

## **National Collecting Scheme Scotland 2007-2010**

### **Evaluation and Recommendations**

#### *Museum partner participation*

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## I. Introduction

This document looks specifically at the participation of the museum partners in Phase 2 of the *National Collecting Scheme Scotland*, covering the period July 2007-March 2010.

Phase 2 was initiated in July 2007 with the aim of continuing the strategic development of the initiative, and of furthering the excellent outcomes produced under Phase 1. The NCSS was continued with the four following distinct changes in place:

- Administrative and overview changes: The Contemporary Art Society, originators of the initiative and developers of its first phase along with the Scottish Arts Council, no longer have a primary role in the development and delivery of the initiative. Direct administration assumed by The Scottish Arts Council.
- Discontinuation of craft/ design acquisitions: insofar as the continuation of the NCSS into a second phase was the initiative of the Visual Arts Department
- Membership changes: The Gallery of Modern Art became the seventh member of the NCSS
- Added research dimension: The History of Art department, University of Glasgow became a research partner, with the appointment of a Research Associate to develop a research dimension.

Throughout this phase, key elements of participation for the museum partners have been:

- Continue acquisitions and related activities
- Continue research travel, with a greater emphasis on individual and independent travel programmes through the provision of travel grants to this end
- Continue to evolve and rearticulate collecting policies in the form of research briefs, with particular relevance to the award of research and travel grants

- Participate in NCSS meetings, gallery and studio visit days, and research-focused activities, as determined by the Research Associate
- Support through participation for the development of the initiative
- Guarantee 15 working days participation and 10% cash contribution towards research travel, as per letter of agreement

This document summarises and evaluates museum participation, and it provides recommendations for the development and enhancement of the NCSS onwards into a Phase 3.

## 2. Phase 2 – summary of museum partner purchasing and research travel activities

Within the period July 2007- March 2010, NCSS awards have been made to each of the seven museum partners in support of the acquisition of **54 objects** by **26 artists**.

### 2.1. GRANTS MADE TO PARTNERS 2007-2010

<i>Aberdeen Art Gallery</i>	Support for acquisitions: £23,525 Support for research travel: £3,000
<i>Edinburgh City Art Centre</i>	Support for acquisitions: £23,500
<i>Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow</i>	Support for acquisitions: £7,868 Support for research travel: £500
<i>Hunterian Art Gallery and Museum</i>	Support for acquisitions: £19,373.50 Support for research travel: £3,000
<i>McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum</i>	Support for acquisitions: £31,300 Support for research travel: £1,500
<i>Paisley Museum and Art Gallery</i>	Support for acquisitions: £7,000 Support for research travel: £1,500
<i>The Pier Arts Centre</i>	Support for acquisitions: £27,850 Support for research travel: £1,500
<i>Total support given to museum partners</i>	Acquisitions: £140,416.50 Travel: £11,000 <b>TOTAL: £151, 416.50</b>

## 2.2 LIST OF ARTWORKS SUPPORTED 2007-2010

### 2.2.1 Aberdeen Art Gallery

Avery, Charles	1973 (Oban, Scotland, UK)	Untitled (Men Leading Unridables), 2007
Avery, Charles	1973 (Oban, Scotland, UK)	The August Snakes Stand Erect (As That is How Their Beards May Be Best Admired), 2007
Coombes, Henry	1977 (London, England, UK)	Gralloch, 2007
Emin, Tracey	1963 (Margate, England, UK); Lives and works in London	For You, 2009
Lauschmann, Torsten	1970 (Bad Soden, Germany); Lives and works in Glasgow	Pandora's Ball, 2008

### 2.2.2 Edinburgh City Art Centre

Avery, Charles	1973 (Oban, Scotland, UK)	Untitled (The Bar of the One Armed Snake), 2009
Billing, Johanna	1973 (Jönköping, Sweden); Lives and works in Stockholm	This is How We Walk on the Moon, 2007
McNab, Janice	1964 (Aberfeldy, Scotland, UK) 1959 (Perthshire, Scotland, UK)	Chairs 3, 2002
Urquhart, Donald	UK)	North Uist Drawing, 2007
Urquhart, Donald	1959 (Perthshire, Scotland, UK)	Perthshire Drawing, 2007
Urquhart, Donald	1959 (Perthshire, Scotland, UK)	Snow-Field Drawing (Siglufjordur), 2007

Urquhart, Donald	1959 (Perthshire, Scotland, UK)	Ice-Field Drawing (Lofton), 2007
Yass, Catherine	1963 (London, England, UK)	High Wire (Red Road), 2008

### 2.2.3 *Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow*

Fagen, Graham	1966 (Glasgow, Scotland, UK)	Downpresser, 2007
Fagen, Graham	1966 (Glasgow, Scotland, UK)	Portrait of Alvera Coke, 2007
Fagen, Graham	1966 (Glasgow, Scotland, UK)	Nancy, 2007
Fagen, Graham	1966 (Glasgow, Scotland, UK)	Bell, 2007
Fagen, Graham	1966 (Glasgow, Scotland, UK)	Roselle, 2007
Fagen, Graham	1966 (Glasgow, Scotland, UK)	Plans and Records, 2007

### 2.2.4 *Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery*

Skaer, Lucy	1975 (Cambridge, England, UK)	Leonora, 2006-2008
Starling, Simon		tbd

### 2.2.5 *McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum*

Abad, Pio	1983 (Manila, The Philippines);	Marotte
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Flannigan, Moyna	Lives and works in Glasgow 1963 (Kirkcaldy, Scotland, UK)	well, Well
Hartley, Alex	1963 (West Byfleet, England, UK)	Solitary Life
Innes, Callum	1962 (Edinburgh, Scotland, UK)	Monologue (Black) 4
Knowles, Tim	1969 (Cheltenham, England, UK)	Larch on easel, Buttermere Shore #1
Knowles, Tim	1969 (Cheltenham, England, UK)	Larch on easel, Buttermere Shore #1
Lauschmann, Torsten	1970 (Bad Soden, Germany)	The Curtain (13 Seconds)
Stezaker, John	1949 (Worcester, England, UK)	Bird Mask II
Stezaker, John	1949 (Worcester, England, UK)	Mask LXXXI

#### 2.12.6 Paisley Museum and Art Gallery

Hymes, Max	1974 (Chester, England, UK)	(Truth in Life)
Saunders, Nina		Duckling (2 parts)

#### 2.2.7 The Pier Arts Centre

Gordon, Douglas	1966 (Glasgow, Scotland, UK)	another unsent letter. then another. and another. and yet another.
Johnston, Alan	1945 (UK)	Orkney
Kapoor, Anish	1954 (Mumbai, India)	12 Etchings
Sinclair, Ross	1966 (Glasgow, Scotland, UK)	I love real life
Barker-Mill, Adam	1940 (Wells, Somerset)	Four in One

Barker-Mill, Adam	UK) 1940 (Wells, Somerset,	ColourViewer
Boyce, Martin	UK) 1967 (Hamilton, Scotland,	Untitled

### **3. Summary from evaluation meetings with museum partners**

Evaluation meetings, conducted by Dr Tina Fiske along with Dr Kirstie Skinner (NCSS Panel member), were held with representatives of each of the museum partners throughout February 2010:

- Monday 1 February: Paisley Museum and Art Gallery – Susan Jeffrey, Andrea Kusel
- Friday 5 February: Pier Arts Centre – Neil Firth, Andrew Parkinson, Lyndsay Jess
- Friday 5 February: Hunterian Art Gallery – Mungo Campbell
- Tuesday 9 February: Aberdeen Art Gallery – Christine Rew, Jennifer Melville
- Thursday 11 February: Gallery of Modern Art – Mark O’Neill, John Ferry, Ben Harman, Sean McGlashan
- Friday 12 February: Edinburgh City Art Centre – Frank Little, Ian O’Riordan
- Tuesday 16 February: McManus Dundee’s Art Gallery and Museum: John Stewart-Young, Anna Robertson

The evaluation process aimed to build an evidence base on the NCSS initiative Phase 2 07/10. It touched on four broad areas:

- *Context of participation*
- *NCSS – value, impact, articulation*
- *Structure of Phase 07/10*
- *Future development*

#### **3.1 CONTEXT OF PARTICIPATION**

Questions were posed pertaining to the contexts within which museum partners have participated in 07/10, focusing on their institutional frameworks, the position of collecting within their organisations and of contemporary collecting in particular, and what use they have made of other initiatives to

develop, strengthen or further articulate/secure their commitment to contemporary collecting.

Without exception, all seven museum partners have undergone changes in organisational circumstance / context between Phases 1 (2003-2006) and 2 (2007-2010), which have necessarily mediated their ongoing participation in NCSS. The major factors effecting change in circumstance / context have been:

- Re-structuring (changes to staffing capacity; departmental re-organisation; senior management changes)
- Redevelopment and other major projects (extensive building projects; palliative building work/refurbishment; major re-hangs/exhibition projects)
- Re-constitution (change in legal constitution and funding arrangement)
- Funding relationships (new funding streams or partnerships)

The context in which all seven museum partners have operated has been stringent financially and it will remain so for 10/11, with the anticipation that the financial situation will tighten further in 11/12. Cuts to Culture and Leisure service/provision have already been put into effect in some NCSS organisations, and others anticipate that they will also be targeted as non-statutory areas to protect front line services.

### 3.1.1 Changes in infrastructures

Changes in legal constitution provided the **Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow's** context of engagement with the NCSS museum membership. Where GoMA did not participate in NCSS Phase 1 03/06, the transition of Glasgow Museums to Culture Sport Glasgow (a charitable company limited by liability) in 2007 resulted in changes to the service's funding provision, which entailed at a very early point a severe reduction of acquisitions budget for GoMA. It was at this point that GoMA joined NCSS as one of the museum partners. GoMA's subsequent success with Art Fund International in November 2007 made a significant difference in leveraging ring-fenced funds

within Culture Sport Glasgow - in part for the development of continued UK acquisitions.

A number of partners have undergone infrastructure rationalisations, some of which have made certain aspects of participation more problematic. For instance, time-scales for securing permissions for travel, and international travel particularly, have been an area of difficulty. Changes in management structure in some cases have left this untested or difficult in others.

- **Aberdeen Art Gallery** will undergo re-structuring across its curatorial provision; existing discipline divisions will be removed and current curatorial structure across 'fine art', 'decorative arts' etc. will disappear.
- Through the process of their Redevelopment, **McManus'** curatorial structure has become more fluid, encouraging a more discursive approach across traditional department divisions: *'In the first phase, we were more of a standalone department ... We've become part of a bigger department. For me personally that has had an impact.'*
- **Paisley** has undergone re-structuring and a series of new Senior Management appointments, so that the structure at the museum throughout Phase 1 is distinctly different from that in place now.
- At **Aberdeen** too, additional managerial levels have been introduced to the staffing structure too.

For the most part, lead curators participating on behalf of their organisations have operated in a context of reduced staffing capacity, which can make their participation in NCSS more pressured. In some cases, this exacerbated by finance, in others by geography too. This is offset for some by increased interaction with / support from peers in other curatorial disciplines.

- **Edinburgh City Art Centre** has been under-resourced curatorially throughout 07/10. When they embarked on NCSS participation in 2003, Jane Warrilow was in post as Curator of Contemporary Art and Touring Exhibitions, and her post has not been filled since. Neither has it disappeared, however, or been re-structured.

- At the outset of 03/06, the **Hunterian** had one Director and three Deputy Directors; at the time of this evaluation, there was one Deputy Director, acting as Director.
- **McManus**: The Head of Arts and Head of Heritage positions amalgamated since the former post was vacated.
- **Paisley Museum and Art Gallery** commenced its participation in phase 03/06 with a much larger curatorial provision, which now stands at one part-time keeper/curator post or 25% of the original curatorial provision at Paisley.
- Encouragingly, through Recognition Scheme project funding, **The Pier Arts Centre** has been able to create a fixed-term post, which has had a significant impact on workloads in a small organisation.

### 3.1.2 Positioning of collections in context

With all seven partners there is a good indication that their collections are increasingly better prioritised and well positioned within their institutions; and that the Recognition Scheme, Redevelopments, refurbishment projects and other projects have enabled an opportunity to focus on collections; each presenting opportunities for institutional reflection as well as project management:

**McManus** re-opened in Dundee in late February 2010 after a lengthy redevelopment process, which offered considerable opportunity to re-position and re-engage the collections, and to understand the inter-relatedness of those collections, which has had clear impact for the curators:

- *‘The redevelopment has taken the lid off normal museum practice and reinvented it as we’ve been through the process – a much more fluid and flexible situation than we have 5-6 years ago.’*
- *‘Everyone has learnt so much in the process and had to be flexible and get used to constant change ... The openness will continue.’*

**The Pier Art Centre** embarked on NCSS Phase 03/06 whilst in the process of redevelopment, and it has participated in NCSS Phase 07/10 ‘post-

development'. This has affected a shift for the Pier in the nature of its participation with NCSS:

- *'03/06 we were in the building phase. We had a lot to do, but perhaps there was more opportunity to think of the issues around collecting then than there is now in the general, day-to-day run of things.'*
- *'NCSS came along at absolutely the right time for us. A 20<sup>th</sup> century collection in a new building – the time worked extraordinarily well. It was a way of saying ' we are an organisation with a collection but also with a programme that works locally as well as nationally to reflect developments in art. NCSS allows to reflect that same ethos in the collection. It also helps maintain our linking between collection and programme.'*

**Edinburgh City Art Centre** has also undergone a refurbishment process and it is likely that **Aberdeen Art Gallery** will undergo a period of closure for refurbishment of its galleries too. At Edinburgh, it has enabled an opportunity to re-organise the spaces within the building, and re-position the collection permanent displays and identify opportunities for additional spaces to showcase it in. Where they plan to relocate the shop to the ground floor, a small space on the first floor will be opened up, which could be used to show contemporary art from the collection. Furthermore, the **City Art Centre** will give over the entire building to the collection again in 2011 (which it has done once before):

- *'Its continuously challenging - how we show the collection how its fits alongside our exhibitions programme ... There is a recognition that the collection needs a higher profile ...'*
- *'Having closed has given us a chance to think about what we show and how we show it.'*

The **Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery's** bicentenary in 2007, likewise, had real impact in terms of the perception of the integrity of the institution's various holdings and their origins in William Hunter's original bequest

- *'Development of the collection is hugely important ... in 2003/06, Hunterian was undergoing centrifugal change – the museum and*

*gallery were till that point separate entities. Intellectually that is unthinkable now. Since the bicentenary, we have realised the extent to which we are one organisation.'*

### 3.1.3 Commitment to collecting in context

Across the seven meetings, the museum partners were asked to articulate the position of collecting as a priority within their institutions, and for the most part there was evidence of support and acknowledgement at Director of Service and Board level respectively (for instance, **GoMA**, **McManus**, **Pier**). Some enthusiasm also resides at Councillor level (**Edinburgh**) with participation of cross-party councillors on the Jean Watson Bequest committee – *'a potent little committee'*.

- **McManus:** *'Collecting is a key focus and will continue to be. Our director is well aware of that ... we are constantly asserting that - in all spheres, not just fine art. We are a living museum and we can't be that unless we try to reflect our material culture.'*
- **Edinburgh:** *'One of the things we do when we are trying to profile the service, when we are trying to get buy-in support, is take reports to the Culture & Leisure committee. It is a great way to engage councillors ... Something like this might be a candidate for that route, but it would need to a document that caught the imagination and demonstrates value and what it means.'*
- **Pier:** *'Our Board has a keen interest in collecting and the issue of how to do that ... the reasoning for it is clearly seen by our Board. They are engaged in this.'*

The means to pursue active, on-going collecting varies across the seven partners; some have Bequests (**Hunterian**, **Aberdeen**, **Edinburgh**) that they may use regularly or more occasionally, some have ring-fenced finite resources (**GoMA**, **McManus**), most have recourse to Friends organisations (**Aberdeen**, **McManus**), whilst others rely more predominantly on external funding to resource acquisitions. (**Paisley**). None of the partners currently enjoys an annual budget or revenue support for making acquisitions, although some have done so in the past.

- **Edinburgh City Art Centre** has the Jean Watson Bequest, which yields about £25K a year for all acquisitions: *‘compared with other local authority museums, it is good ... It has always enabled us to carry on collecting.’*
- **McManus**: *‘At the start of this process, I gathered up bits and pieces of money from different pots, which were yielding small amounts ... which was put in a carry-over budget. That is what we use for seed-funding ... So there is not a part of revenue budget put into acquisitions –all the time we are lobbying for that ... It will start topping up – [it is possible that] the donations money will go into that.’*
- **Hunterian**: *‘The only thing we can spend our endowments on at the moment is acquisitions – but contemporary acquisitions excluded from that. We can’t spend any of our core grant from Scottish Funding council on acquisitions full stop.’*

#### 3.1.4 Developments in support elsewhere for contemporary collections

As the number of initiatives has increased to support the development and presentation of public collections of contemporary art in the UK, participation in these amongst NCSS partners has been good, underlining their commitment to take advantage of all means to build up their contemporary collections. In addition to initiatives, all regularly use Art Fund and National Fund for Acquisitions to support contemporary purchases, which have a good rate of success, and more recently funders such as the Henry Moore Foundation to support new commissions (**McManus**).

##### *Art Fund International*

- **GoMA / The Common Guild** is the only Scotland-based partnership participating in Art Fund International. For GoMA, participation has had a considerable impact in the form of the acquisitions resources for UK acquisitions and research & travel – a ring-fenced finite amount over five years re-introduced in November 2007 as leverage for the award of £1million through AFI, and within the service, AFI has become the driver behind their continued ability to build their contemporary collection. The collecting policy development work it required and the mentoring that it has levered. British acquisitions policy has not

received as much attention – completing on previous rationale – acknowledgement that this needs development.

#### *ARTIST ROOMS*

- As of March 31 2010, four NCSS partners will have participated in the ARTIST ROOMS tour – Pier (08/09), Aberdeen (08/09), CSG (Tramway, 08/09), Hunterian (09/10)

#### *The Contemporary Art Society*

- All seven partners remain museum members of the Contemporary Art Society, and have to date renewed and maintained their annual subscriptions. So far, uptake of the further subscription to the National Network and its programme has been less forthcoming, although the provision of match-funding from CAS for participation in their National Programme could change this.
- Two NCSS partners have to date participated in the CAS four-year acquisitions rotation: Aberdeen (Year 1) and Paisley (Year 2). The other partners are scheduled to participate in Years 3 and 4. Of the National Network, a number of curators have participated in international trips offered by the CAS: Jennifer Melville – India, Ben Harman and Mungo Campbell – Rotterdam and Eindhoven.
- The CAS' Centenary programme: The Scottish Arts Council have awarded the CAS £10K funding for the development of programme around the NCSS partners: Paisley, Pier, Aberdeen, McManus, GoMA

In terms of positioning those initiatives relative to NCSS, across the seven partners there is satisfaction with the range of initiatives currently offered as part of a textured or layered picture, though there was concern that in isolation, any one of those might skew the balance of the picture and the needs of the partners. On the basis of responses, for at least six of the partners, NCSS is the more embedded initiative comparatively speaking, insofar as it enables the partners to 'self-direct' - so that '*what's achieved is what is wanted.*' For **GoMA**, participation in Art Fund International has had a significant effect, and provides the primary driver for their contemporary collecting currently.

- *'ARTIST ROOMS gives a sense of "being about the regions." NCSS is genuinely "of the regions", drawn from the ground up. That is the crucial difference that we need to articulate. The contrast is quite striking.'*
- *'The CAS does bring acquisitions - but at this stage at least it is not clear enough what you are getting. Do they have the capacity to deliver to us up here? If you're not getting the leverage out of the CAS, you have to question the subscription.'*

### **3.2 NCSS – VALUE, IMPACT, ARTICULATION**

Questions were posed pertaining to the partners' engagement specifically with the NCSS, focusing on its value and impact for them, their ability to maintain participation (including key areas of difficulty), and their evaluation of what the current Letter of Agreement articulates and how.

#### **3.2.1 Value of the NCSS**

Across the seven meetings, a set of values began to emerge – **scale, ambition, rigour, structural articulation, partnership, credibility** and **leverage** – as key to what the museum partners perceive NCSS as offering and securing:

- *'From the start, NCSS allowed us to collect on a different scale, a different level. Coley, Fagen, a type of work we had never acquired before.'*
- *'NCSS has raised the bar constantly ... on every level it has allowed us to build and develop our ambition – which has been raised.'*
- *'I don't think anything else has come close to offering the level. You have to go through process of developing policy, then back that up with further clarification for research and travel. Nothing else does that.'*
- *'Its structural; its not just the curator signing up to it, its me the manager signing up to it, its our Directors signing up to it. Everything is laid out, its clear what is going to happen.'*

- *'It's a way of articulating what curatorial functions are and backing it up with money.'*
- *'Partnership, speaking to colleagues is absolutely critical. The support of the SAC, their active involvement; the coalition that has developed across the sectors around these issues.'*

### 3.2.2 Impact of NCSS for museum partners and commitment to collect contemporary

Across the seven meetings, when asked about the institutional impact that NCSS has had, this was well evidenced (see also 3.1.2), in terms of placing greater emphasis upon contemporary collecting; offering new areas of support and relevance for the contemporary collections; being a driver behind institutional step-change; providing the ability to deliver on and feed into broader authority ambitions:

- *'Since NCSS, there has been a shift towards the contemporary .... There was always been a will to collect contemporary art, but NCSS made that real... enabled it to fit in with our historic collection.'*
- *'I get amazing support from staff through the museum; it has rooted the contemporary collecting ...so many things have emerged from this tiny nugget you would call the NCSS ... they wouldn't be there otherwise.'*
- *'NCSS has offered the cash to do something that is utterly additional but which has become core ... participating in a scheme that did not have that as a potential outcome would be neutered. For justification in the toughest of time ... it is the added value of what comes back into the collection and what we can then do with that.'*
- *'NCSS has been a driving force behind our organisational step-change.'*
- *'Yes, we are local authority, we are a small local authority – but we are very strong and there is no reason why we shouldn't reflect the international outlook of Dundee Contemporary Arts with what we do in this building and we know that is a result of the NCSS.'*

### 3.2.3 Impact in the event of discontinuation

Across the seven meetings, when asked about the impact that discontinuation of the initiative or loss of one area currently being funded (acquisitions, research travel) would have, the responses fell into two camps: those for whom acquisitions would continue in some fashion but at a severely reduced scale, and those for whom continued acquisitions would become extremely problematic. Without some support through the NCSS for independent research travel and travel to participate, these would remain more readily viable for a smaller proportion of the members (**Hunterian, GoMA**), becoming difficult for others and currently impossible for some. The values that would be lost were articulated as: **curatorial focus, strategic thinking, ambition, collaborative working, momentum, personal credibility, institutional credibility, knowledge, leverage:**

- *'Loss of focus, reigning in of ambition, loss of collaborative working, the sense of momentum.'*
- *'It would be disastrous; it is credibility to contemporary art in this place; I have to fight for my own credibility and NCSS helps hugely in that.'*
- *'Scale would be very severely diminished. Ultimately so would knowledge ... the knowledge 'wave' and keeping on with that.'*
- *'We would lose that process of gently leveraging upwards through those small but vital bits of cash.'*
- *'One thing you have to ask is 'if this stops, what would the collection look like? We have to try to bear that in mind, so that it builds out and connects. If it stops, will it look like it makes sense with everything else? A sensible piece of curation 50 years down the line?'*

#### 3.2.4 Maintaining participation

- 10% cash contribution towards research travel and travel to participate
- Travel – 15 days – in principle agreement for UK and international
- Decision / selection sits with the curator, in relation to wider articulated collecting policies

Across the seven meetings, when asked about the essential elements (see *above*) currently built into the Letter of Agreement used in phase 07/10, the strong indication from the partners was that the buy-in is still there and its

value is recognised; that the articulation of the buy-in elements in the form of the letter is important; but that delivering on them was **problematic, specifically in relation to the resourcing of and permissions for research and travel**. Key issues in this respect were less the 15 day requirement and primarily **budget** and **capacity related**, and some issues around the principle of international travel.

- *'[The agreement] has to be read and digested by those who sign it; it reasserts collecting as a function-action.'*
- *'The value of [the travel requirement] is recognised within the institution and there is support for it.'*
- *'For political purposes it is very useful to include [the 15 day travel requirement]. It is also a way of giving in-kind and supporting the project.'*
- *'People under-estimate the difficulty with travel ... It is an area that is less invasive to cut that a space or a gallery/building. Those are the kinds of choices being made at the moment.'*
- *'Where NCSS has been helpful has been with offering [external funding]. It has helped ring-fence a little money for travel.'*
- *'We are now part of a bigger department. So there are more layers to go through and there is more persuasion to do.'*
- *'If international travel – this has not been tested. And we have a new CEO, so that is untested too. We have yet to find out. Ultimately that is where the buck stops.'*
- *'Trips must be built into the agreement and provided by someone else. A problematic side for us, because it is not always seen as reasonable ... it is a safer way - a better return – if travel is embedded.'*
- *'International travel as an absolute requirement – some people may not be able to participate. It was the point here that was picked up on.'*
- *'The focus of the initiative in its first phase, as support focused on individual curator, is now much harder than it was 6 years ago.'*
- *'Its explicit in saying the choice lies with the curator ... that is very helpful. There is nothing else like that.'*

### 3.2.5 Perceived credibility of the partnership and the initiative

Across the seven meetings, when asked about the perceived credibility of the partnership and the initiative, various factors were proposed as to where the credibility of NCSS, perceived institutionally and politically, resides: in the **validation** and **leverage** it provides; in the **partnership**; and vitally, in the **works of art** / acquisitions themselves and their ability to have **impact** in their context.

- *'I keep talking about validation because it is external, because all of those works have been funded by more than one funder ... If every amount of council money could lever the same amount of grant aid, many authorities would do well. The scheme brings us the leverage, which takes it beyond the personal.'*
- *'Its partnership, its national, its international; its all the things [the council] want to be involved in.'*
- *'The credibility is enormous when you are able to say 'here is a group of works by Lucy Skaer.' It's the work; that is where people get it.'*
- *'The credibility is the work isn't it? Our board understand that.'*
- *'It was important that we bought a 'Dundee' work back to Dundee. Internationally respected artists are working here and creating great work. That is our landscape reflected back to us.'*

### 3.2.6 Effective articulation of the partnership and the initiative

Across the seven meetings, when asked about the Letter of Agreement and articulation of the NCSS as a partnership or collaboration of seven museums and galleries each holding collections of national significance, all the partners felt that additional or further articulation about peer participants would be beneficial and effectual, particularly in relation to **Recognition status**, as a means to strengthen the profile of NCSS within services and more widely politically. The importance of the website in this, as a common portal for the acquisitions to be accessed digitally, and as a means to represent the initiative as enabling and promoting its partners to engage in 'linked' collecting to an acknowledged and shared national ambition.

- *'To reinforce that in order to maintain credibility you have to be part of this scheme. The politicians recognise how far we have come and how important it is to maintain credibility within these circles.'*
- *'If we were all sitting in the four corners of Scotland, putting in applications to an assisted purchase scheme, well, so what? A list issued every year... the waters would close over it all as they do. All of the institutions hold Recognised Collections – that status did not exist when we started the initiative. It says something that all the partners are involved.'*

### **3.3 STRUCTURE OF PHASE 2**

Questions were posed to the museum partners that pertained to the structure and administration of NCSS Phase 07/10, with specific reference made to the distinct characters of Phases 03/06 and 07/10.

The differences between phases 03/06 and 07/10 could be summarised as follows:

- 03/06 - the structure for acquisitions (administered by The Contemporary Art Society, who developed a mechanism for making funds available; no annuality imposed and no formal application form) gave greater sense of building 'collections within collections'; group travel; rigorous collecting policy development
- 07/10 - acquisitions procedure (administered by Scottish Arts Council on annual basis, with application form) gives a greater sense of acquiring works 'one-by-one'; more emphasis on independent working vis-à-vis collecting policy development and research through travel

*'Phase 1 was a golden age ... With Phase 2, it is very directly taxpayers money – so there are the checks and balances that go with that territory.'*

*'What would be very desirable is a schedule for the year – a list of key dates, perhaps built into the Letter of Agreement. This would help forward-planning and budgeting.'*

### 3.3.1 Annuality of grants

Across the meetings, when asked about the **annuality** of the acquisitions procedure for 07/10, all the partners acknowledged its value in terms of **planning** and **momentum**, although a number of them identified the generic nature of application form as unhelpful and indicated that further clarification around deadlines would be beneficial. In one instance, it was indicated that annuality conflicted with the nature and pace of acquisitions development.

- *'Annuality is good for us, but deadlines could be more clearly stated ahead of time – to help forward planning.'*
- *'You get an expectation of what you need to do. It's about planning. Being forced to plan better – its not inflexible, you can pursue other lines of inquiry.'*
- *'Has forced us to buy works each year, where we would have struggled otherwise.'*
- *'[Annuality] is problematic with reference to the gallery / market structure, more particularly if you are buying from outside Scotland.'*
- *'In reality, it has all been focused around four months over the autumn/winter period.'*

### 3.3.2 Acquisitions practice

Across the seven meetings, it was clear that the process of building acquisitions had proved to be **demanding** but also **developmental** for many of the curators.

- *'With NCSS, you still have to fight hard to get the money. Multiple grant applications are required for each acquisition, which is time-consuming. But that I have found to be a good thing. We have to have clarity around what we are doing.'*
- *'Colishaw was the only off-the-peg piece of 'shopping'; all the rest of the acquisitions have had generative impact ... the right work will be the one that does all these things ... It can't just be 'its just that one' ... Its about making sure all these things strike their mark.'*

- *'I'd find it difficult to think of collecting in other ways ... the thought of 'going back' to things that sink into storage ... I couldn't do it.'*
- *'We have been committed to each purchase absolutely. Sometimes we have had to hold out for them, for several years.'*
- *'Is NCSS getting too established; too institutionalised? Knowing when to buy who? That can be tricky ... an idea might be to allocate money to specific areas – such as works under £1,500 for instance. Ear-marking for different areas or different focuses?'*

### 3.3.3 Travel

Across the meetings, it was clear that sustaining travel throughout Phase 07/10 – in terms of budgets, justification and capacity – has been particularly challenging for some. Many of the partners admitted that they had not participated in gallery days or research events as much as they might have liked. It was acknowledged that the provision of funding for independent research and travel has been an important principle to establish, although it is clear that the implementation of the application process (submission of research briefs) has not been smooth and prone to misunderstanding in terms of expectation and timescales. Some group travel has been undertaken by the NCSS curators via SAC and CAS trips. What have clearly been missed are the group trips undertaken in Phase 03/06, organised by Sarah Yearsley and Gill Hedley.

- *'Research and travel grants lever the justification ... even to travel to London.'*
- *'Group travel was hugely beneficial, the trips were invaluable and their organisation was invaluable – because there is a capacity issue around that.'*
- *'Intangible outcomes are just as important. I learnt an incredible amount during those visits in the first phase – to Switzerland, to Italy.'*
- *'It is dependent on research focuses: An opportunity to travel with peers is a good thing. Currently there is the opportunity to do both,*

*though not group travel as an NCSS group. ...Someone who wants to step out alone should be encouraged.'*

### 3.3.4 Intra-NCSS sharing and inter-institutional relationships

Consistent across the seven meetings was a perception that the intrainstitutional aspect of NCSS, particularly developmental work around collecting policies, had not been as strong as in Phase 03/06. There was a clear interest in resuming the closer intellectual discussion between the partners themselves around their policies, possibly as a way to inaugurate another phase.

The role of the NCSS panel and their feedback was also raised at several of the meetings – with reference to how the panel role might be developed in the future. Intra-loaning of NCSS acquisitions – for instance, Tatham and O'Sullivan suite of works – has been limited in Phase 07/10, mostly due to capacity and to resourcing issues. Some loaning has occurred beyond the NCSS grouping (**Pier** to DCA; **Hunterian** to Newcastle; Tate, London) In terms of relationships or collaborations with other public galleries, which have facilitated acquisitions, these have been occasional and largely reactive; no shared project development resulting in acquisitions. Some reservations articulated about aspects of 'legacy' accessioning, but acknowledgement that such relationships remain an area for development.

- *'It would be nice to have one meeting a year that is just NCSS curators... a meeting with a purpose – sharing information and acquisitions details.'*
- *'An area to return to in another phase – a more structured way for all of us to re-articulate / examine our collecting policies.'*
- *'One bit of feedback that we haven't had is from the panels looking at the applications. That is a perspective that would be welcome ...not just on individual acquisitions, but on the picture, the preamble, the collective picture.'*
- *'Contemporary exhibiting spaces may not have a lot of money, but they are doing a lot more than we are, so it seems logical that we link with*

*that to a greater extent ... [for instance,] if they have bought an artist into Scotland for some of that work to remain.'*

- *'Dundee Contemporary Arts is part of the history of the city. It is 10 years old now and to have some of that history captured for the city – if we feel it appropriate to the collections here – is a good idea.'*

### 3.3.5 Internal, inter-departmental dissemination

Surveying the seven partners, it was the case that with the majority, participation in NCSS at the curatorial level has been shared to a greater extent than in Phase 03/06, although a lead curator is still clearly identified.

Participation 07/10

Aberdeen - Jennifer Melville, Ann Steed, Griffin Co, Olga Ferguson

McManus - Anna Robertson, Susan Keracher

Edinburgh – Ian O’Riordan, David Patterson, Maeve Toal

GoMA - Sean McGlashan, Ben Harman, Victoria Hollows

Pier - Andrew Parkinson, Lyndsey Jess

Paisley - Andrea Kusel, Susan Jeffrey

Hunterian - Mungo Campbell.

Also evidence of impact for wider departments– for exhibitions, conservation and technical staff, though this could be further developed and improved in another possible phase, particularly in respect of education officers.

- *'We are fortunate: the same team does exhibitions and collections. This helps with linking elsewhere. Although we could do more.'*
- *'Our technician has gone on training days off the back of NCSS acquisitions – how to hang them, how to install them. I would hope that many people benefitted and that the organisation has benefitted.'*

## 3.4 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

### 3.4.1 Priorities for a further phase

The seven partners were asked to communicate the priorities for a possible further phase; across all, **continued acquisitions, research travel, travel to**

**participate** and the **network** each remain the stand-out priorities seen as core to NCSS.

A general consensus that NCSS's scale of ambition must be high and related to a shared commitment to work to a national ambition - at the same time as be rooted in tangible outcomes coming from NCSS core priorities.

The website and database – insofar as it will provide a single point of access to the acquisitions made by the partnership - could have impact.

Further priorities such as access, engagement, capacity and profile were all rated as significant and means to focus on them highly desirable, but clearly understood to overlap with the remits of MGS or Engage for instance.

- *'The scale of ambition must be high ... local people must have access to the best of contemporary work, which has relevance to their local collections and contexts.'*
- *'Accessibility – not just display but enabling people to understand and engage is very important. Not something I have seen much evidence of as part of this scheme, that is not to say that it hasn't happened. But perhaps it is an extra layer that you need to look at.'*
- *'A single, stand-alone exhibition could service the issue of accessibility and also make a hugely important political point. A special project – money sought outside of acquisitions/travel cash. It would involve the cost of bringing the works together and a small publication. The demands would be low, but the political impact huge.'*
- *'Within the museum the ability to work across departments has increased, with the possibility that they may result in commissions, possibly with artists who are interested in other areas of the collection.'*

### 3.4.2 Possible future NCSS developments

Forthcoming were possibilities around the development of the core features of the NCSS, as well as the focus that 'special projects' might take with additional partners:

- An exhibition of acquisitions with a small publication, installed at a small number of venues
- A programme of grouped acquisitions, expedited through inter-partner loans
- An enhanced database and website– with rolling guest curation, network activities, commissioning of texts, featured acquisitions etc
- Subdivisions with the pot of acquisitions money – to promote buying work early for instance, and at lower cost
- The use of consultants or specialists around collecting policy development in this respect – to engage in a short programme with the museum partners
- Competitive 'special project' funding aimed at development of a closer partnership between those who programme and those who collect

### 3.4.3. Development opportunities through other organisations

Clear too were opportunities that might be met by other organisations, with investment from Creative Scotland

- Contemporary Art Society's 6-month Curatorial Fellowships: both Edinburgh and Aberdeen may, through proposed re-hang or refurbishment, be good candidates for this, should CAS continue developing such posts beyond their Centenary year. The fellowships last for six months and have been funded by ACE (£9K each) with in-kind support from the museums to support the posts.
- Contemporary Art Society: bringing artists to museum partners

## 4. Identifying focuses for development

Drawing from key evaluation points, this section sets out the focuses for an interim or development period in preparation for a Phase 3 of the NCSS.

### 4.1 CONTEXT OF PARTICIPATION

#### 4.1.1 Evaluation summary points

- For the partners in Phase 2, pressure has been greater in terms of capacity and resources.
- Infrastructures for all the partners have all evolved throughout this phase.
- In terms of the position and profile of collections and the need to develop and invest in collections, in Scotland the Recognition Scheme has had impact along with NCSS, Art Fund International, along with Redevelopment and refurbishment projects.
- The range of initiatives currently offered provide a textured or layered picture, though there was concern that, in isolation, any one of those might skew the balance of the picture and the needs of the partners.

#### 4.1.2 Focuses towards a future phase

##### 1. *Consolidating basis for a broader framework to support NCSS*

*development:* Capacity and the resourcing of capacity have emerged as key issues, through the *Contemporary Collections and Collecting in Scotland* Series as well as the evaluation process. The Scottish Arts Council has committed to the resourcing of the part-time Research Associate post over a three -year period, with partnership from the University of Glasgow, and this has alleviated some areas of capacity around the continuation of the initiative itself. However, the developmental potential of the initiative – intra-NCSS loaning / sharing of works and cross-curation for example - has been very much hampered by such factors as lack of capacity and resource within the museums themselves

- **Scope a Memorandum of Understanding or Collaborative Agreement**, primarily with Museums Galleries Scotland to frame strategic development within a Phase 3.

2. *Maintaining dialogue across initiatives*: Key issues have been identified to date through the platform of the *Contemporary Collections and Collecting in Scotland* Series, developed around NCSS in Phase 2. Sharing of information, opportunities and future development plans will be an important principle to continue within a Phase 3, particularly in terms of shared advocacy and research possibilities to underpin that.

- **Produce a blueprint for the wider network forum** generated within Phase 2 (see also Evaluation and Recommendations – Research dimension and research-focused activities)

3. *Identifying the successes and gains to be built upon*: A Phase 3 of NCSS should seek to capitalise on the developments, gains and the transformations made by individual institutions throughout the Phase 07/10. Each partner should identify possible projects or areas of interest opened up by recent development or refurbishment, or offered by future plans, and for which funding partners could be sought: for instance, the potential for working across departments and engaging artists through commissioning processes; engaging research fellows or curators to work in a consultative manner on refurbishment projects

- Develop with each NCSS curator a brief **context and vision plan** – looking at possible directions opened up by recent or future developments, which could enhance or take forward their commitment to develop collections of contemporary art

## 4.2 NCSS: VALUE, IMPACT, ARTICULATION

### 4.2.1 Evaluation summary points

- NCSS offers its partners a distinct set of values – scale, ambition, rigour, structural articulation, partnership, credibility, leverage

- It has been acknowledged 1) as a factor behind institutional step-change; 2) as a means to deliver on wider service and authority priorities
- Its loss would be detrimental, and in some cases would result in significantly lowered abilities to develop and make acquisitions or undertake research through travel
- Resourcing of and permissions for travel are key challenge to maintaining participation
- The value of the Letter of Agreement lies in factors such as reasserting collecting and in ring-fencing support and in managing expectations.
- It could do more to articulate the nature of the collaboration and shared ambition that is a feature of NCSS, particularly to align with and inter-relate with the Recognition status awarded to collections held by all seven museum partners.
- Credibility of NCSS lies in validation and leverage, partnership and in the works of art themselves,

#### 4.2.2 Focuses towards a future phase

1. *Articulating the value and credibility of NCSS:* A Phase 3 needs to consolidate a vehicle for the wider profile and promotion of the NCSS in terms of the outputs it produces, its value to its partners and its shared ambition as the focus of its credibility.

- **Scope further development for the NCSS website and database of acquisitions** (beyond Stage One, to be completed June 2010)

2. *Consolidating NCSS participation:* A Phase 3 also needs to consolidate the knowledge of and support for the initiative across the various levels of management in its museum partners. The Letter of Agreement is a key means to communicate about and advance commitment to the initiative, as well as secure the key features of participation, such as principle of research through travel.

- **Strengthen the Letter of Agreement** and underpin it with a statement of vision and shared ambition that can cultivate aspects such as peer recognition across the existing partners

3. *Growing NCSS participation*: A Phase 3 needs to consider expansion of participation, and a structure for how this might evolve for new potential partners, i.e. as a staged process involving participation in the NCSS network and development of a collecting policy initially, prior to any support for acquisitions through the application process.

- **Identify potential further museum partners** and **develop a structure** for bringing any potential new partners into the NCSS initiative

### 4.3 STRUCTURE OF PHASE 07/10

#### 4.3.1 Evaluation summary points

- Phases 1 and 2 have been quite distinct: Phase 1 a '*golden age*' whereas with Phase 2, '*the university environment has brought a new perspective.*'
- The annuality of the acquisitions process has been valuable in terms of planning and momentum, though for some partners it conflicts with nature and pace of acquisitions development
- The acquisitions process proved to be demanding and developmental, but issues also that it is becoming '*too institutionalised, too safe.*'
- The principle of the new research and travel grants was acknowledged, as were the inconsistent outcomes of the application rounds 08/09 and 09/10. Prone to misunderstanding in terms of timescales and expectations.
- Intra-NCSS working: A clear interest in resuming a closer intellectual group discussion around the development of collecting policies, and looking at internal, cross-departmental dissemination
- Inter-institutional relationships: These have occurred occasionally, but not yet in the form of co-authored projects
- Interest in an enhanced role for the Advisory panel and its feedback

#### 4.3.2 Focuses towards a future phase

1. *Prioritising intra-NCSS development*: A Phase 3 needs to refocus on intra-NCSS development. This could be by means of a more developed role for the university context around acquisitions research and collecting policy development for instance, as well as inviting specialists and consultants to work with the group on specific areas, i.e. providing tours or development around aspects of purchasing, access to 'knowledge wave,' feedback on acquisitions etc

- **Develop a more structured research programme** for the NCSS, providing support for research and travel to the NCSS curators not through grants to each institution on the basis of a research brief, but through a programme, of which pre-organised travel is a feature. Alongside this **consider and possibly augment the role and composition of the Advisory Panel.**

2. *Inter-institutional relationships*: How could research relationships with individuals, or other institutions or organisations support the strategic development of the museum partners' participation in a Phase 3 of the NCSS? Are there NCSS museum partners for whom either project-based or longer-term partnership working with another organisation will help realise a particular priority or focus for acquisition or area of practice development?

- **Invite consideration around an option of this kind** and look at how a case-by-case protocol could be developed and how such research relationships would need to be resourced

## 4.4 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

### 4.4.1 Evaluation summary points

- The stand-out priorities remain those core to NCSS: continued support for **acquisitions, research travel** and **network participation through travel**
- That ambitions must be high in the sense of collaborative working to a shared national ambition

- The website and searchable database will be important in delivering the profile and political message about NCSS and its collaborative nature.
- Further priorities are: access and engagement, capacity and profile.
- Need to develop further partnerships round NCSS now very prescient, particularly in relation to Museums Galleries Scotland
- Various possibilities for NCSS were proposed, as were opportunities created by other organisations, which might meet the needs of some of the partners in the near future.

#### 4.4.2 Focuses towards a future phase

1. *Website and database*: As per **4.2.2 (point 1)**, scoping around the further development of the NCSS website and database of acquisitions – as a showcase for future activities under a Phase 3, as a vehicle for the network forum and for wider and enhanced engagement with the acquisitions made through the initiative. This should include scoping the potential of other possible providers in this arena too, and will be particularly pertinent in relationship to forthcoming work of the Contemporary Art Society’s Research fellow Robert Dingle into on-line provision for curatorial development for its museum membership.

- **Scope further development for the NCSS website and database of acquisitions** (beyond Stage One, to be completed June 2010)

2. *A context for ‘special projects’*: Opportunities and funding relationships that can further develop the NCSS in the areas of access and engagement and collaborative working need to be identified and explored ahead of a possible Phase 3. Such projects could be identified within ‘context and vision plans’, and may evolve individually for any one partner, or amongst smaller clusters of two or three within the seven members, or across all seven with identified lead partners.

- Explore and progress **different options for developing and supporting ‘special projects’**, for which funding could come on stream, or be made competitively available within a Phase 3

3. *Opportunities through other organisations*: As existing organisations such as The Contemporary Art Society develop their programmes and range of initiatives, and with other possible mechanisms in development (see Dr K Skinner, Establishing TRUST: a patrons' group dedicated to the expansion of Scotland's contemporary art collections), possibilities may be identified by the proposed 'context and vision plans' that resonate with programmes offered elsewhere. For instance, the proposed complete Collections re-hang at City Art Centre in 2011 could provide an opportunity for a six-month CAS fellowship position – which may also seek to highlight the currently vacant post of curator of contemporary art and touring exhibitions.

- **Scope programmes and development opportunities provided elsewhere** on behalf of the partners in relation to areas of strategic development

#### 4.5 SUMMARY

- Scope a **Memorandum of Understanding or Collaborative Agreement**, primarily with Museums Galleries Scotland to frame strategic development within a Phase 3.
- Continue the **wider network forum** generated within Phase 2 (see also Evaluation and Recommendations – Research dimension and research-focused activities)
- In the interim before a Phase 3, each NCSS curator should develop a brief **context and vision plan** – looking at possible directions opened up by recent or future developments, which could enhance or take forward their commitment to develop collections of contemporary art
- Scope further development for the **NCSS website and database of acquisitions** (beyond Stage One, to be completed June 2010)

- **Strengthen the Letter of Agreement** and underpin it with a statement of vision and shared ambition that can cultivate aspects such as peer recognition across the existing partners
- Identify potential **further museum partners** and develop **a structure** for bringing any potential new partners into the NCSS initiative
- **Develop a more structured research programme** for the NCSS, providing support for research and travel to the NCSS curators not through grants to each institution on the basis of a research brief, but through a programme, of which pre-organised travel is a feature.
- Consider and possibly augment the role and composition of the **Advisory Panel** or **specialist advisors**
- Invite consideration around **inter-institutional relationships** and look at how a case-by-case protocol could be developed and how such relationships would need to be resourced
- Explore and progress different options for developing and supporting **'special projects'**
- **Scope programmes and development opportunities provided elsewhere** on behalf of the partners

## 5. Future framework and priorities

This section sets out thoughts for a continued and enhanced NCSS Phase 3 within the remit of Creative Scotland, which could build on the critical practice established in the two previous phases of the initiative. It suggests a framework that might bring them about, and areas of priority.

### 5.1 PRIORITISING A PHASE 3

#### 5.1.1 Supporting contemporary collections-building and dissemination at local level

**An NCSS Phase 3 would provide the best means by which an infrastructure of public collections across Scotland can be enabled to build ambitious collections of contemporary art that can sit at the heart of what they offer.**

*‘ARTIST ROOMS gives a sense of “being about the regions.” NCSS is genuinely “of the regions”, drawn from the ground up. That is the crucial difference that we need to articulate. The contrast is quite striking.’*

Within the spectrum of initiatives that currently offer support or opportunities to Scottish museums and galleries to acquire and present the work of both British and international contemporary artists, the National Collecting Scheme Scotland remains unique

- in its support for the development of ambitious contemporary collections and collecting practice at local level
- in providing a framework for this to develop through ‘linked’ practice undertaken by a number of geographically dispersed peers to a shared level of ambition

As indicated in **3.1.5**, on the basis of responses within the evaluation process, for at least six of the partners, NCSS secures the crucial ability to ‘self-direct’

in respect of collecting - so that *'what's achieved is what is wanted'* – as well as to work in cognisance of peers to a shared ambition.

Insofar as it uniquely continues to enshrine a principle of local collections-building, within a linked structure that allows it to articulate at a 'national' level, NCSS must continue. **What it currently offers is not met by another initiative.** For instance, it is crucial that to make clear that the infrastructure of access offered by ARTIST ROOMS does not supersede the work of the NCSS.

#### 5.1.2 Building public contemporary collecting into the wider visual arts infrastructure

**An NCSS Phase 3 would provide the best vehicle for more fully building public collecting into the wider visual arts infrastructure in Scotland**

*'[Contemporary collections and collecting] has brought together people in a way that no other topic of discussion does because it unites us all'*

*'... collecting, producing, programming, access, research – they ... are completely interdependent.'*

The *Contemporary Collections and Collecting in Scotland Series* demonstrated a wide critical interest across the Scottish visual arts in the development of public contemporary collecting. Across the Series, 94 individuals participated in one or more of the events, amongst them representing 50 organizations and coming from Orkney, Aberdeen, Perth, Dundee, Stirling, London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley and Selkirk.

As evidenced by the Series, the sustainability of contemporary public collecting is indeed related to wider issues of sustainable practice as they inform the continued viability of the commercial galleries, commissioning practices, funding support for production and exhibition etc.

Building on the relationships established in the two previous phases, a Phase 3 would provide the opportunity, amongst others, to further foster reciprocal benefits between a sustainable culture of contemporary collecting for Scotland's museums and a sustainable network of private galleries supporting and promoting opportunities for artists who live and work in Scotland.

## **5.2.FRAMING A PHASE 3**

### 5.2.1. Memorandum of Understanding or Collaborative Framework

The matter of a **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING** between the major stakeholders was raised by Joanne Orr in the third *Contemporary Collections and Collecting in Scotland* Series meeting in Dundee on 20 January, and was supported by the wider forum gathered at that meeting.

A collaborative agreement could

- define common territory between the two agencies SAC/Creative Scotland and MGS in terms of the development of and access to public contemporary collections in Scotland, whilst recognising their different purposes as organisations
- establish a framework within which the organisations can work jointly and strategically to deliver development and support in this area and progress shared research priorities

**The enhancing of NCSS as a developmental initiative, as a partnership (currently) of seven museums and galleries and as a curatorial network should form a primary focus within a possible collaborative framework,** not least as all seven museum partners of the NCSS hold Recognised Collections, to which acquisitions made through the initiative are added.

### 5.2.2 An enhanced research dimension

With the aim of consolidating a field of sustained critical debate, curatorial practice and policy development, a further research phase as attendant to an NCSS Phase 3 could seek to:

- generate layers of research activity through key HE partners under the umbrella of a shared research agenda, but also linking with associate activity generated across the network
- be underpinned by a sector-led, network forum
- be linked to that forum and other international networks by means of a research programme of international dimension as well as associated programmes

See Evaluation and Recommendations: Research Dimension and Research-focused Activity.

### 5.2.3 A structured annual programme

- Restructure support for research and travel to the NCSS curators, providing support not through grants to each institution on the basis of a research brief, but through a programme, of which pre-organised travel is a feature
- Develop the role and composition of the Panel or the role of specialist individuals on acquisitions and relationship to the curator group.

A structured research programme of this kind

- could underpin participation in NCSS, be a feature of participation agreement within the 15 days provision, and include components of the following: travel (outside of Scotland), pre-scheduled gallery days and studio visits, NCSS meetings and forum meetings
- could facilitate the curators in expediting travel for instance, in terms of capacity and permissions/forward-planning issues, which can be difficult particularly at local authority level and which will only tighten in the foreseeable future.
- could provide an intra-NCSS framework to support strategic development of the initiative, particularly in terms of its collaborative nature and ambition, in a Phase 3

- should re-invigorate the intellectual engagement around development of NCSS collecting policies that was a feature of Phase 1
- could provide a structure for inviting specialists and consultants to work with the group on specific areas, i.e. providing tours or development around aspects of purchasing, access to 'knowledge wave,' feedback on acquisitions etc.

### **5.3 VISION FOR A PHASE 3**

A Phase 3 of the NCSS must reassert the vision and priority it gives to the development of ambitious contemporary collecting and critical collecting practice on the part of its museum partners, and to the consolidation through those partners of an infrastructure of collections of contemporary art across Scotland that sit at the heart of what they offer within a local and national context.

A Phase 3 should seek to enable and achieve the following:

#### **1) *Bold contemporary holdings across its partner museums***

- that are the product of strategic, critical and ambitious collecting practice developed at local level
- that have intimate and dynamic relationships with the wider holdings of those partners, and enrich and promote engagement with them
- that can progress and promote the standards acknowledged through the Recognition Scheme
- that are sources of inspiration, enjoyment and creativity as well as of challenge or self-reflection
- that provide fresh contexts for Scotland's diverse public to access and engage with the work of contemporary artists
- that are starting points for innovative public programmes that engage with key issues of contemporary experience – for individuals and communities

2) *An effective infrastructure of contemporary collections*

- that can demonstrate 'linked collecting' undertaken to a shared level of ambition that is national and international in dimension
- that can extend the principle of a linked agenda in order to collectively maximize access, reach, engagement, impact, and legacy
- that can inspire and sustain critical engagement and investment from partners and associates across the wider visual arts sector and artists' community

3) *Enhanced curatorial practice across its museum partners*

- that is both inspiring and critical, and that can shape visions and take risks
- that is supported and valued by the wider institutions within which the museum partners sit
- that is supported by a strong collective development programme and by appropriate research, travel and project opportunities to further potential
- that is informed in its development by models of curatorial practice of national and international dimension
- that is underpinned by relationships with the HE and the wider visual arts sectors

## 6. Recommendations

The Scottish Arts Council's National Collecting Scheme Scotland remains distinctive and unique, and it is highly regarded and valued by its museum partners. It continues to provide the best means by which an infrastructure of public museums across Scotland can be enabled and supported to build and disseminate ambitious collections of contemporary art that sit at the heart of what they offer within a local and national context.

With further strategic development and continued investment, a Phase 3 of the NCSS could build on the achievements of the first two phases to bring just such an infrastructure and its potential impacts and legacy more fully to fruition.

*From this evaluation, the key recommendations are that*

- **The National Collecting Scheme Scotland be further developed and funded for a Phase 3 in relation to four core areas of museum partner participation: acquisitions, collecting policy & collecting strategy development, research through travel, and network participation**
- **Creative Scotland continues funding and planning support for the NCSS in line with its ambitions as a national and partnership agency as articulated in its Business Model (October 2009)**
- **Strategic development within a Phase 3 be framed by a Memorandum of Understanding or collaborative agreement between Creative Scotland and Museums Galleries Scotland**
- **Development of the critical context of a Phase 3 be framed by a shared research agenda, developed as part of a multi-faceted**

**research dimension in partnership with the University of Glasgow,  
Museums Galleries Scotland and other partners**