

Scotland + Venice

Scotland + Venice 2026: Open Call for Curatorial Team and Artist(s)

This document sets out:

- An overview of the Scotland + Venice Programme
- Detail on the Opportunity for 2026
- The Submission and Selection process
- Governance arrangements
- Information on the Professional Development Programme
- Venue information
- A Summary Timeline

Overview of Scotland + Venice

Scotland + Venice is a major international project at La Biennale di Venezia, promoting the best of contemporary art and architecture from Scotland on the world stage. It positions Scotland as a distinct, dynamic, and diverse centre for creative excellence.

The project fosters ambitious, innovative work in contemporary art and architecture, strengthened through international dialogue, professional exchange, critical review, and public engagement.

The Scotland + Venice Partners are: Creative Scotland, British Council, National Galleries of Scotland, V&A Dundee, Architecture and Design Scotland and the Scottish Government.

Programme Aims

Scotland + Venice aims to:

- Present high-quality, contextually relevant contemporary work from Scotland
- Create international opportunities and visibility for artists, curators, and producers
- Present a unique opportunity for the selected artist/s to stage ambitious work on the international stage
- Embed sustainability, equality, diversity, and inclusion at every stage
- Develop new public engagement and legacy pathways (e.g., exhibition return or re-presentation in Scotland)
- Deliver a strong Professional Development Programme for early-career pathways

- Strengthen long-term infrastructure for international cultural collaboration

Programme Objectives

The objectives of Scotland + Venice are to:

- Make a strong, distinctive, artist-centered contribution to La Biennale
- Create a uniquely supportive and collaborative opportunity for the selected artist(s) to research, develop and present new work
- Actively address issues of diversity, access, and inclusion
- Achieve high visibility and audience engagement in Venice's busy environment
- Demonstrate a commitment to ethical, sustainable, and environmentally responsible practices
- Offer professional development opportunities to early-career practitioners, supporting workforce diversification
- Ensure a warm, inclusive, and accessible visitor experience
- Show robust project and budget management, with clear roles and communication mechanisms
- Create opportunities for public engagement in Scotland during and after the Biennale, including restaging or touring elements
- Raise the profile of Scotland's visual arts community, enhancing professional interest internationally

The Opportunity

Scotland + Venice invites Expressions of Interest from curatorial teams working with an identified artist or artists to curate and deliver an ambitious exhibition for the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (May–November 2026).

This high-profile commission requires experienced curatorial and artistic teams with a proven track record of delivering complex projects to tight timelines within public funding frameworks. International experience is not essential, but applicants must demonstrate the capacity to manage a major, public-facing commission in a global context.

Proposals should demonstrate:

- A clear and compelling curatorial and artistic vision
- Strong collaboration between curator(s) and artist(s) with confirmation of the artist(s)'s availability and interest in participating
- Experience in commissioning, production, budget, and team management
- An embedded commitment to sustainability, accessibility, EDI, and Fair Work principles
- Realistic understanding of the scale and pressures of working in Venice

This is a single-phase Open Call. Shortlisted applicants will present directly to the selection panel.

Who Can Apply?

- Applications must come from a team including at least one curator/producer and one artist
- Applicants can be individuals, organisations, partnerships, or collectives
- At least one key team member (curator or artist) must be based in Scotland or demonstrate a sustained connection to the Scottish visual arts sector
- Commercial galleries may apply in partnership but must show public benefit and avoid conflicts of interest

Applicants must demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of Scotland's visual arts sector. Those based outside Scotland must clearly outline how they will collaborate with Scotland-based individuals and organisations to ensure strong project outcomes.

Submission Details

Applications must be submitted using a submission template. This can be requested by emailing: visualarts@creativescotland.com using the subject title 'S+V submission request'

This template asks for the following details:

- A curatorial and artistic proposal
- CVs and short bios of all team members
- A confirmed named artist (with CV/portfolio)
- Outline budget
- Summary of approach to:
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Fair Work, recruitment and remuneration
- Lead applicant contact details
- Confirmation of availability to meet the project timeline

Deadline: 12 noon on Thursday 1st May 2025

**Submissions should be addressed to: Emma Nicolson, Creative Scotland Head of Visual Arts
email: visualarts@creativescotland.com**

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Project Budget

A guideline commissioning budget is set out in the submission document, although final costs will depend on the project approach and make up of the creative team. The available budget for the delivery of the project in Venice will include:

- Artist fees and production costs
- Curatorial and project management fees
- Travel and accommodation

- Insurance, installation, and technical support
- Environmental sustainability measures

Proposals must be achievable within the available resources or provide clear evidence of additional secured funding.

Selection Process

For 2026, the Scotland + Venice Selection Panel will include:

- Emma Nicolson (Creative Scotland)
- Simon Groom (National Galleries of Scotland)
- Norah Campbell (British Council Scotland)
- Sepake Angiama, Director of Iniva
- Lucia Pietroiusti, Head of Ecologies at Serpentine and co-curator of the Golden Lion-winning Lithuanian Pavilion

Shortlisting and Interviews

- A maximum of six teams will be shortlisted
- Each shortlisted team will receive a £500 interview attendance fee
- Interviews will take place on 20 May 2025
- Commission announced: July 2025 (following due diligence and contracting)
- A Letter of Agreement will be issued by Creative Scotland on behalf of the partners

Governance and Oversight

Scotland + Venice is delivered by a consortium of public partners. The selected team will report to the Scotland + Venice Visual Art Steering Group and work closely with Creative Scotland's Head of Visual Arts and the Scotland + Venice Programme Manager, who will provide coordination, advice, and support throughout.

Professional Development Programme

The Professional Development Programme (PDP) is a core component of Scotland + Venice. Delivered in partnership with HE/FE institutions, the PDP offers paid invigilation and learning opportunities for Scotland-based students and early-career practitioners.

The selected team will collaborate with the Scotland + Venice Programme Manager to integrate the PDP into the visitor experience and engagement plan.

Venue Information

The venue for 2026 is not yet confirmed. Floorplans and technical specifications will be shared with the selected team when available. The exhibition will apply to be accredited as a Collateral Event of the Biennale.

Summary Timeline

- Open Call launch: 3 April 2025
- Deadline for submissions: noon on 1st May 2025
- Shortlisting & interviews: 7 –21 May 2025
- Commission confirmed: end of May 2025
- Development & production: June 2025 – April 2026
- Launch in Venice: May 2026
- Biennale dates: 6 May – 22 November 2026
- Return/re-presentation in Scotland: late 2026/2027

Further Information

The 2024 Review of Scotland + Venice 2009–2017 can be found [here](#).

For enquiries about the selection process, please contact: Emma Nicolson, Creative Scotland
Head of Visual Arts: visualarts@creativescotland.com