



GOLDEN THREAD GALLERY LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the Charity's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)"

Objectives and activities

Purpose

The purpose of the Golden Thread Gallery is to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of North Belfast and surrounding area without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions, by associating together the said inhabitants and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education, and to provide facilities for the housing of an Art Gallery and to promote visual art exhibitions featuring artists work on a local, national and international level, to preserve the environment and heritage of the area of benefit.

Golden Thread Gallery (GTG) provides an inclusive, welcoming space for the public to engage with art of our time. GTG's main purpose is to:

- Offer the public a contextual experience of visual art of our time
- Present quality and innovative artistic programmes that embraces the diversity of contemporary arts practice and which engage, educate, challenge and inspire.
- Build and engage the widest possible audience for contemporary arts, extending the reach of the arts, and nurturing a deep understanding and enjoyment of current visual art practice within the broader community.
- Develop, support and promote the work of contemporary Northern Irish artists and contemporary arts practice.

Public benefit

The benefits which flow from the purpose of Golden Thread Gallery include offering the residents of and visitors to Belfast access to view high quality contemporary visual art and the opportunity to participate in arts activities. The gallery is a neutral space that aspires to be accessible to any member of the public that wishes to experience its programme. Visiting the temporary exhibitions at the gallery is free of charge.

These benefits are evidenced by the attendance of residents and visitors to Belfast at the Golden Thread Gallery Ltd.'s annual programme of temporary exhibitions, and associated educational and participatory activities, such as artist talks and workshops.

The beneficiaries of this purpose are the residents of and visitors to Belfast.

There is no foreseen harm flowing from this purpose.

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Achievements and performance

2022/2023 was a key year in rebuilding the gallery's audiences post-Covid and adapting our programming, our aims and our objectives to the new landscape that has emerged in the wake of the pandemic and the lockdowns. The vital role of the arts in recovery for both the region and the individuals who live and visit here has never been more apparent, though we continue to work in a challenging funding climate. It is testament to the commitment, skills and expertise of the gallery's staff that despite inauspicious circumstances, the gallery has thrived throughout the year.

A testament to our revitalised and collaborative approach was being shortlisted and then being awarded a prestigious Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation award for Civic Arts Organisation of the Year.

The vital role that the gallery plays in advocacy for the arts sector was cemented through its continued leadership of the Belfast Visual Arts Forum and participation in the Arts Collaboration Network. As funding for the arts sector continues becomes more and more of a challenge, the importance of our advocacy role increases.

The role that the gallery plays in advocacy for the arts sector:

- Director Chair of the Belfast Visual Arts Forum
- Director member of the Arts Collaboration Network
- Deputy Director member of the Steering group Belfast Visual Arts Forum
- Deputy Director member of the Thrive/BCC Audience Research panel

Supporting artists continued to be a key priority for the gallery throughout 2022/2023:

- Application support provided a vital support to help artists rebuild their careers post pandemic
- 68 artists and specialist staff contracted and paid

We are also a member of the prestigious Plus Tate network of visual arts organisations across the UK that exchange ideas, knowledge, skills and resources and collaborate on joint programmes. Through our relationship with Art Fund the Gallery is also part of the national Art Pass network.

Diversity in the Arts

We secured significant funding from the Art Fund to maintain our commitment to increase diversity within the arts. Minority communities in Northern Ireland, especially refugee woman and children, face distinct challenges integrating into this traditionally insular, white, sectarian population. With many living in hotels/hostels in areas of high social deprivation, opportunities to make connections, learn English and improve wellbeing are limited. Instead of devising a programme for communities, we give agency to participants, letting them choose the activities and skills they want to learn. We began with a pilot of free art workshops for small groups of migrant women from Anaka Collective and Women on World, exploring different art techniques weekly. Co-creating as we went, we developed further workshops for women and ones for teens and children.

Participants, aged from 8 to 65, are from countries including Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Nigeria, Morocco, Egypt, Zimbabwe, East Timor, Lithuania, Poland and Romania.

We made a conscious decision to work in a practical way: asking community members what was needed most and responding, i.e., creating 350 free 'Welcome to Belfast' packs for children, with colouring books of landmarks, art materials and a magazine about life, history, culture and food in Northern Ireland, available in Arabic, Farsi and English. They were distributed to families across Belfast, including young asylum seekers.

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Climate Change

Golden Thread Gallery is committed, as far as practically is possible, to protect the environment and exemplify sustainable business practices in the course of carrying out our operations and programme of activities. The Gallery is aware of the critical importance of protecting our environment for future generations and ensuring the gallery is resilient in the face of climate change, and we will work alongside our funders and stakeholders to do this. We will communicate our commitment to the environment clearly, and explore how creativity and culture can play a vital role in this. We'll work collectively with other organisations in the sector whenever possible to improve practices, reduce waste, think long-term sustainability and make our commitment to protecting our planet visible and effective. Our Environmental Policy has been expanded and updated and is now published on the GTG website. In our outreach activities, we work hard to reduce waste, use sustainable materials and recycle where possible.

Visual Arts Programme

Our 2022/2023 Visual Arts Programme continued to deliver our objectives of connecting to communities and connecting Northern Ireland with the wider world. There was a focus on performance art, with a solo exhibition of Mexican artist Elvira Santamaria-Torres and a group exhibition, Hold on Tight with Sinéad O'Donnell, Katherine Nolan, Jayne Parker, and Hollie Millar. The programme also included Vox Hybrida with Alice Maher and works made in response to her practice by emerging local artists Chloe Austin and Emma Brennan. A large-scale photographic exhibition by Ailbhe Greaney also took place, as well as collaborations with the British Council, Docs Ireland and the Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda.

In our project space, we hosted: Phillip McCrilly; Catherine and Simon MacWilliam; Drydan Wilson; Aoife Shanahan; a Black History Month showcase; the Digital Arts Studios Residency exhibition (stepping in to support them following the disastrous fire in Cathedral Buildings); a group show Not Alone Comes Home; Dorothy Hunter.

In 2022/2023 the gallery:

- Hosted 7 Main Space in-house exhibitions
- Hosted 9 Project Space in-house exhibitions
- Delivered 92 in-house participation activities
- Delivered 15 off-site participation activities
- In-house 24171 visitors
- Had a total of 2864 participants

Engagement and Outreach

Family workshops run on a Saturday morning twice a month. The workshops cater to children ages 3 - 12 and are facilitated by our Gallery Assistant or by other trained outreach artists. The workshops are designed to complement and take inspiration from the exhibition programme and seasonal holidays. Over the last year, we have increased our outreach audience. Workshops are very popular and frequently fully booked; we have had to implement a waiting list to keep up with demand.

Workshops inspired by the GTG exhibition programme have included: Monochrome collage inspired by Alexandra Lethbridge; Painted Birds inspired by Catherine and Simon McWilliams; Faux stained-glass windows inspired by Ailbhe Greaney.

Seasonal workshops have included: 3D Polar Bears; Snow globe decorations; Collage rainbows; monster masks; and lovebirds.

Creative workshops for teens and Adults run on a Saturday afternoon once a month. The workshops cater to participants age 13+ and are designed to complement and take inspiration from the exhibition programme and seasonal holidays.

Workshops inspired by the GTG exhibition programme have included: Introduction to performance art inspired by Hold on Tight; Printmaking inspired by Vox Hybrida. Seasonal workshops have included Valentine's Day cards, Christmas wrapping paper and Halloween relief printmaking.

Within the workshop programme, we work hard to use sustainable materials and recycle where possible.

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Financial review

The Trustees are pleased to present the results for the year. Income for the year was £333,288. We ended the year with reserves of £108,030, £53,191 of which is attributable to unrestricted reserves and £54,839 to restricted reserves.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees have specified that the level of financial reserves needed is three months' operating expenses. The Board of Trustees will aim to build up the reserves to the agreed level and maintain these reserves within this range through monitoring and examination of the charity's monthly management accounts.

The Board of Trustees will monitor and review this policy statement and the level of reserves required annually.

Restricted reserves refer to money with an allocated purpose from funding that states it may only be spent under certain headings. These reserves are mostly from grant funding. The restrictions apply from the specific conditions of offer for each grant.

Unrestricted reserves may be spent freely in accordance with the company's charitable purpose. These reserves have no restrictions and are mostly made up of earned income.

Tax status

Under Section 505(i)(a) and (c) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988, Golden Thread Gallery Limited is entitled to charity tax exemption. It is accepted as having charitable status by the inland revenue under REFERENCE XR54731.

Structure, governance and management

Golden Thread Gallery was founded in 1998 and reconstituted in 2001 as a company limited by guarantee with a memorandum and articles of association. Golden Thread Gallery was accepted as a registered charity with the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland in March 2015.

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Paul Brolly
John Fitzgerald
George Hill
Joe McVey
Catherine McLaughlin
Amanda Croft
Naomi Sheehan
Andrew Drylie (Appointed 7 March 2023)
Shan McAnena (Appointed 2 February 2023)

None of the Trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the Trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

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Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees, who are also Directors of the charity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



Paul Brolly

Trustee

Dated: 26/09/2023