



IAA UK National Committee: a-n The Artists Information Co. Report 2016/17

Business

2017 has seen the culmination of a significant two-year change programme for a-n, including organisational restructure (with the recruitment of 2 new staff) and a shift in constitution from a not-for-profit company to charitable status.

We have augmented our membership offer to artists with the addition of £5m professional indemnity insurance alongside the existing £5m of public liability insurance. Other membership benefits will come through 2017/18, including the addition of the IAA Artist Identity Card.

Advocacy

In October 2016 we published [a-n/AIR Exhibition Payment Guidance](#) which sets out best practice and payment terms for exhibitions for artists in the UK. The result of 2 years of Paying Artists campaigning and consultation work, we worked closely with VAI to ensure synergy with their own guidance in Ireland, and with country arts councils in England, Scotland and Wales to support its implementation through their regularly funded organisations.

In September 2017 we launched the [Paying Artists Working Group](#) consisting of organisations with a national remit, or sector specific expertise, including AD:UK, Crafts Council, Contemporary Visual Arts Network, Engage, Museums Association, Plus Tate, Scottish Contemporary Arts Network and Visual Artists Ireland. The Group will work with a-n to contribute to the development and embedding of future iterations of the Exhibition Payment Guide through their networks. Two artists will be recruited later in the year who will share an important and constructive role as artist representatives in the Group.

In June 2017 a-n published its first over-arching advocacy strategy –[Valuing Artists](#). Through this a-n will develop, deliver and support campaign activities that articulate and challenge the big issues visual artists in the UK will face over the next five years.

What we aim to achieve through Valuing Artists:

- 1) **Visual artists are valued:** Lack of recognition of the contribution of visual artists to the success of the cultural sector, society and the UK economy underpins many of the issues faced by our members today.

Valuing Artists will address this fundamental issue, working with our members and partners to provide new evidence and promote a strong narrative which clearly places visual artists and the visual arts within this wider context. It will explore sectoral best practice, and will look locally, regionally and nationally to identify ways in which a-n and artists themselves can develop informed roles and narratives with policy makers, funders and commissioners.



Activities: [Paying Artists Campaign](#) and Paying Artists Working Group; Code of Practice for the Visual Arts

- 2) **A Brexit that works for visual artists in the UK:** a-n will work to influence the UK's Brexit policy in key areas as it affects visual artists (freedom of movement, residency and rights) and, beyond 2019, continue to promote the rights of artists as they are affected by our withdrawal from the EU by exploring solutions to the issues our members face.

Activities: Sectoral research; Partner campaign with ISM - [FreeMoveCreate](#)

- 3) **More sustainable livelihoods for visual artists:** *Valuing Artists* will build on a-n's core advocacy work to make the case for fair payment of artists by commissioners. It will also articulate the wider range of issues which impact on artists' livelihoods and the nature of their practice today, and promote credible solutions to these issues to government, policy makers, funders and commissioners.

Activities: Research into social security for cultural sector workers with VAI

- 4) **A diverse and representative visual arts sector:** *Valuing Artists* will use a-n's unique position as the largest grassroots visual arts membership organisation in the UK to deliver valuable, nuanced intelligence around the scale and impact of diversity as it is reflected in artist-led practice today.

Activities: Artist-Led Diversity Art Map

a-n 'made the case' across 2016/17 through international events including: Brexit Cultural Campaign Network round table with cross-bench MPs (London); an AIR Council-led Brexit symposium at University Arts London 'What Happens to Us?' (London); panel participation at Goldsmiths 'VoteArt' event (London); representation at House of Lords 'Creatives for Europe' launch (London); representation at Creative Industries Federation 'Big EU Debate' (London); presentation at Culture Action Europe 'Continental Drift' symposia (Brussels).

[Assembly](#)

As part of our aim to engage more deeply with our membership we piloted a new vehicle to deliver regional artist-focused events with and for our members in June 2017. We delivered five events across England, employing a lead artist in each city to ensure bespoke and relevant content. These artists assisted with the commissioning of a total of 83 artists or artist-led projects to deliver bespoke content across 45 artist spaces. The events drew over 550 a-n members, explored a broad range of topics, enabled new member driven content, news articles & resources (including an Artist Led Hot 100, a guide to parenting for artists, and a blue print for socially engaged practice among others). Assembly events will become a regular part of our programme from Spring 2018.



ACE Visual Artists Livelihoods Research

In 2015 a-n were commissioned by Arts Council England to support baseline research into visual Artists livelihoods in England for over 10 years. The resulting paper will be published in 2017, with a-n committed to supporting longitudinal research with ACE over the coming years.

[Older Artist Lab](#)

In February 2017 we partnered in a research project with Luminate Creative Ageing Festival and Cove Park (artists residency space) to deliver a pilot Older Artists Lab involving 6 artists aged between 50 and 75 years. As many opportunities for artists carry age restrictions the pilot was designed to explore exactly how emerging older artists' practice can be nourished and developed. The evaluation of this project will be used to inform how we better support our members.

a-n Coach

In 2016 we supported four artists through coaching accreditation to explore whether its usefulness in artist support. The results suggest coaching will provide much-needed resilience in dealing with the common isolation of working practices, and the lack of confidence artist face. In 2017 we piloted our first dedicated coaching training course for 12 artists, building a cohort of accredited, specialist visual arts coaches across the UK to whom we can refer artists to, and service our artist mentoring and coaching programme. The return on our investment will include both employment and income for the accredited artists, and an incremental long-term benefit to sector resilience and excellence.

Brexit research findings

One year on from the membership survey ran after the EU Referendum in June 2016, our June 2017 survey again had a high response rate (1,200).

The summary survey results were published on the same day we launched our collaborative [FreeMoveCreate Campaign](#) in London, the focus of which is on protecting freedom of movement for all who work in the creative industries.

Key concerns through the survey continue to be freedom of movement, right to remain and impact on earnings. The full research findings will be published in October and presented to the UK government's Migration Advisory Committee, but key headlines include:

- 1% drop in the number of a-n members holding a non-UK passports (from 12% to 11% - around 300 members).
- Continued concern around potential loss of EU protective legislation (around IP, as well as discriminatory rights in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender etc).
- 14% drop in the overall number of artists who have travelled to the EU for work or study in the last 12 months (down from 54% to 40%).



- The number of ‘regular travellers’ (making more than 3 trips a year) remains roughly the same – the equivalent of c.9,000 a-n members travelling regularly each year for work and study.
- 18% plan work travel one month before leaving, some even less. Most (42%) plan around 2-3 months before they travel – irrespective of how long they’re planning to be away for. The vast majority of those making trips of longer than a month or more, still only plan these 2-3 months in advance. These patterns all have implications in relation to future visa restrictions.
- The top 5 EU travel destinations for a-n members accounted for almost 65% of all EU travel recorded by the survey, with France topping the list, followed by Germany, Italy, Spain and The Netherlands – the 5 most wealthy EU countries by GDP. Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden and Denmark make up the next 5 - of these, only Sweden makes the top 10 EU nations in terms of GDP. So proximity for work travel isn’t enough to entice artists - proximity and a wealthy economy that can support cultural activity, employment and sales.
- References around ‘uncertainty’ have increased (by 14%) with strong evidence that the anxieties artists hold about its impact are now based on real life experiences. Headline figures suggest that:
 - 19% of respondents have seen an increase in costs related to their practice and materials
 - 13% have experienced a negative impact on sales
 - 10% have seen a reduction in funding and
 - 8% are reporting a reduction in opportunities overall.

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