

# New government scheme to promote next generation of UK artists around the world

- Known as X-UK, the project will acquire works by exciting British artists to go on display in more than 125 countries
- The collection will work with networks to support standout artists to showcase the best of Britain to the world

Contemporary British artists are set to benefit from a new scheme which will see their work displayed in the country's network of embassies and government buildings around the world.

The Government Art Collection (GAC), which is part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), is launching a five-year acquisitions project to acquire works from exciting talent and showcase the best of British creativity – promoting further interest in the country's globally renowned creative sector.

GAC will work with the Contemporary Visual Arts Network in England, the Scottish Contemporary Art Network, and networks in Wales and Northern Ireland to identify the next generation of potential artistic stars.

The X-UK project initially ran as a successful pilot scheme in 2020-21 when more than 90 pieces by 45 contemporary visual artists were acquired for the collection. These works are now on display in government buildings around the country and internationally in British embassies and residences including Paris, Ankara, The Holy See in Rome, and 10 Downing Street.

The pilot revealed the impact that an acquisition by the Government Art Collection can have on an artist's career by helping to bring their art to new audiences and raising their profiles.

Glasgow-based artist Alberta Whittle went on to represent Scotland at the 59th Biennale di Venezia in 2022 and currently has pieces on display in the National Galleries of Scotland following the pilot scheme's acquisition of her work.

The acquisition of work by Manish Harijan led to his being granted a global talent visa by the British Council, and Ghanaian-born artist Harold Offeh saw his art join a national collection for the first time in his career.

## **Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:**

This fantastic new scheme will shine a light on the UK's brilliant up-and-coming artists and promote our cutting-edge creative industries on the world stage.

The five-year X-UK project aims to be a true reflection of every part of the United Kingdom and will bring some of our most exciting artists to audiences in more than 125 countries.

**UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:**

As the Edinburgh summer festivals draw to a close, the international appetite for Scottish culture and creativity has never been more apparent. Through the UK Government's extensive global network of embassies and residencies, this fantastic project will showcase the best of Scottish creative talent to the world and help raise the global profile of our outstanding homegrown visual artists.

**Secretary of State for Wales, Sir Robert Buckland said:**

I'm delighted that the UK Government is supporting contemporary Welsh art. Acquiring pieces by emerging artists for the Government Art Collection immediately provides publicity and recognition and showcases this wonderful work to the world.

Wales has a rich heritage of celebrated artists from Richard Wilson's 18th century landscapes to Gwen John and Sir Kyffin Williams, and it's great to see the new generation of Welsh talent supported and promoted by the X-UK project.

**Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Shailesh Vara said:**

The X-UK project by the Government Art Collection is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the very best of Northern Ireland's artistic talent alongside the rest of the United Kingdom in over 125 countries across the world.

I am excited to see the high calibre of artwork, which will undoubtedly serve as a fantastic springboard for new and emerging artists from Northern Ireland to display their talent on the world stage.

**Contemporary visual artist Manish Harijan said:**

Coming from the foothills of the Himalayas in Nepal, this is a valuable opportunity that has opened doors for me into the art

world. Connecting with important art networks like CVAN Yorkshire and Humber, who nominated me to the Government Art Collection, has been inspiring, and following the acquisition of my work by the Collection, the British Council granted me a Global Talent visa.

### **Contemporary visual artist Harold Offeh said:**

As a Cambridge-based artist having my work selected for the Government Art Collection was a huge boost. The recognition and validation of my practice has been extremely encouraging, and I'm excited to be part of a national collection for the first time.

The project will also provide a focus for the Government Art Collection's public engagement activity with artists and young creatives during this five-year period. This will include work in 2022-23 with Glynn Vivian Art Gallery in Swansea, the Museum-in-Residence in 10 Downing Street, and work in Bradford during its time as UK City of Culture in 2025-26.

### **Notes to Editors:**

#### [X-UK acquisitions programme 2022-2027:](#)

- 2022/23 – Wales, East Midlands and West Midlands
- 2023/24 – Scotland, North East
- 2024/25 – Northern Ireland, North West
- 2025/26 – Wales, Yorkshire, East
- 2026/27 – Scotland, South East, South West