

International Connections

The impact of the UK's departure from the European Union on the Visual Arts Sector

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Credits

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Cover image

Rachel Jones, say cheeeeeese (2022). Installation view, Chisenhale Gallery, 2022. Commissioned and produced by Chisenhale Gallery, London. Courtesy of the artist.
Photo: Andy Keate

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1. Forewords



Julie Lomax joined a-n The Artists Information Company as CEO in 2018 after working as Director of Development at Liverpool Biennial. She was previously Director of Visual Arts for the Australia Council for the Arts, responsible for visual arts policy and investment. At Arts Council England, she was Director of Visual Arts for London, responsible for investment in the visual arts in the capital.

She is an Executive Committee member of the Association of Women in the Arts and was the Chair of The Showroom, London between 2016-2021.

She regularly lectures at Sotheby's Institute. She originally trained as an artist, graduating from Chelsea School of Art with a degree in Fine Art.

The purpose of this report

There is no art world without artists. There are no artworks to be shipped, no artworks for sale at art fairs and in commercial galleries, no new artworks for exhibitions, no artworks to tour internationally, no new commissions for international biennials, and no exchange of ideas and creative practice via residencies to facilitate the making of the next great artworks.

Artists and their work are endorsed and travel to market and to audiences through a complex set of relationships and negotiations facilitated by curators, collectors, art dealers, commercial galleries, art fairs, museums, public institutions and galleries, international biennials, and festivals. This is both local and global, with art itself an international language, and it is clear that mobility and collaboration are critical to developing visual art practice. It was important to put artists and their experience at the heart of this report as most artists do not have commercial galleries to support them and are operating as sole traders with portfolio careers that are dependent on other forms of income from the visual arts sector, such as commissions, residencies, teaching, workshops and talks, in addition to sales.

The report brings into sharp focus the challenges faced by artists and their ability to engage in the market, which is curtailed and constrained by increasing costs and the burden of administration. It is also a testament to the resilience of artists and their ability to adapt and respond to a changing environment.

a-n The Artists Information Company has over 28,000 members across the UK. We support our members in the business of being an artist and their creative practice, providing services and programmes to ensure our members are market ready. We look forward to working with governments and funding agencies to advocate for and facilitate better conditions and investment in artists to support our members to thrive, continue to develop their creative practice, and engage with important European markets – which benefits the UK and our global position as a creative nation.



Paula Orrell is the National Director (England) for the Contemporary Visual Arts Network (CVAN) and the Chair of the Coventry Biennial. She was previously the curator of Plymouth Arts Centre and Artistic Director of the River Tamar Project before becoming the Director of Contemporary Art Christchurch Toi Moroki in New Zealand.

Paula has an MA in Creative Curating from Goldsmiths College and a BA in Sculpture from Sheffield Hallam University's Psalter Lane campus.

The need for action

The creative and cultural sector has faced extreme conditions due to the pandemic. Government investment has been a lifeline, though income has been reduced for 70% of independent artists and art workers. CVAN is a sector support organisation advocating, campaigning, advising, and providing opportunities for our colleagues to connect. The visual arts sector is precarious at the best of times. Still, with dedicated individuals and a passionate community that cares deeply about the value and role of the sector in society, the UK remains one of the world's global leaders and the second-largest art market.

The fabric of our sector is underpinned by an ecosystem of world-class higher education institutions and artist-led spaces that showcase and develop experimental work connected to studio spaces and galleries. These are the platforms for establishing a career within a network of incredible galleries, institutions, commissioning projects and organisations across the country. The curation and development of excellent national collections are vital to the economy.

Post Brexit, we will encourage the government to build new EU bilateral agreements and expand partnerships internationally to create the best conditions for the market to grow and ensure that the UK continues to develop as a world leader in the visual arts. With the support of organisations such as the British Council, we will work to ensure that work reaches international audiences and fosters cultural exchanges through residencies, touring exhibitions and commissioning opportunities.

CVAN hopes that this report is the first step in understanding what initiatives need to be developed and implemented to ensure we retain a vibrant and exciting visual arts scene that can thrive nationally and globally.

Executive Summary

THE VISUAL ARTS: A COMPLEX AND VALUABLE SECTOR

The visual arts are defined by UNESCO as: “Arts which appeal primarily to the visual sense; they are art forms that focus on the creation of works, which are primarily visual in nature, or are multidimensional objects”. As a sector, it is complex. There are a wide range of stakeholders, including commercial and not-for-profit organisations, funders, arts professionals, artists, students, higher education institutions, and collectors.

The visual arts sector is a recognised economic strength for the UK and holds an important place in Europe: until its recent departure from the European Union (EU), the UK was the largest exporter of works of art in Europe, reaching a value of nearly £215m in 2019, an increase of 144% since 2011.

THIS REPORT ASSESSES THE IMPACT OF THE UK LEAVING THE EU ON THE VISUAL ARTS

Our research is based on 25 in-depth interviews with visual artists and professionals working in the visual arts sector, and an evidence review. It sets out the impact and challenges for the visual arts sector in the first year of operations following the UK's departure from the EU. The report also gathers insight into the likely medium and long-term impact, gives recommendations on how this can be mitigated and outlines opportunities for working with the EU. From their practical, direct experience, interviewees reported four main areas where their businesses, institutions, or artistic practice have faced challenges and the impact on the quality and quantity of outputs the sector produces:

- Increased costs, especially related to shipping and travel
- Limited access to talent and to talent development opportunities
- Perceptions of the UK as a place to do business from EU member states
- Lack of information, or high costs of acquiring information on new procedures

Five key themes emerge from our analysis:

1. AN EXTRAORDINARY SITUATION

The combination of the UK's departure from the EU and the COVID-19 pandemic created significant disruptions for the visual arts sector. While some challenges link directly to the UK's departure from the EU, they have also been augmented by the pandemic, and others are yet to be fully realised or to emerge as global mobility resumes. This constitutes an unprecedented situation that requires particular attention, adapted interventions, and solutions from the visual arts sector working in partnership with governments and funding agencies.

2. INCREASED COSTS OF MOBILITY DIMINISHING THE ARTISTIC OFFER

While it might be easier for large-scale commercial organisations to find ways to absorb increased costs and bureaucracy resulting from the UK's departure from the EU, this is not the case for smaller commercial and not-for-profit visual arts organisations, visual artists operating as sole traders, or art and design students. Whilst good progress has been made with some EU member

states such as Spain, if further projects are restricted or cancelled due to the increasing costs of movement, this will be detrimental to the creative development of visual artists and the visual arts sector and, consequently, to the overall artistic offer available to audiences in the UK.

3. PERCEIVED IMPACT ON TRADE AND COLLABORATION

The UK's departure from the EU has impacted reciprocal trade and commercial arrangements. Interviewees noted a downturn in the willingness of EU stakeholders to continue engaging with the UK in a wide variety of collaborative cultural and commercial endeavours. This intangible impact has the potential to negatively affect a whole range of tangible outcomes such as cultural tourism or the UK's art market share.

4. LOSS OF FUNDING AND NETWORKS, DIMINISHED INFLUENCE

As well as inhibiting access to EU funding, the UK also lost its access to many valuable European institutions and networks. This is likely to impact the international influence and position of UK visual arts organisations and visual artists, and, by extension, the UK's soft power.

5. UNPREPARED, LESS AGILE, AND LESS COMPETITIVE

The visual arts sector had little time to plan or prepare for the new arrangements arising from the UK/EU Trade and Cooperative Agreement 2020 (TCA). Interviewees reported that the information showing how to comply with the new requirements is overwhelming, inadequate and confusing. The additional workload is considerable, constituting a challenge for ‘business as usual’, as well as being a deterrent for future cultural and commercial dealings with the EU.

While the visual arts sector is dealing with and adapting to a new environment, it remains confident in the face of new challenges. There is a collective determination to continue doing what it does best: creating, collaborating, and inspiring.

WHAT NEXT?

This research suggests a series of practical recommendations and next steps that can support the visual arts sector in the ongoing transition. These aim to support the industry and market relationships between visual artists and the visual arts sector in the UK and the EU and are centred around the following themes:

- Advocacy, Information and Partnerships
- Market Development and supporting Creative Practice
- Trade and Research delegation

2. Movement of People

2.1 Legislation Change

The freedom of movement of people between the UK and the EU ended when the transition period expired on 31 December 2020. Border checks between the UK and the EU have increased and the right of UK citizens to live and work in the EU, and vice versa, are limited¹.

From UK to Europe

UK nationals no longer have the automatic right to live, work or study in the EU, and their individual rights are subject to the host country's national immigration laws and visa requirements².

As tourists, UK nationals are allowed to stay in a Schengen area country for a maximum of 90 days in a 180-day period, unless they successfully obtain a visa, work permit or permanent residence³. From the end of 2022, this will be subject to the obtainment of an ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System), a travel authorisation which shows that they have been security checked and can travel visa-free within the EU for the 90-day in 180 visa-free period⁴.

A work permit is now required for UK nationals to work in the EU. Each of the Schengen member countries has its own visa policies. Criteria and requirements, as well as the application process, differ from one country to the next.

No significant changes have been made to date to insurance legislation; individuals and organisations are still expected to purchase public liability insurance and employer's liability insurance, where necessary, when visiting the EU⁵.

From Europe to UK

EU citizens who are travelling to the UK for the first time from 1st January 2021, or have broken their continuous residence in the UK, are no longer eligible to apply for, or receive an immigration status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

They can travel to the UK for tourism without a visa for up to six months but when it comes to undertaking paid or unpaid work or studies, while the current UK points-based immigration system allows for conditional visa free short-term business activities such as events and conferences⁶, in most cases new visa rules apply⁷.

UK-based companies will now need a sponsor licence to hire from the EU. Varied rules and fees apply to the different routes available and to the type of company and its business activities. At the time of writing, a sponsor licence can cost up to £1,476 and in some cases the yearly Immigration Skills Charge can reach £1,000 for the first year, and £500 for each additional six months for each worker.

2.2 Areas of Impact

Travel implications for UK artists and arts professionals

The new arrangements restrict and impose legal, administrative and financial burdens on artists and arts professionals engaged in active and regular travel between the UK and the EU, both for work and for developing their creative practice. This is the case for visual artists engaged in touring; those relying on frequent or extensive research trips and residencies; visual artists who maintain studios in the EU; and arts professionals engaged in delivering workshops, talks and education projects in the EU.

This also affects visual arts organisations' budgets and ambition if they work, or plan to work with visual artists and visual arts professionals or deliver exchange programmes and projects relying on regular travel between the UK and the EU.

1 UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, 2020

2 House of Commons Library: After Brexit: Visiting, working, and living in the EU

3 Artquest: Brexit Begins (2021)

4 Arts Admin. A practical guide to touring across Europe for UK performing artists and companies (2021)

5 Arts Admin. A practical guide to touring across Europe for UK performing artists and companies (2021)

6 Gov.uk – Visiting the UK as an EU, EEA, or Swiss Citizen

7 Gov.uk – Visiting the UK as an EU, EEA, or Swiss Citizen



Giles Round, *They bow. Curtain. No applause.*
Spike Island, Bristol, 2017.
Photo: Stuart Whipps.
Image courtesy the artist and Spike Island

Recruitment

There is no precise data available for the percentage of visual artists and visual arts professionals from EU countries who are working in the UK visual arts sector, or for UK visual artists and visual arts professionals working in the EU. Nevertheless, the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) estimates between 25% and 30% (2018)⁸ of EU workers were engaged in the UK creative industries, tourism, and the digital sector. Research into other sectors such as fashion and the performing arts links difficulties in recruitment from the EU to a shortage of skilled workers in the UK⁹. The music sector has also identified that a high percentage of the workforce, especially among larger organisations and those based in London, is made up of EU nationals¹⁰.

Sir Charles Saumarez Smith CBE, former director of both the National Portrait Gallery and the National Gallery, said that it will be “much harder, if not impossible, to recruit staff from Europe¹¹.” This lost EU workforce includes museum directors, curators and other expert employees¹².

Recruiting from the EU is challenging due to legal restrictions, organisational policies, additional costs, and administrative burdens. As the UK moved from a system of free movement to a points-based immigration approach, an analysis by Sotheby’s London concluded that the UK’s departure from the EU and the negative impact on the art market would impose an operational and human resources risk to the industry. Recruitment for entry level positions in the visual arts sector from the EU is limited under the new system and so is perceived to be at risk of significant restrictions and disruptions¹³.

Limited access to EU talent also has other significant consequences, including restriction of artistic ambitions, and a poorer quality cultural offer.

Employment

UK visual artists and visual arts professionals working in the sector face restrictions on their short-term business travel. New rules require independent professionals who wish to take unrestricted business trips in the EU, to hold a degree and have six years of industry experience¹⁴ with further restrictions at the member-state level – although some progress has been made with individual member states to ease movement restrictions. For visual artists and visual arts professionals, without the formal qualifications or the required level of industry experience, this is a barrier to short-term business travel which, prior to the UK’s departure from the EU, did not carry the additional financial

and administrative burden of obtaining a visa or work permit. The visual arts sector is concerned that it will greatly impact those involved in research and residencies.

By extension, there is a concern that UK visual artists’ and professionals’ careers will suffer from these limitations both in terms of what it means for the development of their creative practice if exchange opportunities between the UK and the EU are limited, and the impact on their incomes, if business development, fees and sales prospects are constrained.

Arts University Fees

EU students and students from the EEA-EFTA or Switzerland who start a new course in England, Scotland or Wales after August 2021 will no longer be eligible for home fee status. Each UK university will set its own fees for EU students¹⁵ and the expectations are that EU students will fall in the same category as international students. Prospective students from EU member states have moved from home student status paying £9,250 for a typical undergraduate course, to international student status paying £23,870 for the same degree¹⁶.

A recent survey by the British Council revealed that 70% of young Europeans who would like to study in an English-speaking country, put the UK as their preferred destination according to the latest UCAS figures. However, the number of EU applicants applying for courses in UK universities by the end of June 2021 fell by 43% compared with 2020¹⁷.

With three universities ranked in the world’s Top 10 Universities for Art and Design (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2020) the UK dominates the EU in the teaching of these subjects. The Higher Education Statistics Agency revealed the numbers of students enrolled on degrees in the UK was already starting to decline for the academic year 2017/18, with a 5.3% decrease in the number of EU students enrolled on Fine Art degrees in the UK, compared to 2016 – the year the UK voted to leave the EU¹⁸.

This evidence supports the argument that an increase in fees for EU students is a factor in the declining numbers of aspiring visual artists from the EU studying at UK art and design higher education institutions. This is expected to have a negative impact on the UK visual arts sector, with fewer EU students engaging with, and in, creative exchanges with UK universities and arts institutions.

8 House of Commons: The potential impact of Brexit on the creative industries, tourism, and the digital single market (2018)

9 House of Commons: The potential impact of Brexit on the creative industries, tourism, and the digital single market (2018)

10 A report by ICM and SQW on behalf of Arts Council England: Impact of Brexit on the arts and culture sector (2017)

11 <https://news.artnet.com/market/implications-of-brexit-1934921>

12 Creative Industries Federation: Why the UK’s World-Leading Creative Industries Need International Workers and How to Attract Them (2017)

13 Sotheby’s Institute of Art: Royal Uncertainty: An In-depth Analysis of the Potential Affects of Brexit on the UK Art Market (2016)

14 UK in a Changing Europe: The Brexit Deal and Services Sector (2020)

15 British Council: EU Student Advice

16 The Art Newspaper: Huge fee hikes for EU students who want to study art in the UK come into force from September (2021)

17 House of Commons: The potential impact of Brexit on the creative industries, tourism, and the digital single market (2018)

18 HESA. What do Students Study? (2021).

3. Movement of Goods

3.1 Legislation Change

Importing and exporting goods between the UK and EU is no longer subject to the freedom of movement of goods that governs trade within the EU single market. Importers and exporters on both sides must ensure they have provided the correct documentation and paid the relevant taxes to move goods between the two areas¹⁹.

Import, export, and sales and purchases

Customs declarations and documentation for UK/EU trade are now required, and individuals and organisations involved are faced with significant changes to their sales VAT, import VAT and customs duty obligations, as well as alterations to the controls and procedures at the UK/EU borders.

Sales to customers in the EU are considered exports, and as such must be dealt with in the same way as sales of goods to customers outside the EU. The sale will become a zero-rated export (the VAT rate is set to zero) and if the EU customer is to act as the importer, they will be responsible for the import VAT due in the EU country of import. These rates vary according to countries.

EU exporters will not charge VAT to UK buyers, they will have to pay VAT to HMRC at the point of import alongside any applicable customs duties.

Furthermore, some stock purchases from the EU are now classed as imports into the UK. These will therefore mostly be excluded from the VAT margin scheme for onward sale.

Paperwork implications

There are several administrative implications for the visual arts sector. The following points are a non-exhaustive selection of implications that are affecting visual artists and visual arts organisations in their import and export dealings with the EU.

Businesses must obtain a UK Economic Operators Registration and Identification number to commercially import and export goods from England, Wales or Scotland into the EU, and, depending on how sales are structured, UK dealers may be required to register for VAT.

The new regulations now require artworks to be subject to export declarations, detailing places of origin, components and values before they can cross the UK-EU border. Some exports of artworks to the EU require export licenses to leave the UK, and UK exporters will need to prepare for changes to the Rules of Origin legislation governing the trade of physical art objects. Compliance is subject to tariffs and requires specific paperwork to be compiled.

Some import, export or re-export of artwork containing animal or plant species, and their parts or derivatives might also need a permit under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

UK creative industry businesses with EU exposure will need to reconfigure their regulatory compliance and their intellectual property strategies, so that goods can be distributed across the EU. Businesses are liable to meet the costs of these changes to continue trading in the same way. For example, UK trademark owners will need to appoint an EEA lawyer to represent them on new applications and proceedings before the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO).

The structure and legal status of some companies in the UK might also be impacted; companies and limited liability partnerships that have their central administration or principal place of business in EU member states, may no longer have their limited liability recognised²⁰.

UK companies who want to use a provider to transport goods to the EU by road will need a road consignment note²¹. Shippers need a 'UK Licence for the Community' to make commercial journeys within the EU. This licence only allows the holder to conduct a limited number of haulage jobs inside an EU country or between two EU countries. Licence holders must get a 'European Conference of Ministers of Transport' permit to conduct three or more cross-trade jobs within the European Union²².

The UK Government plans to introduce an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme that will ease clearance across the UK-EU border. In future cross-border shipping, there will be a need to apply for an ETA in advance of travelling²³.

What remains unchanged

Some areas are left untouched, the most relevant are detailed below:

Reliefs for UK import duties such as Temporary Importation Relief and Inward Processing Relief (eg for exhibitions) have remained largely intact.

The UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement 2020 confirms that EU laws in relation to Artists' Resale Rights and Anti-Money Laundering will remain enshrined in UK law.

The UK Government guarantees that artists and their heirs will continue to benefit from the Artist's Resale Right which is a right of artists living in EU member states, and therefore the UK's departure from the EU will have no impact on the intellectual property rights of artists, as a continuation of the existing rights has been agreed.

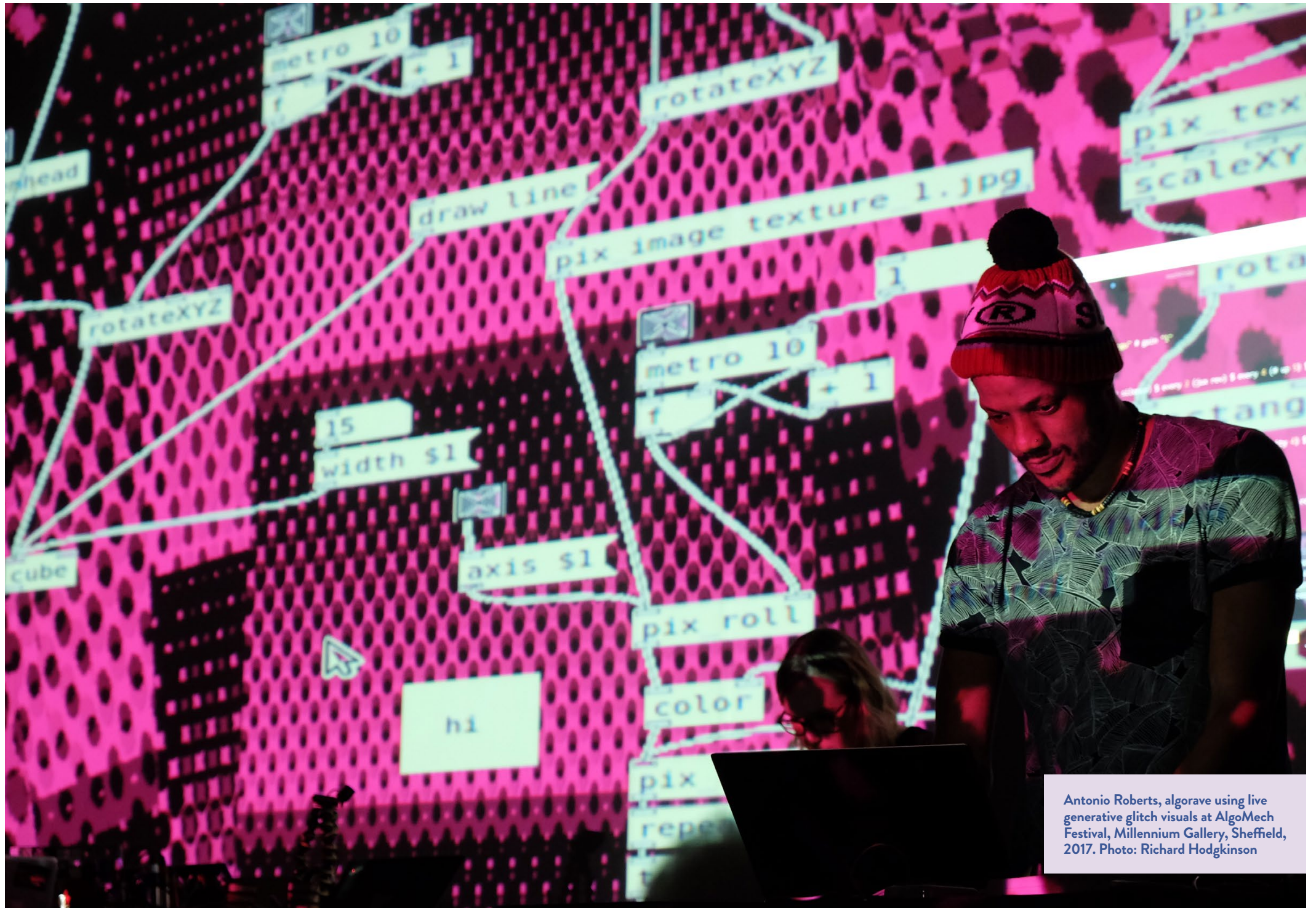
19 Gov.uk: Get UK customs clearance when exporting goods: step by step

20 Gov.uk: Selling services to the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein

21 Gov.uk: Carry out international road haulage. (2021)

22 Gov.uk: International road haulage: HGV driver documents. (2021)

23 Gov.uk: New Plan for Immigration. (2021)



Antonio Roberts, algorave using live generative glitch visuals at AlgoMech Festival, Millennium Gallery, Sheffield, 2017. Photo: Richard Hodgkinson

3.2 Areas of Impact for the Visual Arts Sector

Administrative burden

The immediate impact on artists and the visual arts sector in the UK is more research, additional paperwork, a required series of new tasks, and associated time investment. Visual artists and the visual arts sector are concerned about the increasingly complicated bureaucracy. Joe Kennedy, Director of Unit London, a commercial contemporary art gallery, explains how these time-consuming new procedures are damaging commercial art galleries' ability to be agile, to respond to a fast-paced art market, as well as the effect it is having on collectors, sales, and subsequent incomes of visual artists.

“More customs red tape will mean it will take longer to get works to clients from the UK to the EU and vice versa, which may result in delays and could affect deals materializing”²⁴

Customs clearance issues are affecting what used to be an easy A to B shipment to the EU. Logistics partners “might get turned away at the border or you might suffer a tariff” due to incorrect product classification of artworks, and proof of origin documentation for non-UK goods may prove to be problematic for customs clearance if the works have multiple national sources of origin²⁵. The case studies in this report illustrate these problems.

Gallery registrars and other staff involved in shipping artworks are spending considerable time training or re-training and updating processes and timelines to deal with complex administration and logistics. Visual artists operating as sole traders have reported that the additional administration is a burden with many stating that they don't feel fully informed or up to date.

Additional costs

All exports to the EU are now subject to EU VAT regardless of their value. This has cost implications for the importer and the exporter. The scenarios of importing and exporting an artwork between the UK and EU are multifold, and depend not only on its value, origin, purpose and destination, but also on who and where the importer and exporter are, and what has been agreed in terms of who will cover which fees and taxes. Sales executives in commercial art galleries report that these are tools they use as part of sales negotiations.

If the scenarios are multifold, so are the consequences, and while not all of them are detrimental to UK businesses, generally this report found that importing and exporting artworks between UK and EU is more costly than it used to be prior to the UK leaving the EU. There are new or additional expenditures for transportation, VAT, insurance, customs compliance, and legal requirements. Writing to the Antique Trade Gazette in March, LAPADA member, Phillip Crosthwaite of Cloverleaf Home Interiors said: “What would normally cost us £300 to be delivered from The Netherlands now costs us £800”.

These are direct and expected costs; some less obvious and hidden costs could also affect the parties involved. For instance, customs queues at Dover and other ports are expected to be longer. To mitigate this, shippers may need to have more drivers on each truck to comply with regulations regarding workers' hours. Vehicles will likely need to be modified in terms of security and climate control for artworks to account for longer periods of time, and insurance companies could increase their fees as delays mean the goods are in transit for longer. Due to these new challenges, it has also been reported that the competition for suppliers involved in shipping has shrunk, meaning clients have fewer options and prices could be inflated. Furthermore, some exporters might need to engage specialist advisers at an additional cost to ensure procedures are followed correctly.

For large businesses, these costs can be managed and absorbed within sales, but for individual visual artists, smaller commercial galleries, and public visual arts institutions with fixed programme budgets, they could have a seriously negative impact.

Loss of competitive edge

Where the UK has lost a key advantage in the arts market since the departure from the EU, is in instances when it could make the most of its low value-added sales taxes, which in many cases was not even applied. For example, a commercial gallery sending a painting to a client in Italy, where the VAT is 10%, could previously save money by shipping it via the UK, where the VAT is only 5%. Now, the buyer or seller would be forced to pay the additional 10% VAT upon its arrival in Italy. Jo Kennedy from Unit London recalls this common procedure.

“The UK was always a good vehicle to bring works to and sell onwards to EU in free circulation”²⁶.

Visual arts sector commentators fear this could also negatively impact the robust UK auction and art fair sectors and make places like France – which has one of the next lowest VAT rates, at 5.5% – more appealing for business.

Some UK commercial galleries, who have other addresses in Europe, are concerned about losing the advantage of being able to ship artworks between their different locations due to the increased shipping costs, while others such as White Cube and David Zwirner, have opened offices in Paris to manage their sales from France and be more competitive.

Smaller commercial galleries have fewer options, especially if they have a high proportion of clients based in Europe. This is the case for galleries specialising in Italian modern art who have closed their London galleries: Tornabuoni Art Gallery, Cortesi Gallery and ML Fine Art.

24 <https://www.nicholashall.art/journal/art-logistics-post-brexit/>

25 Haines Watt: VAT & Customs post-Brexit - challenges facing the art sector (2021)

26 <https://www.nicholashall.art/journal/art-logistics-post-brexit/>

The impact on incomes of visual artists who are sole traders and who previously had access to a healthy European market, has been significant. Lydia Hardwick's interview in this report highlights this.

The UK is perceived to have lost a considerable competitive edge in its visual arts dealings with the EU, whose member states can now make savings by choosing not to trade with British companies, choosing instead from the other 26 members. It has been reported that even when cost is not the primary blocker for EU clients to purchase from a UK gallery, paperwork can be.

Access to art for UK audiences

The impact for the UK will not only be felt on the visual arts market trade: high import and export costs could also endanger the quantity and quality of exhibitions available in the UK including touring exhibitions. V&A Director Tristram Hunt argues museums would find it impossible to host "block-buster exhibitions"²⁷. This is echoed by Luís Raposo, the European President of the International Council of Museums:

*"We are afraid that itinerant exhibitions will be more expensive due to increasing costs in Assurances"*²⁸

Impact on UK's soft power

Most industries have noticed a fall in overall import and export of goods to and from the EU. Between January 2020 and January 2021, exports from the UK to Europe fell by 38% and imports from the EU fell by 16%. Economist Thomas Sampson (2021) expects the continued cost of export declarations to further reduce the overall level of trade between the UK and the EU.

Combining music, performing and visual arts, 56% of UK exports went to the EU in 2014, and 59% of the Arts Council England's (ACE) international activity in the three years leading up to 2016 took place within the EU. ACE states that "EU countries make up 59% of the market for our arts and culture industry"²⁹. This equals a substantial movement of goods and services for the visual arts sector that are at risk from being affected by the disclosed challenges detailed in this report. As a major exporter of cultural goods, the UK could see soft power with the EU critically affected.

27 <https://www.museumnext.com/article/museums-and-brexite/>

28 <https://www.nicholashall.art/journal/art-logistics-post-brexite/>

29 Arts Council England: The Arts and Culture Sector and Exit from the European Union (2016)



Lydia Hardwick, ceramic pots,
various sizes, 2020.
Image courtesy the artist

4. European Funding and Networks

4.1 A New Situation

The UK's departure from the EU also ended direct access to EU funding including the European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds which gave the UK €17.2 billion between 2014 and 2020 and Creative Europe which, since its launch in 2014, has awarded €111 million to the UK. The UK has lost access to several important EU institutions and networks including the European Council and the European Investment Bank, as well as to the European Network of Cultural Centres, European Digital Art and Science Network and the European Innovation Council.

4.2 Impact on the Sector

EU Funding

A breakdown of year-on-year funding from Creative Europe can be found in Figure 1.

Fig. 1: Creative Europe Funding in the UK (€million)

Year	Media	Culture	Cross-Sector
2014	€17	€6	€0
2015	€11.4	€5.4	€1
2016	€11.9	€3.5	€0.5
2017	€12.8	€3.8	€0
2018	€12.2	€3.5	€0
2019	€14.4	€6.9	€0.09

Source: Creative Europe Desk UK

Case studies of Creative Europe supported projects in the visual arts

In 2019, Creative Europe gave UK-based Feature Expanded (FX), €80,000 to develop a unique and tailored set of activities that helped visual artists bring new vision and strong innovation to feature film production.

Source: Creative Europe Desk UK

Understanding Territoriality: Identity, Place and Possession was a two-year partnership between the UK, Italy, Belgium, and Macedonia. Creative Europe provided €200,000 in funding to the project between 2015 and 2017. This was a pan-European initiative involving the UK and 15 other countries.

Source: Creative Europe Desk UK

Between 2017 and 2020, Creative Europe gave €200,000 in funding to Creative Climate Leadership. This was a new programme for artists and cultural professionals to explore the cultural dimensions of climate change and act with impact, creativity, and resilience.

Source: Creative Europe Desk UK

UK organisations have collectively been involved in delivering 44% of projects benefitting from the Creative Europe fund since its inception. There are concerns about the gap in funding for EU collaboration and programmes, both in terms of source of income, and impact and ambition.

UK cities can no longer participate in the European Capital of Culture programme, which greatly benefited Liverpool in 2008, accumulating a total of £130M in the six years lead-up period. However, UK cities do have the opportunity to participate in the UK City of Culture programme. Other sources, while less prominent, were numerous. National cultural institutes such as the Goethe Institut and other foundations or institutions distributing funds for cultural projects for EU members states are no longer available to the UK.

Networks

As well as losing access to EU funding, visual artists and visual arts professionals expressed concern about losing their position within EU networks and institutions. This means they would no longer be able to influence decisions or benefit from direct access to discussions regarding creative, cultural, and digital affairs within the EU.

While some established relationships between UK and EU arts organisations are solid and expected to continue, they will be affected by the new constraints and challenges which are likely to reduce the number and scope of projects being delivered.

In some cases, the very existence of arts organisations heavily relying on EU networks are at risk which may result in a more inward-looking visual arts sector.

5. UK International Influence

International economic perception of the UK

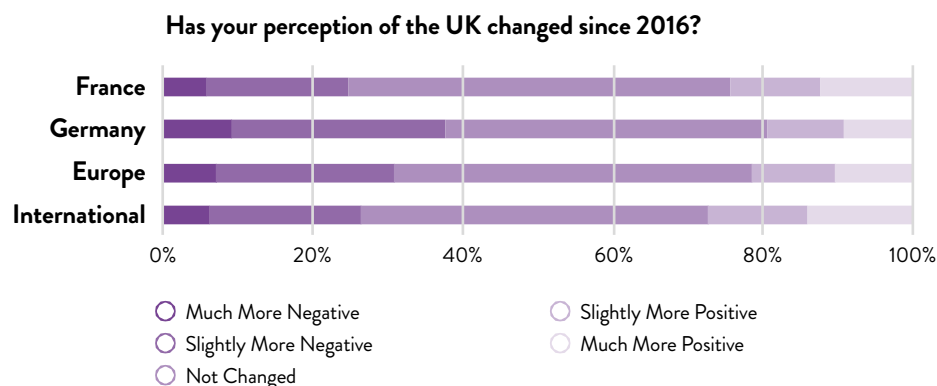
A recent poll of international attitudes toward the UK since the UK voted to leave the EU in 2016, shows that across the EU, more than 30% of its citizens have a more negative attitude toward the UK than they did before the vote. Figure 2 (below) shows how this decline in public reputation is more pronounced in Germany, one of the UK's significant partners in the arts.

These perceptions and attitudes towards the UK may have an impact on the UK economy and the opportunities available for the visual arts sector. The Initiative on Global Markets surveyed economists in the US and Europe about how they perceive the UK's departure from the EU will impact the UK economy between 2021 and 2030. The results showed that 90% of European economists and 79% of US economists agreed or strongly agreed that the UK economy would be several percentage points smaller in 2030 than it would have been as a member of the EU³¹.

Additionally, a recent econometric study concluded that the UK's departure from the EU is predicted to have a detrimental economic effect on art markets in the UK. The model shows a predicted decline in London's position as one of the few large primary art market centres on the global stage, due to the UK's departure from the EU affecting access to this market³².

Interviewees also raised concerns that the UK's departure from the EU will impact on the confidence of EU visual artists and visual arts organisations to collaborate with the UK, resulting in the country's visual arts sector being excluded from funding, investment, and commercial opportunities.

Fig. 2: International Public Perception of the UK, post 2016



Source: Published by Statista Research Department in 2020: Survey of 4,500 respondents conducted in 2018.

Tourism's share in the visual arts economy

Cultural tourism is crucial for the UK's economy. In 2017, London alone generated £3.2 billion in revenue from cultural tourism³³. Real and perceived restrictions on travel to the UK are important risk factors that will impact on attracting tourists.

In a 2020 report looking at the factors impacting visits to DCMS-funded museums, the UK's departure from the EU is listed as one of the five external factors increasingly likely to deter EU visitors to the UK. It reveals a correlation between the 1.7million fewer visits seen by London DCMS-funded museums from EU visitors in 2016-2018 compared to 2014-2016, and decreased enthusiasm to visit the UK.

Scoring four entries in the top 15 most visited galleries in the world, some of the UK's most popular art museums get over half of their visits from tourists. For example, 64% of visitors to the National Gallery are tourists. Strategies to retain this market position and increase visitor numbers from the EU will be important to the museums and gallery sector.

UK museums and galleries such as the V&A wish to continue to host large successful touring exhibitions such as David Bowie Is and Pink Floyd, both of which had immense international appeal. The current structure of import taxes due to the UK's departure from the EU could be a barrier to prevent this happening in the future. This type of cultural activity also enhances the UK's 'soft power' and influence internationally, and has an impact on the UK's attractiveness as a tourist destination.

An interpretative analysis of the secondary art market has suggested that if there was a decline in tourism due to the UK leaving the EU this would also impact visual artists, whose works sell on the secondary art market – a significant amount of sales in this market are made to tourists from the EU³⁴.

Overall, there is a concern about the impact of a suspected reduction in the number of international visitors on the UK's visual arts sector's finances as tourism accounts for a large proportion of its income.

31 Chicago Booth: Initiative on Global Markets. After Brexit. (2021)

32 Baur, P. Analysing the Impact of BREXIT on Artists Careers within the United Kingdom by Examining the Market for 'Fine Art' (2019)

33 https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/take_a_closer_look_-_a_cultural_tourism_vision_for_london_2015_-_2017.pdf

34 Baur, P. Analysing the Impact of BREXIT on Artists Careers within the United Kingdom by Examining the Market for 'Fine Art' (2019)



Copperfield London booth
presenting Alberta Whittle at
Frieze London 2021

6. Case Studies

Caroline Bartlett, Artist: Caroline Bartlett is a textile artist with several commercial and public galleries, including The Whitworth, and museums such as the V&A. She supplements her artistic practice with teaching at university and in adult education; she has been a visiting lecturer on Foundation, Degree, and MA level courses. She works internationally and is represented by a commercial gallery in the US and delivers five-day workshops in Holland. While COVID-19 has postponed her workshops in the EU, at present she is struggling to get clarity on what will be required or expected in terms of work visas and permits to continue working internationally and specifically in the EU, when travel resumes.

“Nobody seems to know what is expected”

The partners she works with in the EU are also finding the new requirements to hire UK tutors for workshops challenging; she is worried they might choose to stop working with UK visual artists like her, which will have an impact on her income. This is a risk that she is coming to terms with.

“Can they be bothered to find out and go through all the hoops? [...] For a lot of EU countries, if they are given the choice of a whole range of artists that they can invite, it’s going to be much easier for them to just invite another EU resident than to come our way”

Navigating the information and getting clarification on complexities around labelling the equipment and materials she needs to ship to enable her to carry out her workshops has been challenging, raising questions around whether the equipment and material are for sale, part of an exhibition, or for how long the exhibition will take place.

“It’s more to do with the amount of upskilling I am going to have to do to comply with a lot of regulations [...] For small traders, there is just so much information to take on and digest to get it right so that you don’t get caught in traps like I’ve previously experienced, where my work has been held at customs for weeks [...] I sent 13 documents to get my work back”

Shipping artworks is not straightforward. For example, textiles can be categorised as craft or fine art. It is also dependent on the purpose it will fulfil at the destination, and different tariffs apply to the different categories available.

“The crossing over between disciplines means that things do not sit neatly within the categories that are provided within the tariff system”

Due to the nature of her work, her artworks might travel from one country to another and be on loan for more than two years. This impacts on the validity of the documentation she needs to support her shipping. In addition, visual artists like her need to be aware of the VAT in relation to customs charges. In Caroline’s opinion, the guidance available is not specific and the rules do not address the operational specificities of the visual arts sector, nor the need for flexibility which could end up discouraging people like her from taking on projects that require shipping within the EU.



Diana Ali in collaboration with Will Hughes, *Suits You Not Me*, slo-mo video performance, 2016. Image courtesy the artist

“For many, it’s just not worth the hassle. I think for a lot of artists who are not fully established, they will feel quite constrained and confined and less ambitious”

Barbican Art Galleries: Like many other arts organisations, the Barbican reported that it is still too early to measure the impact that the UK’s departure from the EU will have on their operations, budget, artistic vision, and business planning.

“I guess a lot of organisations have been in this firefighting situation, and haven’t had the luxury of time to really step back and analyse this”

The Barbican Visual Arts department has made the decision to pay an additional fee to their transport agents so they can manage all aspects of shipping to the EU.

“They kind of are our buffer, so we pay them effectively to take on a lot of the headaches for us”

Merchandise and other goods, such as books, that the Barbican sells in their shop, and exhibition catalogues that they produce, have also been impacted by increased export costs.

“Transport costs have just gone up so much. 300% in some cases. It’s so extraordinary that we’re having to relook at all our financial models in relation to partnership work. And then there are also complicated factors around sustainability”

The Barbican Visual Arts department has not yet had to deal with the impact on artists’ freedom of movement due to the pandemic, but anticipates that they will have to absorb the additional work and costs that will come with it. The Barbican, as a multi-arts centre, will mostly feel the knock-on effects on their performing arts income, which could put additional pressure on the visual arts department to generate alternative revenue.

“We’ve talked about Brexit for months and months now at the Barbican but, honestly, the performing arts have dominated those conversations”

On another level, their confidence about working with institutions in the EU has also altered significantly.

“There was a slight feeling of loss of trust between the UK and Europe [...] We’re less of a natural partner than we would have been”

When it comes to recruitment, another limitation the Barbican Centre will face is having access to a smaller pool of talent to recruit from.

“Being able to attract the best and most talented people from Europe, in terms of who we can sponsor at the Barbican, we have rules about which grade you have to be in for the City of London to agree to sponsor your visa. So, for anyone who’s at an earlier stage of their career, we wouldn’t be able to sponsor them however brilliant they were and however much we want them”

Giles Round, Artist: Giles Round is a visual artist working in a wide range of media. His practice relies on art materials and products that are often produced outside of the UK, such as linen, stretchers and some specific paint products.

“We are now even more relying on our European neighbours for certain types of product which we don’t produce”

For Giles, what used to be a straightforward online purchase has become a time-consuming process with new conditions, additional costs and expected delivery delays.

“Buying something on the internet should be as easy as buying socks, suddenly it became a two-day thing with emails back and forth, setting up all these accounts etc. [...] I had to pay them a higher amount because they put a kind of office fee on the fact that all their UK orders take them more time”

While he used to have regular work projects taking place in the EU, he is concerned that these kinds of opportunities will not come in so easily anymore.

“All of a sudden, rather than being easy, you become a much more difficult option [...] We will become more isolated, and I think our invitations would just go down”

He is adapting his work and operations to the new regulations; some are easier to find and to understand than others. The UK’s departure from the EU has added pressure on small companies and sole traders like him who do not have the adequate resources to absorb costs; these include the time associated with compiling paperwork, conducting the necessary research, and covering for the additional expenses to be able to continue working in the EU.

He has had to set up an Economic Operators Registration and Identification number (EORI) number to manage his sales, and make some changes that have impacted his income, and he has chosen to no longer display the option of selling his artworks to EU customers on his website.

“I wouldn’t send anything internationally unless somebody emailed me first. Because every single time, I’m going to have to learn or discover how much it’s going to cost... do this whole kind of thing. And before, it was much, much easier, and so now, because I haven’t had time to understand. I’m going to shut it down”

Hollybush Gardens: Hollybush Gardens is a commercial contemporary art gallery founded in 2005. The gallery represents international artists with a large proportion living in the EU. Hollybush Gardens works with EU institutions – artworks were shipped regularly back and forth between the EU and the UK before the pandemic.

They have had to make some changes in the way they operate in terms of the storage of artworks, to anticipate large expenses in shipping.

“We can no longer be a hub for inventory for certain artists [...] It’s basically a lot more costly, so spontaneity and fluidity of moving things around has changed dramatically”

They are concerned about what the impact of the UK’s departure from the EU is having on the visual arts sector and the increase in shipping costs that will have serious consequences on non-profits and small-to-medium-sized UK visual arts institutions.

“You cannot afford to suddenly spend £1000 to ship one or two works from Europe when it may have cost you £200”

If you add to this the new measures affecting the free movement of people, and consider how it will affect visual artists, Hollybush Gardens are worried it is impacting emerging artists who do not have a strong position in the market.

The information on the new procedures and costs of importing and exporting goods is difficult to find and hard to digest, and it doesn’t truly reflect the processes galleries have to manage. It often ends up being a case-by-case approach that requires having to look at each consignment individually and from scratch.

“I think there’s a lot of confusion. And it’s quite hard to find advice. I think it’s easier when you have X million turnover, and you can go to an expensive tax lawyer, it’s harder when you are a small to medium operation. We have seven employees”

Hollybush Gardens expect to be faced with a situation where either they must lose some of their competitive edge in the EU market by increasing their prices to cover the additional costs of shipping, or absorb these new expenses and have their profit margins squeezed as a result.

For the first time, they are expecting to have to consider where visual artists and artworks are based when deciding on their exhibition programme.

“You have to think a little bit more in terms of margins and costs, which we’ve never done, ever, in relation to anyone, really. So, it’s a kind of a financial awareness, which I don’t want to have when thinking about what shows to do. But you will have to, to some extent, if you haven’t got limitless funds”

In December 2019, Hollybush Gardens did a lot of work on their inventory and looked at what might need to be shipped to the EU to ensure that as many of their artists as possible would not be left with a big bill if they needed to re-import their artworks at some point in the future. As a result, a lot of artworks were sent back to their artists based in the EU before 31st December 2019. This has led to reduced stock in Hollybush Gardens storage which will impact on what they can show collectors and ultimately, what they can sell. Like many other companies, they are considering opening an office in the EU to alleviate some of these new challenges.

“We’re even thinking of potentially having an office somewhere else. I don’t want to have an office in another country. I don’t want to add to the costs or workload, but we’re seriously thinking about that”

There is also the question of the UK’s arts courses no longer appealing to EU students. They explain how a lot of the artists they work with who are based in the EU, studied in London – eg at the Royal College of Art or Goldsmiths.

“I am worried about just the fact that less European students will want to come into British art schools. And I’m worried about how that will undermine the kind of ecology of what’s going on in London; we’re talking about London, that’s where we’re based, but of course, the whole UK”

The concern is that London and the UK is losing its status in the global art world, becoming less attractive and less vibrant.

“I think that the idea of London as a cultural hub has taken some beating. And it’s no longer potentially seen like that [...] I think that there’s a sense, amongst younger and mid-career artists, that London is perhaps no longer the interesting scene”

Jane Wilson and Louise Wilson, Artists: Jane Wilson and Louise Wilson are visual artists who work together as a duo. Their work is based in video, film and photography and they were nominated for the Turner Prize in 1999.

Over their years of making artworks, they have developed a trusting relationship with the suppliers they use for their work, some of which are based in the EU. As a result of increased shipping costs, they may not be able to continue working with all of them.

“Last summer, when we were fabricating work for the Royal Academy exhibition, we worked with these printers for years and they are fantastic, but the shipping, just to be able to kind of bring the work physically back, was three times what we would normally have paid”

They noted how this issue has also prevented some artists based in the EU from participating in the exhibition at the Royal Academy, as the commercial galleries that represent them could not afford the additional shipping costs.

“The galleries weren’t in a position to forecast three times the transportation costs, and that really did impact who came through, in terms of the invitation”

As university lecturers, they were saddened to lose many EU students due to the increase in the tuition fees.

“European students, they won’t come. And I noticed that. I was teaching at the RCA on the Moving Image course. And it’s a great cohort that we had selected from interviews: some fantastic work. And that all happened. Some of them did manage to make it across and they lasted the first semester. And then that was it because they just couldn’t sustain it [...] It was a lot of students who didn’t pursue the course”

Due to the pandemic, they feel it is still early to really understand what the full impact of the UK’s departure from the EU will be on the visual arts sector. However, having personally benefited from opportunities to grow and develop as visual artists when the UK was a member of the EU – from freedom of movement to collaborations, work opportunities and funding – they are concerned about what this now means for UK-based artists’ experiences if the ease of travelling and the available funding to take part in projects in the EU is taken away from them.

“We’re in an international art world, and London was very much an important centre, the ultimate thing is that Brexit would have and will have a negative impact on the UK arts funding”

They are hopeful that the situation will improve, for visual artists to find new routes and for unexpected positive outcomes, but they also question the point of frontiers at a time where the whole world has never felt so connected, even if only digitally.

“As a digitally connected society, where do we need to sit in terms of borders or unions or work?”

Diana Ali, Artist: Diana Ali is a visual artist and curator who has been working internationally for the past 20 years. Her work relies on travel and international collaborations. She has first-hand experience that the increased costs linked to shipping artworks to and from the EU is dissuading artists from taking part in an exhibition she is working on. As an artist herself, she can relate and shares their concern.

“The main problems have been that artists don’t want to do it because of customs, delivering their artwork, which they pay for themselves”

Looking ahead, she worries that the UK will be left out when it comes to collaborative arts projects with the EU, which will continue to operate as it did, but without the UK. She feels it will have an impact on the ability of UK museums to continue being part of the circuit for major touring exhibitions, and that galleries will become even more insular, which goes against what she believes is the intrinsic nature of art being an international language.

“There is going to be a lot of tightening on cross-border, cultural collaboration”

She reports that the UK’s departure from the EU has impacted her students, both UK and EU based and that UK visual arts students will be excluded from opportunities that their EU based peers will have access to, and for many EU students it will be financially challenging to study in the UK.

Hannah Barry Gallery: Hannah Barry is the Director of the Hannah Barry Gallery, a commercial gallery representing early career artists and is also the Director of Bold Tendencies: a not-for-profit arts organisation with an annual programme of visual arts and architecture commissions and related live events. The Hannah Barry Gallery has a relationship with the EU via the artists they work with, its supporters, partners, and collectors. The gallery also used to welcome EU trainees aged 19 to 27 who applied to gain work experience via its own art trainee programme, or through the EU’s Erasmus programme.

Shipping artworks is a very tangible issue for the gallery, impacting its budget and competitiveness.

“We have an impact regarding import taxes. It’s much more complicated than it used to be to bring a painting from Brussels to London [...] Especially when you’re talking about works of art at the lower end of the market [...] The cost of shipping can at times go towards 50% of that value. So, it makes the cost of showing that painting here, and selling it here, ultimately, more expensive. And that also applies to the reverse: if you sell something made here, you no longer have to charge the VAT for something that’s going to Germany, but that person will have to pay their own import duties”

As a gallery director, she understands her role comes with challenges and as an established company she will find ways to work through the complexities of the UK’s departure from the EU and the impact on her business. However, she has concerns about people starting new arts businesses in the current climate.

“I don’t mind existing in a pressurised situation. But I would rather that the pressure came from places other than always just being about finance [...] I think it’s very damaging particularly for the young generation, because I think, if I had my chance again, now, I probably wouldn’t start what I have been able to start”

Hannah believes the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on the visual arts sector, is, and will be, broad and doesn't stop at finances and logistics. It also has an impact on the way the UK is viewed.

"I think already, there's a negative perception I would say, I think, certainly from colleagues and friends outside of the UK [...] The country is not viewed as it was"

She thinks that where the UK's departure from the EU has created gaps, there should be consistent lines of finance and communication to overcome these.

Paul Maheke, Artist: Paul Maheke is a French visual artist who lives and works in London. He is still working out what this means for him personally, being a self-employed artist whose earnings come from both the EU and the UK, and he is considering seeking legal advice to assist him.

"The timeline was so precipitated that people didn't really have time to prepare"

He experienced first-hand one of the implications of increased shipping costs. A public gallery he worked with suggested he travelled to France to produce the work for a show he was taking part in, so that they would avoid the additional charges they would have had to cover if he had produced his work in the UK and then shipped it to France.

"It also meant that I had to spend an extended period of time outside of the UK, outside of my home, outside of my studio [...] It's definitely not something that I would like to do more in terms of having to travel to produce work, I think it's a weird logic as well, it doesn't really necessarily align with the ecological concept that I have"

He is concerned that the visual arts sector in the UK will become isolated if exchanges with the EU are more complicated and more costly. This could also translate into a loss of opportunities and revenue for UK artists.

"I know already it's, for example, crazy expensive to import paintings into the EU now, and vice versa. So, I guess I can see that it can get in the way of making money, basically"

If he wasn't settled in his live workspace in London, he would have considered moving back to Europe.

"I think there would be less and less reasons for me to stay in London"

Sunday Painter: The Sunday Painter is a ten-year-old commercial gallery representing 12 artists, and participates in international art fairs. The immediate impact of the UK leaving the EU on their operations has been around shipping.

"It's at least 20% more expensive to ship. And then obviously the import tariffs which are a pain"

The gallery notes that it has yet to experience and understand the full impact of the UK's departure from the EU on its budgets and operations. They are considering opening storage for their artworks in the EU and think that this could be a future solution for smaller commercial galleries. At present they are navigating and learning the rules and changes that apply to their operations. This adds time and consideration to each shipment they manage.

"It is case by case in terms of when we're shipping to the EU or selling work to someone in the EU or bringing work in, everyone has different import rates. So often it's learning as you go through the job"

International art fairs are a big part of the visual arts sector economy, and the additional shipping costs the gallery will have to outlay to attend an art fair has restricted their participation to one art fair in the EU in 2021 – and this issue is two-sided.

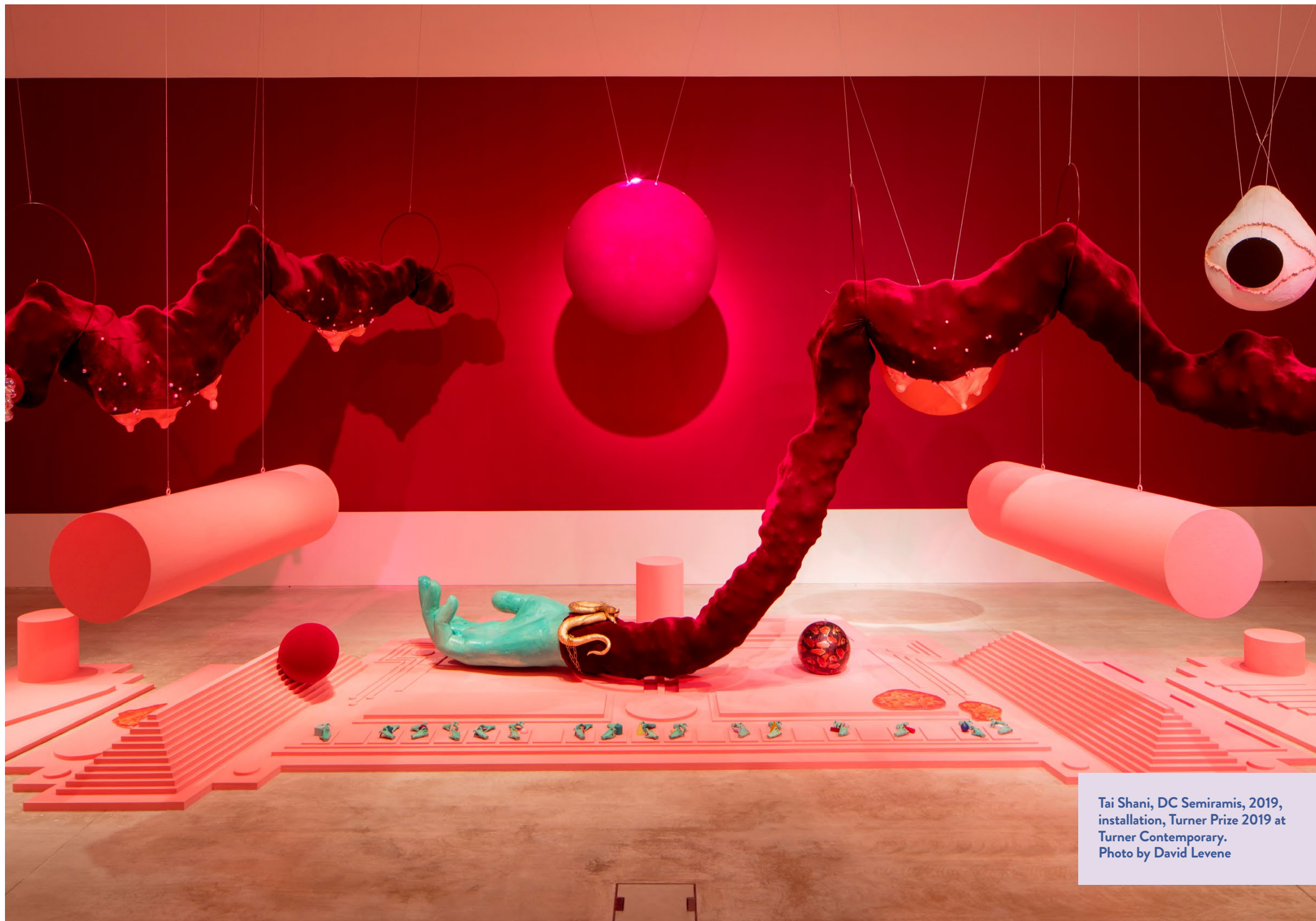
"It might make a gallery in the EU think twice about going to that fair, because it's an extra headache and an extra cost for the shipping and the import fee"

The additional shipping costs could also have an impact on future artistic decisions for the gallery.

"We work with a number of artists that are in the EU, living in Germany, Poland, and France. And, when we started working with them, there was a consideration that we still have to ship the works. And that's still a cost. But I can imagine it being a consideration for us even more. So now if we're looking at an artist we want to do an exhibition with, it would be another layer of expense and complexity"

The gallery is also concerned about how artists will be affected in their ability to easily travel and work in different countries.

"By the very nature of the work they do, I feel like it's so important to be flexible, and be able to move from one country to another country, one city to another city. You know, the nature of their (artists) work is they have one-off exhibitions, and the travel is a massive part for artists these days. So, I feel like it's become harder for the artists going abroad wanting to do a residency"



Tai Shani, *DC Semiramis*, 2019,
installation, Turner Prize 2019 at
Turner Contemporary.
Photo by David Levene

Liverpool Biennial: Liverpool Biennial is a major international visual arts festival, commissioning new work from international and UK artists.

The Biennial went ahead in 2021, however the UK's departure from the EU added additional difficulties to an already challenging situation due to the pandemic, both in the planning and delivery stages.

“We were really concerned about it [...] The potential impact of Brexit was one of our highest risks”

And during implementation, they experienced delays when dealing with shipping.

“Hugely time consuming, and really slowed down the process, and slowed down the process of working with the artists as well”

Liverpool Biennial is part of a network of biennials in the EU that was funded to collaborate via Creative Europe funding. Liverpool Biennial is leading the partnership and made the funding application. They will not be able to lead this type of EU funded partnership in the future, which will leave a gap in the network.

Looking beyond the practical impacts, it is the intangible, long-term consequences for the visual arts sector that the Liverpool Biennial team is mostly concerned about.

“The fear is around the consequences of making it so much more difficult to work and to travel, and to have conversations informally, (and) easily in person”

The Whitworth Art Gallery and Manchester Art Gallery: The Whitworth Art Gallery is part of The University of Manchester and operates as a convening space between the University and the residents of the city. Manchester Art Gallery is a publicly funded art museum famous for its permanent collection of pre-Raphaelite paintings.

The Director of the two museums feels the diversity agenda that the institutions are promoting will be challenging because the UK is no longer part of the EU. This is a multifaceted issue: with no direct access to apply for EU funding and limitations on their ability to recruit staff from the EU, Manchester University's EU student intake has been reduced. There is a perceived lack of trust and decline in the willingness to collaborate from EU institutions and this has created an environment that is not supportive of the conditions that the visual arts sector requires to flourish.

“[Brexit] had a huge impact on the license of creative freedom”

Gasworks: Gasworks is a non-profit visual arts organisation based in South London. They run exhibitions, events, studios, artist residencies, international fellowships, and education projects with a particular focus on international exchange.

The immediate impact of the UK's departure from the EU on Gasworks is on the ability to be agile and flexible in the management of their operations. While in the past they would take part in projects relying on artworks being shipped quickly, this is something they can no longer engage with as it is too risky within the new shipping parameters and additional costs.

“And there's all these extra taxes and these extra costs, which makes budgeting really complicated”

Shipping has become more expensive and requires additional administrative work. Consequently, the choice of shipping agencies has shrunk to the disadvantage of smaller organisations that have limited funds.

“Some shipping companies stopped doing it, because it's so much paperwork and normally it is the cheap ones, the ones that you could rely on doing things. Of course, we're a non-profit, we are always going to go for whatever is more value for money. And a lot of the people said it's just not worth the time. 'I've paid all the fees, and I've done all the paperwork, I'm not going to do it.' So, you're left with the main big companies, which now can charge what they want. Because the competition has been reduced and we don't have the choice”

The new regulations due to the UK's departure from the EU are having an immediate effect on Gasworks finances, which will mean tough future decisions.

“We might have to reduce the level of activities to be able to afford them”

The increased shipping costs also go beyond impacting an organisation's budget. They also have an impact on artists and their livelihoods.

“It's not small at all, because as it falls onto something, it gets bigger and bigger and bigger. So just the fact that you can't commission maybe because of import taxes, the commission of an artist is smaller. It means that the work is less ambitious, it means that impact on this artist's career is slower. It means that then that work sells for less”

At the time of writing, Gasworks were delivering their final EU funded project and will not be able to access these funding streams in the future. They were founded to engage in international collaboration and dialogue, but this is now more difficult to deliver in partnership with visual artists and visual arts organisations in the EU and consequently presents new challenges.

“It’s the scalability of ambition, it is the scalability of the project. And it’s the collaboration on an international scale, that has been taken out of our vision, at least for now, and therefore doesn’t feature in our budget”

The challenge Gasworks has, is to align their ambition with their resources.

“As many doors get closed, we need to open new ones. But it gets to a point where it becomes too difficult, or you feel so compromised, that it almost feels like, maybe you don’t want to do it [...] So we will certainly keep looking for those opportunities. [...] As a smaller organisation, we don’t have the resources to employ somebody that will do a special accounting for that project, or that can do all the fundraising. We can’t, it has to be dealt with in house”

Antonio Roberts, Artist: Antonio Roberts is a media artist and curator based in Birmingham. Working mostly in digital mediums, he doesn’t have the challenges other artists face with shipping. The main challenge that will affect him is additional travel restrictions due to the UK’s departure from the EU. He is regularly invited to conferences to give talks or to festivals to perform, deliver a workshop, or present his work. The process used to be quick and easy.

“There’s just no replacement being offered for what we’ve now lost – the ease of travel, the ease of collaboration – and so I just feel sorry for myself and sorry for those who are going to be hardest hit”

He feels that if collaborations and exchanges with the EU are more complex, this will have a major impact on visual artists’ development and on their finances, and will impact their creative practice and ability to collaborate with other visual artists.

“The long-term impact for me is just the travel, because that’s where a lot of my relationships were formed [...] It’s the social side of things that will have the most impact [...] Socialising is powerful, we get to become good artists”

The information on travel, visas and employment is available but is complex and confusing for individual visual artists to navigate and needs to be made simpler.

The Photographers’ Gallery: The Photographers’ Gallery is a not-for-profit organisation based in London which has recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. The Gallery’s relationship with the EU is multifaceted: a large proportion of their exhibitions are delivered in collaboration with visual arts institutions based in the EU. They regularly invite EU visual artists for workshops and talks, some of their collectors, buyers and patrons are based in the EU, and approximately 20% of their staff are EU nationals.

The Gallery’s income comes from a diverse range of activities: fundraising, bookshop, café, ticketed admissions and more. Most of these income streams have been affected by the UK’s departure from the EU.

“We lost collectors, because now that they are outside of the UK in one of the European jurisdictions, they may find it easier to buy those same artists from other galleries that are based on the continent where there are less issues in terms of transportation. So, we have definitely lost collectors and supporters”

The operational logistics of major visual arts galleries are complex, and for established institutions such as The Photographers’ Gallery, rely on shipping, importing, and exporting. These operations have been hit by additional complications and costs since the UK’s departure from the EU.

“The complications in logistics become astronomical because we often represent artists that are based on the continent who produce the work on the continent. It has to be shipped to the UK to be exhibited and framed in the UK; it gets exhibited in the UK and gets sold, sometimes in the UK, but sometimes also back into the continent. So, it’s the increased cost of logistics with all the customs duties, and the paperwork. Sometimes it’s rather complex. And this whole complexity in moving things around is also de-incentivising buyers to keep buying from us”

Most of the wood used for framing comes from the EU, and the price of this raw material coming from the EU has increased since the UK has left the EU. “The cost of framing has really spiralled out of control.” This is another deterrent for buyers who will now make savings having their photographs framed in the EU rather than by the Gallery.

This issue is also affecting expenditure on goods for the Gallery’s café.

“In the café, a lot of the products that we sell come from the continent, whether it’s Italian produce, coffee and mozzarella, those costs have increased, and they can’t quite all be passed through to the customer. So, it ends up eroding our margins”

The bookshop has recently seen a reduction in online orders from the EU while they have received complaints from customers based in the EU about paperwork and delivery delays due to complications with customs.

Some funding streams such as trusts and foundations in Europe and EU funding, are much harder to access, or can no longer be accessed by the Gallery.

“The public exhibitions team also often work with EU partnership funding, especially on the digital programme. And of course, they’re finding that we’re a much less attractive partner for the EU at the moment, due to the increased cost of administration of things here. So, we’re not being so successful in those, which we have been in the past”

The concern is around the Gallery’s ability to continue delivering against their vision when they are faced with reduced opportunities coupled with stretched resources.

“We do charge admission charges that are very modest. And there’s always discussion about whether that could go up, but now, especially with things being as they are, the last thing we want to do is to raise the admission charge. So that is an option we would have, if you are looking further down the line, but we prefer not to go there because access is important for us”

Concerns were also expressed about the free movement of people across the EU and the UK being less attractive for visual arts students, artists, and visual arts professionals.

“The ability of people to move freely was at the basis of our business model in terms of people working here, in terms of artists that we collaborated with. And as soon as that becomes more difficult, or in some cases, impossible, the pool of talent shrinks”

Vlatka Horvat, Artist: Vlatka Horvat is an established Croatian visual artist living in London, and a lecturer in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. She is represented by a commercial gallery in the US, where she used to live, and three commercial galleries in the EU. Previously she would consign work to her commercial galleries in the EU, but this has become an issue since the UK’s departure from the EU.

“One of the galleries that I work with, which is based in Zurich, had a lot of my work on consignment, about 30 pieces, some of which are quite large sculpture works. And they insisted last year that they return it all to me before Brexit [...] They didn’t want to get stuck paying customs if they were to try to return it to me after Brexit. So, the fact that all this work came to me at the end of last year, has meant a loss of any potential income because the gallery can’t sell the work that they don’t have in their possession. And it’s also meant an unexpected significant cost to me because I now have to pay storage for this work”

She is not the only artist dealing with this issue: “there were masses of people whose galleries were wanting to send work back.” She is now faced with related additional difficulties as the artworks were produced in the UK before being exported to the EU and she does not have paperwork proving their origin as this was not needed at the time of production. She has been unable to find advice or information to help her with this issue and she is concerned that she will now have to pay import tax to get her own work from the EU back to the UK.

“So, it’s all this sort of trying to avoid basically getting my own work back into the UK. Because I don’t want to have to pay taxes on my own work coming back”

Like some of her peers, she is seeking advice and options on the best way to produce future artworks in relation to the UK and EU’s new regulations.

“I’m increasingly having to make plans to produce as much work in Europe. Printing photos, they’re framing work there, manufacturing sculptural work there, which, in the kind of larger picture, means that I’m no longer contributing to the UK economy, the production costs and the transport and shipping costs and insurance costs, all this which would have been in the UK previously are now all in Europe [...] What then happens to this work, it can never come back to me unless I pay import on my own work. So, I will either have to find galleries in Europe to store this work, or I will have to destroy the work after the exhibition [...] We can’t afford to bring the work back [...] It’s wasteful, and it’s terrible for our archives, and it’s terrible on so many different fronts, such as the environmental impact”

She has been unable to locate useful information to assist her with the new administrative paperwork that visual artists are faced with and reports that the documentation can be very complex depending on the situation, such as temporary versus permanent import and VAT implications.

Yorkshire Sculpture Park: Yorkshire Sculpture Park celebrated its 40th birthday in 2017. It is the largest sculpture park in Europe and holds strategic relationships with many visual arts organisations based in the EU. The main issue they are currently facing is tax duty.

“We have several pieces of work from Europe on display [...] There is potentially a consequence that we will have to pay duty on all that work, which now is significant because it’s done on the value of the work. It is a significant amount of money which we don’t have. We are a publicly funded gallery, so that is a massive risk and a big concern. And we’re trying to get that resolved. But nobody seems to have thought of that in the process”

Tax duty is also affecting the prices of smaller goods sold in the gift shop. A mug that was priced at £20 before the UK’s departure from the EU now costs £28 as it is an imported product, classified as craft.

“The way that it’s classified means that there’s a big, big duty to pay. And so, our prices have gone up for a lot of products. Just overnight in the shop, to get our price point right, we’ve had to decrease our margins on some of those products. And we rely heavily on our retail and commercial operations”

Another concern is artists' residencies and managing the gallery space under the new regulations that relate to logistics such as shipping and free movement of people between the UK and EU. This affects both the resources that are allocated to residencies, and their reach as an organisation.

There is a concern that it will take some time for the visual arts sector to experience the full impact on what audiences will be able to experience and have access to. If it costs more to import artworks from the EU and if these costs are not subsidised, visual arts organisations will have to reduce their programmes. The offer available to UK audiences will be affected, which could lead to a greater disparity in accessibility to art between people who can travel and have access to work that might not be shipped to the UK, and those people who do not have this privilege.

"I think it's about accessibility to artwork. I think it could become limited. If people have to pay duty on sculpture that they're bringing in, and then they're sending back again, nobody's going to bring it in, because it's a massive amount of money those public galleries don't have. So, then the public get to see a smaller selection of work"

Chisenhale Gallery: Chisenhale Gallery is a non-profit contemporary art gallery based in the East End of London. The organisation focuses on a programme of commissioned exhibitions, events, performances and talks.

While they are aware of the implications in costs and paperwork for shipping artworks, because of the pandemic they feel it is too early for them to fully appreciate the impact of the UK's departure from the EU will have on their organisation's operations and finances. They think the information and guidance available is unclear and at times ambiguous.

"When we were looking into what it might mean for us in terms of shipping artworks into the UK, I remember finding it quite difficult to navigate what we would need to do, and it was a very long form, and quite confusing, but I think we haven't really looked into it since that point, because since then, everything's been about COVID"

They will continue working with visual artists and visual arts organisations in the EU and delivering collaborative projects as this is at the very core of the Gallery's vision. While they are committed to finding a way to do this, they anticipate obstacles.

"We are just having to think more carefully about it. But it's certainly not, in any way, preventing us from pursuing commissions by European artists. I think that's the most important thing to convey for us at this point. But the hurdles that will come are those that we are willing to undertake because we don't want to become a more hermetic or insular institution as a result"

The Gallery is concerned about the long-term effects on the visual arts sector in the UK if freedom of movement and visas become more of a challenge.

"I feel like it will discourage people from European countries coming to London to live and work and it will make it so much harder for them to do that. That has the potential to be really bad for the sector. Because if talented people don't want to come here, then that's really a cultural loss"

Turner Contemporary: Turner Contemporary is a contemporary art gallery and catalyst for the re-generation of Margate in Kent. They work internationally with visual artists and visual arts institutions on exhibitions and loans.

They are aware of the practical implications that the UK's departure from the EU will have on the Gallery's budget, timelines, and staff workload. It will be more expensive to ship artworks to and from the EU, requiring additional paperwork and therefore taking more time to organise exhibitions and loans with partners in the EU.

They feel the wider impact has yet to be realised in the visual arts sector, and that challenges exist around changing perceptions and losses of opportunities and funding.

"I think the whole shift has been massive. We probably won't really understand the real implications of it for quite some time. But I think also, you know, the implications are around money, finance, time, perceptions, and just how Britain is regarded as well"

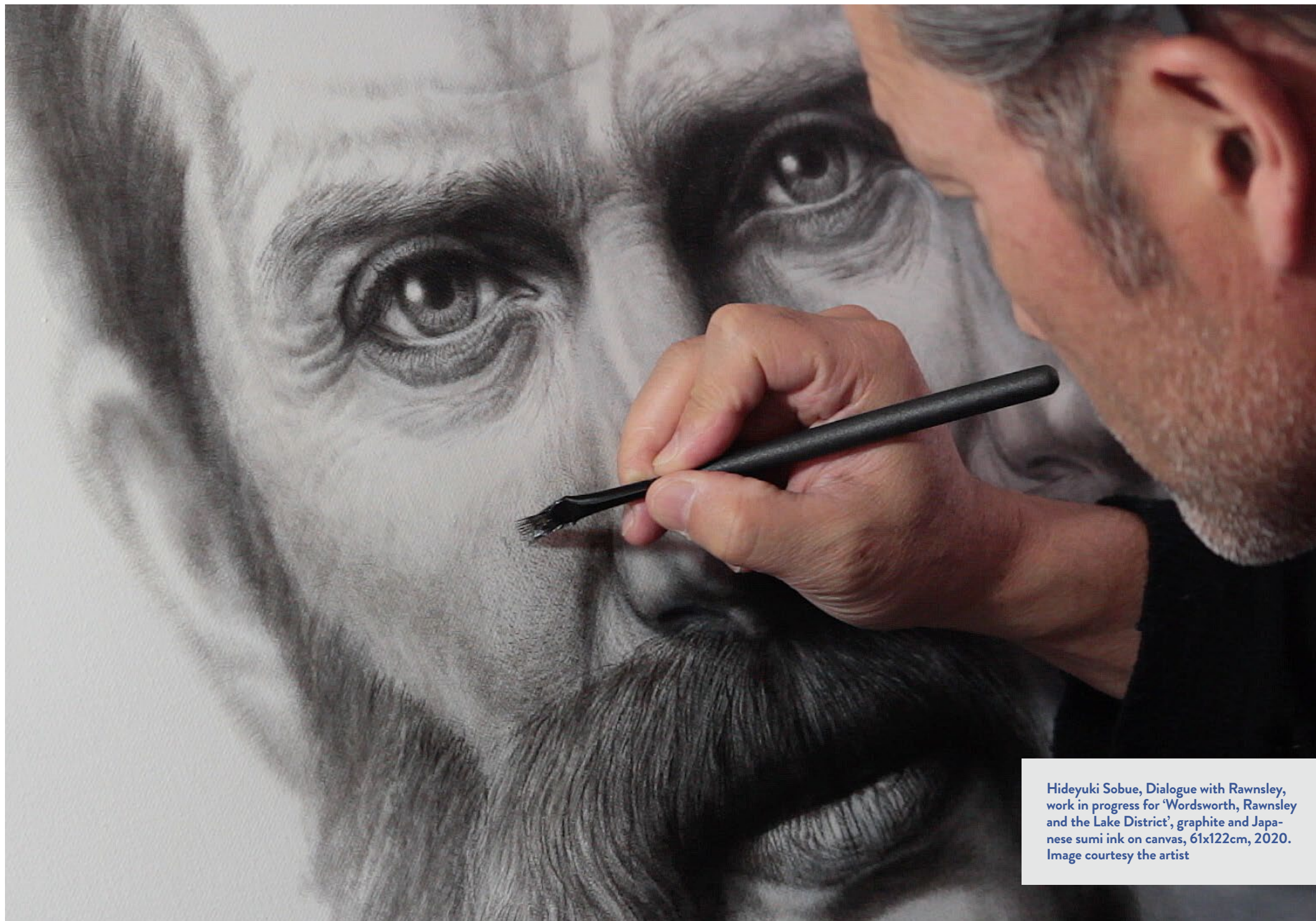
Whilst they are hopeful that existing relationships with EU partners will continue, there is concern about the visual arts sector if it becomes more difficult for institutions in the EU and UK to work together on artistic exchange and collaborative projects.

"People are less likely to want to collaborate just because we're not part of that block anymore"

Lydia Hardwick, Artist: Lydia Hardwick is a ceramicist, based in Essex, who has been practising for over ten years. In the past two years, she has reduced her teaching hours to focus on developing her business. Most of her buyers have found her via Instagram, including both individual buyers and wholesalers. The digital platform has enabled her to reach a large proportion of international sales with only 50% of her customers based in the UK. As a sole trader, she manages all aspects of her business, including managing her social media accounts, arranging shipping, and making her ceramics to sell.

Prior to the UK's departure from the EU, a quarter of her sales went to customers based in the EU, with around four inquiries per week about her ceramics. These have disappeared, and she attributes the reduction in her sales to the EU, with additional shipping costs.

"It is a quarter of my business basically"



Hideyuki Sobue, Dialogue with Rawnsley, work in progress for 'Wordsworth, Rawnsley and the Lake District', graphite and Japanese sumi ink on canvas, 61x122cm, 2020. Image courtesy the artist

It is also difficult to confidently advise her potential customers in the EU on the additional shipping costs that need to be added to what she charges for her ceramics.

“VAT in every country is different. The courier charge, the customs charges that’s put-on top, I still don’t know how much it would be, it seems to change every time someone receives something [...] They might also be charged a customer fee, which I still have no idea how they decide that. And the shipping cost itself has also gone up”

The USA is now more hospitable for her trade than closer countries such as France, as there is a threshold whereby goods under \$800 are exempt of additional shipping tax for buyers. Lydia suggested that the UK should adopt similar trading arrangements with the EU.

“Let’s say the pot is £600 or £700, to then have to pay up to £200 extra is a huge amount for people. And most of the time now they’re just saying no”

The lack of simple, accessible and comprehensive information has been challenging, and she has spent a very large amount of time trying to find guidance, which has put a strain on her already busy operations. When she is approached by prospective clients in the EU who are interested in purchasing her work, she often needs to spend a considerable amount of time corresponding with them and researching information to answer their questions. She has lost sales due to the additional shipping costs between the EU and UK and also reports that there was inadequate time to prepare and plan for the UK’s departure from the EU.

“There was no way to plan [...] There wasn’t even a deal until two days before it happened [...] There was no planning you could do”

When considering the wider visual arts sector, she is concerned for the younger generation of visual artists as they won’t have the opportunities she has been able to benefit from, such as being part of a large international community, to be able to move freely, get inspired by cultural exchanges, and consequently to see their artistic practice enriched.

“It’s just the opposite of what the arts sector needs. [...] I feel like creative output might not be as good. Because there is a limit on interaction and experience”

D6: Culture in Transit: D6: Culture in Transit is a not-for-profit international visual arts producer organisation based in Newcastle. It has multiple deep partnerships with the EU, working with the British Council on exchange projects and being involved in Creative Europe programmes and residencies. They see the impact of the UK’s departure from the EU as being reputational, practical, financial, and managerial. It has been highly disruptive for their business and they will struggle to continue delivering their work without finding a radical solution.

“We opened up an NGO in Cyprus because we wanted to have a European base that we could start to function from [...] But we’re still trying to work out the relationship, the triangulation between Cyprus, the UK and the EU, at least partially”

Losing access to previous levels of EU funding is a concern for the future and they do not see the current options available to them as viable for a sustainable future in the visual arts sector. They have considered seeking alternative funding within the UK for the kind of projects they deliver. However, relying on a single source would reduce the scope of the work that could be delivered. The current option to gain Creative Europe funding is to partner as a third country, however this possibility has been greatly reduced.

“If you have all these countries to choose to partner with, the UK as a third country is not necessarily where you want to go. In terms of the priorities of the European Union, Britain is a third country and is a bit of an anomaly. There isn’t any kind of international cultural development money to work with the UK, [...] I think we will be marginalised”

Working out the new rules is a large administrative burden, a lot of work for a small not-for-profit organisation working internationally.

“The nightmare is understanding across the 27 member states [...] We’re having to work out every single country separately now”

The UK’s absence from the Erasmus programme is another consequence of the UK leaving the EU that disappoints D6, who relied on it as an indicator of cultural understanding in their recruitment processes as well as it being a general concern for the visual arts sector.

“It’s going to be a much poorer space for internationalism for a younger generation”

D6 also noted that exiting EU cultural networks such as Culture Action Europe, will be detrimental to future collaborations between the EU and UK, with the UK not benefitting from the associated learning and knowledge exchange.

“It’s not just about funding. It’s also about networks [...] We’re seeing fewer and fewer British faces and British voices in strategic positions across Europe outside of the funding and outside of the political sphere. Within civil society, the British voice has been marginalised because of this. So that impact is also huge”

Cultivator: Cultivator is a project funded through the European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund, Arts Council England, and Cornwall Council. It has been running since 2016 and has a range of creative business advisors. It delivers bespoke business support and skills development

for visual arts organisations and artists. It has worked extensively with the EU in the past through a Creative Europe funded partnership.

“That opportunity to take artists into different international settings has been really important. But they’ve always been European settings [...] It does worry me that now I don’t know how we’re going to fund those sorts of opportunities”

Cultivator’s mission, business model and services to the visual arts sector are heavily reliant on EU funding and partnerships.

“Since 2002, the project has been funded through European money. Without money, we can’t actually run the project. Because it’s a £3m project [...] There’s nothing else even through trusts and foundations, you just wouldn’t be able to raise the level of funding that you need to run a programme of this quality”

Cultivator are concerned that due to international travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the visual arts sector has not fully experienced operations with challenges around freedom of movement and additional costs.

“The whole issue of people actually accessing opportunities, either galleries or exhibition opportunities, the cost of taking work into Europe, all of that is going to start to kick in”

They advise that further resources will be needed to alleviate the additional costs and administrative burden linked to freedom of movement, as restricted and costly movement will be a real obstacle for cultural exchanges between the EU and the UK, limiting opportunities for visual artists.

Hideyuki Sobue, Artist: Hideyuki Sobue is a Japanese visual artist living and working in the Lake District, UK.

Hideyuki has experienced issues importing his work back into the UK from his commercial gallery in Paris following the UK’s departure from the EU. The process took two months, involving multiple shipping providers and phone calls, and a lot of paperwork. While there were a combination of reasons, the central issue was that the international shipping company struggled to manage the new paperwork that was required to ship his artwork. He noted that this simple problem can have big consequences: as shipping artworks becomes more complicated and people are more reluctant to incur costs, this will reduce the number of artworks moving between the UK and the EU.

He reported that his peers have expressed similar concerns, and this will discourage visual artists taking part in exhibitions if they need to send their artworks from the UK to the EU and vice versa.

“I believe a lot of artists and galleries, or art managers, will be discouraged from expanding their horizons”

Hideyuki believes in the economic and social value of art and that in a post pandemic world, society cannot afford to limit creativity. He cited, as an historic example, state support for Abstract Expressionist artists, including Jackson Pollock, as being essential for the cultural recovery of the United States in the aftermath of the Great Depression.

Copperfield Gallery: Copperfield Gallery is a commercial gallery, based in London specialising in contemporary visual art with a strong focus on diversity and representing UK artists, alongside creating exhibition opportunities for diverse artists who do not have commercial representation.

Copperfield Gallery has invested time and resources developing their market in the EU, which has responded well to the artists they represent and their work. Most of their collectors and the institutions they deal with are based in the EU, and the UK’s departure from the EU has impacted negatively on the Gallery and their business.

“And if import and export remain as it is, it’s going to significantly impact the way we do business with Europe [...] The biggest thing is, there are suddenly massive costs for doing business [in Europe] both in time and in money. Anyone will tell you I’m sure, that shipping costs have gone up significantly. And the time involved in the technicalities of it. And it also seems that getting those technicalities wrong can have quite serious implications”

The Gallery is envisaging having to make significant changes to their operations to alleviate the impact on their logistics and finances. This will become more apparent when they go back to their pre-pandemic levels of activity. While they are yet to fully discover what lies behind the new regulations, in terms of the freedom of movement of people, artworks and services, they feel there is a need for clear and simple information around import, export and visas for visual artists, and the visual arts sector.

“There’s a lot of unknowns, the information given there is not very clear. And I think above all else, I haven’t found a single benefit”

The Gallery reported that they will experience “a massive competitive disadvantage” compared to commercial art galleries based in the EU, who are exempt from the additional costs involved in selling and shipping work to other EU countries, whilst UK art galleries are experiencing additional costs.

“If you’re a gallery in Holland, for example, nothing has changed. You can still deal with the rest of Europe as before; you only have trouble dealing with the UK. Whereas if you’re in the UK, you suddenly have trouble dealing with every country”

The Gallery gave the example that it feels as if they were a runner who has had one of their trainers confiscated, while everyone else in the race still has both trainers, and yet they need to carry on running, despite the disadvantage.

Whitechapel Gallery: The Whitechapel Gallery was established over 120 years ago in London and delivers approximately 13 modern and contemporary visual arts exhibitions per year, plus education, talks and seminars. At the time of interview, the Gallery reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has been their primary focus and it is too early to assess the impact the UK's departure from the EU will have on their organisation. They acknowledged that increased shipping costs had resulted in the decision to stop selling books to EU customers from their website.

“We’ve currently stopped directly selling books to Europe on our website just because of the cost implications”

The main concern is whether the UK's departure from the EU could indirectly impact funding for the Gallery.

“My biggest fear from Brexit is that it will impact the amount of money available to the Arts Council to be able to fund organisations like ours”

The Gallery also expressed concerns about audiences as their ticket income relies on international visits. Another area of concern is workforce, as the Gallery employs EU nationals.

“I think the effects of Brexit will be to probably reduce the diversity of the pool of people available”

The Gallery would ultimately welcome government measures to stimulate cultural tourism and further taxation relief to reduce financial pressure.

“There could be further sort of tax reliefs”

Frieze: Frieze runs international art fairs in London, New York and Los Angeles and has offices in London, Berlin and New York with employees from across the globe. The London fairs typically have galleries attending from over 35 countries and they showcase “the best contemporary art from all over the world.”

“It just simply wouldn’t work if we didn’t have galleries coming from all over the world to participate”

While the practical consequences arising from the UK's departure from the EU are understood, Frieze has not yet fully experienced them. They ran Frieze London and Frieze Masters in October

2021, and are currently assessing the impact on their business. In the run up, it was necessary to keep in constant contact with participating galleries based in the EU: in 2017 they held roundtables with galleries and art professionals to discuss the implications of the UK's departure from the EU. Key points from these roundtables were included in the Creative Industries Federation ‘Global Trade Report’. The report outlined the arts sector's concerns and recommendations with regards to a trade deal with the EU. It was distributed to UK Government ministers, civil servants and the press. The four key recommendations were as follows:

- Maintain the 5% reduced VAT rate on artworks imported into the UK
- Maintain the free circulation of artworks between the UK and the EU
- Maintain the full waiver regime for artworks imported under Temporary Admission
- Maintain the ability for people to move freely between the UK and the EU

“I know from some London galleries that it has meant that they’ve had to take on an enormous amount more admin and paperwork, to the point that it could be an additional staff member, which is quite a big cost, just to deal with all the shipping paperwork and logistics and tax issues and so on. It’s just a lot of additional work that wasn’t there before”

There are additional unknowns about how effectively this will work and whether complex paperwork and systems will discourage commercial art galleries based in the EU to participate in art fairs in the UK.

“The question is: is it going to be as easy for them to do a fair in the UK as it is for them to do it in Switzerland? Or to do a fair in New York? Are we talking about a system and a process that’s going to be as straightforward and as well organised? That still feels a little unknown [...] But if it’s not well done and well organised, it will just put people off”

Due to its high concentration of visual artists, visual arts institutions, galleries and collectors, London holds a key strategic position, and its diversity makes it very attractive for the global visual arts scene and for the art market to flourish. London's reputation is at risk if international movement and the ability to do business is restricted.

“London’s been such a successful place for galleries to do business for such a long time. And I think what everyone’s hoping is that Brexit can’t take the shine off that, but there is definitely a worry that it might [...] The worst thing that could happen to the London art scene is for it to feel provincial [...] What makes it great is the diversity and the fact that it’s such an international place”

7. Conclusions

This report shows how the COVID-19 pandemic has prevented the visual arts sector from fully experiencing the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on their operations, budget and ambition. However, the research also reveals that the visual arts sector is widely expecting to make significant changes in its business models, see a rise in costs, engage in complex administration, be affected by a reduction in partnerships and opportunities, and potentially lose its market position due to the new framework that regulates exchanges between the UK and the EU.

This research confirms other findings into the impact of the UK's departure on the cultural sector. A survey by Arts Council England found that the loss of freedom of movement of people, goods and services was a significant concern for organisations who wished to bring artists and organisations to the UK (73% of respondents), to engage in cross-border projects with EU partners (73%) and to conduct future touring within the EU (70%).

As a response to the concerns in the visual arts sector around touring artists and artworks and the lack of clarity on requirements, many organisations have attempted to produce guidance. For example, Artsadmin has commissioned research to assess the barriers for UK artists touring in the EU. While such guidance aims to support the sector in navigating the new rules, it has been challenging to present a comprehensive and clear set of guidelines.

The visual arts sector itself, and the way in which visual artists and their work travels to markets and audiences, does not easily fit within the new procedures and regulations. Both individuals and organisations alike are struggling to understand and comply with them, and are dealing with the associated additional expenses and workload.

The central challenge identified in this report, is the impact that the UK's departure from the EU is having, and is expected to have, on visual artists and the visual arts sector's ability to produce artworks and programmes both in the public and commercial sectors, due to new challenges on the freedom of movement of people and goods. These impacts have both commercial and intellectual consequences that could compromise the quantity and quality of output produced.

The main areas of impact this research has revealed are as follows:

- Direct impact on visual artists' livelihoods and creative practice
- Fewer partnerships and collaborations between UK and EU
- Additional time required for completing administrative work linked to new procedures and regulations
- Additional costs and expenses incurred by new procedures and regulations
- Reduced opportunities for development and income
- Smaller pool of talent to recruit from

There is a dynamic interconnection between these impacts. For example, additional expenses might not support a competitive position or encourage preferential rates in deals, as shown in the shipping

examples in this report, and can also be a barrier to collaborations with the EU. We used the four main outputs that categorise international cultural exchanges, according to a recent DCMS study, to summarise and frame the findings in this research. Figure 3 below, synthesises how our assessment fits within each category. It highlights that the common expected impacts across the four categories are both a measurable reduction in output, and additional pressures on finances and administrative capacity.

It is anticipated that the tangible and intangible impact of the UK's departure from the EU on visual artists and the visual arts sector will determine new ways of working, but with reduced artistic outputs: if collaborating with the EU is more costly, complicated, and time-consuming for UK artists and the visual arts sector, it will not be possible to pursue activity at the same level without new financial and business models. These will be needed if visual artists and visual arts organisations are to continue delivering artistic outputs and are to benefit economically from engagement with the EU.

Like other industries, the visual arts sector would welcome the opportunity to present the challenges and opportunities through the appropriate UK government channels and present solutions for the continued economic and creative benefit of visual artists and visual arts organisations in the UK. Legal and political experts expect the EU and the UK to remain in negotiations for the foreseeable future whilst recent developments for touring musicians are encouraging.

Fig. 3: Assessment of the impact of the UK's departure from the European Union on the Visual Arts Sector

▲ Impact on income + expenditure and paperwork ▼	Impact	Outputs of international cultural exchange
	From academic education to training, via residencies, the visual arts sector is active in providing and taking part in talent development and capacity building opportunities. These are being affected by the increased administrative burden, attached costs and travel limitations Brexit is imposing.	Talents & capacity building
	UK and EU institutions co-producing or co-commissioning work will face budget and administrative difficulties especially without the stimulation of European funding and visas requirements.	Co-produced & co-created content
	If shipping of artworks suffers from additional costs and complicated and time-consuming administration, UK museums and galleries might import and export less work, thus impacting on what audiences will have access to. Similarly, the UK might end up exporting fewer artworks to Europe, impacting its influence abroad.	Showcasing of cultural content
	The UK lost its membership of many European networks that facilitated mutual understanding and a grouped approach to research and development projects in the arts. Limitations on recruitment and employment could affect the level of intellectual cooperation between the UK and Europe.	Intellectual cooperation



Andreas Lechthaler Architecture | Artworks
© Shirley Baker Estate

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations were expressed by stakeholders during interviews:

- **Clear information, guidance and training** needed to cover all areas affected by the UK's departure from the EU that are specific to visual artists and the visual arts sector, including but not limited to: classification of goods and tariffs, VAT implications and visa regulations for each of the 27 European countries.
- **New funding models** to support visual artists and visual arts organisations to engage in creative and economic exchanges between the UK and the EU.
- **Further and ongoing consultation** with visual artists and the visual arts sector to continue to record the specificities of the sector and present the case for future investment in the sector to interested parties.
- **Business investment growth** for small-scale commercial galleries to attract new opportunities and profile work internationally.
- **Continued negotiations** with individual EU countries to ease the restrictions in the movement of visual artists and artworks.

9. Next steps

Informed by the expertise and experience of visual artists and the visual arts sector that has been gathered through this research, a-n The Artists Information Company (a-n) and the Contemporary Visual Arts Network (CVAN) propose the following next steps to continue to strengthen industry and market relationships between visual artists and the visual arts sector in the UK and the EU.

The departure of the UK from the EU presents both challenges and opportunities. Visual artists and the visual arts sector in the UK are working through the challenges and making changes in their interactions and practices to sustain a vibrant and dynamic market and creative collaborations. They have an excellent track record of being nimble and adaptive, and armed with the right information, tools and short-term incentives, they will continue to engage, collaborate, and maintain the UK's global market position.

Advocacy, Information and Partnerships

- Visual Arts Alliance – International Working Group

The Visual Arts Alliance will set up an International Working Group with a watching brief over the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on the visual arts sector. CVAN will continue to represent the visual arts sector at key meetings with DCMS and other government departments and funding agencies.

- All-Party Parliamentary Group for Visual Arts

This research will be presented to the APPG for Visual Arts, which is an informal, cross-party forum of MPs and Members of the House of Lords which discusses the role played by the UK's visual arts sector. It keeps other parliamentarians informed and up to date with issues affecting the visual arts community, and with the contribution that the sector makes to society and to the UK's economy. The APPG also sets out ways that the visual arts can remain a vital and world-leading sector now and in the future. It is a partnership between a-n The Artists Information Company, CVAN and Design and Artists Copyright Society who form the group's Secretariat.

- International Working – Resource for Visual Artists

a-n will develop an International Working resource for visual artists with simple, clear information around visa regulations and work permits, undertaking residencies, fabricating, exhibiting, and shipping artworks, sales, import and export duties, online sales and purchasing, and online work such as talks, lectures and workshops. This information will be gathered into comprehensive 'country sheets' applicable to each EU member state, providing at-a-glance key information for artists. The information is expected to evolve, and the resource will be updated regularly. It will be made interactive, with visual artists encouraged to add tips and experiences. The International Working resource will prioritise key markets for visual artists in the EU in the first two years, concentrating on those EU

member states that artists predominantly engage with, expanding to cover other EU states where opportunities for visual artists exist. The International Working resource will eventually cover key markets outside the EU.

Market Development and supporting Creative Practice

- Rapid Response International Grants for individuals

A thriving visual arts sector is dependent on relationships, connections and collaborations, all of which are essential to building endorsement for visual artists, their creative practice, audiences, and markets for their work. In order to maintain market presence, visual artists and visual arts professionals are required to navigate a complex set of structures, relationships and arrangements that are both local and global. In the past two years this has been done digitally. However, the visual arts sector in England was able to open safely as early as July 2020, and from 2021 there has been a return to business as usual in the UK.

International travel is opening up and large-scale events such as art fairs, and biennals are critical to visual artists careers and provide networking and business opportunities for visual arts professionals. There are many key visual arts events in the EU such as the Venice Biennale, FIAC art fair in Paris and exhibitions in the well-developed museums and gallery infrastructure across the EU. Invitations to participate in events often come with little time to plan and now require additional administration and cost.

a-n and CVAN propose that a Rapid Response International Grants programme for individuals is set up for a two-year period to mitigate against additional costs and administration. The proposed programme will support participation in key visual arts industry events that have a proven professional benefit to visual artists and professionals working in the visual arts sector both public and commercial. It will prioritise opportunities in the EU with the details agreed with potential stakeholders such as government funding agencies. We propose grants in the region of £500 with a light-touch application process and decisions for applicants within two to four weeks. a-n is experienced in small-scale grants programmes, having recently distributed £2.5m in emergency funding to visual artists and freelancers working in the visual arts sector and could be involved in delivering the programme. This will enable access to time-critical opportunities whilst individual agreements are being negotiated between the UK and EU member states (such as the recent agreement with Spain).

- Small-scale Market Development Grants for visual arts organisations

It is critical that visual arts organisations are able to continue to operate business as usual in the EU, and that they have a similar competitive advantage in the art market. Our research targeted smaller commercial galleries that do not have multiple international offices and that have an excellent track record in supporting visual artists in the UK. There are many barriers expressed by commercial gal-

eries in this report, such as additional costs to attend visual arts industry events such as art fairs, to shipping artworks and paying for storage.

Art Fare was a market development grant programme developed by the Australia Council for the Arts to support commercial galleries and other visual arts organisations to showcase Australian artists' work at visual arts market and industry events. Art Fare provided small-scale grants to ship, present and promote Australian artists and their work, including applying for flights, accommodation and visas for the artists. It helped many commercial galleries and visual arts organisations to attend key art market and industry events, thus gaining exposure for Australian artists and their work in new markets, enabling them to make sales whilst minimising their risks and resources.

a-n and CVAN are proposing that a similar time-limited grant programme is developed for a minimum of two years to ensure that visual artists and visual arts organisations can maintain their presence in the EU visual arts market. The programme will give smaller commercial galleries the confidence to stabilise, respond quickly to market opportunities in the EU, and continue to do business and grow their markets to the benefit of artists in the UK.

The proposed programme will also enable other visual arts organisations to take part in industry events. These organisations include Allied Editions, a consortium of public sector visual arts organisations that showcase specially commissioned limited editions in art fairs for sale. The sales then benefit the individual organisations.

The current services of UK Export Finance, the UK's export credit agency for trade finance and insurance, do not fit the visual arts business model, especially when applied to small businesses. There is also a level of complexity when researching other finance and grants available to businesses in the UK. The proposed programme might also signpost advice on other government funding options, such as loans to expand international business in the future.

The evaluation of the proposed programme might also offer outlines of different types of business finance models such as Australia's Export Market Development Grants run by Austrade, which takes a developmental approach and thus could be more suitable to the visual arts sector.

- Tax relief

There is an opportunity in 2024 to expand the Museum and Gallery Exhibition Tax Relief to apply a 'not-for-profit' test beyond just charities. This will support the ecosystem of grassroots artist-led spaces. A further consideration might be to include exhibitions that sell works of art in the UK.

Registered arts or heritage charities can claim eligible expenditure as unrestricted funds through the government Museum and Galleries Exhibitions Tax Relief (MGETR). These claims can be used to support core work, commission and contract staff, or develop new artistic and curatorial practices.

More organisations would benefit from the Relief by changing the legislation to adopt a not-for-profits test that includes Community Interest Companies (CIC). This could create unrestricted funds for arts organisations to develop new exchanges and international partnerships or help manage the increased costs of leaving the EU.

CICs and charities also produce exhibitions that sell work. If there were a benefit in claiming the Relief for selling works of art in not-for-profit spaces, this would help offset costs and enable new and exciting national opportunities for artists and organisations.

Trade and Research delegations

In addition to rapid response grants for individuals, CVAN and a-n recommend that structured reciprocal research and trade delegations are facilitated between the UK and the EU for visual artists and visual arts organisations to develop or continue strong collaborations and partnerships.

The trade and research delegations could be city-to-city partnerships such as the recent Manchester (UK) and Aarhus (Denmark) partnership; attendance at large-scale industry events such as a biennial art fair; taking small-scale commercial galleries to ARCO (Spain) to assess the potential and appetite of the market for artists in the UK, or taking a delegation of visual artists from the UK to a major festival or biennial to meet with other international artists, curators and visual arts organisations to gain more exposure for their work.

The benefits of structured trade and research delegations are access, facilitated relationship building, and exploration of partnerships and collaborations including financial commitments. This approach works well with the visual arts sector as evidenced through other international delegations organised by Arts Council England that have facilitated long-term reciprocal partnerships with South Korea and Hong Kong.

10. Appendix

10.1 Methodology

Secondary data gathering

The secondary research in this report was conducted using data provided by government websites, trade industries, arts organisations, and journalistic publications. This data gave BOP Consulting a contextual insight into the general influence of the the UK's departure from the EU on visual arts organisations, careers, and prospects

Primary data gathering

BOP Consulting sought to understand how artists and visual arts organisations in England were being impacted by the legislation changes coming from the UK's departure from the EU on legislation, and to gauge how these individuals and organisations can be better supported.

Primary research was organised into three tranches to gain a rounded understanding of the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on the visual arts sector. These three tranches were:

- Consultee interviews with artists
- Consultee interviews with public gallery senior staff
- Consultee interviews with commercial gallery senior staff

The responses from these consultee interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed using interpretive thematic analysis. Using this method, BOP Consulting was able to generate new insights and concepts.

Discussion guide

Each consultee interview was conducted using the same discussion guide to generate themes related to the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on the visual arts sector in England. The discussion guides were as follows:

- Can you tell me about your practice / work (medium, career stage / role and responsibilities)?
- Tell us about your international work, especially in Europe
- Have you noticed any impact of the UK's departure from the EU on your practice / career / organisation so far?
- What do you see as the most significant longer-term impacts of the UK's departure from the EU on your practice / organisation and on the visual arts sector as a whole? Why do you see these as being important?
- What is your understanding of the government's response – this includes relevant bodies such as DCMS and ACE – to the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on the visual arts sector?
- What could the government, including bodies such as DCMS and ACE, do to mitigate the impact of Brexit on visual artists and visual arts organisations?
- What about visual arts sector support organisations, what kind of support could they offer to mitigate the impact you have identified?
- How have you been planning your work for the post-Brexit situation? What resources have been useful to guide you?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell us that we have not covered?

10.2 List of Consultees

The following artists, and senior staff from public and commercial galleries, were consulted for this report:

- Alessio Antonioli, Gasworks
- Alistair Hudson, The Whitworth
- Antonio Roberts, Artist
- Brett Rogers and Francesca Filippini Pinto, The Photographers' Gallery
- Caroline Bartlett, Artist
- Clymene Christoforou, D6: Culture in Transit
- Diana Ali, Artist
- Giles Round, Artist
- Hannah Barry, Hannah Barry Gallery
- Harry Beer, Sunday Painter
- Helen Featherstone, Yorkshire Sculpture Park
- Hideyuki Sobue, Artist
- Iwona Blazwick, Whitechapel Gallery
- Jane Sutherland, Cultivator
- Jane Wilson and Louise Wilson, Artists
- Katrina Crookall, Barbican
- Lisa Panting, Hollybush Gardens
- Lydia Hardwick, Artist
- Paul Maheke, Artist
- Sam Lackey, Liverpool Biennial
- Victoria Pomery, Turner Contemporary
- Victoria Siddall, Frieze
- Vlatka Horvat, Artist
- Will Lunn, Copperfield
- Zoe Whitley and Isabelle Hancock, Chisenhale Gallery

10.3 Literature Review References

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a-n is the largest artists' membership organisation in the UK. We support and act on behalf of our membership and the visual arts sector to improve artists' livelihoods, to inform cultural policy and to affirm the value of artists in society.

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Contemporary Visual Arts Network England leads a collective agenda for policy change across the visual arts.

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