



Salisbury Cathedral Visual Arts Policy

Introduction

Salisbury Cathedral's mission statement is :
Salisbury Cathedral exists to make real the glory and presence of God in the world.

Visual art is one of the great civilizing and inspirational achievements of humankind which can speak to us of the transcendent and of eternal verities, as well as challenging our perceptions of ourselves and the way we live. In this sense, it is deeply spiritual.

The Bible speaks in the Old Testament of God as Creator (Genesis 1), and in the New Testament the Word that spoke in Creation "became flesh and dwelt amongst us" (John 1:14). God thus speaks to us through material and physical things, elements that are fundamental to visual art.

The Holy Spirit is also described in the Bible as the source of inspiration and the one who opens the human spirit to the divine working and who nudges us, and even pushes us, into new and exciting ways and places. Good art plays a part in this.

God creates, and his creatures share in that creation through the promptings of the Holy Spirit in a variety of ways, by no means constrained by the Church's boundaries and definitions - the Spirit "blows where it wishes" (John 3:18). The Church has frequently benefited from the insights of artists (and musicians) who may not be professed Christians.

In its creation and presentation art elicits wonder, challenges and probes, opens us to hidden meaning, to deep purpose and witnesses to the creativity and energy that has its source in God.

Good art honours the act of creating, delights in form, beauty and colour and is a vital component of a religion of the Incarnation.

For centuries forward-thinking churches have used the arts as a method of outreach - to attract and engage outside the formal structures of church membership whilst celebrating the creativity that God gives to human beings.

With recent successes in mind, and an ambition to boost engagement and repeat visiting at the Cathedral, it is timely for the Cathedral to examine why it engages with the arts, and how best such an engagement might be framed within a coherent arts policy.

Specifically the development and implementation of a Visual Arts policy for the Cathedral should address three of the objectives set out in Faith in the Future:

- Building a more diverse congregation
- Creating opportunities to promote discovery, learning and education
- Welcoming more visitors and enhancing the visitor experience

Aims

For Salisbury Cathedral to become recognised as a venue for high quality exhibitions of Visual Art, and to be known for its ability regularly to attract artists of excellence - whilst contributing positively to the Cathedral's budget position.

Specifically:

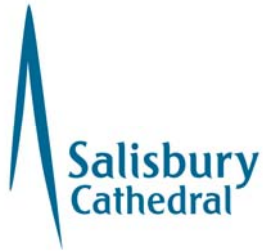
- To generate increased visits to the Cathedral overall, not least by attracting a wider cross section of visitors and to increase the rate of repeat visiting.
- To deliver Visual Art which can support the Cathedral's Education Centre in its programming, allowing it to deliver challenging and stimulating sessions to both school/curriculum and adult groups.
- To deliver opportunities to increase the profile for the cathedral, and generate positive press, media coverage and successful hospitality events which also support the work of the Cathedral's Development Department.
- To deliver opportunities to promote equality and diversity in a spiritual and cultural context.
- Where practical to provide equal access for those with disabilities to engage with arts provision in and around the Cathedral.

To fulfil these aims, and within budgetary constraints, the Exhibitions Committee will create a programme of exhibitions working three years ahead, which aims to host a minimum of three visual art exhibitions or installations each year, of which at least one should be of significant stature.

Delivery

The Exhibitions Committee will:

- Establish clear criteria for artwork which is appropriate to the space, but also proactively approach organisations and artists who offer the potential to provide high quality artwork which can be exhibited in the Cathedral at low cost;
- Investigate the possibility of an 'honorary curator' who can take a proactive role in researching potential artists and work which supports the ambitions of this policy. This person will work with the Exhibitions Committee and the Head of Education to build the long term exhibitions programme;
- Utilise in the first instance funds from within the Marketing and Communications budget to facilitate the provision of visual arts within Salisbury Cathedral. These may be used at the discretion of the Marketing Director to cover items such as artist's expenses, delivery and transport, interpretation material, hospitality etc, on the basis that the return to the Cathedral should be worthwhile;
- Encourage and build on existing community links, and be open to requests for exhibitions from charities and other groups whilst maintaining a high level of quality;
- Develop partnerships with other arts organisations to explore joint exhibitions or loans. These could include: Salisbury International Arts Festival, The Garden Gallery, Roche Court, Bournemouth Arts Institute, Fine Arts Society of New Bond Street;
- Develop artistic links with neighbouring Cathedrals including Winchester and Chichester, in order to commission jointly funded projects;
- Work with such organisations as The Arts Council of England, for help with professional expertise, contacts, and fund raising for exhibitions;
- Ensure that works of art are accessible to the widest possible audience through appropriate interpretative materials and educational activities which inform and explain;
- Commission art works of all kinds, funds permitting, either as permanent works inside and outside the Cathedral, or as part of Festivals or other projects.



The Exhibitions Advisory Committee will drive the delivery of this policy. The Canon Treasurer will oversee the Committee as the Chapter link (though not necessarily chair) and there will be representation from Education and Marketing staff, plus other members of staff as appropriate. Further members of the Committee will draw on both local and national arts expertise. Non-cathedral committee members will serve a term of three years, renewable for a further three year term before retiring.

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Appendix

Selection criteria for Visual Art Exhibitions and Installations

Does the proposal address at least one of the following criteria?

- Has a spiritual/theological dimension which explore aspects of Christianity and/or promotes understanding of other religious faiths;
- High quality artist, likely to deliver significant visitor numbers and profile;
- Work which reflects the architectural surroundings of the Cathedral and Close;
- Allows exploration of Cathedral's Social Justice objective;
- Offers opportunities for supporting education activity;
- Develops the Cathedral's links with its local community and offers the likelihood of attracting local visitors who would not otherwise come to the Cathedral.
- Promotes equality and diversity in a spiritual and cultural context

The proposal must also satisfy the following criteria:

- Subject-matter appropriate to the Cathedral;
- Be approved by the Exhibitions Committee;
- Be appropriate to its setting. Installations must not get 'lost' in the sheer size of the Cathedral interior or Close;
- Artists must be willing to contribute or support the production of interpretative material, including involvement with supporting educational events, where appropriate;
- Appropriate Health and Safety assessments must be completed and appropriate steps taken to address any issues identified. Exhibitions are then covered by the Cathedral's Public Liability Insurance to a value of £10 million;
- Artists must offer part or full contribution to insurance, security and transportation costs for artworks, as appropriate.

Selling artworks

The Cathedral does not deliver 'selling exhibitions' as might take place in a commercial gallery. However, exhibitions may take place of work which is for commercial sale at a later date with enquiries directed to an artist or gallery. No prices will be displayed on work exhibited in the Cathedral.

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