

SLACA - Chairmans Report 2024

As our last AGM was December 2022, a lot has happened since we gathered to review where we are as the only Arts & Crafts Association in Skye & Lochalsh.

One of the highlights over the last two years has undoubtedly been the continuance of our much praised ART SKYE marketing initiative which has seen 12,000 booklets and 15,000 leaflets being distributed each year to members and tourist businesses. Going by your feedback and conversations with visitors and businesses the material produced continues to be regarded highly and sought after, representing an important communication stream for the Arts and Crafts on Skye.

Recently we took the decision to completely re-build and upgrade the ART SKYE website; the new site now is fully device compliant and is purposefully image led enabling members work to be showcased at their very best.

This year also saw us mount our very first showcase exhibition at An Talla Dearg Gallery in Sleat. The show represented a cross section of the membership and generated impressive sales as well as receiving many positive comments particularly from locals. The overall reaction was summed up by one comment: *"it's so refreshing to have an exhibition where you can see such a variety of work"*, the following is a report submitted by Liz Myhill:

The SLACA showcase exhibition took place at Gallery an Talla Dearg in Isle Ornsay over three weeks from 22nd March until 10th April, nicely crossing over the Easter weekend. 17 members showed their work and undertook one or two days stewarding the gallery space, which everyone seemed to find enjoyable and was certainly met very favourably by the public. There were several comments about the diversity and quality of work presented and a good local attendance, probably helped by opening before the main tourist season had begun.

We also had an artists social afternoon on the last day for everyone involved to meet, chat and help with take down. Many hands certainly made short work of things and it was a lovely and rare opportunity to come together for a blether.

The exhibition made just shy of 9.5K in total sales and we have been invited to return in 2025 with a similar time slot of: Friday 11th April to Wednesday 23th April, Easter weekend is 18th - 20th

Congratulations go to Liz Myhill and Karen Davies for all their hard work in creating the admin systems, liaising with the venue, organising collection points for the work and brilliantly hanging the exhibition; thanks also to all the volunteers who gave of their time to man the show and be the face of Art Skye. We look forward to returning to An Talla Dearg in 2025.

In 2023 we were again invited as an Arts Association to take part in the Highland Art Prize which this time was held in Glasgow. Five pieces of member's work was chosen and although not winning, the show gave excellent exposure to our members and the Association. We have again been invited to take part in 2024 and a call for entries email will be going out very shortly. Thanks again to everyone who was involved in the delivery and collection of members' work.

On the social media front, my wife Jane handed over responsibility for Facebook and Instagram posting and re-posting to Kayti Peschke of Skio Pottery. Kayti has continued and expanded on Janes work particularly in the area of reels and stories. Here's a wee message from Kayti regarding social media:

"Sharing content on our instagram page and stories is a great way to get more interest in our studios and events and grow our online audiences.

If you have anything coming up or new work to share then do feel free to email me at skiopottery@gmail.com and I can share on our Instagram and Facebook pages.

I'm also making my way around studios with my camera to take some photos for our posts, so be great to meet more of you and see your work up in person!"

Since the last AGM we have sadly lost some members, in particular Donald MacKenzie of the Blue Studio, Pam Carter, artist, John Parsons wood turner and most recently Laurence Broderick sculptor. All were great supporters of the Association and will be sorely missed.

When it comes to trading, members have reported that trading over the last couple of years has slowly returned to pre-covid levels which I guess is to be expected; 2024 however is trading down on the previous year and anecdotally the explanation has been 'the wrong type of people' and 'camper vans'. With the advent of the Scottish, and soon the English schools breaking up, we can but hope for an upturn in business.

On the committee front we welcomed Kayti Peschki from Skio Pottery and said goodbye to Ian Williams and Russ Sherwood. Currently we have two vacancies on the committee, the first as a non-officer post and the second for Treasurer. At this point I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all who serve on the committee, for their time and dedication. Meetings have been more enjoyable and manageable with the advent of Zoom and the light-hearted atmosphere we all try to generate. Your current committee members are: Peter McDermott (Chair), Beverley Scholefield (Treasurer), Cathy Myhill, Liz Myhill, Karen Davies and Kayti Peschke.

Sadly Stuart Whatley who was Treasurer feels it's time that he stood down and let someone else look after the finances. Stuart is a founding member of the Association and has been stalwart in his support and encouragement over what must be nearly 30 years of the Association's existence. We'll greatly miss Stuart's wisdom but happily he still remains a member of SLACA.

So that's it, we look forward to many more years being the premier organisation which promotes and encourages the Arts and Crafts created and sold throughout Skye and Lochalsh.