

Shetland *arts*

2023 - 2024: Quarter 1

Report of activity relating to Social Outcomes

Case Studies: Shetland Noir, Kiln Connections, Student Showcase

Interim Key Performance Indicator Statistics (appendix)



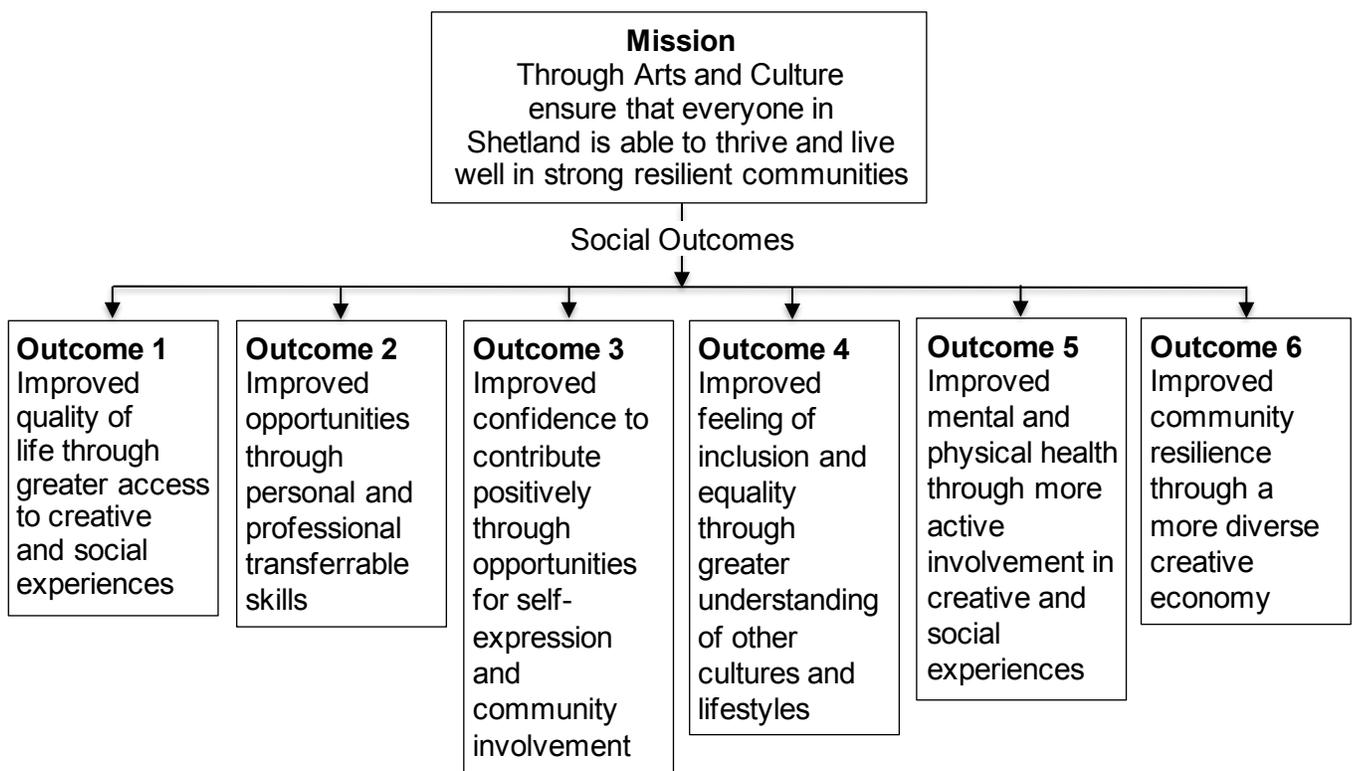
Introduction

In the summer of 2020, Shetland Arts developed a new mission statement and six supporting social outcomes as part of an overall review of strategy. The work was supported by the Social Value Lab and responded to a range of strategy documents, including the Shetland Partnership Plan, Shetland Charitable Trust's Strategy 2020-25, Scottish Government's Islands Plan and Cultural Strategy alongside Creative Scotland's Priorities and Ambitions.

The social outcomes were formally adopted by the SADA Board of Trustees for implementation in April 2021 and complement SADA's purposes:

- To advance the education of the public resident in Shetland in the Arts, in particular the Arts of Dance, Drama, Theatre, Film, Literature, Music, Crafts, Visual Arts and any new form of Media;
- The advancement of Arts and Culture for the benefit of the public in Shetland;
- The advancement of Citizenship and Community Development for the benefit of the public in Shetland.

We used 2021-22 to transition to this new way of thinking about our work and we now actively design our workplan using the social outcomes developed and report against them.



When planning an activity, we consider which two Social Outcomes the activity will deliver against. Many of our activities will deliver against more than two of our Social Outcomes, however our KPI reporting only takes into account the two outcomes defined at the beginning of the project. In our narrative reporting we acknowledge that a participant or audience member may well have experienced a different impact than we intended, and we will make every attempt to capture their story.

1: Improved quality of life through greater access to creative and social experiences

Family ties in Shetland brought **Helena Kay** home to Shetland all the way from London in April to perform with her four-piece jazz ensemble. This was a special evening in Mareel with support from **High Level Hot Club**, and the audience were treated to a memorable night of virtuosic yet accessible contemporary jazz.

In May we presented the work created by artist **Holly Veselka** as part of the XCHANGE residency and commission, a partnership between Shetland Arts and McNay Museum of Art in San Antonio, Texas, funded by British Council, Art Fund (UK) and Association of Art Museum Curators (US). **The Rig** is a mesmerising 3D animated video and stage one of an ambition to create a public artwork that repurposes the ecosystem of an offshore platform to create a thriving habitat for pelagic birds and marine life.

Known for her moving image work, digital archives and installations exploring humanity's relationship with the natural world, Veselka often uses photogrammetry, laser, and infrared scanning as both medium and subject to highlight issues of land, biodiversity, and climate change. During her month-long residency in Shetland in May 2022, she explored the archipelago's landscape and industry and became captivated by the decommissioning of the Ninian Northern offshore platform and jacket at Dales Voe. In her exploration of the decommissioning site, Veselka was struck by the quantity and diversity of marine life—including threatened cold water corals—that had grown on the rig during its 40 years of operation. Visually, petrochemical infrastructure is often a symbol of human ingenuity, energy demand, climate change, or environmental degradation. But to Veselka, the ecosystem living on the rig was a different type of symbol—one that represents life's resilience, a symbol of hope. The work remained on show in the Feature Space in Mareel through May and June and can also be viewed on our website.

Scottish Award-Winning comedian and “viral sensation” **Gary Meikle** performed a show in May to a large and appreciative audience.

The **Fisherwomen** exhibition by **Craig Easton**, in collaboration with **Shetland Amenity Trust**, opened at Da Gadderie in May and ran through to the end of July. The exhibition featured portraits of women who had worked as herring girls, as well as portraits of women working in the fishing industry today. The portraits were joined by a landscape series, documenting the journey of the herring industry from Shetland, down the East coast of Scotland and England. The exhibition had huge significance to Shetland and was well received and attended. There was an opening event as well as a chance to hear from Craig and some of the women he photographed at the ‘Evening With...’ event in June.

Mareel's cinema programme was as varied as usual - everything from superhero blockbusters (**Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3, Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse, Shazam! Fury of the Gods**) to independent dramas (**God's Creatures, Allelujah, The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry**) via family favourites (**The Super Mario Bros. Movie, The Little Mermaid, Puss in Boots: The Last Wish**), horror (**The Boogeyman, Evil Dead Rise, Renfield**), thrillers (**John Wick: Chapter 4, Fast X, Missing**) and comedies (**Rye Lane, Book Club: The Next Chapter, Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret**), plus a curated selection of world cinema in our **Screen Horizons** slots on Sundays and Wednesdays; documentaries on everything from cyclists to musicians, to an attempt to make the fashion industry more sustainable; classic movies back on the big screen, including **The Big Lebowski, Local Hero** and the **How to Train Your Dragon** trilogy; and the chance to remotely experience an acclaimed production of **Hamlet** at Bristol Old Vic and this summer's blockbuster **Vermeer** exhibition at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Mareel hosted five concerts over four days during the 41st **Shetland Folk Festival** in May, including one of the legendary Foy concerts on the Sunday night.

“Thank you so much for everything your staff did to contribute to a successful 41st Shetland Folk Festival.” (Shetland Folk Festival Committee)

2: Improved opportunities through personal and professional transferrable skills

SHOTPUT Dance Theatre delivered week-long photography and theatre workshops with two visiting artists for young adults and adults. These workshops looked at taking a theme and developing it using theatre and photography to create a still life. These images will become part of an exhibition which will tour with the production in Autumn this year. We are delighted to have Shetland representatives as part of this national exhibition.

The UHI third year **BA Fine Art** students held their exhibition *a'four* at Bonhoga in April and May. The exhibition, part of their Professional Practice module, was an opportunity for the students to learn about planning, curating and installing their work in the gallery at Bonhoga.

Craig Easton and **Lottie Davies** ran a one-day workshop for S4 students from AHS and Brae in June, as part of the outreach work for the *Fisherwomen* exhibition. The students heard from Craig and Lottie about their careers as commercial and fine art photographers before being tasked with taking some documentary images of their own in the afternoon.

The academic year ended in Q1 for students studying **Creative Industries courses in Mareel** delivered in partnership with **Shetland UHI**. All students achieved a pass in their courses:

- 23 Skills for Work music, film or drama students
- 8 Skills for Work Enterprise and Employability students
- 1 NC Film student
- 2 HNC Music students
- 17 Masters level module students

The academic year culminated in a **Student Showcase** performance and screening in Mareel in June (See Case Study)

3: Improved confidence to contribute positively through opportunities for self-expression and community involvement

Shetland Arts, alongside Shetland Islands Council Education department have been running weekly sessions in our Education Space led by freelance musician **David Boyter** for participants of the **Bridges Project Pathway Programme**. These sessions have been really successful. Participants recorded and edited two tracks, which were played to the wider Education team at the end of term for a mini celebration. We hope to continue these sessions in the new academic year with new participants to the programme.

Shetland Youth Theatre in collaboration with **Diverse Marine Values Project** and an extensive team from **University of Portsmouth** delivered a week-long Easter intensive for ages 12-19 at The Garrison Theatre. This project aimed to empower youth via meeting with decision makers and exploring marine values through the creation of a devised performance project. The intensive looked at a range of performance techniques including physical theatre, documentary theatre, digital storytelling, and embodied historiography and ended in a site-specific informal performance for parents and guardians of

the participants. This project allowed us to reach two new members to Youth Theatre who have continued to come to the next term. All of the young people seemed to really enjoy the project and there is consensus amongst the project leaders that they would like to work together again.

Our two weekly Film Crew sessions have continued to meet each Saturday with Keiba Clubb and a Creative Assistant in our Education Space. These lively sessions have sold out, with groups working both independently and together on film projects devised and storyboarded by themselves.

An alternative children's event in April through the Creative Scotland Touring Fund, **The Happiness Collectors** had children wearing headphones to go on their own adventure to be transported around the world by sounds and music. Since the pandemic children have grown accustomed to being at home and not around others as much as they used to, so this allowed for children to have their own escape, whilst bringing them out of their comfort zone.

"I thought the Happiness Collectors was perfect for my 4-year-old who struggles to sit still – so having an event where they don't have to sit and can move around was ideal for us. And it was so relaxed, it made me think I should try taking him to more kid's activities at Mareel."

4: Improved feeling of inclusion and equality through greater understanding of other cultures and lifestyles

In April, Mareel played host to **Pibroch**, a play written and performed by **John Bolland**. It was a one act environmental play with live music by **Fraser Fifield**, which drew parallels between our current climate emergency and the Piper Alpha disaster of 1988 while exploring the need for an urgent but just transition. The performance included a post-show discussion and Q&A session (link below) which saw a healthy debate of the environmental changes we are facing between both John and the audience.

Shetland Youth Theatre continued to work towards a theatrical production through their weekly activity. 12 young people came to weekly sessions working with Company Leader **Stephenie Pagulayan** and a Creative Assistant to refine and expand on the work and its themes. This was then shared again at the end of term and will be built upon next term to be made into a theatre film exploring a variety of subjects. We very much look forward to sharing their work very soon!

5: Improved mental and physical health through more active involvement in creative and social experiences

Children's show **Two In a Barrel** came to Shetland in May, with two shows and a workshop in Mareel, and one show with a workshop in Walls. This production centred around two best friends surrounded by an island of rubbish. By looking at mass consumerism and the effects it has on our world today, it encourages everyone to be more responsible for their own waste. The workshops were very effective, and the team included all participants and took them through some essential theatre movement workshop practices, expanding on themes which arose during the initial performance. Participants were relaxed and confident and keen to contribute.

David Boyter delivered a free four-week block of Music Making Creative Lab sessions. These were a series of workshops for adults providing introductions to different music making technologies. The

sessions introduced participants to the basics of electronic music production using Teenage Engineering's Pocket Operator synthesizers. The focus was on learning to programme beats, create bass lines and sequence melodic synth patterns. Feedback from participants was positive with suggestions on what we could do next. Most people said that they would pay for future sessions (£5-£10). David said that Mareel was a great space to lead these sessions.

Photographer **Craig Easton** visited Shetland in June to deliver workshops and events alongside the **Fisherwomen** exhibition. The 'Evening with...' event at Shetland Museum and Archives was an opportunity for the public to hear from Craig about the project, as well as a discussion with women who worked in the fishing industry, both past and present. A highlight of the evening was a herring gutting demonstration by **Rita McNab**, kindly supported – in herring – by Shetland Catch.

6: Improved community resilience through a more diverse creative economy

Creative Sustainable Futures was launched at the end of February and went from strength to strength through the first quarter of 2023/24. The initiative is designed to grow the circular economy in Shetland and includes a tool library, paint recycling scheme, community workshop, dye garden and dye kitchen. It was supported by the **Community Led Local Development Fund**.

The **Community Repaint Scheme** became operational at the beginning of April and we are pleased that SIC's Household Waste Recycling Centre at Gremista has been very supportive in facilitating a collection point for surplus paint at Gremista. The paint is collected there, or at Mareel, processed and then offered for sale at low cost (£2/litre) via our small outlet in the foyer at Mareel. In the first quarter we processed 95 containers of paint, preventing over 160 litres of paint from entering the waste stream, and sold 50 containers via the outlet.

The **Tool Library** has a stock of over 230 tools and a growing membership. For an annual fee of £30 (or £10 concession) members can borrow as many tools as they like. In the first quarter 12 items were loaned and 11 new members joined the scheme. Customer feedback includes, "So happy that the tool library has finally opened to the public, such a brilliant idea" [new tool library member] and "Folk are loving the paint store" [local artist via email].

At the **Shetland Climate Festival** in June we engaged with the public over the two-day event and our discussions demonstrated wide support for our project developments, including from our parliamentary representatives Beatrice Wishart and Alistair Carmichael. School teachers from Anderson High and Brae were keen to discuss ways to tie our initiatives into the curriculum.

The **Community Dye Garden** was established on the terrace by the café at Mareel and grew well with the good weather this quarter. Of the 20 seed kits that were given out to members of the public at the launch event in February three were returned in June, with healthy seedlings ready to be planted out. These will hopefully flourish and provide material for dye workshops in the future.

In the **Mareel Recording Studio**, **Adam Guest** and **Lisa Ward** continued sessions on their respective album projects. There were remote recording sessions for **Catriona MacDonald**, and **Jenny Sturgeon** recorded three tracks in the studio as part of the **Living Mountain** project in May.

The first of four **Summer Showcases** began in May at Bonhoga. The craft exhibitions feature four sets of makers, each exhibited for five weeks. This year we have invited some makers from outside of Shetland to join the Shetland-made craft – in the first two exhibitions the makers included **Aamos**



Designs, Sharon McGeady, Karlin Anderson, Paparwark, Gilly B, Red Houss, Lois Walpole and Hilary Grant.

Curated Retail at Bonhoga and Mareel has been busier as the tourist season got going. We have new products on the shelves from the latest round of retail commissions – including oysterplant socks by **Jocelyn Naquin** and Shetland colouring books by **Tenneka Patterson**. We have also expanded and improved the retail shelving at Mareel and are adding more Shetland craft to the stock.

“It’s been the most successful exhibition to date - sales wise. And I’ve had quite a lot of good feedback from clients and visitors to the studio here. So thank you and well done on pulling together such a great showcase for all of us.” (Bonhoga Summer Showcase exhibitor)

“We recently bought 4 pieces by Lois Walpole fom the Bonhoga exhibition. They complement perfectly a piece we bought from Sarah Kay. We are delighted by them both and they fill a space that’s been empty for 5 years waiting to find the right thing to put there. They are a daily reminder of a wonderful 2 weeks spent in Shetland.” (Bonhoga Summer Showcase customer)



Case Study: Shetland Noir

Introduction

Renowned Shetland crime writer **Marsali Taylor** and *Shetland* author **Ann Cleeves** approached Shetland Arts in 2022 about holding another **Shetland Noir** festival. The first *Shetland Noir* festival was previously held back in 2015, in partnership with **Promote Shetland** and **Iceland Noir**. The event was hugely successful, so with this in mind a date was set – June 15-18th 2023.

Planning

Months of careful planning started for the co-curators Ann, Marsali and the Shetland Arts team, with headliners **Richard Osman, Val McDermid, Martin Edwards, Elly Griffiths, Shona Maclean, Dr Jacky Collins** and **Dr James Grieve** all booked to come to the festival along with 20 fellow crime writers who took part in 7 panel sessions.



Mareel was closed to the public, with exclusive use given over to more than 200 *Shetland Noir* participants attending the festival.

Over the weekend there were 25 events including panel discussions, 'how to' workshops, author speed dating, talks, interviews, a local writer's event, a supper dance and a quiz on the closing night. Ann, Marsali and the Shetland Arts team meticulously planned the panel events and interviews.

It was decided to have full weekend card holders, day card holders and single events on sale. In July 2022 the early bird Noir cards went on sale to the public until December 31st, with the full Noir cards selling out in April, shortly after the programme was released.

With every festival comes the merchandise; for this event there were to be t-shirts, notepads, pens, reusable travel cups, and pin badges. The Shetland Noir bookshop featured 40 books from speakers and panellists. It was a big hit – panellists were very happy to see their books on sale and it was an opportunity for attendees to get books signed by authors. 320 books were sold over the weekend.

Performance



Thursday 15th June arrived in an unusual form – glorious sunshine! What a day for our Noir visitors to experience Shetland in all its glory. The day started off with the finishing touches for the guests arriving for their passes. Some of the guests left on a small bus tour of the Shetland mainland with Marsali as their tour guide, travelling as far north as Voe, along to Aith to stop off at the famous Cake Fridge and back to Lerwick in time for the opening event. Ann Cleeves opened the *Shetland Noir* weekend, Marian Armitage gave everybody a delightful taster of what Shetland food has to offer and local fiddle group Kirmirren played in the Café Bar. *Shetland Noir* had begun, and so had the mingling and chatting of authors from far and wide. It was lovely to see so many catching up and new friendships formed, setting the tone for the weekend – warm & welcoming.

Friday started with a ‘speed dating’ event held in the upper foyer; there were some uncertainties around how this would go however many who attended the event said how much they had enjoyed it and how it had been one of the highlights of the weekend. The panel sessions and talks were generally well attended. They each gave the audience a bit more insight in the authors themselves and their books, and how they came about finding their stories.

There were three schools talks during the festival: one at Mareel on Thursday for Anderson High school students with Dr James Grieve and Helen Pepper, and on Friday James headed north to Brae High School and Helen went over to Aith Junior High School.

Saturday saw the day everyone had been waiting for – Richard Osman. However, an early morning social media post from Richard confirmed that BA had cancelled his flights to Shetland without warning. This was extremely worrying for the *Shetland Noir* team as



Richard Osman ✓
@richardosman

...

A million apologies to everyone at [@shetlandnoir](#) this weekend. British Airways have cancelled our Glasgow flight at the last minute (with no explanation) and we haven't been able to find a workable alternative to get to Shetland on time today. So upset to miss this event. Sorry to you all, from a very, very frustrated and disappointed writer 😞😞😞



well as the audience members. Nevertheless, technology saved the day, as Martin Edwards interviewed Richard Osman over Zoom and we still had a near full house in the Mareel Auditorium. In true Shetland form, we had a supper dance in the Sound Hall, with local dance band Leeshinat. This proved to be a great night with everyone getting stuck into the dancing! We had two local dancers that helped to teach the dances as well as few locals who knew the dances which really encouraged our Noir visitors.

The festival continued with panel discussions, talks, and workshops on the Sunday and then concluded with an excellent quiz compiled by Martin Edwards. Although some of the Noir visitors had left throughout the day there were still a number that stayed for the end.

We had an additional bus tour around Shetland on the Monday which around 20 people attended. Many had their travel booked for that day so unfortunately couldn't attend. This tour went north as far as Eshaness and then back along the westside through Aith and back to Lerwick.



Evaluation

Shetland Noir has been one of Shetland Art's success stories since the pandemic. The atmosphere and general buzz around the building was great to witness. Huge thanks to our Marketing team without whom we wouldn't be able to reach all corners of the globe.

Everyone was so friendly and keen to share feedback in the comments boxes around the building. Some thought there were too many panel sessions throughout the weekend, which is understandable, it's all

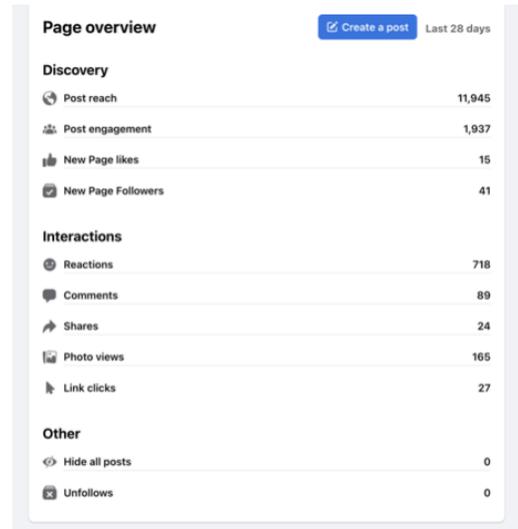
constructive feedback for how we can amend it for the next time. Although the main comment made over the weekend was – *when can we do this again?*

“Massive ‘well done’ for the technical wizardry that transformed Richard Osman’s non-arrival from ‘tragedy’ to TRIUMPH. Hurrah!”

“Great festival - really enjoyed meeting the many authors - it was a very friendly, intimate festival. Enjoyed the dialects session. Possibly a few too many panel sessions - but well done all!”

“What a wonderful event! Thanks so much for your hard work to pull it off. We’ll never forget Shetland and the generous people here.”

“Truly one of my best life experiences ever! 🙌🙌🙌”
Lisa de Nikolits



Shetland News review - Wonderful Storytelling with a Dark Undertone

...In a way, the event itself was the real star as the crowd is testament to. Many travelling very far, at great expense, to this relatively inaccessible rock to be here to enjoy a well organised and prestigious event.

As one visitor said: “I’ve been to lots of crime festivals big and small and have never enjoyed it as much as the Shetland one. Everything was so wonderfully thought through. The programme, the speakers, the organisation, the format all so well put together.”

I asked... Marsali Taylor, who co-organised the event with Ann Cleeves, how she felt it went. She couldn’t have been more delighted.

“Absolutely fantastic, everyone enjoyed themselves. The visitors were waxing lyrical, not just about the event, but on how helpful the Mareel staff were and the Mareel staff were so delighted with the behaviour of the visitors.” (June 18th 2023)

Case Study:

If I'd Known You Were Coming I'd Have Fired A Cake

Kiln-fired glass artworks created by students attending the **Shetland Islands Council Bridges Project** were on display in the Bonhoga Café during March and April.

The artworks were an outcome from a series of workshops led by designer **Niela Kalra** and artist **Katie Leask**, of **Nielanell Contemporary Knitwear** in Hoswick. Meeting each week, the group explored glass fusing techniques using Bullseye glass, and were involved in every aspect of designing, cutting and fusing the glass. They experimented with printing and painting onto surfaces and glass slumping. The group also learned about firing the glass in kilns, and the theories behind the programming of the kilns.

The table setting theme emerged through conversations between participants throughout the activities. During each session, as well as working with glass, the group sat together around a table and talked, shared stories, made tea and importantly, ate cake. They reflected on the important feelings of connection that coming together to talk, laugh, eat and drink gave them.

To capture this in pieces of glass, the group began designing a table setting. They collectively selected a colour palette before each bringing their own unique take on designing a series of plates and centrepieces. Some of the final pieces came from memories and connections to family. Some were influenced by a pure enjoyment of composition. Some were about colour (purple came to hold a particular meaning within the group) and others stemmed from places or times that are important to the individuals.

Together, the display worked well because of the joint design decisions that were made. Colour and shape help the individual pieces relate to one another. The final collection was a real celebration of a group of skilled and dedicated young people who can be very proud of what they have achieved, both in glass and around the table.

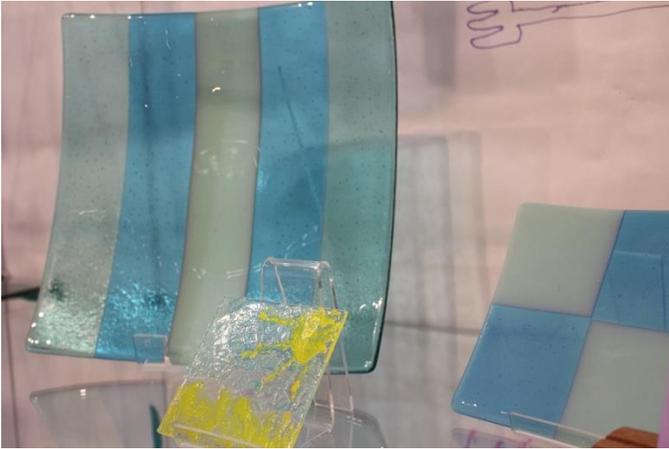
While the project itself increased participants' confidence, and developed skills, the display provided a public platform for validation of the participants' hard work, learning and commitment. The display provided a chance for participants to engage with different groups and individuals beyond their everyday networks.

'We all went out to see the exhibition at Bonhoga yesterday and it looks so good! Thank you for all the effort you put into the display. The young artists all felt rightly proud to see it looking so impressive in a public space'. (Project mentor)

This project is part of the Creative Islands Network, a Culture Collective programme funded by Creative Scotland, and run by An Lanntair, Pier Arts Centre, Shetland Arts and Taigh Chearsabhagh.







Case Study: Student Showcase

On June 8th Mareel hosted the annual end of year showcase for UHI Shetland students who have been studying music, film and drama. The students collectively organised and promoted the event as part of their studies.

The showcase started with a film screening in the cinema featuring shorts made by Film Crew, Skills for Work, NC, Degree and Masters students.

Audiences were then treated to a drama 'happening' in the stairwell overlooking the foyer from Skills for Work drama students.

The evening culminated with a musical extravaganza from Skills for Work, NC, Degree and Masters students, and Shetland Young Promoters Group members.

I'm absolutely blown away by the talents of the students. Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to them for a thoroughly entertaining evening. (Shetland Islands Councillor)



Actuals (see footnote 1)	Concerts, Screenings, Exhibition Days				Attendances				Development Sessions				Participations			
	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Apr	May	Jun	Q1
Delivered	362	346	360	1,068	24,168	21,607	30,216	75,991	100	106	85	291	544	532	558	1,634
Quarterly Target 23/24				1,022				57,569				452				3,504
% of Target Delivered				105%				132%				64%				47%
Impact (see footnote 3)	Concerts, Screenings, Exhibition Days				Attendances				Development Sessions				Participations			
	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Apr	May	Jun	Q1
Improved quality of life through greater access to creative and social experiences	343	321	330	994	20,936	17,857	28,244	67,037	3	6	4	13	9	35	74	118
Improved opportunities through personal and professional transferrable skills	34	33	55	122	3,863	3,856	6,862	14,581	77	66	53	196	413	365	298	1,076
Improved confidence to contribute positively through opportunities for self-expression and community involvement	18	22	26	66	732	1,160	1,522	3,414	58	54	65	177	328	320	386	1,034
Improved feeling of inclusion and equality through greater understanding of other cultures and lifestyles	16	23	12	51	275	532	91	898	0	6	0	6	0	35	0	35
Improved mental and physical health through more active involvement in creative and social experiences	232	176	164	572	11,604	6,455	9,793	27,852	15	15	16	46	113	108	191	412
Improved community resilience through a more diverse creative economy	81	116	131	328	10,926	13,264	13,520	37,710	40	50	16	106	204	171	98	473

1: Attendances are the number of people who attend concerts, screenings or exhibitions. Participations are the number of times people take part in development sessions

2: We have profiled each quarter against data from previous years' so we can more accurately predict and analyse seasonal variances

3: Our activity is planned and measured against the 'Social Outcomes' (SOs) listed under the Impact heading - each event, session or project has two priority SO, and the table above cumulatively captures these priority SOs