

Minutes of the 126th AGM of the Society of Scottish Artists

ZOOM (online)

Sunday 31 January 2021, 11am

1. Apologies:

Aileen Grant, Lys Hansen, Sylvia Home, Diane Maclean, Norman McBeath, Susan Wilson, Fenneke Wolters-Sinke

Present:

Jamie McAteer (Co-President), Olivia Turner (Co-President), Rhona Taylor (Vice-President), Rick Ballard (Honorary Treasurer), Elise Allan, Jayne Austin, Alistair Bamforth, Jill Bennett, Alan Bond, Jules Bradbury, Alison Brewster, Felicity Bristow, Andrew Brooks, Greg Bryce, Molly Bullick, Yvonne Buskie, Helen Butler, Sheila Carnduff, William Carr, Paul Charlton, Gordon Cheape, Rowena Comrie, Alastair Cook, Louisa Crispin, Heather Davies, Chrissie Day, Sarah Devlin, Liz Douglas, Kinga Elliott, Jana Emburey, Adrian Gardner, Marion Gardyne, Linda Gateley, Andrea Geile, Theresa Gourlay, Alison Grant, Su Grierson, Lindsey Hamilton, Toni Harrower, Chrissie Heughan, Sharon Hiley, Jane Hunter, Gavin Johnston, Peter Kelly, Joanne Kerr, Daniel Killeen, Jiyoung Kim, Catherine King, Sarah Kudirka, Wendy Law, Jodi Le Bigre, Tansy Lee Moir, Astrid Leeson, David Lemm, Theresa Lynn, Lynne Mackenzie, Lynsey MacKenzie, Doug Mackie, Rona MacLean, Sheila MacNeill, Kathleen Madigan, Harry Magee, Michele Marcoux, Jenny Mason, Gillian McFarland, Sharon McGregor, Alistair McIntyre, Scott McLachlan, Louise McLaren, Julia Alexandra Mee, Janet Melrose, Cristiana Messina, Fiona Mill, Audrey Mitchell, Mary Morrison, Liz Murray, Ruth Nicol, Rowan Paton, Sophia Pauley, Lindsay Perth, Jenny Pope, Ursula Pretsch, Sharon Quigley, Katherina Radeva, Emma Rankin, Carmen Rayavargas, Jojo Richardson, Duncan Robertson, Alena Rogozhkina, Catherine Sargeant, Ann Shaw, Judith Shaylor, Jenny Smith, Jakub Stepanovic, Jayne Stokes, Hazel Terry, Susan Wade-French, Andrew Walters, Gill Walton, Sarah Wilson, Anne Wishart, Eric Wishart, Robyn Woolston, Denise Wyllie, Denise Zygadlo

In Attendance: Lindsay Howarth (minutes)

Jamie McAteer (Co-President) welcomed all to the AGM.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the last AGM held on 26 January 2020 were presented and accepted as a true record of the meeting pending the amendments noted below in Matters arising. Proposed Jamie McAteer, seconded Rona Mclean

3. Matters arising

Amendments to 2019 minutes:-

7. Presidents Address – Sharon Quigley reflected on her ~~six~~-seven years as ~~President~~ on Council

4. Adoption of Accounts

Draft accounts for period ended 30 June 2020 reflect the recent successes and benefits of increasing membership, with a positive surplus position and strong bank balance. Accounts currently being audited to be filed with OSCR by end of March.

5. Constitution

Administrative changes made to update titles of membership and associated fees. Ordinary Member updated to Artist Member and Associate and Graduate Members added. Full review of Constitution planned over the next 12 months.

6. Election of Committee Members

No members of Council stepping down this year. Lindsey Hamilton elected as Artist Member.

7. President's Address

The Co-Presidents reviewed the activities of 2020 acknowledging what a difficult and unusual year this had been for many.

Membership

Current Membership figures: 1186 (Active) 49 (Pending) TOTAL: **1235**

Around 8% decrease since January 2020 due to clearing of historic pending memberships.

Current Membership location: Scotland 91% | England 6% | International 3% | Wales <1% | N.Ireland <1%. International Members up around 1%.

The Membership has proved to be resilient with the majority of members being retained. It was fantastic to see communities of artists pulling together with initiatives such as the Artists Support Pledge.

The Co-Presidents were keen to hit the ground running with the ambitious programme they had planned for 2020, which included 5 off site exhibitions. However, as the Covid pandemic struck in March it became apparent that postponements would have to be made with the planned shows being re-arranged across 2021 and 2022.

Insectarium: Fascination and Fear at the Scottish Ornithologists' Club was the first of the exhibitions to be postponed and has been rescheduled for June 2021. Total Artworks: 243 | Total Artist Applications: 103 | Total Selected: 53

The **Satellite Associates** programme launched in February 2020 with members invited to step forward to become advocates for their region. This was to assist in our presence beyond the Central Belt and to help connect to the Membership as best we can. 20 applications were received with 15 invited to become a Satellite Associate. Two SA projects currently ongoing:- **Road Trip** is a collaborative artwork travelling around Scotland. Each of the 15 collaborators will add to the 50x50cm canvas before sending it on to the next. The work will be exhibited at the 2021 Annual Exhibition. **4x4x4** – 4 artists, 4 minutes, 4 artworks. Zoom presentations to be filmed in February and launched in March/April on the new SSA website.

10 new Professional Members were elected at the end of March:

Anne Brodie, Chris Brook, Rosalind Lawless, David Lemm, Martin McKenna, Emily Moore, Charlotte Roseberry, Christine Sloman, Erlend Tait and Pamela Tait.

As the severity of the pandemic grew it became clear that the programme would need to become digital in order to survive. It was noted that some Members were struggling with isolation, lack of connection and loss of income/funding. With that in mind the SSA's first **Mental Health Awareness Week** was created. Members worked with a GP, a life coach, a cognitive therapist and a mental health nurse to create 3 events which were streamed on YouTube: - Coping Strategies (attendance 116) | Staying Grounded (attendance 106) | Resources for Wellbeing (attendance 51).

Urban Departures, a Members Exhibition co-curated by the Council and Rosalind Lawless to showcase printmaking was originally planned to take place at House for an Art Lover, Glasgow. This pivoted to take place online when it proved difficult to pin down new dates for a physical exhibition. Working with Project Room 2020 / Art North the exhibition was hosted online as a Gallery event where viewers could 'walk' around an internal gallery space to view the 17 works by 5 artists. Sales for the exhibition totalled £450. This particular exhibition highlighted that the landscape of art institutions is changing and contacts we have been used to working with are no longer at these venues. This requires us to build new relationships to ensure our presence at these venues continues in the future. Dates for a follow up exhibition are being discussed.

Tides Changing | Changing Tides - It was not possible to rearrange dates for this Members exhibition which was initially scheduled to take place at Old Gala House, Galashiels (Jun-

Oct). Instead, it was hosted online using Artlogic, an online viewing and sales platform. The exhibition was a great success and resulted in sales of £3,032 with 25,059 views. Online exhibitions will never fully replace in person events but it was noted that this number of people would not have seen the exhibition were it hosted at the original gallery. Total Artworks: 235 | Total Artist Applications: 120 | Total Selected: 36

Members exhibition **Shifting Centres** at Resipole Studios, Argyle was postponed and a new provisional date set for 2022.

The **Eichstätt Lithography** residency call received 9 submissions and the selected artist was Jill Bennett. The Selection Committee was made up of Jamie McAteer, Olivia Turner, Jenny Smith, Aleksandra Kargul, Catherine Hiley and Jodi le Birge.

The **SSA Annual Exhibition 2020** was cancelled earlier in the year following talks with ESSA counterparts, VAS and RSW. This decision was not taken lightly but the risk of going ahead with the planning of the exhibition to face cancellation later down the line was deemed financially unsound.

Knowing that the Annual exhibition was not going ahead early in the planning stages allowed focus to be directed to creating other opportunities to keep the membership engaged and to provide them and the Society with much need sales.

A **Meet the Members** showcase was held across Social Media at the start of the pandemic which was really well received. This grew into the event **SSA Dialogues** featuring an artist from each of our membership categories: Frederick Jones - Artist Member, Siobhan McLaughlin – Graduate Member, Kristina Chan – Professional Member and Noel Griffin – Student Member. The events were live streamed on YouTube and received over 400 views.

The **SSA Council Forums** followed which gave a more in depth look at the work of Council Members Sarah Kudirka, Su Grierson, Duncan Robertson and Gillian McFarland. All the talks were live streamed on YouTube and are still available to view. Members were encouraged to look up the talks.

The **SSA Members' Professional Development Programme** was developed as a professional toolkit for the members to help support and develop their practice. Working with external partners Art UK, Art 360 Foundation, Hospital Fields, Cove Park, Royal Drawing School, Pier Arts Centre, An tobar, Travelling Gallery Tatha Gallery. The events were exclusively for members and took place as live events. The events were recorded and will feature on the new website. The events were well attended and received very positive feedback.

Presenting Your Artwork (attendance 89) | Photographing Your Artwork (attendance 75) | Writing About Your Practice (attendance 95) | Working With Galleries (attendance 120) | Residencies (attendance 75) | Be Your Own Publicist (attendance 96) | Building Your Archive (attendance 111)

A major aspect of the Annual Exhibition which provides essential support for the Membership is **30 x 30**. Using Artlogic the 311 submissions were uploaded and released for sale. There were 22,166 online views of the exhibition which far exceeded expectations. Sales totalled £4,769.

With the lack of physical opportunities, it was essential to focus on improving the website and our Social Media presence. There has 120% increase in followers on Instagram thanks to initiatives such as Meet the Members. 39% increase in Facebook following. The aim is to carry on growing this throughout the year.

The website is currently being redesigned and rebuilt. The existing website is over 10 years old and more functionality is required at both the front and back end. The aim is streamline membership sign up and create easier to navigate member profiles. Current timeline dictates

a launch date in March. The rebrand goes hand in hand with the new website and will reflect the continually changing membership.

Upcoming Programme and Opportunities

Here and Now | Tatha Gallery, Newport on Tay | Professional Members Exhibition | 26 June – 24 July 2021 Over 300 submissions received from over 60 artists. It was noted that the quality of submissions was incredibly high and selection was very difficult with 15 artists eventually being selected.

New for 2020, the **Marchmont House Residency** (focussing on art, nature and humanity) is a fully funded, month long residency taking place in May. The Presidents were invited to Marchmont House by Hugo Burge and were astounded by the quality of the facilities on offer. This will be a 3 year programme which we hope to build on year on year.

The **Professional Members Call** will be live from 1st March. Applicants must have been a member for 2 concurrent years and have exhibited in 2 SSA exhibitions in this time.

A series of smaller digital exhibitions (20-30 artworks per show) are being planned and will be launched in the coming months. To include as much of the membership as possible themes covered will be painting and drawing, printmaking, film and digital media, photography, figurative and sculpture.

We are still in discussion with NGS and ESSA re the Annual Exhibition 2021. We have been offered a slightly shorter slot (13 weeks instead of 15 weeks) and this may be reduced even further. It is hoped the dates will be confirmed in March.

It is hoped the Engramme Exchange will take place at the end of 2021, pending the refurbishment of their gallery space.

Plans for 2022

Dunoon Borough Halls – Members Call 17th June 25th July 2022

Resipole – Dates TBC

House for an Art Lover – TBC

Gibraltar Exchange – in talks with the Cultural Minister of Gibraltar re an artist exchange where SSA Members will exhibit in Gibraltar and Gibraltar based artists will exhibit with the SSA. Initially planned for 2021 but the pandemic and Brexit have seen that pushed back.

The Co-Presidents have an optimistic outlook for the next 2 years with plenty of opportunities pencilled in and more to come.

8. Open Discussion

Prior to addressing the questions submitted it was noted that there were multiple examples of positive feedback about the programme. As a response to this the Vice President thanked all those who submitted works, attended online events and viewed the digital exhibitions.

Jana Embury asked if more online educational events were planned. Jamie McAteer responded that it was hoped there would be events attached to the digital exhibitions.

Other members enquired about Professional Practice events and Mental Health Week. There are no Professional Practice events currently scheduled but we would be open to doing more if the interest is there. Members were encouraged to get in touch if there was a particular topic they would like to see covered and these will be facilitated where possible. Mental Health Awareness week is also something we would like to continue if we can get the support for it.

Judith Shaylor, on behalf of the collective Abstractionistas, asked about collaboration opportunities and was encouraged to send in a proposal.

Jayne Stokes asked if the Society had considered setting up a mentoring scheme? Rhona Taylor advised that this was something discussed when the Professional Development programme was being pulled together. It is something that the Society is interested in, but the worry is that the resources are not in place to support this. Council Member Gillian McFarland has previously looked at funding streams available for this and we will be working with her to develop this further.

It was asked if the AGM would be held online going forward. Olivia Turner replied that this would make sense given our membership now spans the globe. Once in person events are back the AGM could be streamed simultaneously.

How can a member become more active, especially in regard to curating / hanging? Jamie McAteer explained that there has been a reduction in opportunities due to both the lack of in person exhibitions and the social distancing requirements in place but that open calls are issued when opportunities were available. In terms of general involvement, just get in contact! If you have skills that you think we could utilise, we'd love to hear from you.

Jenny Smith invited everyone to unmute themselves and give Olivia, Jamie and Rhona a round of applause for the amazing job they have done.

9. AOCB

Co-Presidents and Vice-President thanked all who attended this year's AGM.

Meeting closed 12.15pm
