

Visual Arts Policy

1. Our Vision

For over 900 years the Cathedral has been a passionate Christian presence at the heart of the city and the region. It celebrates the stories of local people and events and seeks to offer a radical welcome to all who will cross its threshold. It is not only a place to which people come; it is also a place through which they go and from which they emerge renewed. It is a place of interaction, between people and with God: not in order to escape from the world around, but rather to renew commitment to it.

2. Our Values

We are a values-driven organisation and community and our actions reveal what we hold dear and who we want to be. We have articulated some core values which congregate around three themes of our common life:

- **Inspiring Worship** - We place a priority on seeking to facilitate inspiring worship in the everyday life of the Cathedral
- **Radical Welcome** – We commit ourselves to learning how to offer a radical welcome to all who would enter the Cathedral.
- **Empowering Worth** - In all that we do, we will seek to value others and to encourage them to value themselves. In our engagement with City and Diocese we will advocate for the creation of a society that values human worth.

Towards a Visual Arts Policy

'We are not human beings in search of a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings immersed in a human experience.' Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

The transformation of the Cathedral and its environs by the refurbishment project in 2020/21 has created a wonderful 'shrine' at the heart of the city – if by 'shrine' you understand the proper origin of the word 'a box or chest containing precious objects'. The Cathedral is a 'more than' space – an inspiring context for worship; a stunning and stimulating heritage site, a dignified and magical setting for all manner of events: In short a sacred space that can be common ground.

Yet the Cathedral really comes alive when it is animated by people, when it brims with their stories, feels their joys and their laments, joins their celebrations and their daily lives. It is, therefore, only truly about its business when the encounters it facilitates (and witnesses) take people beyond, as well as deeply within, themselves. When they provoke contemplation, enhance meaning, evoke awe and wonder, joy and play, solidarity, hope and even on occasion rage.

'Spirituality: The art of keeping your internal fire alive' Maxime Lagacé

For this Cathedral any understanding of spirituality cannot be limited to 'religious or 'ritual' acts. Neither can it accept a false division between sacred and profane, secular and religious, this worldly and 'other worldly'. Experience of the sacred is open to all, it is in the end about the way we see, hope, dream, imagine. This transforms the ordinary into the holy it can make the mundane sacred.

We want to explore a visual arts policy for the Cathedral in the context of this wide (and deep) appreciation of faith and spirituality. The transformed Cathedral offers a stunning setting which, in dialogue with a radical welcome (by which we mean hospitality that stretches us beyond ourselves to provide a true welcome for every friend, citizen and stranger), opens up new possibilities and encounters:

- How can the use of art help renew people and their commitment to the building of a better world?
- How can art play an integral part in the Cathedral's contribution to personal and corporate transformation?
- Can the Cathedral, as a place for art, offer inspiration to artists and new audiences?
- What part can art play in the development of people's spirituality?
- How can art use, enhance and benefit from, the 'more than' shrine that is St Nicholas

3. Aims and Objectives

In this context, we wish to explore how art can promote and enhance our values – bringing new understanding by exploring emotion and meaning. We have developed this visual arts policy to provide a framework that helps to guide how we achieve this. In summary, we wish to:

- Offer opportunities for encounter and transformation
- See how art can enliven and explore our key values

- Explore the human condition in a way which supports the Christian ethos of the space
- Use art to enhance learning and understanding amongst all ages
- Enrich the quality of experience of those who visit and worship at the Cathedral
- Reach new and diverse audiences so that more people can enjoy common ground.

4. Five Year Programme of Visual Art

We wish to maximise the use of the art spaces available inside and outside the Cathedral to create a varied programme of visual arts which could be major events or smaller interventions (a major event being defined by the level of artist, the scale of the exhibit and whether the art gives reason to visit the Cathedral in its own right).

We will do this by:

- Providing aesthetic and spiritual experiences drawn from the building itself
- Making the most of our art collections (applied art, sculpture, stained glass, manuscripts, icons etc).
- Promoting the Cathedral as an inspiring space for art and artists, inviting local, national and as appropriate, international artists to respond to the building and our ethos.
- Identifying and attracting exciting and relevant touring shows as opportunities arise.
- Commissioning original art (both permanent and temporary) that responds to specific themes or opportunities, as budget allows.
- Developing partner exhibitions, for example taking part in multi-site shows across the city.

The range of art work to be included in the five-year programme is varied and may include:

- Sculpture and installations.
- Paintings, ceramics and drawings.
- Photography.
- Interactive digital work
- Performance.

Priority will be given to work which (in no particular order):

- Is site-specific or site-responsive.
- Will have wide appeal to visitors.

- Will engage and challenge visitors and worshippers in appropriate ways.
- Explores themes close to our values (please note that any work open to theological interpretation must not be at odds with the Christian ethos of the space)
- Celebrates creativity and the wider dimension of our mission.
- Includes interpretative material and supporting educational events appealing to local schools, colleges and universities and/or art and craft groups in the locality.
- Creates partnerships with other organisations and institutions; e.g. exchange exhibitions.
- Can attract funding by grant or sponsorship.

5. Role of the Arts Advisory Panel

The five-year programme of visual art will be developed and implemented by Cathedral staff in association with freelance artists and community groups. This programme will run in parallel to the Cathedral's external programme of cultural event bookings.

The Cathedral's own visual arts programme will be mentored by an Arts Advisory Panel. This is not a formal sub-committee of the Dean and Chapter but an advisory group of skilled and connected people passionate about bringing visual arts to the Cathedral. We anticipate the Panel's membership including representation from the Dean and Chapter, the Activities and Learning Officer, professional curators and artists, and perhaps audience engagement, business and fundraising experts.

The Art Advisory Panel's focus is only on the visual arts and it has no role in the Cathedral's other art activities, principally music. However, in the fullness of time, the visual arts programme might, on occasion, assist with synergistic creative opportunities in other areas of cathedral life, which could provide a powerful visual arts/music/heritage/worship seasonal programme.

6. Arts Advisory Panel – Terms of Reference

To support the development of a Cathedral-led 5 year visual arts programme by:

- helping to shape Chapter policy around the visual arts
- advising on programme and quality
- advising on applications from artists for exhibition space and vetting proposed content
- using contact networks to promote the Cathedral as a space/subject to/for artists and for touring shows

- advising on offers of art collections (gifts or loans) to the Dean and Chapter and supporting the development of an Art Acquisition and Disposal Policy
- supporting the development of grant applications and ensuring exhibitions do not proceed without adequate resources
- advising on exhibition parameters, artists' contractual arrangements, health and safety and safeguarding requirements, as raised as issues by cathedral staff.

March 2021

Exhibition Guidelines for Professional Artists and Collectives

We welcome exhibition proposals from individual artists and groups and are keen to hear from emerging and established professional artists and collectives as well as from gifted amateurs and organisations. Proposals will be considered on their merits and according to the wider priorities established by the Cathedral's Visual Arts Policy. Please note that you do not need to be Christian to exhibit at the Cathedral.

We also approach artists and community organisations for a changing programme which includes, in no particular order: established professionals, local schools, 6th form colleges and institutions of further or higher education, art and craft groups, societies, communities and exchange exhibitions in partnership with other institutions.

These guidelines are to support artists working at a professional level to have a satisfying exhibition experience at Newcastle Cathedral.

1. Decision Taking

Temporary exhibitions and installations can be proposed by any external party. The Artist Exhibition Proposal Form should be submitted to learning@newcastlecathedral.org.uk in the first instance. This will be internally assessed using the Cathedral's BRICS assessment tool and forwarded to the Programming Group for recommendation to the Senior Management Team and ultimately, Chapter. Depending on the scale of the proposal, the Dean will seek the Arts Advisory Panel's advice on budget, quality, suitability and artistic intent.

In order to ensure that any artwork, exhibition or installation can meet the potential envisaged without disruption to ongoing cathedral life, the designated SMT member will ensure that necessary stakeholders, including the Cathedral Architect, those responsible for liturgy and theology and for the day to day operation and maintenance of the cathedral, are involved in regular planning meetings and that account is taken of the Cathedral's Liturgical Plan and Conservation Management Plan. The Cathedral's Fabric Advisory Committee will be consulted on any temporary exhibition which is expected to be in place for more than three months and/or which has the potential to impact on the fabric of the building.

2. Organisation of Exhibitions

We invite professional artists/groups to provide the following information in support of their application for a temporary exhibition:

- a) Details of the organisation proposing to offer the exhibition
- b) Biographical details of the artist(s) and any record of the works' provenance
- c) An artist's statement detailing:

- how the proposal relates to the Cathedral's Visual Arts Policy, mission and values
 - the process which the artist has been through in considering how the proposal links to this special building spatially and/or to its collections. Why exhibit here?
- d) Any proof of funding
 - e) Details of the media used and any special requirements (e.g. risk assessments for use of interactive installations, site demarcation, permanent invigilation, environmental conditions, exhibit maintenance)
 - f) An illustrated list of the proposed exhibits or samples thereof
 - g) Proposals for anything else the artist/organisation would like to offer to accompany the exhibition, e.g. private viewing, public workshops or other events
 - h) A detailed budget for the exhibition. Costs should include those for installation, de-installation, transport, running and maintenance for the duration of the exhibition, re-instatement of the cathedral location to its previous condition, (including making good any points of attachment etc), invigilation (if necessary), private view and/or launch, publicity, interpretation, professional fees (including curatorial, agent's, designer's, and publicity agent's) and the insurance of works of art while in transit and on display.
 - i) Any anticipated income streams arising from the exhibition
 - j) Suggested dates and duration of the exhibit/exhibition

3. Display Practicalities

Following an in principle agreement by the Cathedral, work will ensue to set dates in the diary, installation and de-installation requirements, programming etc.

The Cathedral will be pleased to:

- Draw up an artist's contract and/or loan agreement with the artist or exhibition group to include details of the commission, budget, health and safety etc.
- Provide a principal officer to work with the artist during planning and delivery. He/she will provide a personal tour, advise on appropriate install/de-install times, taking into account worship and other activities in the space, and advise on timeline and deadlines for images and text (e.g. for website copy), and care of exhibits etc.
- Provide floor plans of the agreed exhibition space and agree layout of the exhibition
- Provide preparation space, where possible

- Assist with curation, interpretation, lighting, signage, installation, volunteer stewarding and security as within its capabilities, providing deadlines for images and copy for website, text etc.
- Support press and publicity for the exhibition, including any press launch and private view. (A limited number of free marketing opportunities to help promote the exhibition/installation will be discussed).
- Support sales and merchandising, where appropriate, and provide information about acting as an agent of sale – commission etc. to be agreed at the time of booking.
- Investment of Cathedral resources will depend on the level of the artist, the scale of the exhibition and whether the art gives a reason to visit the Cathedral in its own right.

Please be aware that the Cathedral retains the right:

- to approve the individual works to be displayed
- to remove any for which permission has not been given or which are deemed offensive
- to withhold approval for substitutes not previously agreed and to provide reasons for any such refusal
- Unfortunately, the Cathedral cannot accept liability for loss or damage.
- The Dean and Chapter are very keen that the presentation be of professional standard and in keeping with the environment of the display but that creativity and originality is not impeded

We hope that artists/exhibitors will understand the need to:

- Be responsible for in transit insurance and security
- Have in situ insurance for theft and damage for the duration of the exhibition and flag up any invigilation concerns early in the planning process
- Ensure any electrical kit brought on to the premises is recently PAT tested
- Ensure they have read the Cathedral's Safeguarding Policy
- Supply appropriate Health and Safety assessments and method statements and take appropriate steps to address any issues identified.
- Remain responsible for any specialised maintenance of an artwork, installation or interactive unless previous agreement has been made with the Cathedral and agreed also with the staff subsequently responsible.
- Provide training for staff and volunteers and identifiable boundaries and controls for works of art, including light or sound installations, that can be managed by cathedral personnel should the artist or group member not be present
- Avoid attaching to, or damaging in any way, the fabric of the building, unless previously approved by the Cathedral's Fabric Advisory Committee
- Provide Public Liability Insurance to a value of £5 million

- Complete an artist's contract and/or loan agreement stating the terms of the exhibition
- Agree any payment terms or retail commission in advance of the exhibition.
- Follow Cathedral brand guidelines and funders' requirements in relation to interpretation, marketing and retail opportunities
- Provide interpretative information 3 weeks before the exhibition to allow time for its design and print (if to be produced by the Cathedral) and for approval and sign off
- Be open to the Cathedral exploring ways of providing spiritual reference/commentary on the exhibition theme or content
- Be open to the Cathedral exploring ways of monetising the exhibition, e.g. through ticketing, special events, donations etc., subject to any funding conditions
- Be sensitive to the Cathedral's core audiences and congregations
- Be sensitive to the function of the building as a place of worship and strict protocol of certain civic duties and memorial services whereby a display could need to be removed quickly and at very short notice, should the need arise.

4. Locations, Dates, Durations

The location of temporary exhibitions will reflect appropriateness and will be determined in most cases by the concurrent principal liturgical and other demands on space within the Cathedral and its environs.

Spaces particularly suited to temporary exhibitions are the South Transept, the Eastern Chapels, St George's Chapel and the Crypt (noting stepped access to both places) and Cathedral Hall. Any exhibition proposal for the nave must be able to respond to the scale of the space. The Churchyards and Terrace also provide opportunities for installations or small works of art.

The appointed cathedral officer will work with the exhibitor to identify the most appropriate space and exhibition parameters. We have a set of white exhibition screens and plinths available for you to use in certain locations. Unfortunately, we do not have any display cases and would need to approve any additional exhibition equipment, fittings or AV in advance of an exhibition being installed on site. We are also short on space to store packing crates and other exhibition materials before, during or after the exhibition period.

All exhibitions must be considered in the light of the liturgical year, which provides the framework for the life of the Cathedral, and take into account prior commitments and planned activities. We will agree installation working hours with you on a case by case basis.

Temporary exhibitions will normally last no less than four weeks and no longer than six months. Light and sound installations may be one-off events.

Artist Exhibition Proposal Form

Name of promoter/artist/group	
Contact name & address	
Telephone	
Email	
Title of proposal	
Artist's biography/Collective's information	
Preferred dates	
Preferred location	
Brief summary of the proposal including medium used.	
How the proposal relates to the Cathedral's Visual Arts Policy, mission and values	
How the proposal relates to the space. Why exhibit in this special place?	
Proposed method of installation, including any requirements for power/lighting or other special requirements.	
Budget, funders and anticipated income streams	
Other events to support the exhibit/exhibition	
Illustrative supporting material attached?	