

VALUING ARTISTS

a·n

Blueprint for change:
a-n's 5 year advocacy strategy
for UK visual artists

a-n has built a reputation for delivering valuable insights and advocacy activities to influence and inform cultural policy on behalf of our 21,000 members. We will build on this energy and ambition to change the career prospects for visual artists.

Working with our members and partners we will develop, deliver and support campaigns that articulate and challenge the big issues visual artists will face over the next five years.

Valuing Artists is our strategy for doing this. It will put advocacy at the heart of everything we do, giving our campaigning a new strategic focus and urgency, while gathering the evidence we need to make our arguments as compelling as possible.

It will focus on the things we know are likely to impact most on our members – fair payment, Brexit, diversity, as well as fundamental issues around the way visual artists are valued.

The background to *Valuing Artists*, and what we want the strategy to achieve, is set out below.

The context for Valuing Artists

a-n's advocacy activities – from our leading contribution to the visual arts' **2015 Treasury Spending Review submission**, to the 2016 launch of the national **Paying Artists Exhibition Payment** – have established us as a confident and unique voice within the policy landscape of the visual arts.

Valuing Artists will sustain and amplify our voice to meet the challenges visual artists face over the life of the new government and beyond. It will continue our work to embed our Paying Artists guidance and framework, but will also look broadly at issues likely to impact on our members.

Future commitments from DCMS and ACE are uncertain beyond the guarantees of the next funding rounds whilst the continued reduction of local authority spending on the arts in general will have an increasing impact on the livelihoods and practice of artists.

Beyond these critical funding issues, Brexit presents substantial challenges for visual artists. Our membership surveys show that more than half of members travel abroad for work related reasons up to as many as six times a year – freedom of movement is therefore a practical necessity as well as a cherished right. Residency is a major issue too, with our research showing that 12% of our members hold non-UK passports.

Advocacy on behalf of our members must address these issues during the Brexit negotiation process and continue to champion their interests once we leave the EU in 2019.

As a sector we continue to face more challenge around how the government views and values visual artists and their work. It has purported to value arts and culture in their broadest sense, but its new administration has immediately relegated arts and culture in a ministerial reshuffle.

We know the visual arts (and artists) are less mobilised than other culture sectors, often lacking the compelling evidence needed to demonstrate its contributions to society and the economy and to make its case stand out amongst those of other artforms.

Valuing Artists will challenge this track record and plug the critical gaps in evidence so that visual artists are clearly seen as part of the wider success of the visual arts in the UK, creating their own distinctive case which make the most of opportunities presented.

The strategy will work to be at the centre of these efforts, championing the interests of members and affirming a-n's own position as a sector leader for visual artists.

What we aim to achieve through Valuing Artists

1

Visual artists are valued: Lack of recognition of the contribution of visual artists to the success of the cultural sector, society and the UK economy underpins many of the issues faced by our members today.

Valuing Artists will address this fundamental issue, working with our members and partners to provide new evidence and promote a strong narrative which clearly places visual artists and the visual arts within this wider context. It will explore sectoral best practice, and will look locally, regionally and nationally to identify ways in which a-n and artists themselves can develop informed roles and narratives with policy makers, funders and commissioners.

2

A Brexit that works for visual artists in the UK: a-n will work to influence the UK's Brexit policy in key areas as it affects visual artists (freedom of movement, residency and rights) and, beyond 2019, continue to promote the rights of artists as they are affected by our withdrawal from the EU by exploring solutions to the issues our members face.

3

More sustainable livelihoods for visual artists: *Valuing Artists* will build on a-n's core advocacy work to make the case for fair payment of artists by commissioners. It will also articulate the wider range of issues which impact on artists' livelihoods and the nature of their practice today, and promote credible solutions to these issues to government, policy makers, funders and commissioners.

4

A diverse and representative visual arts sector: *Valuing Artists* will use a-n's unique position as the largest grassroots visual arts membership organisation in the UK to deliver valuable, nuanced intelligence around the scale and impact of diversity as it is reflected in artist-led practice today.

How we will do it

Valuing Artists will be driven by a-n, but we will continue to collaborate and build on our strong sector partnerships, to achieve our aims. We will therefore use a combination of approaches to deliver the strategy, including:

- *a-n's inhouse team* – we have an experienced and expanding inhouse team to coordinate and deliver the activity streams developed, augmented in 2017 by a Campaign Manager to get political activity underway
- *a-n AIR Council* – will play a targeted role in supporting and delivering key strands of activity across the campaigns
- *Collaborating with key sector partners for mutual benefit* – we have many sector partners who are active with their own advocacy and campaigning, within and beyond the visual arts, with whom we have strong relationships. We will continue to support and contribute to their activities where appropriate, and will collaborate in gathering the critical sectoral evidence that will help us all achieve our aims. We will also continue to develop our active role as members of Culture Action Europe, the Creative Industries Federation and as the UK National Committee for the International Artists Association
- *Our artist members* – we will identify and support opportunities for artists to play direct roles in delivering *Valuing Artists* where appropriate
- *External advocacy support* – we will continue to work with DHA Communications to develop activity plans, narratives and monitor policy horizons to keep plans focused and up to date

Campaigns activity, developments and achievements will be launched and promoted via a-n.co.uk



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