

**Report of the Trustees
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The company's objectives are to advance and improve, production and promotion of art and culture and the advancement of education and training in the arts and related subjects in Northern Ireland and beyond ("hereinafter called the "area of benefit") through the provision of workshops, advice, information and training and the organisation of exhibitions, residencies and events and through such other charitable ways as decided by the directors.

The company has power to:

- (a) promote and improve visual, sonic and live art and the production of works of artistic merit by established, new and emerging artists through the provision of workshops, advice, information and training and the organisation of exhibitions, residencies and events and through such other charitable ways as the directors decide;
- (b) promote learning through the arts with the object of developing aesthetic and cultural appreciation by providing an innovative and experimental (visual or multi-disciplinary) arts programme in the area of benefit which is freely available and accessible to all;
- (c) promote arts exchange opportunities for emerging and established artists outside Northern Ireland;
- (d) advance the education and training of visual arts and multi-disciplinary practitioners by the provision of integrated training and arts management experience, mentoring and information.

All trustees have had regard to the Commission's Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

Purpose of the Charity

The main purposes of Catalyst Arts Ltd has always been:

1. to advance and support the career of local emerging contemporary artists in Belfast and Northern Ireland through on site exhibitions at Catalyst Arts Gallery, off site exhibitions and residencies, technological resources, networking and international opportunities.
2. to support local volunteers in Belfast with an interest in the arts and arts management, by advancing their skills in practical aspects of running an art gallery such as installation, funding applications, archiving and administration work.
3. to bring experimental, innovative contemporary art to Belfast and engage the local arts community and the general public with contemporary art through exhibitions, talks, workshops and off site participatory artworks.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Significant activities

Catalyst Arts is the longest running artist led gallery in Northern Ireland. We provide a unique platform for emerging local artists and recent graduates to exhibit their work in a curated context within an accessible, professional and stimulating environment. The gallery fulfils a significant local and national role by touring Northern Irish artists both nationally and internationally. We provide artists with the use of our technological resources, networking opportunities and access to our historical archives.

We are run by a rolling board of up to ten volunteers who curate and deliver high quality exhibitions and projects. We provide to the public an exciting programme of innovative, multidisciplinary contemporary art from local, national and international artists, alongside complementary educational workshops and talks. We aim to maintain and improve our existing relations with other arts organisations and to continue to expand and reach new audiences.

Catalyst Arts is a charity based organisation that supports and promotes the production of innovative and experimental contemporary exhibitions and events that are free of charge and accessible to a wide variety of audiences.

Our organisation upholds a unique position within the visual arts sector of Northern Ireland and offers an unrivalled training scheme for individuals that include curation and arts administration. We do not have any paid members of staff and function through the commitment of seven voluntary co-directors and a strong volunteer community.

We are a member based organisation, whose members benefit from open calls, the use of our resource centre and advice on a daily basis. Catalyst provides exhibition opportunities for artists at the beginning of their careers, enabling the display of work alongside practitioners with an internationally established reputation.

Review of past programme

- Bedroom Pop with Dreambean - Catalyst Arts Graduate Award 2021 Show (14th April - 5th May 2022)
- Made Public - Catalyst Arts Library with Ronan Smyth, Nollaig Molloy, Grace Jackson, Niamh Seana Meehan, Susannah Dickey, and Catalyst Arts Co-Directors (17th May - 18th June 2022)
- Of Course with Ronan Smyth, Leah Corbett and Thomas Wells, Jane Peaker and Sam's Eden, Susannah Dickey, Padraig Regan, Conor Cleary, Waste Land Track Club, Emma Brennan, Louise Kennedy, Ellen Reay and Pete Moser (7th - 30th July 2022)
- Sculpture & Lens, with Second Year BA students from Belfast School of Art (9th - 19th August 2022)
- Core is Concrete with Ben Weir, Tanad Aaron, and Niamh Seana Meehan (6th October - 3rd November 2022)
- What grows in the heart with Anton Shebetko, Outburst Queer Arts Festival (11th -19th November 2022)
- Propagate - architecture | sound | body with Helena Hamilton, Bodyjam by Day Magee, and Rachael Campbell Palmer (22nd - 26th November 2022)
- It feels hairy to start from nothing again - Catalyst Arts Members' Show (1st - 15th December 2022)
- The Green Room with MFA students from the Belfast School of Art (6th - 25th January 2023)
- Ornaments of Prospect with Beau W Beakhouse and Sadia Pineda Hameed (2nd March - 1st April 2023)

22/23 marked a significant period for Catalyst Arts as we adapted and settled into our new premises at 6 Joy's Entry (moved in January 2022). Every exhibition/project/event posed new challenges, our board responding to and adapting to resolve issues as best as possible. It very quickly became clear that we needed to make improvements to the space in order for it to best facilitate our programme. With securing a 5 year lease we were able to confidently invest more in the infrastructure of the space installing a lighting rig in the gallery, improving our heating system, installing a fit-for-purpose sink to facilitate the installation/de-installation of exhibitions, installing a security system, and providing our directors with up-to-date fire safety training - all thanks to the Artist Studios and Maker Spaces Organisational Grants 2022/23 awarded by Belfast City Council. This allowed us to create a more safe and comfortable environment for our members, volunteers, artists, visitors, and directors.

The new city centre premises has resulted in an increased footfall, new audiences, and further opportunities to work alongside partners in Belfast such as Outburst Queer Arts Festival and Ulster University.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

This year, we continued our strong relationship with Ulster University, specifically Belfast School of Art, facilitating the annual Sculpture & Lens show with second year BA students in August, and the interim MFA show in January. These two exhibitions provided early-career artists with the opportunity to develop and exhibit new work with specialist support from the Catalyst Arts' board.

With our Graduate Award Show, supported by Fenton Art Trust, we were able to support Dreambean in further developing their practice and achieve an ambitious installation in our gallery space with their first ever solo show.

At Catalyst we value our members and the symbiotic relationship of support that exists between us and our members. This year we wanted to provide our members with a paid opportunity to develop and exhibit work. This took shape as a curated exhibition of three members' works selected through an open call, providing members with the opportunity to develop and exhibit new work with the support of the Catalyst board. We also sought to find new ways of engaging with and platforming our members leading to the development of Casual Placements - a members' newsletter where members have the space to share their ongoing works, ideas, and thoughts with new audiences.

With the BCC Artist Studios & Maker Spaces Organisational Grant we were able to improve and expand on our members' resources - expanding and diversifying our library, expanding our tools resources, and providing new printing facilities. We were also able to improve on the condition of our archive through acquiring further appropriate archiving materials and providing our board and volunteers with archive training - ensuring the longevity of the 30 years, and counting, Catalyst Arts archive for years to come - an important and useful resources for both members and the wider arts community of Northern Ireland.

A core element of our programme throughout 2022-23 was audience engagement. This weaved itself throughout the programme in the form of events and workshops including; a drink n' draw, discussion groups, a publication launch, a reading and listening group, poetry reading events, hands-on workshops, soup making, communal cooking and eating, and live-art performances. These events and workshops allowed for audiences to engage with contemporary visual art in new ways as well as developing skills.

Three Co-Director shows took place over the year - Of Course, Core is Concrete, and Ornaments of Prospect. Of Course was an exhibition which was activated by the form of a dinner party with a series of courses unfolding throughout the month. Over the course of its 29 years, Catalyst Arts has occupied five distinct premises; Core is Concrete explored the new space of 6 Joy's Entry through the commission and presentation of three site-specific responses. Ornaments of Prospect was an installation which reimagined tool making and methods of metal production, and how this might lead to collective and alternative modes of communication, knowledge and craft.

We continue to develop our relationship with our funders - keeping an open and engaged dialogue with our Arts Development Officer, Joanna Johnston. The work documented above has laid a stable and sustainable foundation demonstrated by the standstill in our ACNI funding for the year 23/24 during a period where the Arts Council faced a ten percent cut to their budget.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

Financial performance in the year to 31 March 2023 has been broadly consistent with the trustee's forecasts and expectations. Income receipts for the year totalled £67,139 (2022: £48,177) and expenditure for the year totalled £62,035 (2022: £59,658). This resulted in a surplus of £5,104 (2022: deficit of £11,481) for the year.

Reserves policy

Financial Policy on Operating Reserves involves maintaining an operating reserves ratio of between three and six months core costs which based on current income and expenditure varies between £7,000 and £14,000.

CATALYST ARTS LTD

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006. Trustees who served at anytime during the year were:

Cecilia Graham	(resigned 23 May 2023)
Manuela Moser	(resigned 26 September 2022)
Kate Josephine Murphy	(resigned 12 January 2023)
Dominic McKeown	
Marta Dyczkowska	(resigned 7 June 2022)
Eoin Bennett	(appointed 26 August 2022)
Rachael Melvin	(appointed 28 November 2022)
Silvia Koistinen	(appointed 26 August 2022)
Sean Ward	(appointed 20 June 2023)

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 14th December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Rachael Melvin - Trustee