enjoy the experience of being in direct contact with works of art of the highest quality.

2 *Focus on education, scholarship and partnership.*

Our goal is to deepen the appreciation and understanding of the national collections through intelligent interpretation, in particular reaching out to school children, elder citizens, rural communities and disadvantaged groups.

Underpinning our work are the research and scholarship of the curators and conservators, who work with the universities and art colleges to make Scotland an internationally renowned centre for visual culture.

3 Ensure a stimulating programme of exhibitions and displays.

Our aim is to mount a wide range of exhibitions and displays, which include major international loan exhibitions, and displays based on the permanent collection that examine either a particular work or group of works. Our exhibitions can have intellectual integrity and/or broad popular appeal.

The Cultural Importance of the Collections

NGS's principal role is to add to, care for and interpret the national collections of fine art on behalf of the people of Scotland.

NGS encourages people to visit Edinburgh to see iconic works of art such as Canova's *Three Graces*, Velázquez's *Old Woman Cooking Eggs*, Duane Hanson's *Tourists* and various likenesses of Mary Queen of Scots and Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender.

For primarily historical reasons, the greatest part of the collections is located in Edinburgh. We wish however to give all Scotland a clearer sense of ownership of the National Collections. NGS strives to ensure even greater access to its collections by touring artworks across the country whenever possible.

NGS operates on an international as well as on a national level. Our works of art are much in demand for exhibitions around the world, promoting the status of Scotland wherever these works are seen. The international prestige of the collections helps make Edinburgh a "must visit" tourist destination attracting welcome revenue to Scotland.

NGS supports a professional Conservation and Registrars' Department who not only looks after the National Collections housed in Edinburgh but also facilitate loans and exhibitions and provide specialist support across Scotland in the form of advice and practical work.

To keep the collections, housed in the National Galleries, alive and changing, it is important that they do not become static collections. NGS is committed to finding resources to acquire new works and encouraging gifts, in particular to strengthening the contemporary and Scottish Collections which play such a crucial part in the artistic life of Scotland.

It is important that both artists and students of art have access to great collections. Our national galleries in Britain were founded to inspire and educate the nation's artists. We must not lose sight of this.

The Economic and Tourism Benefits of NGS

The Galleries have a leading role to play in the promotion of Scotland as a tourist destination, forming some of Scotland's most prestigious tourist attractions. With their city centre locations and stimulating exhibitions programmes, not to mention world renowned permanent collections, the Galleries attract over 1m visitors each year. Investment in improving visitor provision will further increase this. For example, the new Weston link attracted over 200,000 visitors in its first month of opening.

Market research demonstrates that the Galleries attract significant numbers of overseas and UK-based tourists and non-Edinburgh based Scottish day visitors. In 2003, 80% of visitors to the National Gallery and 52% to the Portrait Gallery were in those categories.

NGS is striving to improve its entrepreneurial activities to support the core costs of maintaining free access to the permanent collections. Further developments are planned in retail and publishing activities.

NGS ensures that it mounts exhibitions of the highest international standard during the Edinburgh Festival and New Year celebrations. These contribute to the overall quality of Edinburgh and Scotland as a whole as a tourist destination. The Galleries run by NGS are only closed on Christmas and Boxing Days.

How NGS can contribute to the Cultural Commission's Remit

Broadening our Audience

What is the best way to provide cultural facilities and ensure the widest access? And how do we increase and broaden the profile of our audience and members of the public engaging in cultural activity?

NGS has a world-wide reputation for the excellence of its collections and the imaginative nature of its exhibitions. At the same time, NGS has expanded the profile of its visitor base, encouraging social inclusion through its education and outreach programmes. We will continue to develop our touring exhibitions programme in order to optimise access across the country.

NGS has built up a number of partnerships, which have enabled it to work all over Scotland with a variety of local authorities and community groups. NGS has an ongoing relationship with Highlands and Islands Council and has promoted a number of projects within its community.

We are working with regional galleries and local authorities to develop exhibitions, share expertise, resources, and reduce costs. A Partnership

conference was held in Edinburgh in September to consult with our current and potential partners and begin the process of creating a mutually beneficial framework for doing this.

However there is an acute shortage of locations outwith the central belt, where NGS can display great works of art. These works require controlled environmental (temperature and humidity) and security conditions. We would like to see the establishment of a series of regional facilities which provide the right conditions, which could be shared by NGS, NMS and NLS with regional local authorities. The capital funding should be provided on a challenge fund basis by central government with revenue costs provided on a 50:50 basis from central government and the relevant local authority.

The lending programme is a central part of the Galleries' work. Artworks are lent to institutions across the UK and abroad with frequency. Access to artworks from the collections is greatly enhanced through the lending programme.

A variety of IT developments are underway to meet the needs of all potential audiences and optimise access to the collections. We are using IT to make people in Scotland more aware of the treasures held at the National Galleries and to provide more scope for in-depth learning and research about the collections. IT also provides a useful tool to help bridge some of the gaps which occur through having a widely dispersed population. IT is not seen as a replacement to visiting the Collections at the National Galleries; it is our firm belief that nothing can replace the experience of standing directly in front of a great piece of art and studying it "in the flesh".

- The IT gallery in the Weston Link opened in August 2004. Touch screens enable visitors to access information on a wide selection of works from the collections, as well as information about other arts institutions across Scotland. Additionally there is an information system that enables users to find out about events taking place across the three sites in Edinburgh. Market research shows that this initiative has been a great success.
- The next phase of this development is to provide access to the national collections via the world-wide web. The content and design of the website will aim to attract specific audiences, to improve access across boundaries, and encourage learning about art in general and the national collections in particular.

While we wish to increase the number of touring exhibitions of NGS collections and give greater access to them via the web, we also believe we should encourage the citizens of Scotland to visit their capital city and see the collections in situ. Transport infrastructure and funding opportunities could make NGS more accessible to wider sections of the population.

Reaching groups that do not normally come to NGS is part of broadening access. NGS operates a number of initiatives for people with a disability – e.g. monthly exhibition tours interpreted in British Sign Language; and people with visual impairments are given descriptive tours of a range of exhibitions.

With an aging population across the UK, it is imperative that older citizens feel welcome and inspired by National Galleries. We are aware that a significant part of our audience is over 65.

The exhibitions programme is an important part of our activity. By bringing the best work from around the world to Scotland and by reinterpreting the collections in different displays, we can continue to develop a changing and dynamic programme which will encourage both repeat visits and new audiences.

Our exhibitions programme also provides an excellent opportunity for us to work in partnership with the Scottish and UK business community. Sponsorship provides much needed additional funds, but also opportunities for business contacts, employees and newcomers to Scotland to sample the riches of Scottish culture.

The role of Education

How do we develop skills and provide cultural knowledge?

NGS is an educational institution; education underpins everything we do. The curatorial and conservation teams are respected academics and experts in their fields, bringing knowledge to a wider audience and enabling NGS to participate in the international academic community. This strengthens the base of academic excellence found in Scotland.

The new facilities in the Weston Link will provide opportunities to expand our lecture series, which is particularly appreciated by our older audiences.

We aim to broaden the understanding of the visual arts in all sectors of the community with the interpretation and presentation of works of art, increasing availability on the web and developing special education projects to target audiences.

48,000 school children visited the Galleries last year and this trend is set to continue.

NGS strives to provide a comprehensive education programme linked to the curriculum as well as exhibitions and pictures on display. Working in partnership with key stakeholders, the organisation offers a wide range of activities to ensure that services meet everyone's needs. Current programmes include family trails,

sensory tours for visually impaired people, BSL-interpreted tours, after-school clubs and community and adult learning workshops.

Through its Outreach programmes the organisation continues to expand its role in community settings. Using new media, and working with contemporary artists, participating groups are able to access the national collections and develop their own skills in workshops that explore creative processes.

NGS runs a major exhibitions programme. Some exhibitions are specifically aimed at encouraging first time visitors, while others encourage more specialist interest.

NGS plays an important role in educating the public about Scotland and Scottish history from both within and outwith Scotland. The Portrait Gallery presents a unique panorama of the history of Scotland told through the portraits of the many individuals who have made that history, from 1530 to the present day. It is planned to redevelop the building over the next five years in order to create an enriching and exciting gallery experience for local audiences and tourists alike.

By optimising existing and unused space and reinterpreting the collections using a wide variety of strategies we hope to increase the number of visitors, attract a broader demographic spread and, most importantly, enhance the quality of the experience for all our visitors.

Scotland needs to ensure that education facilities in national institutions complement the curriculum and should not strive to replace local authority provision.

The Institutional Infrastructure

What is the best way to organise and support the culture sector in Scotland to deliver maximum value in the most effective manner?

NGS believes it needs to be a lean and highly focused organisation to develop effectively over the next 30 years. It has a clear vision of how it would like to develop as the national institution caring for, and expanding, the collections of Scotland.

One of the key messages of cultural rights is that of cultural responsibility and of providing the opportunity for those who enjoy and participate in the national collections to give something back. Creating sustainable philanthropic programmes is a major priority for the National Galleries.

This should be backed by a supportive tax structure which enables gifts of art and money to be made in the donor's lifetime. Serious consideration should be given to the recommendations of the Goodison Review on Museums and

Taxation, commissioned by the Treasury (especially recommendations 34 and 37) and to the creation of a planned giving vehicle similar to that which exists in the USA. The ability for institutions to create significant endowments in order to operate effectively and acquire new works of art over the next 30 years should be a priority.

NGS, with its 150 year history, has an outstanding record of attracting gifts and bequests, of both works of art and money. We are convinced this is largely because we are a small organisation with a distinct identity that looks after donors, collectors and sponsors in a personal way. We believe that our record of success would be much poorer were we to become part of some larger organisation:

- Scotland is a small country and the relationship between private individuals and public institutions, such as the National Galleries or the great city collections in Glasgow and elsewhere, has always been close and co-operative. The present institutional infrastructure must be maintained if this relationship is to be allowed to grow.
- The trustee system, whereby the collections are held in trust for the people of Scotland and kept open free of charge, is one that has served NGS – and Scotland – well. The British trustee system is a model now being adopted by museums in France, Germany and Spain, where over-centralisation and dependence on political change have led to stagnation and a disincentive to private giving.
- We fully support the arms-length approach from government that the Trustee system implies, believing that dialogue between the Scottish Executive and Trustees helps balance the needs of NGS, the interests of the people of Scotland and participation in the overall cultural policy of the Scottish Executive.

We are anxious to see the charitable status of the NDPBs resolved. In our view it is both desirable and possible to be both an NDPB and have charitable status.

Encouraging Creativity

How do we maximise the creative potential of the people of Scotland?

NGS has established formal curatorial and educational links with Edinburgh College of Art, one of the four great art schools in Scotland. Artists are important to everything NGS does. The national collections of fine art in Edinburgh and London were founded in the early 19th century to educate and inspire the nation's artists. If Scotland is to have a thriving artistic community, it must continue to develop its world-class collections of contemporary and historical art.

Scotland has outstanding holdings of Old Master and French Impressionist paintings, classic modern art (especially Surrealism), historic and modern Scottish art, and portraits of notable Scots. However, compared with London (Tate), Paris (Pompidou) or New York (MOMA), it lacks a great collection of contemporary art. One of its top priorities over the next few years must be to form such a collection.

We believe that NGS is best placed to do this – not only to attract collections of contemporary art, but to house them in a purpose-built extension that is itself a masterpiece of contemporary architecture. But we also believe that such a collection, if sufficiently numerous, should be shared on a long-term rotating basis with other major centres of population such as Glasgow.

Conclusion

The Cultural Commission has an unrivalled opportunity to shape and promote cultural provision in Scotland. The NGS is a key player in this process. It has an illustrious history and serious ambitions for the future, which will benefit the people of Scotland directly and enhance the reputation of Scotland globally.

The Management Group
National Galleries of Scotland
11 October 2004

Background Information

The National Galleries of Scotland comprises five Galleries in Edinburgh and two partner galleries in the North and South of Scotland, whose collections of fine art are amongst the best in the world.

The five Edinburgh galleries are:

- *The National Gallery of Scotland*
- *The Royal Scottish Academy*
- *The Scottish National Portrait Gallery*
- *The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art*
- *The Dean Gallery*

In addition, the National Galleries of Scotland owns the Granton Centre for Art, a purpose-built storage facility located at the Granton foreshore in Edinburgh.

The two partner galleries are:

- *Paxton House, Berwickshire*
- *Duff House, Banff*

The National Gallery's collection ranges in date from the early Renaissance to the end of the nineteenth century. It covers paintings, prints and drawings, and sculpture, and includes most of the major figures of Western art such as Raphael, Titian, Velázquez, Vermeer, Watteau, Constable and nearly all of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. It also houses the national collection of Scottish art c.1600-c.1900 with masterpieces by Ramsay, Raeburn, Wilkie and MacTaggart.

Scotland, despite its size and population, has produced an astonishingly high number of men and women whose lives have inspired and changed the world. The Scottish National Portrait Gallery collects, displays and interprets their portraits for the interest of the present generation and for the future. It currently also houses the National Photography Collection.

The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and The Dean Gallery house the national collection of modern Scottish and international art from 1900 to the present day. They possess the world's most comprehensive collection of modern Scottish art, with fine holdings of the Colourists and the Glasgow Boys.

It includes, in the Dean Gallery, a re-creation of the studio of Sir Eduardo Paolozzi. The collection of Dada and Surrealist art, in particular, is world famous. The grounds around the GMA and Dean Galleries also house an "outdoor gallery" for sculpture, a very popular amenity in Edinburgh. The GMA was awarded the Gulbenkian Museum of the Year award in 2004 for the Jencks Landform.

Paxton House is run by The Paxton Trust. The National Galleries of Scotland has some 70 paintings from its collections on long-term loan to Paxton House. These are displayed in a dedicated picture gallery.

Duff House is an example of a partnership between a local authority and two national institutions. The running costs are met by Aberdeenshire Council and the building is maintained by Historic Scotland. The National Galleries of Scotland provides the artworks on display and all the cataloguing and expertise.

Principal Functions of the Board of Trustees

As provided by the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 the principal functions of the Board of Trustees of the NGS are:

- to care for, preserve and add to the objects in their collections;
- to ensure that the objects are exhibited to the public;
- to ensure that the objects are available to persons seeking to inspect them in connection with study or research; and generally to promote the public's enjoyment and understanding of the Fine Arts both by means of the Board's collections and by such other means as they consider appropriate;
- and for those purposes to provide education, instruction and advice and to carry out research.

NGS Objectives 2004-09

The Galleries mission is *to preserve, display and augment Scotland's national collection of works of fine art for the enjoyment and education of the widest possible public, regardless of their age, ethnic origin, social background or geographical location.*

Objective 1:

Care for, improve and strengthen the collections.

- Ensure the best standards of care for the permanent collections and works on loan to the National Galleries of Scotland through appropriate conservation and optimum collections' management.
- Expand and develop staff expertise to improve and disseminate knowledge of the collections.
- Continue to build the collections in specialist areas, striking the right balance between cultural coverage and artistic excellence as opportunity and funding permit.
- Identify and acquire, where possible, the best works available, which fall within the collecting policies of the galleries.
- Maintain and develop staff expertise to form a repository essential to the integrity of the collections.
- Develop a purchasing policy that allows the presentation of new works in relation to broader cultural structures, including race, gender and class.

Objective 2:

Increase the number and range of people who access the National Galleries of Scotland's collections, exhibitions and services both on and off-site.

- Provide an excellent visitor service and ensure ease of access to buildings, improving the visitor experience through a focussed approach to front-line customer care.
- Generate income to support core services through audience-focussed exhibitions, publications and other products.
- Ensure the widest possible communication of NGS services through effective marketing.

- Increase online and digital access to NGS collections and services.

Objective 3:

Expand the range of learning opportunities available to NGS visitors on and off-site.

- Ensure relevance of programmes to all audiences by establishing high level consultation forums.
- Develop the gallery visitor experience through improved interpretation of exhibits.
- Devise programmes to contribute to social agendas such as health, employment, housing and education.
- Increase specific learning programmes for families, communities and people with special learning needs.
- Promote creativity and visual literacy as central to the schools and teachers education programme.

Objective 4:

Develop strategic partnerships with other organisations.

- Deliver a new Partnership Strategy in line with the Scottish Parliament's vision of a Scotland where organisations collaborate to ensure that cultural life is inclusive and accessible.
- Promote the exchange of works and professional expertise with national and regional museums and galleries and develop a formal touring exhibitions policy.
- Collaborate with VisitScotland and other organisations to promote Scotland as a tourist destination, thereby contributing to the national cultural economy and enhancing the National Galleries of Scotland's international standing in the UK and abroad.

Objective 5:

Make best use of NGS estate.

- Review the use of existing land and buildings in order to maximise their potential and optimise gallery and office space.
- Re-develop the SNPG building to fulfil its potential through new displays and programmes and attract new audiences.
- Establish a new international exhibition and learning facility that meets international-standard environmental conditions through completion of the Playfair project.
- Support sustainable development and environmental initiatives being undertaken to create a better Scotland.

Objective 6:

Diversify the financial base on which NGS operates.

- Income generation:
 - Develop opportunities to maximise income earned.
 - Increase long term support from the business community, trusts and foundations, gallery users and the public.
 - Develop a philanthropic fundraising strategy.
 - Create opportunities for corporate support.
 - Build networks of friends and supporters through events and activities at NGS and around the world.
 - Develop a fundraising infrastructure to sustain the fundraising activity and develop the donor base.
- Effective utilisation of resources to ensure optimum value for money.

Objective 7:

Provide an excellent public service through the efficient use of resources and in accordance with corporate governance best practice.

- Propagate a sustainable funding framework.
- Continually improve employee relations and working practices to ensure that the National Galleries is regarded as a valued employer.
- Develop staff to be the best in their field, thereby ensuring an excellent public service.

- Develop a procedural framework in recognition of corporate governance requirements.