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Title:

Artists Running : 50 Years of Scottish Cultural Devolution

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Abstract: It is just over 50 years since the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) devolved the governance and subsidy of Scotland's arts from London to Edinburgh. Dan Brown, Deborah Jackson and Neil Mulholland discuss how artists, curators, arts administrators and the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) learned to co-habit. They examine the tensions between the SAC's Keynesian values, Scotland's emerging artist-run organisational culture and its long established Unionist-nationalist arts institutions. What changes and challenges did the cultural devolution of the late 1960s precipitate in Scotland's contemporary art and how did this impact upon the political devolution that followed in 1999?

8 keywords: Scotland, contemporary art, devolution, unionism, nationalism, artist-run-initiative, workshops, galleries

Main Text:

“Over the last two years, Transmission’s committee has sought to undertake a process of decolonisation, addressing representation in the institution, taking direction from the original constitution and foregrounding the experiences of people who are underrepresented in the arts. [...] We understand our situation in a wider context [...] following [...] the historic dismantling of grassroots and minority-led arts organisations across the UK.” (Transmission 2018)

Neil: Transmission’s¹ current predicament is not new. It begs the question: as governance of the arts has been slowly devolved to Scotland over the past 50 years, what has been learned and what has been unlearned by the nation’s arts administrators?

Deborah: Transmission’s situation is reminiscent of a number of ‘custody battles’ that ensued when the Scottish Art Council attempted to take control of independent art organisations. This suggests that there is much to be learned and unlearned, not least from the legacy of the first wave of Scotland’s Artist-Run Initiatives (ARIs). It is important to acknowledge the impact that Transmission has had on Scottish contemporary art, particularly in light of the latest decision by Creative Scotland to drop Transmission from its portfolio of regularly funded organisations. However, we also need to acknowledge a tendency for dominant accounts of contemporary Scottish art to focus on a limited range of practices and institutions. This often centres on Transmission’s role as a catalyst for most of what happened in Scotland during the 1990s. (Jeffrey 2014) Without understating the importance of Transmission, the inevitable outcome is an incomplete and secessionist version of events focused on ‘pivotal’ exhibitions. The focus on consumption over production has meant that too many significant ARIs have slipped below the radar. We need to redresses the historical imbalance by acknowledging the role that the first wave of ARIs played in scoping out alternatives to the prevailing structures and discourses of the art world in order to understand the changes and challenges that ARIs have faced.

¹ Founded in Glasgow in 1983 by GSA graduates, Alistair Magee and Alistair Strachan.

Dan: It is also necessary to distinguish the shifting definitions of what might constitute ARIs. What is an ARI? How might we define it?

Deborah: The term ARI encompasses a myriad of activities that accompany commercial galleries and public museums. Despite their variety, ARIs can be typified by a mutual commitment to self-determination and the capacity to develop and transform at a fast pace. Their alacrity means that ARIs are involved in producing art scenes (Burrows 2010). ARIs are developed and managed by unremunerated artists, rather than professional administrators. Artists are responsible for all aspects of the organisation. Major art institutions, in contrast, are broadly characterised by strong hierarchical relations, with chains of delegation that delineate responsibilities. ARIs develop a minor approach, replacing centrally-driven, top-down organisation with horizontal distributions of knowledge and practice.

Dan: The structure and culture of major institutions you describe is still largely defined by the 'Victorian values' that created them. For instance, Edinburgh's Royal Scottish Academy (RSA. est. 1826) was formed to improve knowledge and understanding of the visual arts. One of the functions of the RSA was, and still is, to annually exhibit the work of its members, the RSA Academicians and selected practicing artists.

Neil: Many of Scotland's existing art institutions, clubs and voluntary societies, such as the RSA, were founded in the 18th and 19th century by the bourgeoisie - the local worthies who governed Scottish civil society – to be frequented by fellow travellers. They were established by the new establishment for the new establishment.² Self-perpetuating selection, purposefully designed to preserve exclusivity by enabling only existing members to elect their bourgeois peers, made it possible for nascent art organisations to attract substantial endowments long before their foundation stones were laid. They were, thus, able to operate without recourse to the state. ARIs, in contrast, were inclusive associations, founded by early career artists who had no capital and no wealthy patrons. While their participation in such public arts associations remained voluntary, their philanthropy no longer signified economic and political hegemony. Without the unwaged labour of their founding members, and the prospect of emerging support from the SAC patron-state, such ARIs simply would not exist.

² The bourgeoisie, those owning property worth £10 or more, were enfranchised by the Representation of the People (Scotland) Act 1832, increasing the electorate from 0.2% of Scotland's population to 13%. See: Morton, G. (1994). *Unionist-Nationalism : The Historical Construction of Scottish National Identity*, Edinburgh, 1830-1860. Edinburgh, The University of Edinburgh.

In the 1950s and early '60s Scotland's bi-partite schooling was designed to deny most children the opportunity to gain the requisite qualifications to attend university.³ When mandatory maintenance grants for higher education students were introduced in 1962, Scottish art schools became a little more comprehensive. In 1965, Harold Wilson's Scottish Education Department (SED) published the *Circular 600* requiring Scotland's local authorities to introduce comprehensive education for 12-16 year olds. The *Circular 600* stopped the public funding of selecting 'secondary schools' wherein only a chosen minority of pupils could gain academic qualifications; such opportunity now had to be made available to all children.⁴ Because comprehensivisation threatened the class exclusivity supported by the streaming of academic education, a greater number of middle-class parents began to send their children to private schools after 1965. The siphoning of more bourgeois pupils into the private sector meant that comprehensively state educated graduates made fewer connections among Scotland's ruling class while at school, namely the middle classes that almost wholly constituted the art world. Moreover, since bourgeois art organisations did not 'represent' working-class culture (beyond fodder for genre painters), working-class artists felt compelled to establish their own comprehensive organisations.⁵

This division of power, and the rise and fall of British industrial power, is starkly evident in the architecture of Victorian learned societies and late 20th century ARIs. Compare the Royal Institution's William Playfair designed Greek temple on Edinburgh's Princes Street, commissioned and owned by the all-powerful Board of Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvements in Scotland (1727-1906), with the dilapidated apartments and

³ In 1903, the UK Government compelled the Scottish Education Department to publish 'Circular 374' (SED 1903). This attempted to segregate Scottish schools into junior secondaries, which provided two or three years of largely technical education, and selecting senior secondaries, which provided five or six years of 'academic' education leading to a secondary leaving certificate. Primary school pupils who did not pass a compulsory examination at age 11 were to be denied entry to senior secondary school, and thus, would never be able to obtain the secondary school qualifications required to attend university or art school. Those who attended junior secondary were destined to work in a trade or unskilled job.

⁴ In practice, Scotland's influential Association of Directors of Education (ADES), which deemed the SED's Circular 374 to run counter to Scotland's egalitarian tradition of the 'Democratic Intellect' (1961), ensured that Scotland did not implement bi-partite secondary schooling as strictly as in the separate educational systems of England & Wales and of Northern Ireland. Many of Scotland's small towns and villages, finding segregation impractical, ran 'omnibus' schools that combined junior and senior secondary education. These were important precursors of full comprehensivisation in the 1960s. Nevertheless, the '11 plus' greatly helped to determine and maintain urban Scotland's class divisions. See: Davie, G. E. (1961). *The democratic intellect : Scotland and her universities in the nineteenth century*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh : University Press. and Stocks, J. (2002). "Social Class and the Secondary School in 1930s Scotland." *Scottish Educational Review* 34(1): 26-39.

⁵ This is what Transmission refer to when they state their mission concerns 'foregrounding the experiences of people who are underrepresented in the arts.' Transmission (2018). *Creative Scotland Funding Response Statement* Glasgow, Transmission.

post-industrial warehouses in forgotten corners of cities, painstakingly converted into workshops and studios by lay members of ARIs.⁶

Deborah: The formation of ARIs in Scotland is indicative of a critique of this cultural hegemony that was perpetuated by Scotland's ossified cultural institutions. They were also fuelled by a determination to transform Scotland's culture. As globalisation and postcolonialism began to transform the social and cultural landscape in the 1950s and '60s, Eurocentric and Imperialist artistic paradigms were increasingly problematised. Major institutions such as the RSA could not convincingly continue to promulgate Scotland's place in the world while being inimical to international developments in contemporary art. At the same time, artists across Europe and the USA were engaging in institutional critique. They challenged the conventions of power that bound them to dealers, curators, critics and collectors seeking to participate directly in the advocacy, presentation, interpretation and criticism of their own work. Through self-organisation, artists began to (practically) dismantle the assumption that the academies were the sole arbitrators of aesthetic and administrative standards, which, in turn, began to disintegrate the monopolistic authority of all major institutions.

Dan: The 1960s was a significant period in relation to the attempted redistribution of cultural power and the relationships between differing scales of institution. Specifically, since 1967, Scotland's visual arts have in part been shaped by two interconnected developments:

1. Artist-run initiatives (ARIs) – self-organised by collectives of artists to meet their specific needs
2. The formation of the Scottish Arts Council (SAC, 1967-2010), which devolved the Arts Council of Great Britain's (ACGB, 1946-94) model of governance to Scotland.

The motivations for artists to set up their own organisations are manifold. Jacqueline Cooke summarises these as 'mutual support, autonomy/agency for artists, space for innovative art forms, resistance to commodification and radicalism'. (Cooke 2007)

⁶ 'The place was full of dry rot, really dreadful. The conversion was tough and done entirely by work parties of members.' Sheena McGregor in Henry, C. (1993). *The First Twenty One Years Glasgow Print Studio*. Glasgow, Glasgow Print Studio. p1.

Deborah: The rise of ARIs in Scotland during that period can also be considered in relation to artists resisting artistic and political centralisation. The decentralisation of ACGB funding contributed towards persuading artists to stay in Scotland because they anticipated that it would foster a more directly supportive and responsive environment.

Neil: The foundation of SAC in the late '60s rode a wave of heightened political nationalism in Scotland, contemporaneous with Winnie Ewing's pivotal SNP victory in the Hamilton by-election of November 1967. Rather than join 'Unionist-nationalist' (Morton 1994) art societies - such as the RSA and The Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts (RGI, Glasgow, 1861-) - young artists and their audiences had been establishing their own citizen-led organisations.⁷

Deborah: Scotland has a long tradition of ARIs that have often been instigated by a critique of major art institutions, such as those you've just mentioned, and motivated by a pragmatic need to sustain artistic practice. Artist-run activities have proven vital in negotiating the institutional and economic obstacles to creative and professional development.

Dan: To an extent Scotland's ARIs were also rooted in a new generation's counter-cultural disenchantment with the conservatism and insularity of the Scottish post-war Establishment. Their fresh approach is particularly apparent in the programmes of the New 57 Gallery and The Richard Demarco Gallery, which set out to present the latest developments in contemporary art. However, the formation of ARIs was driven as much by necessity as opposition. These self organised communities of practice (Wenger 1998) needed to build their own resources to make and exhibit their work.

Neil: Without fabrication facilities, few artists could practice, so many joined the Scots diaspora. By the end of the '60s ARIs had reconnected Scotland with art's global community of purpose, most notably with peers such as AIR and SPACE (1968-) and Acme (1976-81) in London and The Institute for Art and Urban Resources PS1 (est.1971) in New York. Self-determination strategies were shared. In Gallowgate, Docklands, Queens, Hackney and

⁷ Scottish civil societies '...were not part of "citizen politics", instead they were the instruments of the £10 ratepayers.' Morton, G. (1994). *Unionist-Nationalism : The Historical Construction of Scottish National Identity, Edinburgh, 1830-1860*. Edinburgh, The University of Edinburgh. p35.

Leith, the post-Fordist downturn of the early '70s heralded the rise of the studio loft.

Dan: ARIs can be divided into two subcategories:

- ARIs that present work to an audience
- ARIs that provide artists with the tools of their trade

This production/distribution categorisation of ARIs is a crude one. It is not a dichotomy. From the outset, the activity of the production organisations was not solely confined to the provision of space, equipment and training. ARIs were also concerned with promoting the work of their members and increasing the visibility of their specific medium through exhibition programmes.

What distinguishes workshops and production facilities from artist-run galleries is their focus on specific media. These organisations were formed around the practices of printmaking, sculpture and photography and their primary aim was to provide artists with access to the specialised equipment necessary to produce work in these fields. Although, ostensibly, the production facilities were perhaps less politically radicalised than gallery-based ARIs, they were similarly concerned with levelling the playing field.

Neil: Yes, artist-run galleries/workshops could be said to be overlapping and interdependent. However, chronologically speaking, most of the key artist-run galleries emerged before the artist-run workshops, some ten years prior to the formation of SAC. The means of distribution were cheaper and simpler to set up than the means of production. It was also pressing; there was great demand for gallery representation among artists. This is largely because, by the 1950s, Scotland had grown to be more socially conservative than England & Wales⁸, and the collectors who fuelled Scottish modernism, such as Alexander Reid and Walter Blackie, were not being replaced. Artists were

⁸ The Conservative & Unionist Party's substantial UK General Election victory of 1955 was greatly bolstered by the majority of Scottish electorate, who in the '50s and early '60s, voted Tory. Scotland (and Northern Ireland's) social conservatism is also marked in its failure to follow the repeal of laws in England & Wales that denied people their basic civil liberties. For example, homosexuality remained illegal in Scots Law until the 13th of November 1980, even though England & Wales passed their Sexual Offences Act 1967 on 27th of July 1967. The Wolfenden Committee, which supported these legal changes, met in 1957. See: Devine, T. (2014). How history turned against Tory-voting Scotland. The Guardian. London.

compelled to establish their own galleries and advocate on behalf of their peers. From 1957 to 1968, Scotland witnessed the rise of foundational independents: 57 Gallery (1957), Jim Haynes' Paperback Bookshop and Gallery (1959), Traverse Theatre (1963) and Richard Demarco Gallery (1966-92), all in Edinburgh, Glasgow's New Charing Cross Gallery (1963-69)⁹ and Glasgow League of Artists (1971-81).¹⁰ These organisations were cauldrons of the countercultural self-determinism that dominated *Scottish International* magazine (1968–74). Collectively, such indies initiated a global unlearning of modernism and imperialism and heralded the emergence of global 'contemporary art'.

Dan: The first wave of workshop and production facilities were all printmakers. Founded by artists Roy Wood, Philip Reeves, Julian Tevelyan, Robin Philipson, Hubert Kempshall in 1967 Edinburgh Printmakers was followed by Glasgow Print Studio (1972–), Peacock Printmakers, Aberdeen (1974–) and Dundee's Printmakers Workshop (1977–98).

Neil: Scotland's foundational artist-run galleries were established by painters (57 Gallery, New Charing Cross, Transmission, and Collective). Painters were not so reliant on the existence of workshops to practice; representation and a space to exhibit were more important concerns and required collective organisation. Nevertheless, finding suitable studio accommodation was an issue. Artists organised in Scotland's nascent industrial wastelands, building the affordable Working Artists' Studio Provision in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow in 1977. WASPS (Working Artists' Studio Provision Scotland) perfectly complemented Scotland's growing workshop provision. Large-scale fabrication finally arrived with the foundation of the Scottish Sculpture Workshop in Lumsden in 1979. Studios, workshops and galleries were reciprocally intertwined. As the number and scale of galleries grew, capacity was built for more artists to work in Scotland. All of these self-subsidising organisations were eager to gain financial support from SAC.

⁹ Founded by the artists Bet Low, Tom MacDonald and John Taylor with the art dealer Cyril Gerber on Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street. In 1969, under the charitable direction of Gerber, this became the Scottish Arts Council supported Compass Gallery. See: McCulloch, M. P. (2013). Culture and the : Poetry, Painting and Music in 1960s Glasgow. The Scottish Sixties Reading, Rebellion, Revolution. L. a. B. Gunn, Eleano. Amsterdam, Amsterdam : Editions Rodopi: 175-192. & p186.

¹⁰ The Glasgow League of Artists was an artist-led organisation that pursued more socially-engaged and political work than that found in the Royal Glasgow Institute or The Society of Scottish Artists (1891-). It was also active in setting up studio spaces at 45 St Vincent Lane, Glasgow.

Deborah: It is significant that, around the time that SAC was formed in 1967, three ARIs were constituted in Edinburgh: Demarco Gallery (1966), The New 57 Gallery (1966) and Edinburgh Printmakers (1967). On the whole, these were concerted efforts to affect established institutional specificities that had denied emergent local practitioners exhibition opportunities.

Neil: New 57 Gallery grew out of the 57 Gallery. This gallery space was initially Daphne Dyce-Sharpe's sculpture studio in George Street, it then moved to Rose Street in 1961 to 1973, before resettling in 1975 above Scottish Arts Council Gallery in Market Street, Edinburgh (the upstairs floor of what is now Fruitmarket Gallery).

Deborah: At the time of 57 Gallery's inception, the critic Cordelia Oliver wrote that: 'the climate was unbelievably bleak for any talented non-conformist in their first few years out of art school' (Oliver 1969: 2) as there were virtually no opportunities for young artists to show contemporary work. The Edinburgh International Festival (1947-) overlooked home-grown contemporary artists preferring to foreground 19th century French painting with a succession of annual exhibitions including: Degas (1952), Renoir (1953), Cezanne (1954), Gauguin (1955), Braque (1956) and Monet (1957).

The founding of the 57 Gallery was part of a growing consensus among artists that, rather than attempt to reform Scotland's major arts institutions, they should collectively form their own organisations. Artists were challenging the arbiters of taste who determine our cultural narratives. The 57 Gallery was founded on the premise that it would be an independent space where artists could actively *participate* in administration and policy formation (Oliver, C. 1969). To support the idea, an association was formed of subscribing members and a committee was elected to run the gallery. When 57 Gallery transformed into New 57 Gallery in 1966, it was against the backdrop of growing political activism. The incoming committee of New 57 Gallery was composed of a group of artists who had spent much of the 1960s engaged in institutional critique and social activism.

Neil: 57 Gallery's constitution established a highly influential model of having a voluntary committee who were able to serve no more than two years as directors. They formed a committee for the visual arts and supported lay members, who all paid a small annual subscription to cover the organisation's

running costs. They were accountable to the collective's members. To avoid conflicts of interest, directors could not exhibit their own work.

Deborah: The 57 Gallery's model of ARI governance, of an unpaid committee of practicing artists and an egalitarian membership, has become the structural blueprint of contemporary artist-run galleries. While its genesis is routinely misattributed to Glasgow's Transmission Committee for the Visual Arts, it is wholly indebted to the founders of 57 Gallery.

Dan: Edinburgh Printmakers original constitution sets out its organisational aims as follows:

"To promote, maintain, improve and advance education particularly by the encouragement of the study, practice, and knowledge of the art of printmaking. To provide facilities for the practice by any member of the Association of such graphic techniques as etching, lithography, silkscreen printing, wood-cutting or other graphic processes and for the exhibition of works produced by these techniques." (Printmakers 1967)

In the same way as the constitution for the 57 Gallery became the template for almost all of the subsequent artist-run galleries, Edinburgh Printmakers' constitution was used as the blueprint for the workshop production organisations that followed. It sets out three key priorities that are still in place today - to provide facilities and space for production, education and technical training for artists and the promotion of specific disciplines. Access was limited to members whose membership fees contributed to the running costs. Workshops were administrated and governed by committees of volunteers elected by the membership. However, unlike the 57 Gallery's constitution, committee members were not limited to a two year tenure.

Neil: The 57 Gallery committee model has been replicated across Scotland by Collective (Edinburgh. Est. 1984), Transmission (Glasgow. Est. 1983), Generator (Dundee. Est. 1997), Embassy (Edinburgh. Est. 2004), and it has spread to Catalyst (Belfast. Est. 1993) and 126 (Galway. Est. 2005) in Ireland. The New 57 Gallery's *Memorandum and Articles of Association* (Gallery 1966) were, literally, passed from one ARI to be repurposed by another, forming a legal palimpsest. It is, by now, such an established practice, a form of folklore, that we may call it an ARI doxa. While this do-it-together (DIT)

mental model this generated is by no means unique to Scotland, Scotland is internationally celebrated and mythologised for its dogged pursuit. This model has persevered now for over 60 years. What are its strengths and weaknesses?

Deborah: Generally, ARIs have a rolling committee, usually between five and seven members who work on a voluntary basis and are responsible for all aspects of the gallery. This model is beneficial in that it ensures that the organisation regenerates every few years; with periodic changes in personnel there is a constant turnover of new influences. The transitory nature of the committee does however have its disadvantages in that this often means that the associated knowledge and documentation is particularly vulnerable to being lost, or exists only in the minds of those who experience it. As I noted earlier, selective memory neglects to acknowledge the extent to which Transmission's 1950s, '60s and '70s precursors provided vital foundations for contemporary art in Scotland.¹¹

Neil: For me, the ARI doxa was, and remains, vital for four reasons:

Firstly, it is a fluid palimpsest rather than a fixed 'statute'. Voluntary committee-run constitutions are based on precedent, but they are all different. Each adapts the constitution of its predecessor. The constitution is unlearned to fit new situations, and flourishes.

Secondly, as Deborah notes, the doxa invites a form of cultural amnesia. I think that this is germane to contemporaneity. ARIs that consent to being governed by the doxa completely change their DNA every three years. The

¹¹ "Events of 35 years ago are well within the memory of many Edinburgh-based artists, collectors and arts administrators who were involved with the New 57 at the outset, yet documentation to support recollections is elusive. Information is scattered in personal archives and notebooks, in incomplete *Gallery of Modern Art* files and in assorted envelopes of old preview cards and catalogues, often undated." Prince, G. (1992). "Early Years of the 57." *Variant*(12): 36-41. p36 In contrast, the Transmission archive is well maintained and accessible online and onsite: 'The archive is a real existing thing within the resource room at Transmission. This room also contains a library and a collection of slides and other visual material left at the gallery by artists for viewing by visiting curators or other researchers in the days before digital documentation. A physical encounter with archival, promotional and research materials, as well as with the art on display and the gallery committee, was a key part of the pre-Internet Transmission experience. Such an encounter enabled different kinds of collisions to occur between artefacts, people and ideas than might now take place in the digital era.' Transmission. (2018, 02/01/2018). "Transmission Gallery Archive." Retrieved 20.3.18, 2018, from <https://www.transmissiongallery.org/Archive>.

constitutional founders are quickly forgotten, thus mitigating against the formation of embodied institutional memory. An upside to the unlearning this ensures is that it is seen to nourish artistic experimentation.

Thirdly, the doxa is a powerful ethical code that binds, and offers a form of self-empowerment to local communities. This is popular across a broad community (not just artists) because it is a means of establishing and maintaining social relations through reciprocal participation ('gift-bonding') and self-subsidy.

Gift-bonding means that, providing that members offer their labour freely to their local commons, they are free to use the commons' open resources. Such open resources grow as more members participate in the commons and as the commons becomes better connected with similar member-led networks. While such gift-bonding initially ties participants to their local communities of practice, in turn, as they connect with more members of the artworld operating a comparable *quid pro quo*, they gain membership of more diverse artistic communities of practice.

One of the goals of any small ARI, then, is to reciprocally tie distinct communities of practice to one another via a local and transnational commonwealth of networks. ARIs, if sufficiently numerous and geographically diverse, can create immense resources that can be easily distributed horizontally. This is in contrast to art organisations that build a 'walled-garden' around their resources by making them accessible only to fee-paying customers and/or to a select committee of remunerated (funded) members. As the term implies, walled-gardens ensure that the art world replicates hierarchical social structures. An ARI driven commonwealth of networks, however, promises to offer a decentralised solidarism that *unlearns* the unitary power of the art world's hierarchical bodies.

Deborah: Since the 1960s, ARIs in Scotland have shown a persistent commitment to their roles as pedagogical centres and epistemic communities. The New 57 Gallery's revised constitution stressed their position as a pedagogical hub:

“To promote, maintain, improve and advance education particularly by the encouragement of the study, practice and knowledge of the fine arts...” (Gallery 1966).

The events of May 1968 had a profound effect on artist-run culture. The Scottish art scene began to benefit from the input of younger artists who were politically motivated; this was manifest in their self-organised activities. For example, Alexander Moffat, who joined the committee of the New 57 Gallery in 1968, wrote that the role of the Gallery was to 'present a radical alternative in Scotland to the major galleries and institutions' (Moffat 1972: 9).

What was important about the 57 Gallery was that the impetus came from the grassroots; artists identified and advanced an intellectual curiosity in ways that were not being achieved in organisations with sanctioned roles and responsibilities. They were able to maintain relative sovereignty from successive UK and (after 1999) Scottish politically-led administrations. They supported projects that were ingrained in the local, while simultaneously connecting with the international art world.

Neil: The ARI doxa, then, is a shared ethics that unbundles established roles and territories, and facilitates international cultural exchange with like-minded committees. Such was its power that, by the 1970s, Tom Nairne's short-lived Scottish International Institute was anticipating a future Scotland that would be, simultaneously, internally decentralised and externally globalised.¹²

Let's now turn to the second important development that Dan identified earlier, namely that, in 1967, governance of the arts in Scotland was devolved from the ACGB in London to Edinburgh. The Scottish Arts Council (SAC) was created as largely autonomous branch of ACGB. It championed Scotland's national interests *in Scotland*, while loyally replicating John Maynard Keynes'

¹² Headed by Nairne, the Scottish International Institute supported self-governance and cultural autonomy. It sought to overcome Scotland's conservatism and provincialism - the so-called 'cultural cringe' - by supporting a 'post-national internationalism' that imagined a future Scotland no longer shackled to its imperialist past. In this, the Scottish International Institute mirrored the ARIs vision of a horizontal network of similar International Institutes in which Scots would directly participate. Prominent associates included: Hugh MacDiarmid, George Macleod, Neal Ascherson, Murray Grigor, Hamish Henderson, Stephen Maxwell, Brian Murphy, Lynda Myles, Michael Spens and Ben Whitaker.

Arnoldian view of culture as unitary and idealist.¹³ A cultural National Health Service (NHS), it situated its surgeries closer to its patients, directly hosting exhibitions in galleries and community centres scattered across Scotland's most sparsely populated mainland and islands. This subsidiary approach was a bitter-sweet victory for the sort of Scottish cultural Internationalism that Nairne pursued. It devolved cultural administration to Scotland, but did so in ways that replicated the anachronistic state imperialism of the UK in miniature. SAC was a colonial act.

The establishment of SAC also ruffled the feathers of Scotland's Establishment, powerful forces in Scottish civic life that had, since the 1707 Act of Union, maintained Scotland's cultural distinctiveness within the larger United Kingdom of Great Britain (1707-1800)¹⁴ and the Second British Empire (1783-1815). Edinburgh's loyal Unionist-nationalist bourgeoisie, effectively, governed Scottish civil-society for 260 years. The establishment of SAC in Edinburgh as a 'delegation' of ACGB threatened this status quo. It meant that Scotland's hitherto self-governed artistic traditions would now be determined by branch managers of the Keynesian Union State. Scotland's Unionist-nationalists regarded this as a not so much a colonial act as a cultural betrayal. Who knew best how to govern Scottish culture? They did.

This is worth situating in a longer post-union (1707-) context. The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), established in 1940, was chaired by Keynes from 1941 until his death in 1946. The Victorian *laissez-faire* British State had been resolutely opposed to such centralisation. It wasn't remotely interested in directly governing the arts, never mind the stateless-nation of Scotland. The British Empire's preferred colonial model was to leave local governance to loyal boards of control:

"A third feature of the governing of Scotland post-1707 was the creation of a series of boards or commissions, based in Edinburgh, which attempted to administer Scottish affairs. [...] They were a prime source of jobs and rewards

¹³ The famed economist Keynes chaired CEMA, the ACGB's war-time precursor. Keynes' intimate involvement with London's modernist Bloomsbury group greatly influenced the cultural assumptions of both CEMA and ACGB. Keynes' macroeconomics, equally, meant that CEMA and ACGB were centralist in organisational approach. Keynesian cultural policy, thus, is a marriage of modernist hierarchical vanguardism and the consensus politics of welfare state capitalism.

¹⁴ The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was not formed until the 1800 Act of Union.

for the Scottish bourgeoisie and their sons, so keeping them sweet to the favours of the Union.” (Morton 1994: 8)

Since, there was no unitary welfare (British) state to speak of prior to 1942, much of the governance of Scotland was conducted by civic organisations such as the aforementioned Board of Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvements in Scotland or the Royal Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland (1819-26). Victorian municipal corporations ran Scottish towns and cities as rival, competing companies.

It wasn't until the formation of the UK-wide welfare state and its postwar expansion that the UK Government in Whitehall (London) took an interest in directly governing matters such as the arts in Scotland (specifically from 1940-67). It is important to recognise that, from a Scottish Unionist-nationalist perspective, 'devolution' to SAC was only possible if usurpation of governance from civic Scotland to the UK state in Whitehall could be deemed to have taken place over that 27 year period (1940-67). If no centralisation of such powers of arts governance had taken place, how could the UK 'devolve' powers they did not have? In the most comfortable corners of civic Scotland, the arts included, local self-governance simply did not change during the inception of the welfare state. The Scottish Committee of CEMA/ACGB were mainly a distant, invisible bureaucracy rather than a modernising force for renewal.¹⁵ They came to Scotland's attention only when they threatened to interrupt unbroken home-rule of the arts.¹⁶

Dan: 1965 was a pivotal year in the development of the visual arts in Scotland. It saw the publication of Jennie Lee's UK white paper *A Policy for the Arts*, which emphasised the need to provide wider access to culture and to encourage innovation and creation among younger generations. This further threatened the status quo governing civic Scotland. Wider access to, and participation in, the arts remains an important policy goal at local national and regional levels in Scotland to this day. In its early years, however, SAC

¹⁵ 'To Scottish eyes in 1940, CEMA was almost invisible behind the organizations to which it gave its grants.' McArthur, E. (2013). Scotland, CEMA and the Arts Council, 1919-1967 background, politics and visual art policy. Farnham, Farnham : Ashgate. p38.

¹⁶ For example, McArthur demonstrates how the establishment of CEMA threatened Cursiter's own wartime plans for National Gallery of Scotland touring exhibitions, precipitating a constitutional stooshie: Ibid. p54-58.

seemed to conflate support for access to the visual arts with the selection and presentation of its own agenda. The majority of the Scottish Visual Art section of *1968 ACGB Annual Report* deals with the acquisition of a gallery at 5 Blythwood Square, Glasgow.

Neil: In the late 1960s, this was SAC's long-term plan for the visual arts, namely, to curate its own branches just as ACGB had done. Edinburgh's Charlotte Square Gallery and Glasgow's Blythwood Square Gallery adopted the salubrious 'salon' style of private galleries in Dundas Street (Edinburgh) and St. Vincent Street (Glasgow). While ARIs nurtured participatory democracies, SAC administered with the cold dead hand of the British civil service. SAC galleries were distributed but not devolved; run directly from Charlotte Square. The embryonic Scottish patron state took a very long time to establish a more arm's length relationship with its clients. In failing to unlearn Keynes' personal perception that there was no worthy art produced in 'provincial' Scotland, (McArthur 2013: 4) SAC decided it had to invent, incubate and manage the arts. In fact, the visual arts had been independently supported by Scotland's network of civil societies, municipal and national museums and galleries for hundreds of years. Moreover, since it was heavily involved with the development of Art Nouveau, Scotland was part of the European modern movement. Indeed, since the 1930s, the National Gallery of Scotland's Director Stanley Cursiter was busy establishing what would become the UK's first National Gallery of Modern Art (Edinburgh, 1960-). The British civil service's ignorance of Scotland's visual arts governance and CEMA's patronising attitude was, understandably, met with great antagonism.¹⁷

Deborah: London's stand-off with Scotland's powerful visual art network emerged in 1940 when CEMA was being established. Since it emerged in 1943, the CEMA Scottish Committee had, in fact, experienced considerable autonomy over Scotland's arts policy. When, in 1967 the infrastructure of the ACGB was fully devolved to Edinburgh, SAC's mandate was twofold. Firstly, it aimed to directly support artists in advancing their careers through financial assistance in the form of awards and bursaries. Secondly, the SAC was

¹⁷ 'It was organizational power that positioned visual art in Scotland at the epicentre, behind which lay almost 200 years of growth, which had been especially strong during the nineteenth century when "unionist-nationalism" animated campaigns for Scottish political rights and cultural identity within the Union.' Ibid. p74-75

directed towards widening the availability of contemporary art to the general public. Since SAC directly maintained and curated two galleries of its own, accusations persisted that they were ignoring or stifling support for Scottish artists and their own civic and self-initiated organisations.¹⁸

Neil: The rise of ARI collectivism overlapped with the slow establishment of SAC's Glasgow Arts Centre which began in a room rented from the Glasgow Lady Artists' Club in Blythswood Square in 1967. This was a slice of Cork Street 'civilisation' in deepest darkest Glasgow. It mainly exhibited touring exhibitions, dispatched by the ACGB to educate provincials. As Dan and Deborah note, the establishment of regional arts centres of this nature was a priority for SAC. Capital project support for the means of production - studios and workshops - followed, but the impetus was on raising the aesthetic bar through programming an eclectic array of concerts, educational events and touring exhibitions. In this respect, SAC's Glasgow Arts Centre was already outgrowing Blythswood by the turn of the 1970s. In 1971, at a SAC open meeting to determine the future of the building, the newly formed Glasgow League of Artists proposed to requisition the Lady Artists' Club building and act 'democratically' as its 'advisory committee' (i.e. to establish a New 57 Gallery in Glasgow). Keen to preserve the generalist arts remit of their Glaswegian branch, SAC, instead invited the visionary *International Times* editor and playwright Tom McGrath to take care of the building. Aware that Glaswegian artists, such as the GLA, felt excluded from SAC's Glasgow Arts Centre, McGrath immediately patronised younger Scottish artists, bringing a wide array of intermedia into what would become the Third Eye Centre's programme.

Dan: McGrath's appointment helped to draw attention towards forms of art other than painting. Sculpture and printmaking had long been marginalised under CEMA and the ACGB's Scottish Committee. Until the formation of SAC, 'Printmaking and Sculpture sat on the periphery but photography remained an outsider' (McArthur 2013) both in terms of funding and in terms of their visibility in exhibitions. Photography was regarded as a means to an end rather than a fine art discipline. This marginalisation was purely a case of snobbery. Stills, Edinburgh's photography ARI, is something of an anomaly.

¹⁸ In 1978 the Scottish Arts Council attempted to respond to the need to regionalise the arts with innovations such as the Travelling Gallery; a bus converted into a gallery that would tour the whole of Scotland. This rather missed the point. SAC remained fully in charge of programming.

Initially solely conceived as a gallery, their 1977 Articles of Association make no mention of production or technical provision, focussing exclusively on improving the public understanding of photography as fine art. Stills' darkrooms and production facilities were not established until 1981.

Neil: McGrath's Third Eye Centre (Est.1975) established community photo-studios that deliberately blurred the division between artist and audience. McGrath commissioned forms of social practice informed by his field trips to New York and Chicago. The response was remarkably similar. In spite of this confident self-determination, the textbook Keynesian position of Earl Haig at SAC remained that Scotland had suffered from a modernist bypass and their role was to give it a crash course. Haig wrote to McGrath regarding his inaugural '74 Third Eye programme that 'there should be no difficulty in enabling Glasgow viewers to have the opportunity of absorbing and learning some of the main trends. [...] Joan Eardley and Stanley Spencer, though good artists, are not part of any of the main movements which I have in mind'. (Haig 1973)

Deborah: McGrath was constantly frustrated by SAC interference in his curatorial decisions. He felt that SAC remained intent on steering the Third Eye Centre towards a Cork Street-style salon gallery. (McGrath 2006)

Dan: Whatever the misgivings there were regarding their managerial style, it must be noted that, from the start, SAC recognised and supported ARIs. SAC's 1968 ACGB Report highlights their commitment to funding a number of new organisations run by artists:

'Among new grantees were the lively Richard Demarco Gallery, many of whose exhibitions were guaranteed against loss up to a certain sum by the Council, and the Printmakers' Workshop in Edinburgh which aims to offer all the facilities for professional lithography and etching to artists in Scotland, facilities which otherwise have been confined to the colleges of art.' (Britain 1968)

The New 57 Gallery also received a grant in 1967 and 'its funding increased steadily throughout the '70s to reach £19,000 a year by 1981' (Prince 1992: 40). However, for the vast majority of ARIs, then as now, money was very scarce. Small grants and the energy of the community scraped together

equipment resources which were housed in any available space regardless of its suitability.

Deborah: With the establishment of the SAC, artists in Scotland inferred that a decentralised structure would be able to support greater diversity of practice. For a period this did, in part, assist in creating the economic conditions in which an independent artistic microclimate grew. The New 57 Gallery benefited from the SAC's arm's length funding and a tangible outcome of this support was that the gallery was aided in promoting and exhibiting art that was not shown by major institutions, or seen as viable within Scotland's commercial galleries.

Nonetheless, reflecting on the fifteenth anniversary of the 57 Gallery, its Director, Moffat, bemoaned the lack of financial support from the SAC. He cited that the 57 Gallery's policy of 'consistently and defiantly' 'specialising in the uncompromising young artist' was in part responsible. 'The Gallery has always struggled to survive, as artists of little reputation usually make little money. Until 1968 the Gallery at no time received more than £100 per annum from the Scottish Arts Council – a remarkable fact considering what was being spent elsewhere. On looking over Gallery files one finds hundreds of letters – requesting, pleading, and begging for some kind of financial assistance. And today, when the annual grant from the Scottish Arts Council tops the £1,000 (only just), the Gallery is still by no means financially solvent. The battle continues...' (Moffat 1972: 1)

Neil: Competition for SAC funding was fierce. In the early days, compared to its own venues and those run by Demarco, New 57 Gallery received a pittance. This was largely because Demarco's inaugural Cork Street model offered a form of professional advocacy that aligned with ACGB's Bloomsbury values and placated its fantasy of re-igniting the market for contemporary art that had once existed in Scotland. This risk aversion did not pay off. Demarco quickly broke loose from the Cork Street model, while New 57 Gallery eventually came to pioneer support for what became Scotland's first home-grown international art movement since Art Nouveau, the New Image.

Dan: The levels of funding that Edinburgh Printmakers and the New 57 Gallery received in that first year were minor, less than a third of what was given to the Demarco Gallery. Rather than reflecting SAC's masterplan for

democratising the arts, this speculative funding represented a good return for a minimal investment. To some extent, this strategy seemed to pay off. By 1976, Moffat was writing that: 'Scotland is now a livelier place than at any other time since 1945. There is an abundance of gallery space where there was once a desert; there are many foreign exhibitions instead of a few of earlier years; there is a more diverse range of work being produced by a larger number of artists than ever before.' (Richardson 2011: 57) The ARIs were integral to this.

SAC's piecemeal funding of ARIs was to continue throughout the next two decades; their early decisions to financially support ARI's enabled these organisations to establish themselves and grow and encouraged others to follow.

Neil: It is no coincidence that the emergence of internationalist DIT experimentalism in the 1950s and '60s coincided with rising pressure on Whitehall to devolve greater political office to Edinburgh, a movement that culminated in the election of eleven SNP MPs in October 1974. Conceding to the long-running campaign of ACGB's Scottish Committee's to run its affairs in Edinburgh was an opportune sop to cultural nationalism that ensured political office remained in Whitehall. From 1967 until 1999, this meant that, in Scotland, two new conflicting, and overlapping, forms of artistic governance came to co-exist: the ARI doxa of grassroots self-determination and the UK's colonial model of 'devolution' embodied in SAC: limited delegated authority temporarily granted by a centralised imperium. While, as we have seen, the two new distinct forms of governance frequently conflicted, they were, and remain, interdependent. As a combined force for supporting cultural inclusion and emerging art, they significantly diminished the cultural dominance and political grip of Scotland's older conservative Unionist-nationalist art organisations.

The materialisation of the SAC in Edinburgh in the late 1960s raised the spectre of 'professionalism'; an unwelcome spirit that continues to haunt arts organisations in Scotland:

"Transmission believes that Creative Scotland have chosen to cut our funding because they are no longer prepared to invest in an institution that refuses

professionalisation, and yet by virtue of its unique history operates at a scale comparable to more professionalised institutions.” (Transmission 2018)

As we have all just demonstrated, Transmission’s history is far from 'unique', but does their point regarding professionalism remain valid?

Deborah: Transmission's current position suggests that ARIs continue to be both undervalued and exploited by public patrons. While it is reasonable to say that this is evidence of the re-consignment of power from ARIs to the centre, we should also be mindful not to overestimate the power of major institutions or play down the agency of ARIs. ARIs are increasingly confronted with administrative mandates that are difficult for small institutions to scale-down. Contemporary artist-run culture is paradoxical in that it favours collective organisation, yet, far from feigning dilettantism, engenders high levels of professionalism and, on occasion, a spirit of entrepreneurialism.

For example, when Dyce-Sharpe opened *Our Contemporaries* on February 9th 1957, she intended the 57 Gallery to be 'a professional gallery for artists excluded from Edinburgh's safe or modish RSA or commercial market'. (Prince 1992: 36) Indeed, many contemporary ARIs continue to be both resolutely professional and voluntary. ARIs are thus often associated with the rise of the 'professional amateur', challenging the authority of major institutions by taking on their custodial role. (Leadbeater and Miller 2004) In this, ARIs can be seen as part of a larger project of participatory democracy that values the contributions of enthusiastic amateurs and blurs rigid demarcations between professional fields.

Dan: 'Amateurism' was a badge of honour in the early days of ARI governance. 'Administration' was something to be avoided at all costs. Phillip Reeves, Glasgow School of Art's Head of Printmaking and the first Director of the Glasgow Print Studio recalls: 'We didn't want to become bureaucratic. We were very unofficial for a long time. Everyone was so caught up with the creative side.' (Henry 1993: 1) Margaret Thatcher's UK Government (1979-1990) instigated cultural policies that shifted emphasis towards what neoliberal Conservatives termed the prudent (fiscal) management of the arts. This facilitated the rise of managerialism. In 1987, the Arts Minister Richard Luce said: 'there are still too many in the arts world yet to be weaned from the welfare state mentality—the attitude that the taxpayer owes them a living.

Many have not yet accepted the challenge of developing plural sources of funding'. (Alexander 2007: 73)

In its bid for increased UK Government funding in 1986/87, ACGB promised to deliver better value for money through improved governance. Their rhetoric failed to deliver the expected windfall. In the introduction to the ACGB Annual Report of that year, Secretary General Luke Rittner painted a bleak picture, acknowledging that many 'arts organisations were staving off financial disaster, not because of lack of demand, but because the essential core funding was no longer enabling them to fulfil that demand.' (Britain 1987: 1) SAC, still at 'double arms length' (Galloway and Jones 2010: 29) from the UK Government, was to some extent insulated from this and continued to support the development of ARIs. This was a windfall for ARIs in Scotland: Transmission was established in 1983, followed by the Collective in 1984, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop and Highland Print Studio in 1986, Glasgow Sculpture Studios in 1987 and Streetlevel Photoworks (Glasgow) in 1989.

Neil: I am not convinced that SAC ever shook off the ACGB's centralising Keynesian culture. Over the past 50 years, for every soupçon of self-determination won by artists in Scotland, there has been a concession of autonomy in exchange for 'stability'. SAC, like the ACGB, always wanted the arts to mirror the organisational structure of the British Civil Service. For example, in the late 1970s, SAC increased pressure on New 57 Gallery to appoint a 'paid' director. New 57 Gallery mounted a Pac-Man defence and, by the early '80s, were in talks to merge with SAC-run Fruit Market Gallery in Edinburgh. In 1984, part of the New 57 Gallery committee, led by Jim Birrell, narrowly voted to merge. Dissenting members were supported by Iain Patterson, who, in the same year, split to form Collective on the basis of the original 57 Gallery constitution. Fruitmarket quickly appointed a director and abandoned its artist committee forever, corroborating the Collective's mistrust.

Following McGrath's departure from Glasgow, artists in the city were given fewer opportunities to exhibit as Third Eye attempted to be more 'international' (which meant a return to importing touring exhibitions). Artistic disgruntlement led to consultation with members of New 57 Gallery in Edinburgh, and this, in turn, birthed Glasgow's Transmission Committee for

the Visual Arts in 1983. Throughout the '80s, it was Transmission that negotiated Glasgow's place in the international art world, not Third Eye.¹⁹

Dan: John Major's UK Conservative Government (1990-97) presided over two important changes to cultural organisation in Scotland. In 1994 SAC, became a separate arm's-length-body (ALB) and ACGB was disbanded. SAC now reported directly The Scottish Office.

Neil: This move was a concession to a new wave of Scottish political nationalism in the 1990s. Where, in the '70s, devolutionary appeasement was closely related to the fate of North Sea oil, in the '90s its was deployed more a means of mitigating Scotland's growing democratic deficit. The realignment of SAC was part of a package of overtly Unionist-nationalist symbolic concessions. Infamously, the Stone of Destiny was returned by John Major from Westminster Abbey to Edinburgh Castle in 1997. (Galloway and Jones 2010: 33) But such Romantic Walter Scotticisms had long been dispensed with by a home-grown, SAC-supported, avant-garde. The Tories' laughable ignorance the transformation that the ARIs and SAC had wrought on Scottish culture did a great deal to aid the ultimate success of the cross-party devolution movement.

Dan: The other new development in 1994 was the launch of the National Lottery. SAC's role was to distribute Lottery grants for the arts in Scotland. The influx of Lottery money, which came with UK Government strings attached, and SAC's new arm's-length relationship with the Scottish Office, intensified the pressure on SAC to hold its client organisations accountable for the Lottery grants they received. Time was called on the spirit of amateurism. Over the next 10 years, SAC compelled ARIs to radically change their structures. SAC continued to pressure arts organisations to appoint paid staff that were accountable for the delivery for specific outcomes related to their public subsidy and to replace the Artist Committees with more

¹⁹ Third Eye could not negotiate on behalf of artists as it had no artist members nor any discernible means of representing Scottish artists in international venues. In the '80s, Third Eye became less focused on raising the profiles of Scottish artists than it had been under Nairne. Not only did Transmission have members, it was closely allied with comparable international organisations and so was able to broker opportunities for its members, associates and their affiliates. The peer-support of its membership has proven key to Transmission's import and was a key reason for its inception.

conventional Boards of Directors responsible for the prudent governance of the organisations.

Neil: While the 1994 Lottery injection certainly accelerated this tendency, this had been going on for some time. In 1992, SAC made 'Godfather' offers to Transmission and Collective to appoint paid 'accountable' directors and Boards that would include non-artists. To persuade them, they withdrew SAC funding. Collective, with high rents and little support from Edinburgh Council, backed down in 1992. Transmission held out, and - thanks to the attention attracted by Glasgow's 1990 reign as European City of Culture and the success of the 'Scotia Nostra' artists (Harding 2001) - won its battle with SAC. Transmission's small victory over SAC, and the recognition this bestowed upon them from the international art world, demonstrated the power of the commonwealth. *Ars longa, vita brevis*.

Deborah: Dundee's Seagate Gallery can be considered to be a similar casualty of SAC's tactics: deliberately fail to foster the independent sustainability of ARIs and force them to mount a Pac-Man defence. In Edinburgh, SAC's strategy from the early '70s was to sweeten New 57 Gallery and Edinburgh Printmakers' move into the Fruitmarket complex, with the eventual aim of merging them into one organisation.

Neil: This ultimately failed since the Printmakers absconded and Collective carried on New 57 Gallery's project.

Deborah: In Dundee, SAC manipulated a comparable confluent relationship which saw the demise of the Seagate Gallery and the creation of Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA). SAC facilitated the closure of Seagate as part of state-led project to regenerate Dundee. Opening in 1999, DCA accommodated virtually every formerly independent visual arts organisation in the city, with the exception of Generator Projects. Established in 1997, it is Generator that has continued to produce the Dundee art scene.

Seagate's fate and Generator's precarity illustrate that the art world remains hierarchical, operating under tacit codes of conduct that presuppose so-called professionals do not make mistakes. There are inherent risks of following the agendas attached to public subsidy as this can lead to a focus on raising

funds rather than raising artistic standards and expectations. It is always pertinent to ask who benefits from the professionalisation of the arts.

Dan: In the mid 1990s, SAC commissioned Peter Davies to write the report *A Review of Open Access Facilities*, a comprehensive review of the state of Scotland's ARI infrastructure. Davies found that many of ARI's were housed in buildings that were potentially unsafe and whose operational procedures failed to meet even the most basic of health and safety guidelines. In many cases their facilities were deemed insufficient to meet the basic needs of their users. Years of piecemeal funding had undermined the ability of the production facilities to even begin to meet the new demands placed upon publicly funded arts organisations. Davies advised that, instead of funding four print workshops, three sculpture workshops and two photography centres Scotland should centralise all of its workshop resources into three national centres of excellence. (Catto 2017)

Neil: Again, this is unsurprising. The SAC, like ACGB, has repeatedly sought to centralise the arts in Scotland through creeping, predatory corporate strategies: acquisition, merger, amalgamation. SAC's tactic of choice was the Godfather offer: paying handsomely to change the management teams. The longer such tactics were pursued, the more likely small ARIs were to mount a Pac-Man defence and amalgamate with organisations that threaten to swallow them up. This, of course, achieves the desired aim of the unitary British state that gave birth to SAC: centripetal governance. Davies' report, then, simply reflected what he saw as SAC's core values. It set an extreme example of what might be in store if art organisations that do not accept the more modest proposals that, inevitably, follow. Because the abstraction of 'good management' was the goal, it did not matter that this drive to centralise cultural provision, while perhaps relevant to populous urbanised England, is wholly unsuited to Scotland's geography and would only serve to drive up the cost of involving its citizens in the arts.²⁰

²⁰ 'The museums and galleries physical infrastructure in Scotland is however arguably very different to elsewhere in the United Kingdom. It is dominated by small local independent museums geographically spread throughout the country, what is particularly different to England is the lack of regional infrastructure, with cultural delivery tending to go from national straight to small local delivery. There are around four medium-sized local authority services in Scotland's relatively small cities and one very large metropolitan service in Glasgow, in contrast to England where the extensive regional infra-structure has allowed for the development regional centres or "hubs". Orr, J. (2008). "Instrumental or intrinsic? Cultural policy in Scotland since devolution." *Cultural Trends* 17(4): 309-316. p310

Dan: The workshops were also particularly vulnerable at this time because, thanks to ARIs, the visual arts had changed. David Harding notes a shift in attitude from his students who: 'rejected the other traditional disciplines of the School of Fine Art; Painting, Photography, Printmaking and Sculpture. This was an informed political gesture repudiating what they perceived as the limitations of such art forms. They did not want to be bound by a single medium.' (Harding 2001)

The sculpture workshops were increasingly regarded as populated by one-track specialists divorced from the wider art world. The membership model had stagnated and produced communities that were insular. The work produced by workshop members was regarded to be of dubious quality, not just by SAC, but by their peers in ARI galleries. Gordon Munro, an Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop committee member at that time, recalls attending a conference in the 1990s where a notable young artist stated 'that no self respecting artist would go anywhere near the sculpture workshops.' (Munro 2017)

Deborah: The identity and role of ARI galleries changed in the 1990s as expectations and practices shifted towards more 'professional' art world manoeuvres. Whilst this suggests that the once-radical aspirations of artist-run activities gave way to a more individualistic or entrepreneurial spirit, the situation is more nuanced. Rather than surrendering the critical territory that their predecessors have fought for, members of ARIs were either unaware of their genealogy or were self-consciously distancing themselves from the preceding generation.

Dan: As professional artists abandoned them, increasingly sculpture workshop facilities were being used for commercial purposes: to fabricate fixtures for bars, fire escapes and kitchens. Scotland's workshops, thus, were in very real danger of having their public funding revoked. Production workshop organisations were in a perilous state. Years of chronic underfunding had left them financially and operationally vulnerable. Production workshops are more expensive than ARIs galleries to set up and operate, but they are capable of generating more revenue from leasing their facilities to groups and associate members. If effectively managed, their

higher operating costs should be easily offset. In the end, the majority had to be bailed out by SAC just to keep them afloat.

In 1993 WASPS, in serious financial trouble, became a fully fledged landlord and property developer. For the printmakers, sculpture workshops and photography centres, remaining ARIs became fiscally untenable. Under pressure from SAC, they began to 'professionalise' by replacing their voluntary committees with paid administrators. Arguably, it was Lottery money that saved Scotland's production based organisations. SAC rejected Davies' proposals and instead decided to continue to support numerous production facilities so long as they underwent a process of reform.

Neil: By the time the Scottish Parliament reconvened in 1999, SAC had been devolved from the ACGB for 32 years. The Scottish Government has not further devolved governance; on the contrary, Keynes' ALBs were dramatically reduced by the '99 Lib-Lab Executive, which systematically transformed them into executive nondepartmental public bodies of government. One of the first ALBs nominated to go was SAC, finally axed by Scotland's first SNP Government in 2010.

Creative Scotland (CS) is a different beast – an instrumentalist patron state that rejects Arnoldian conceptions of culture. CS makes no distinction between different art forms, nor between individual artists and institutions. It does so since, buried within the broader New Labour project from which it arose, is Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory (Giddens 1984). Following Giddens, New Labour insisted that everyone must become their own system. In Scotland, artists are now 'learning organisations'. Has the 'professional' management of arts organisations has been valued as an end in itself by all Scottish Governments since '99. This is despite the fact that the most vital and celebrated art since the late '60s has emerged from Scotland's self-devolved ARIs.

Dan: While this professionalisation had serious implications for the ARI galleries, ultimately divesting them of their original political purpose, the UK Government Department of Culture Media and Sport Guidelines on the distribution of National Lottery funds compelled the 'closed shop' production facilities to open up to a wide array of communities in ways that hitherto antithetical to the operation of the workshops. The Lottery was a potent force

for widened participation regeneration and change, funding capital projects that resulted in the development of improved resources that enabled these organisations to better meet the aims set out in their original constitutions. The workshop production organisations established in Scotland during the 1960s, '70s and '80s all still are in operation. Constitutionally they remain largely unchanged and are still committed to the same aims set out by 'Britain's first open print workshop' (Henry 1993: 1) Edinburgh Printmakers in 1967. With the exception of Stills, all operate a membership system. While none are ARIs, artists are well represented on their staff and boards.

Capital developments funded by the Lottery, local authorities and the patron state have transformed the spaces workshops inhabit and the facilities they provide. Mergers have consolidated and transformed workshops. Peacock Printmakers became Peacock Visual arts when they merged with Artspace Galleries in the early 1990's. Dundee Printmakers were assimilated into the development of DCA in 1999. Street Level and Glasgow Project Space moved into Trongate 103 in 2009. The original ARI workshop, Edinburgh Printmakers, are currently developing Castle Mill into 'a vibrant new creative hub opening to the public in 2019.' (Printmakers 2018)

Deborah: Whilst 1960s institutional critique may no longer dominate, ARIs in Scotland from that period have left a lasting legacy by shaping Scottish contemporary art practice. Elements of the first wave of self-organised practice from the 1950s-'70s remain alive. This is evident in contemporary ARIs that opt to maintain or re-invent an organisational structure that is participatory and collective rather than static and hierarchical, that continue to share a belief in self-help and mutual aid to get things done, and that overcome passivity through their own strategies, rather than depending established authorities.

Dan: Devolution of the administration of the arts to Scotland over the past 50 years has resulted in a network of well resourced organisations that support artists in the production of their work. Of course none of these organisations are financially sustainable without continued public funding and even minimal cuts would put them in danger. Despite this, Scotland's workshops are better placed to support artists than at any point in their history.

Neil: This success heralds a different form of precarity. The culture of charismatic impresarios that dominated arts admin in the '70s certainly was superseded by New Labour's cult of 'evidence-based' financial controls in the late '90s (Nisbett 2016). SAC saw the visual arts (and artists) as wild things that needed to be sensibly nurtured if they were to blossom. However, CS, by contrast, is compelled by the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (2007-) to view the visual arts, incontestably, as a branch of the cultural industries, the singular objective of which is the 'culturepreneurial' transferal of wealth. CS has thus economised culture rather than encultured the Scottish economy.

So long as this particular form of instrumentalism remains Scottish Government policy, all patron statelet-sponsored arts organisations are perpetually 'unsustainable'. This precarity greatly strengthens the singular hand of the Scottish Government, rather than Scotland's many art organisations, in determining what economic activities constitute 'culture'. In Scotland, where CS *is* the hand of Government, this is a perilous situation. As today's Transmission committee are very aware, ARIs have paid the high price of surrendering their relative cultural autonomy for financial stability. Were Scotland's patron statelet to withdraw its core support for visual art, only Scotland's ossified c18th and 19th art societies and a truly interdependent network of ARIs might survive.

Today's advocates of Scottish self-determination draw sustenance from Nordic social democracies. There is as much to learn from home-grown asymmetric inter-dependent self-determining forms of the ARI doxa. As The Jimmy Reid Foundation has demonstrated, in policing and local government, Scotland is now less devolved than before 1999. The fact that Scotland's patron state for the arts is more centralised now than Scotland was during the Victorian era of civic-society is cause for alarm. SAC was established in 1967 in recognition that the post-war centralised Union State, dominated by England's geopolitics, was failing to meet and nurture Scotland's distinctive cultures. How a centripetal statelet such as Scotland may now, in turn, redistribute its substantial resources towards user-generated organisations remains a pressing question.

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