Wales Arts International

Creating 2013



Image credits

International Arts and Wales in 2013 Wales Arts International's 5 year strategy

Wales Arts International facilitates international work in the arts through collaborations, projects, networks and communication.



| A partnership approach | 01 |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| A changing landscape | 03 |
| Purpose | 06 |
| Our vision | 06 |
| Outcomes and strategic objectives | 07 |
| Wales Arts International objectives | 80 |
| Delivery | 14 |



This document is hyperlinked throughout. Clicking on the headings within the contents page with take you to the relevant section.







A partnership approach

Wales Arts International was established in 1997 as a strategic partnership between the Arts Council of Wales and the British Council, based on a shared belief that working together and integrating complementary activity will enhance opportunities and impact.

As an Assembly Sponsored Public Body,
Arts Council of Wales is responsible to the
Welsh Assembly Government for funding
and developing the Arts in Wales. The British
Council is the UK's leading international
Cultural Relations organisation whose
purpose is to build mutually beneficial

cultural and educational relationships between people in the UK and in other countries.

As the government of a devolved Wales within the UK and an expanded Europe, the Welsh Assembly Government has and is developing relationships internationally. WAI works closely with several departments of the Assembly Government to enableWales to engage internationally on arts-related issues, including the Culture and Heritage Division, Creative Business Wales, the Arts Strategy Board, European and External Affairs and International Business Wales.



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WAI is part of the Arts Management Team of the ACW and ensures that international work is embedded into the Council's corporate plan, its Artform strategies and other relevant strategies and policy documents. International artistic collaborations and creative partnerships play an important part in the development of the arts in Wales.

The arts travel beyond borders and there are many international opportunities open to artists and the arts in Wales.

Artistic collaborations develop inter-cultural relations and raise the profile of the arts and the culture of Wales internationally. They also contribute towards developing the creative economy in Wales.

There is growing international recognition of the contribution the arts make in many spheres, including economic development, skills, health, tourism, inter-cultural dialogue and regeneration.

Developing an infrastructure that allows artists and arts organisations to take up a variety of international opportunities will be a priority of the WAI partnership for the next five years.

This will mean focusing on communication, networks, investment, recognition and reach.

The Arts Council's expertise in developments and networks in Wales combined with the British Council's global arts networks has considerable creative potential.

This partnership is a key focus for WAI, but WAI will make further complementary strategic alliances and develop support for artists and organisations involved in international work in and from Wales over the period of this strategy.

This strategy is an expression of a commitment to further the international engagement of the arts in Wales.



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The operating environment for both ACW and the British Council and indeed the arts has changed in recent years and will continue to change.

Arts Council of Wales' Perspective

Wales is now a devolved country within the UK and an expanded Europe. There are growing cultural dimensions to the work of the Welsh Assembly Government's international relationships.

The Arts Council of Wales is now looking forward to a new relationship with the Welsh Assembly Government post the Arts Review carried out by Elan Closs Stephens. Whilst an arm's length principle will be maintained, better co-operation in certain areas of work as identified in the Arts Council of Wales'

Art Form Strategies, its Corporate Plan 2008-11 and its International Policy, offer new opportunities.

The increase in Welsh presence in other countries offers new opportunities for Wales Arts International to develop new paths for the arts in Wales. Welsh Assembly Government officers in Brussels for example offer invaluable links for the arts in Wales with the 27 member states of the European Union.

There is a growing conviction that the arts acting independently and to their creative ambition, will add value to cultural relations and help to raise the profile of our small nation which in turn raises interest in the arts in Wales.

The British Council Perspective

The British Council's purpose is to build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide.

As part of its Arts Action Plan and to develop its relationship with Wales Arts International following the signing of a new partnership agreement with the Arts Council of Wales in April 2008, the British Council has created a full-time arts post to be based in Cardiff.

The Arts Action Plan is committed to invest in the British Council's international network of professional expertise including specialist posts and external advisers. The Council's Arts Group operates in 110 countries worldwide. WAI will continue to work with the British Council to ensure Wales interacts with international networks, projects and programmes.

The UK is recognised internationally as a leader in creative practice. The UK creative economy now accounts for 7% of GDP and is growing at twice the speed of the economy as a whole. The sector stands to grow further with the growing global demand for creative content and UK international networks. There is an opportunity for the arts and creativity in Wales to benefit from the vibrant global creative economy. Cultural leadership at all levels will be key in this respect.

The UK government's creative economy strategy "Creative Britain" aims to establish the UK as the world's creative hub. The strategy has several international initiatives that could offer opportunities for the arts in Wales and overlaps with WAI's remit in terms of international market for art, crafts, music and the performing arts. Although Creative

Britain focuses on the creative economy, it identifies international cultural diplomacy as well as creating an open market in ideas and skills as ways of developing UK's creativity.



Image credit

The WAI Perspective

International recognition and interest in the arts from Wales is growing, a tribute to not only past work of Wales Arts International, but to a range of many organisations that have supported the arts and raised the profile of the culture of Wales internationally. In this respect, WAI looks forward to developing its work with a range of partners on project basis, both in Wales and internationally. These will include other UK partners (e.g. Visiting Arts).

The communications revolution of the last ten years has led to an expansion of artists' networks through use of new technologies and has added virtual artistic collaborations and exchanges to physical ones relying on touring or travelling. New media developments offer the arts in Wales a gateway to the world and the world into the arts in Wales and offer our artists new international platforms.

Wales has a history of strong cultural interfaces with the world; from the ambitions for sharing and world harmony (for example at the root of the foundation of the Llangollen International Eisteddfod after the Second World War) through to challenge of Art to reflect humanity in the recently established Artes Mundi exhibition or Wales' presence at the Venice Biennale.

Wales is a leader in the UK in terms of bilingualism. This offers an opportunity to share particular experiences regarding linguistic and cultural identity and confidence with other bi-or multi-lingual societies through activities in theatre, literature, music and multi-media. Multilingualism is one of the priorities of a European Union of 27 member states with 21 official languages and more than sixty lesser-used languages.

Culture and communication are also a
Europe–wide priority and a range of
international arts networks and opportunities
are supported through EU transnational
partnerships which can also help to introduce
aood practice from other countries to Wales.

The new Agenda for Culture in Europe has three priorities of relevance to WAI:

- promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue (which includes promoting the mobility of artists and professionals in the cultural field and the circulation of all artistic expressions beyond national borders)
- promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs;
- promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations.

WAI also has an advocacy role. The
WAI Director is a member of the Heritage
Minister's Arts Strategy Board. The
"One Wales" Labour - Plaid coalition
government will develop a new culture
strategy for Wales that will look at how to
"make our mark on the world stage and
support opportunities for Wales' artistic
producers to participate on the international
stage." (Heritage Minister Rhodri Glyn
Thomas in Arts Professional November 2007)

The challenge for Wales Arts International over the next five years is to develop the infrastructures in the context of this new landscape so that the arts in Wales engage and take up international opportunities.

WAI's purpose is to place the arts and the contemporary culture of Wales on a world stage and to provide an international context to the arts in Wales.

WAI exists to provide an infrastructure that creates, promotes and delivers a programme of activities and projects that invest in and develop quality arts from Wales internationally.

WAI not only ensures that Welsh artistic and cultural output is appreciated by as wide an audience as possible, but also plays its part in the development of increased understanding between people in the UK and those in other countries through inter-cultural dialogue, artistic exchanges and collaborations.

Our vision

Our vision is that the arts from Wales engage and develop internationally so that by the end of 2013 Wales Arts International's programme of projects and activities will:

- transform opportunities for international artistic practitioners in Wales
- invest in artistic practice and cultural leadership in Wales through engagement in global and local networks
- bring financial investments to the arts and creative economy in Wales
- form relationships with different cultures through the arts
- foster international artistic excellence in Wales
- further international impact and recognition for the arts and culture of Wales.

Outcomes and strategic objectives

This strategy is driven by the following set of outcomes:

- More artists and cultural organisations able to work internationally with increasing visibility and recognition.
- Wales contributing to and benefiting from the promotion of the UK's creative and knowledge economy.
- More work attracted into Wales that stimulate the arts here and provide a benchmark for the indigenous arts sector.

- Increased capacity by the arts sector in Wales to act internationally.
- More investment and engagement within the EU.
- More intercultural understanding leading to positive social change.
- Increased profile for Wales and Welsh culture in the world.



Ruthin Craft Centre (photo: Dewi Tannatt-Lloyd)

To meet the above outcomes and deliver our vision, WAI's strategic objectives are identified in 3 priorities:

- i) maximising international opportunities for the arts in Wales
- ii) Increasing investment into WAI's programme of activities
- iii) Ensuring international impact and recognition for arts from Wales

Objective 1:

Maximising international opportunities

WAI aims to facilitate and maximise international opportunities available to artists and arts organisations in Wales which in turn will benefit and develop the arts in Wales.

WAI will develop structures that ensure that the arts community (individuals and organisations) **know** about relevant opportunities of interest and will advise them on possible participation.

WAI's focus will be on developing international work for professional artists in Wales.

This priority will be delivered through increased information, communication, networking and travel support.

1.1 Communication, information and advocacy

WAI's structure (systems, projects and tools) will increase our capacity to communicate opportunities to enable artists and arts organisations to develop their own international work as well as being an advocate for Welsh arts to the relevant international players.

WAI's communication plan will have two main goals:

- 1) raise the profile of Welsh arts of international acclaim to the world (out)
- 2) raise awareness in Wales of relevant international opportunities (in).

WAI will exploit new technologies to achieve these goals.

As well as facilitating artists and arts organisations from Wales to work internationally, WAI will be a point of access for international arts into Wales. In this respect, WAI will provide the British Council and other strategic international partners with intelligence and contacts throughout Wales

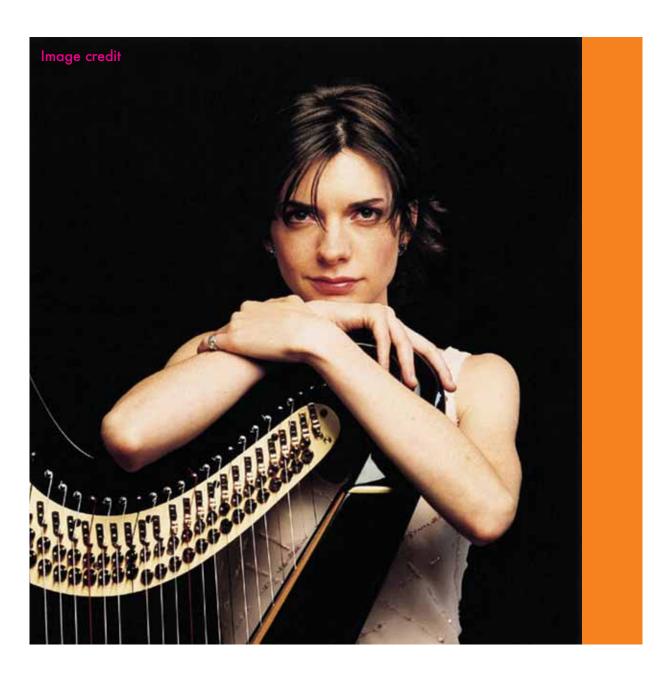
Each WAI project and activity will identify the relevant communication tools and action plan.

For some projects, additional communication support may be available in identified priority countries (e.g. British Council, WAG offices and PR agencies).

The arts, by their very nature, offer very effective means of communication if they are of the highest standard and if they are adequately supported. WAI will support and promote world class quality art and projects which can be promoted and recognised at the international level. Some cross art form initiatives, such as developing critical writing about the arts in Wales and internationally will be prioritised.

PR and marketing support will be provided by both the Arts Council of Wales and the British Council. WAI will identify and keep a diary of events and landmarks in and outside Wales that maximise international opportunities relevant to the sector (e.g. Smithsonian 2009, International Eisteddfod, Hay on Way, Brecon Jazz, Artes Mundi, Venice Biennale, European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, European Year of Innovation and Creativity 2009, Cultural Olympiad 2008-12).

WAI will continue to work with partners to develop communications synergies in the international domain.



10

"For individuals and organisations alike, international networking is the civil society answer to globalisation. The opportunities have grown alongside the expansion of activity and the speed of travel. Just as the coming of the railways ensured that success could no longer be related only to a small locality, so regional and global economics and the political institutions that accompany them have demanded at least a regional - and increasingly a global - expansion of professional contact." Simon Mundy (Independent Consultant on Cultural Policy).

International networking for arts professionals in Wales takes place at three different levels, the global, the European and the UK. It is now possible to find a global and European equivalent to almost any national grouping.

Through participating in creative networks, WAI will support international exposure for the arts in Wales.

To fully benefit from international networks WAI will also look to support the development of international cultural leadership skills within the sector in Wales, which will involve support for individuals through initiatives such as continuous professional development to work internationally, international mentoring schemes as well as sharing of good practice.

Networks enable artists and arts organisations in Wales to benefit from global opportunities whilst operating locally. West Wales based artist, Simon Whitehead calls this "glocalisation" of the arts. Each time he works internationally, it enriches his understanding of his own "milltir sgwar"

(locality) and never fails to offer him a new perspective.

Participation in international networks brings many varied benefits including, opportunities to develop work, international contacts, visits, investment, advocacy and communication. Over the past ten years, and with the support of both our parent organisations, WAI has developed a unique international network of contacts for Wales on which we will seek to capitalise over the period of this strategy. This will not only help to support future work but will also maximise the legacy value of our projects. For example, through a variety of residency programmes, WAI already has a network of arts practitioners who have developed international contacts.

WAI will also participate in networks that bring appropriate investment to support the vision.

There are therefore three identified networking activities:

- i) firstly to encourage and assist arts professionals in Wales to be actively involved in networks relevant to them
- secondly for WAI to join the relevant European networks to develop capacity of the organisation to target greater investment into the sector
- iii) thirdly to develop over the course of this strategy, our own network of arts professionals working internationally in Wales and organising an international forum for the arts in Wales to discuss and overcome challenges.

Over the course of the next five years, WAI has a target to increase its programme funding fourfold. We will do so through working with the British Council to ensure artists and arts organisations in Wales participate in their global projects. We will also establish a European cultural desk and work with the Arts Council's Business Development team to explore new funding opportunities. We will also seek to raise private funding from foundations and businesses to develop international work in Wales.

2.1 British Council Arts Group

Changes to the way the British Council manages international projects bring opportunities. WAI works with the British Council Arts Group, as the conduit for organisations and artists in Wales to participate in major British Council projects.

Unlike the UK's Arts Councils, the British Council is not an arts funding organisation; it rather uses the arts to respond to the UK's international strategic and geographical priorities by promoting the debate of issues and ideas, challenging opinions and increasing understanding between cultures.

The British Council works closely with WAI and partners to identify opportunities for collaboration which will meet the different objectives of partnerships, to ensure that it capitalises on different strengths, and that the Council responds to the interests and international aspirations of the UK arts and creative industries sectors. WAI works to promote the artists of Wales in the British Council programme of projects throughout the world.

The new senior Arts Group post created to work with the Wales Arts International team and others will help to deliver this strategy. The post will identify opportunities and facilitate artists and arts organisations from Wales to participate in British Council projects.

2.2 European Cultural Desk

WAI supports the creation of a European cultural desk to help bring greater investments and new opportunities into the arts in Wales.

WAI recognises that European Union projects are too large for smaller organisations or individuals to manage adequately. WAI will therefore lead on developing EU projects that invest in developing the arts sector in Wales in an international context.

The aims of the European Cultural Desk are:

- a. to develop WAI's capacity to identify, develop and submit successful transnational bids to the EU for funding for WAI's strategic projects
- b. to develop and deliver this strategy
- c. to develop knowledge and intelligence within WAI/ ACW and to share with and develop European engagement for the wider sector in Wales
- d. develop partnership with key partners and networks – in particular through key EU and British Council networks
- e. to become sustainable in the long term
- f. to engage with relevant partners in WAG

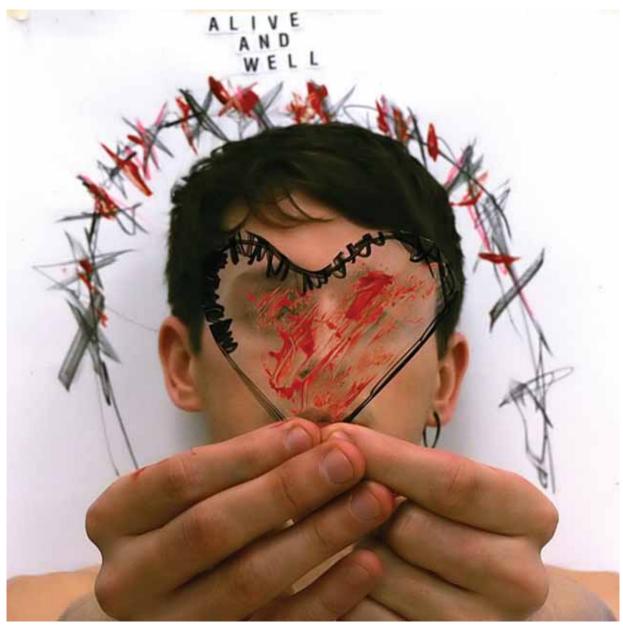


Image credit

2.3 Government bodies, foundations and businesses

WAI will participate or facilitate others to be part of relevant global and local networks that bring investment to artistic practice in Wales.

For projects to be sustainable in the long term, they need to develop diversified revenue routes.

Throughout Wales and the world, there is a

growing recognition of the value of the arts to other sectors of society. WAI and its funding partners will explore opportunities to both learn from others as well as share good practice from Wales with the world.

WAI will seek to develop new relationships that could bring in new sources of international funding into the arts in Wales. It may be in the form of sponsorship, R&D or as match funding for successful bids to other sources (e.g. European, British Council, private investments, foundations).

WAI will create, manage and promote a programme of activities and projects that are designed to foster artistic and creative excellence and which will have international recognition and impact. There will generally be three types of projects:

- 3.1 showcases and visits (e.g. at Venice Biennale or British Dance Edition etc)
- 3.2 Arts projects that develop cultural relations (with priority countries)
- 3.3 Residencies and encounters

The three categories identified in the pyramid at the end of this strategy are the key to this priority, as the opportunities for impact and recognition are linked to the three levels of support:

- 1. artist led
- 2. sector led
- 3. form relationships with other cultures through the arts

WAI will work with artists and organisations who are leading the field and the quality of whose work may be gauged at an international level to develop both recognition and impact. Artist-led initiatives supports the Arts Council of Wales's international Policy which is committed to "Develop international ambition and excellence - enhance the ability of artists and arts organisations to build an international profile".

WAI will support sector-led forums that bring international and Welsh practitioners together to exchange ideas and experiences. WAI will continue to work with partners in Wales and beyond to showcase the best of Welsh arts in the most relevant festivals and showcases. WAI will seek additional support for partners for new showcasing opportunities.

WAI will work to form relationships with other cultures through the arts. This can develop meaningful cultural relations for Wales that support artistic collaboration and mutual benefits for both countries. WAI and our partners will support international cultural relations for Wales that benefit the arts whilst also reaching people. In this respect, WAI will favour projects that have clear cultural and social benefits. The voluntary cultural sector in Wales already plays a role in developing cultural relations, especially in the field of intercultural dialogue.

WAI will engage with stakeholders (e.g. Welsh Assembly Government) to create a profile for Wales that will benefit the sector. WAI will also work with the relevant players in Wales to identify and focus on priority countries where there are wider key priorities focusing on arts and culture.

Sectoral Expertise

The ambition is to grow WAI's capacity to increase the activities, opportunities and investment over the next five years. To support WAI staff to do so, a voluntary advisory group of people will be created. Experts from the arts sector in Wales (through the Arts Council's list of advisors) and key international arts advisers will advise and

inform our operation. Advisers will be impartial and independent. WAI will also continue to work with a strategic steering group representing partners and the sector to continuously evaluate this strategy. WAI will establish, on needs basis, panels of experts to select artists for individual projects.



Image credit

Structuring our work

15

The new WAI structure of projects will therefore be the following:

Objective 1: Maximising international opportunities

- Communications
- Networks
- International Opportunities Fund

Objective 2: Investment

- European Union
- British Council
- Other government bodies, Foundations and businesses

Objective 3: impact and recognition in each art form

- Art form showcasing and visits
- art projects that develop cultural relationships
- residencies and /encounters

All projects will form part of WAI's network. Some projects will continue to be managed externally by the relevant organisation or project manager.

Criteria for our work

The criteria for all WAI projects are:

- The project brings new work for artists
- The project fosters excellence

- The project benefits the sector in Wales
- The project increases funding to the arts
- The project has a sustainable / long term development value with partners/ collaborators abroad
- The projects develop inter-cultural relations through the arts

Monitoring and evaluation:

WAI will create annual activity plans that will provide a framework for our work and projects. WAI will evaluate our projects against the aims and desired outcomes of those projects.

Geographic priorities

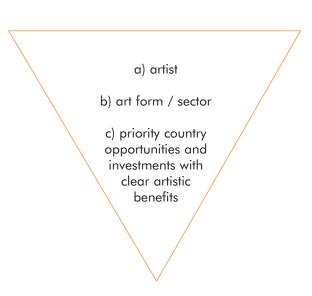
WAI will work strategically with our stakeholders in some (but not all) of their priority countries when there is a clear opportunity to develop the arts in Wales and when there is investment to support the initiatives. The same criteria for our projects as above will apply. Priorities will change as relationships with those countries develop and mature.

WAI's country /geographic priorities will be aligned to some but not all of the following:

- (a) artistic led agreements signed by ACWe.g. Quebec
- (b) British Council Arts Group cultural relations priorities (e.g.India)
- (c) Welsh Assembly Government's cultural relations priorities (e.g. China)

WAI will cooperate with the relevant departments in the Wales Assembly Government to identify where the arts and culture can play a key role and work with the relevant departments of WAG (e.g. Heritage, International Business Wales, European and External Affairs etc)

The WAI pyramid model will ensure that projects will meet the aims of this strategy. Priority will be given to projects that benefit the artists and the sector in Wales in collaboration with partners in priority countries.



Annex A: WAI organigram

Strategy support: ACW Dir. Of Arts, ACW Council Member, BC Arts Group, BC Wales advisory group, WAG Culture/international.

Objectives: to support the delivery/ review of WAI strategy

Artistic international advisory panel: From the ACW National List of Advisors
Objectives: to advise on needs basis and meet annually.

