

ARCADE STUDIOS BELFAST LTD

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 2023

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purpose of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30th September 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 1st January 2019)

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Arcade Studios Ltd's objectives are to nurture talent and foster a thriving creative community by providing affordable studio spaces, engaging exhibitions, and a supportive network in Belfast City Centre. Comprising of established and emerging artists dedicated to revitalising and sustaining artistic spaces, we aim to contribute significantly to Belfast's cultural resurgence.

The company has power to:

- a) promote and improve visual art and the production of works of artistic merit of emerging and established artists in Belfast through the provision of exhibition opportunities and events in a city centre gallery, and through such other charitable ways as the directors decide;
- b) provide affordable studio spaces that are available to both emerging and established artists of a range of creative disciplines
- c) promote education and appreciation of the arts by providing an innovative arts programme in the area of benefit which is freely available to all

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

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Purposes of the Charity

The main charitable purposes of Arcade Studios Ltd are:

1. to preserve and foster the creative sector in Northern Ireland and stimulate and educate public interest in the arts for the benefit of the community through exhibitions and events.
2. to provide studios and resources to enable engagement in the arts.
3. to provide a supportive hub for continuation and development of artistic practice.

Significant Activities

Arcade Studios was established by 3 graduates of Belfast School of Art as a response to the lack of studio spaces available to artists. Our inclusive and collaborative environment encourages artists to explore ideas, push boundaries, and develop their practices. Through various programs, dialogue, and interdisciplinary collaborations, we facilitate artistic growth. We recognise that access to affordable studios and supportive environments is essential for artists' development and success. Our vision is to foster a dynamic, inclusive community that celebrates artistic diversity, champions creative expression, and nurtures the next generation of talent in Belfast.

We are run by four directors who operate on a voluntary basis who curate and deliver high quality exhibitions. We provide to the public an exciting exhibition programme from local artists and artists further afield. We aim to maintain and improve our existing relations with other arts organisations to reach a wider audience.

Arcade Studios does not have any paid members of staff and functions through the commitment of the four voluntary directors.

We are a member based organisation who also provide opportunities for non-member artists through our open call exhibitions, providing opportunities for artists through all stages of their careers.

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Review of past exhibitions (October 2022 - September 2023)

- Royale Arcade Academy Exhibition - open call group exhibition (6th October - 27th October 2022)
- Light Ready by Jackie Crooks (1st December - 22nd December 2022)
- DIY Ring Workshop with Le Chéile Jewellery (23rd January 2023)
- Arcade Studios Members Show (2nd February - 23rd February 2023)
- Ephemeral by Natalie Gibson and Louise Kennedy - Arcade Studios 2021 graduate award show (6th April - 27th April 2023)
- club [construction] by Reuben Brown (1st June - 22nd June 2023)
- Open and Shut by Naomi Litvack and Clare French (3rd August - 24th August 2023)

The 22/23 exhibition calendar saw the first of our annual Royale Arcade Academy exhibition, which involved over 100 artists exhibiting in the gallery. This exhibition was available to artists of all disciplines through an open call. Our opening night saw over 500 members of the public in the gallery throughout the course of the evening. The exhibition enabled our exhibiting studio holders to engage with curators, buyers, and over 100 local and international artists. Since this exhibition, the popularity and demand for our space has increased, highlighting the need for our services. We recognise that access to affordable studios and supportive environments is essential for artists' development and success. Our vision is to foster a dynamic, inclusive community that celebrates artistic diversity, champions creative expression, and nurtures the next generation of talent in Belfast.

As these exhibitions are open to the public, we recognise that the artists involved in the exhibitions may have benefited from an increase in their profile and may have, as a result, sold a piece of their work. However, this was incidental to providing members of the public with the opportunity to learn more about local art and enhance their appreciation and understanding.

This year, we continued our strong relationship with Ulster University, specifically the Belfast School of Art, by supporting recent graduates and selecting two artists, Natalie Gibson and Louise Kennedy, to exhibit their work. This initiative helped them further develop their practice and achieve an ambitious installation in our gallery space, marking their first show post-graduation.

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A core element of our program throughout 2022-23 was audience engagement and the encouragement of progress in artistic practice. This was woven throughout the program in the form of events and workshops, including a ring-making workshop with Le Chéile, Dougal McKenzie's "TV in The Kitchen," and live music from past studio holder Paddy McKeown.

We have continued to preserve and foster the creative sector in Northern Ireland and stimulate public interest in the arts for the community's benefit. This includes holding open calls for exhibitions and participating in Late Night Art. We host bi-monthly shows, which have included director-led exhibitions, a members show and the first year of Royale Arcade Academy, where there were over 100 different artworks on display. We also encourage student tours into our space as part of Late Night Art.

Our commitment to supporting and empowering artists aligns with fostering creativity and pushing boundaries within the artistic community. By providing state-of-the-art resources and improved working conditions, we enable artists to explore new creative territories and engage more deeply with their crafts. This, in turn, contributes to broader cultural innovation and artistic discourse in Belfast.

Overall, Arcade Studios is designed to nurture and support the local artistic community and actively contribute to the broader goals of Belfast's cultural strategy. By investing in both our physical infrastructure and the professional growth of our members, we enhance the vibrancy, sustainability, and cultural richness of both Arcade Studios and the wider community in Belfast. This commitment ensures that our studio remains a critical hub for cultural engagement and artistic innovation, thereby enriching the cultural landscape of the city.

With the BCC Artist Studios & Maker Spaces Organisational Grant, we were able to improve and expand our studio holders' resources. This included diversifying our library, expanding our tool resources, and providing new printing facilities. We also cleared out spaces and made necessary repairs throughout the building.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

Financial performance in the year to September 2023 has been broadly consistent with the trustee's forecasts and expectations. Income receipts totalled £14,777 (Sept 2022 - £14,289). Expenditure for the year totalled £15,742 (Sept 2022 - £14,210).

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 during the year were:

Eimear Nic Roibeaird

Cameron Stewart

Sophia Campbell

Áine Gordon (Appointed 13th Sept 23)

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 21st July 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Áine Gordon - Trustee