

GOLDEN THREAD GALLERY LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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.

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.

There is no foreseen private benefit flowing from this purpose.

Our main activities to further our purposes for the public benefit

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

- Offer the public a contextual experience of visual art of our time
- Present quality and innovative artistic programmes that embrace 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.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Achievements and performance

2023-2024 has been an exciting year for the gallery. In September 2023, Golden Thread Gallery said farewell to its premises on Great Patrick Street and moved into temporary accommodation at Weavers Court, while the former Craftworld (former Corporation Gas Showroom) building on Queen Street is renovated to be our new home. The Gallery is due to reopen to the public on August 10th, 2024.

Despite not being physically open to the public for 7 months of the 2023-2024 year, the gallery has remained committed to delivering its mission of making art accessible to as many people as possible. This has included partnering with the Naughton Gallery and Queens University Belfast to provide us with venues to deliver:

- Twice monthly family workshops.
- Monthly teens and adults' workshops
- Weekly community workshops

We have also been able to deliver workshops offsite for schools and FE colleges including:

- Fane Street Primary School (working both with children and with refugee families)
- Belfast Met Learning Support Unit

In addition, we have worked with the Education Authority and Mears Housing to deliver workshops for refugee families temporarily housed in hotels.

We have worked with Translink and Arts & Business NI to commission and deliver an iconic large public artwork for Translink's new station at York Street. Kevin Killen was appointed and his largescale metal and light sculpture Journeylines was unveiled in April 2024. Working with Kevin Killen, Lesley Cherry and the gallery's in-house team, the gallery delivered a programme of creative community engagement as part of the project, working with local community groups such as the Belfast Hub Veterans club, Seaview Ladies Group, the Serenity Club, and Sailortown Regeneration Forum. Community input and ideas will be featured in further artworks to be unveiled in Phase 2 of the station, including a smaller sculptural piece and designs in the perforated panelling which will surround the finished building.

We are 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

GTG has always had the principle 'Nothing about us, without us' at the heart of our outreach and community work. We believe that visibility and representation are crucial for creating a feeling of welcome and ownership in cultural venues, and the arts sector as a whole. Our focussed work over the past few years to make the arts in Northern Ireland more diverse and inclusive of people of colour and minority communities is now embedded in all that we do. 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. Our collaborative, co-creation approach was recognised last year, when we were runner-up in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation award for Civic Arts Organisation of the year.

We've continued our projects funded by Art Fund to engage new, diverse audiences with the arts. As well as offsite and online workshops, a new edition of our 'Welcome to Belfast' art packs for children, with colouring books of landmarks, art materials and a magazine about life, history, culture and food in Northern Ireland, will be launched in the autumn, available in Arabic, Farsi, English and now Tigrinya also. They will be distributed to families across Belfast, including young asylum seekers.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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 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

Despite moving location, our 2023-24 Visual Arts Programme continued to deliver on themes of nature, identity, our place in the world, **how we got here** and what our future looks like whilst also supporting our artists.

We started the programme with Niamh O'Malley in our main space after the hugely successful *Gather*, Ireland at Venice 2022. *Gather* was the national representation of Ireland at the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. The exhibition in the GTG was informed by her work for *Gather* in Venice and explored the breadth of O'Malley's current practice.

The final exhibition in the main space at Great Patrick Street was by acclaimed Irish filmmaker trilogy Clare Langan, titled *The New Dawn Fades*. We screened three works; *Flight from the city*; *And in the Silence Came* and *Heart of a Tree*. This was her first ever exhibition in Belfast.

In the Project Space we continued with Dorothy Hunter's solo exhibition. Charys Wilson was the recipient of the GTG Mentoring & Exhibition Award 2023 and received a solo exhibition in June. The award is presented to a University of Ulster School of Art Graduate based on their MFA work and final show. In May we hosted a one-day experimental film screening by Zhenia Mahdi-Nau. Our final Project Space exhibition was by ceramicist Anne Butler, and it featured as part of August Craft Month with Craft NI.

From our temporary accommodation in Weaver's Court, we launched our *How We Got To...* touring exhibition, featuring a selection of artists responding to their past encounters with GTG. The artists are: Gail Prentice, Brendan Jamison, Shiro Masuyama, Edy Fung, Elvira Santamaría Torrés, Martin Boyle, Jack Pakenham, Robin Price, Lorraine Burrell, Susan MacWilliam, Clement McAleer, Megan Doherty, John Carson and Gerry Gleason. *How We Got To...* opened at Threshold Gallery, Flax Studios in February, then toured to Shankill Library in March. It will next be hosted at Belfast Central Library.

Engagement and Outreach

We offer free family workshops, teens & adults' workshops and community workshops each month. Family workshops cater to children ages 3 - 12 and are facilitated by our Gallery Assistant or other trained outreach artists. Creative workshops for teens and adults cater to participants age 13+.

All workshops explore fun, creative activities designed to spark the imagination and introduce participants to new artistic mediums. Themes and activities complement and take inspiration from the exhibition programme and seasonal holidays.

Workshops inspired by the GTG exhibition programme have included:

- Paint Your Own Clay Tile inspired by Anne Butler
- Notan Art inspired by Clare Langan
- Collage inspired by Niamh O'Malley
- Rock painting inspired by Dorothy Hunter
- Cyanotype inspired by Charys Wilson

- Charcoal landscapes inspired by Clare Langan

Seasonal workshops have included:

- Under the sea collage inspired by World Ocean Day
- Halloween handprints
- Chinese New Year dragons
- Toilet roll tube butterflies
- Festive handprint paper wreaths

From October 2023 to June 2024, we partnered with the Naughton Gallery at Queen's University Belfast to continue providing our outreach programme. This provided us with new venues for our workshops, which brought new audiences, including students and staff at Queens. In turn, the Naughton Gallery benefitted from having an outreach programme for the first time.

We included workshops linked to their exhibitions, i.e., '*FULL OF WONDER OR FULL OF PLASTIC? YOU DECIDE*.' by Ingrid Hess, Heart relief printmaking inspired by '*Clear!*' and Barbie Poster Collage inspired by '*I am wearing Carlyle Feuera*'.

The capacity of space created by the partnership with Naughton Gallery allowed us to offer a brand-new workshop, a drop-in community art workshop. This workshop caters to participants of all ages, all abilities and all English language levels.

Two workshops were linked with festivals, Northern Ireland Science Festival and Northern Ireland Mental Health Festival.

Within the workshop programme, we work hard to use sustainable materials and recycle where possible. Over the last year, we have increased our outreach audience. Workshops are very popular and frequently fully booked, as a result we have had to implement a free online ticketing system through Art Fund.

Financial review

The Trustees are pleased to present the results for the year. Income for the year was £494,382. We ended the year with unrestricted reserves of £105,613.

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.

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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
Shan McAnena

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.

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.



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Paul Brolly
Chair, Trustee

Dated: 12th September 2024