

Scotland + Venice

Embargoed until 10am Thursday 3 April 2025

Scotland + Venice to return to the Venice Biennale

In 2026, Scotland will return to the Venice Biennale for The 61st International Art Exhibition

Scotland + Venice, which supports the promotion of contemporary visual art in Scotland on an international stage, has established a reputation as one of the Biennial's most exciting collateral events over the course of the last 20 years. Following a pause in 2024 to review Scotland's involvement, the Scotland + Venice Partnership is pleased to announce a renewed participation in 2026, and a commitment to future editions in 2028 and 2030.



The Choir is waiting at the threshold and (pause) - deep dive (pause) uncoiling memory, 2022 photographer Cristiano

Today, Thursday 3 April 2025, a [call out](#) by Scotland + Venice is launched to encourage applications from across the country for those who would be interested in delivering the project in 2026. Expressions of interest via the Scotland + Venice website are welcomed from those working with an artist (or artists) to curate and deliver an ambitious exhibition which will run in Venice from May to November 2026. It is expected that the exhibition will then return to audiences in Scotland, as it has in previous years.

In 2024, an Independent Review recommended that Scotland + Venice return to presenting in Venice in 2026. The Review found there was overwhelming support for the project from across Scotland's visual arts community. Consultees backed an option for a renewed approach which prioritises public engagement at home and abroad, with more resources committed to the project, including a dedicated Programme Manager. More detail on this new role will be shared later in Spring 2025.

Those consulted for the Review saw Scotland + Venice as offering a unique opportunity for artists based in Scotland to engage with complex topics and contemporary issues on a global stage, providing impactful professional development for artists, creative individuals and organisations across Scotland. Contributors to the Review highlighted the importance of the project to the development of the visual arts community in Scotland, and its key role in raising the profile of the sector internationally.

A professional development and invigilator programme will run in 2026 alongside the Venice exhibition, delivered in partnership with Scottish HE/FE institutions. This has been a key success for Scotland + Venice, offering opportunities for students and creatives. An Open Call process will be announced and promoted later this year, with support from HE/FE partners.

The Partnership is also committed to exploring opportunities to share the work presented in Venice to audiences in Scotland after the Biennale exhibition closes.

It is hoped that the presentation in 2026 can build and develop this model for the 2028 and 2030 editions of Scotland + Venice.

Alastair Evans, Chair, Scotland + Venice Partnership, said, *“Exhibiting work during one of the highest profile moments in the visual arts calendar, at the Venice Biennale, allows Scotland’s artists to be seen on a prestigious international stage with their global peers, in a city visited by thousands every year. It gives artists the opportunity to create a significant commission, as well as giving others working in the Scottish art scene the chance to develop their own skills on an ambitious project. A professional development and invigilator programme*

will again run alongside the Venice exhibition, delivered in partnership with Scottish HE/FE institutions. Over 200 students and creatives have graduated through the programme since Scotland + Venice began in 2003.”

Evans continued, *“Scotland + Venice presentations have been consistently well-received. Recent presentations have seen impressive attendances in Venice, with over 23,000 visitors to Charlotte Prodger’s presentation in 2019 and nearly 37,000 attending Alberta Whittle’s exhibition in 2022. In 2023, Alberta Whittle’s commission returned to Scotland with a screening tour delivered in partnership with LUX Scotland, and an exhibition at National Galleries of Scotland achieving home audience figures of over 117,000. This work was also acquired by the National Galleries of Scotland following her presentation. We hope that the project for 2026 will deliver similar opportunities for artists and arts audiences both in Scotland and Venice. The Scotland + Venice Partners would like to thank all of those who contributed to the Review.”*

Jenny Crowe, Chair, Scottish Contemporary Art Network, *added, “The return of the Scotland + Venice project to the art biennale is very much welcome and signals a renewed buoyancy for contemporary art in Scotland. The Biennale remains an incredibly important platform that brings together curators and arts professionals from across the world - Scotland being part of that global conversation is essential. Many artists and arts professionals in Scotland enjoy international careers, and although only a small number can, inevitably, be represented in the Biennale, the Scotland + Venice opportunity existing and being part of that international mix will undoubtedly foster a new sense of ambition and reach. It allows artists to consider their place and connect their work to audiences from all over the world”*

ENDS

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About Scotland + Venice

Scotland + Venice is a major international project designed to promote the best of contemporary art and architecture from Scotland on the world stage. Founded in 2003, the project supports the development of new work, fosters international connections and exchange, and positions Scotland as a vibrant place for creative and cultural production.

Scotland + Venice is a partnership between Creative Scotland, British Council Scotland, National Galleries Scotland, Architecture and Design Scotland, V&A Dundee and the Scottish Government.

The aim of the 2024 Scotland + Venice Review was to deliver research and conclusions that enable the Scotland + Venice Partnership to determine the future viability of the project, the effectiveness of its approach, and consider alternative options for the future.

<https://scotlandandvenice.com/>

About the Venice Biennale

The Venice Biennale is one of the most significant international platforms within the global art world, celebrating visual art, architecture, cinema, dance, music and theatre. Founded in 1895, and despite the significant growth of similar events around the world, the Art Biennale is still promoted as the most influential and prestigious contemporary art event, attracting an audience of over 700,000 in 2024. Future editions of the Art Biennale will take place in 2026, 2028 and 2030.

The Venice Biennale events take place in 29 country pavilions housed in the Giardini and Arsenale sites. 'Collateral' events take place in venues and spaces across Venice and include presentations from countries not included in the Biennale's official country pavilions. Scotland, Wales and Catalonia have been regular presenters as collateral events.

Architecture &
Design Scotland
Alteòrachais is Deòilinnidh na h-Alba



BRITISH COUNCIL
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Riaghaltas na h-Alba