

Background

Scotland is recognised internationally as a country that encourages and supports excellence and innovation in the arts, screen and creative industries. Over the last 19 years the Scotland + Venice project has made a significant contribution to the country's international reputation and profile, presenting new work in the fields of art and architecture to thousands of industry specialists and audiences from across the world at the Venice Biennale (La Biennale). The Venice Biennale is one of the most critically acclaimed, global platforms, for the exhibition and promotion of excellence in the fields of Visual Arts, Architecture, Film, Dance, Music and Theatre. It provides Scotland with a significant opportunity to showcase and develop new opportunities and markets for creative work.

Scotland + Venice has an exceptional track record for staging work that is reflective of, and that contributes to, global developments in contemporary art and architecture. It has played a key role in demonstrating the creative ambitions of the country and in developing the international profile and careers of the many artists, architects and creative practitioners who take part. Evaluation has demonstrated that the benefits of the project are significant and extend beyond the selected artists and architects to the wider art and architecture sectors in Scotland, including the many students and early career staff that manage the exhibition during the seven months of the Biennale.

A strategic partnership

Building on the achievements of Scotland + Venice, the partners in the art and architecture projects have come together to harness its potential and to pool their extensive knowledge and experience. Working strategically, Creative Scotland, British Council Scotland, National Galleries of Scotland, Architecture and Design Scotland, V&A Dundee and Scottish Government, seek to develop more effective and efficient ways of working that will increase the international profile of the project, generate stronger creative outcomes and legacies and deliver time/cost savings.

The partners and their organisational teams provide a networked resource for the creative team to draw from, be guided and supported by.

Strategic Objectives for Scotland + Venice 2023

Founded in 2003, Scotland + Venice is a major, international project designed to promote the best of contemporary art and architecture from Scotland on the world stage. Through the creation of new work, participation in La Biennale, aims to position Scotland internationally as a distinct, dynamic and diverse centre for creative excellence, fostering ambitious, innovative work in the fields of contemporary art and architecture, strengthened through international development, professional dialogue, public engagement and cultural exchange.

- **International:** To make a critically relevant contribution to international discourse about art and architecture and generate international opportunities for Scotland's creative sector.
- **High quality work:** To make a strong, globally relevant and distinctive contribution to La Biennale which showcases the best of Scottish art, architecture and design.
- **Raising profile:** To strengthen Scotland's reputation as an ambitious, innovative connected centre for the arts and architecture, internationally open to new ideas and partnerships.
- **Public Engagement:** Strengthen public interest in and engagement with contemporary art and architecture internationally and in Scotland.
- **Development:** To support the creative and professional development of students, artists, architects, curators and producers.
- **Equalities and sustainability:** To maintain and develop a proactive and progressive approach to equalities, diversity and inclusion and sustainability across the project.
- **Governance:** To develop Scotland + Venice to achieve best value for money with clear governance, management and reporting structures.

The Venice Biennale

The Venice Biennale (La Biennale di Venezia) is one of the most internationally significant and influential platforms for the exhibition and promotion of excellence in the arts and architecture.

Founded in 1895, the Art Biennale is still a world leader, despite the significant growth of other similar events across the world. The Architecture Biennale, founded in 1980, is recognised as being one of the most critical platforms of its kind.

The Biennale maintains a unique approach to the programming of these two events, which take place on alternate years across the main sites of the Giardini and the Arsenale. This approach is based on three pillars –

- The International Exhibition devised by the invited curator of La Biennale. The curator is selected afresh for each edition to bring new themes and perspectives to light.
- The exhibitions by the National/Country Pavilions, each with its own curator and project. In 2019 there were more than 90 countries taking part, representing an almost 100% increase over the last 20 years.
- Collateral Events, organised and taking place independently across the city and approved by the Biennale curator. For an agreed fee the collateral events are promoted as part of the Biennale programme and are regulated accordingly.

Great Britain has been represented at La Biennale since its founding and an official, national pavilion was launched in 1909. The British Pavilion is located in the Giardini and managed by the British Council. Its mission is to celebrate the best new art and architecture from the UK at this major international festival.

In 2003, in recognition of the strength and diversity of contemporary practice in Scotland, the Scottish Arts Council, the Scottish Government and the British Council Scotland launched Zenomap, a group exhibition of new work from Scotland, an official collateral event at the Art Biennale. This was followed in 2004 by the first architecture project in Venice – Landforms - an exhibition which presented developments in Scottish architecture following the establishment of Scotland's devolved government in 1999.

Since then, Scotland + Venice has become established, successfully maintaining and growing its presence at both the Art and Architecture Biennales. The project has a strong reputation, at home and abroad, for delivering work of exceptional quality and for making a distinct and original contribution to this key international platform.

Further information on all Scotland + Venice art and architecture projects can be found on the [Scotland + Venice Website](#).