



Landscapes & Horizons Pilot

Summary evaluation report

April 2024



**COVE
PARK**

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Introduction

Background

Landscapes & Horizons was intended as a fully funded group residency for five Scotland-based artists and cultural practitioners, aged over 40, from refugee and other migrant backgrounds. The pilot was a collaboration between the Scottish Refugee Council and its project Cross Borders, Cove Park and Luminare Scotland.

The residency took place at Cove Park from Monday 26th February to Friday 1st March 2024, with artists departing on Saturday 2nd March.

Purpose, aims and objectives

This was the first time the three organisations had partnered or run a residency programme together. It was aimed specifically at refugee, migrant or displaced artists and creatives, and was open to people working across broad professional practices.

The residency provided a week of dedicated studio space at Cove Park, with time for each resident to pursue their own interests and take part in group workshops and activities.

The aims and objectives of the Landscapes & Horizons pilot were defined by the partners as:

Project aims	Outcomes
To support the creative development of older artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds	Artists' creative practice develops as a result of the opportunities
To develop connections and peer support between participating artists, and between the artists and the partner organisations	Artists make new connections with each other and with the partners
To explore the support needs of older artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds	Partners have a better understanding of artists' support needs to inform future work
Project Objectives	Outputs
To deliver an artist residency at Cove Park in late February that supports older artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds	Five artists take part in the residency
To provide an accessible and supportive recruitment process	Information issued; online sessions and individual advice provided; interpretation offered where needed
To design and deliver a series of bespoke shared workshops for participants as part of the programme	Workshops planned when participating artists have been identified, designed to meet individual and collective needs

Culture Radar was commissioned to evaluate the pilot and develop this short report to inform learning for the partners, and the design of any future version of the pilot, particularly in relation to:

- The impact of the various activities and approaches on participating artists' creative development;
- The extent to which the programme fulfilled its aims and objectives as outlined above;
- Identify any other forms of future support that the artists would value;
- Assess the impact of the collaboration between the partner organisations on the development of the programme, in particular relating to the intersectional needs that the residency seeks to address.

Methodology

The evaluation was carried out between 2 March and 25 March 2024 and comprised:

- Consideration of pilot programme information and process relating to the promotion, application and selection of participants for the pilot.
- Attendance and observation of a participant workshop at Cove Park on 1 March 2024.
- Two online group interviews with participants (Friday 15 and Tuesday 19 March 2024) to gather feedback on the pilot from a participant perspective.
- One online group interview with the project partners (Tuesday 19 March 2024) to gather feedback on the pilot from a partner perspective.

All quotes used within the evaluation report have been taken from interviews and have been anonymised.

About the partners

Cove Park

Cove Park is an artists' residency organisation, based in Argyll on the west coast of Scotland. It hosts national and international cultural producers and researchers working in all artistic disciplines in the creative industries, and in academic and scientific contexts. It provides facilities, support and care for the development of new ideas and new projects, collaborations and interdisciplinary practice. Residents stay on site in private accommodation and have access to private studios, communal work and meeting space, a library and Cove Park's 50-acre rural site. It can host up to 12 individual residents at any one time.

Luminate

Luminate is Scotland's creative ageing organisation. It works across Scotland to ensure that older people's creativity can flourish whatever their circumstances, experience, interests and ambitions. It is a developmental organisation, supporting the development of creative ageing work in a wide range of contexts. Its creative projects are designed to explore and test new ways of working and/or to engage new communities, and it shares its learning with others to support the development of creative practice. It runs networking, training and other professional development opportunities, and works with wide-ranging collaborators including artists and cultural organisations, community groups and social care providers.

Scottish Refugee Council

Scottish Refugee Council is Scotland's national refugee charity. It provides direct support, advocacy and advice to people seeking and granted asylum in Scotland. It works to enhance refugee protection and integration policy and practice in Scotland, the UK and Europe. Its vision is for a Scotland in which all people seeking refugee protection are welcome; a place where women, children and men are protected, find safety and support, have their human rights and dignity respected and are able to achieve their full potential.

Cross Borders

Cross Borders is a programme of arts and cultural activism projects led by Scottish Refugee Council. Its projects include mentoring, commissions and collaborations with artists, activists and cultural practitioners from refugee and other migrant backgrounds in Scotland. It advocates for their rights, care and protection whilst facilitating connections, support, exchange and artistic activity. Cross Borders is for anyone with a creative or cultural practice who has sought refugee protection or been forcibly displaced and is currently living in Scotland. This includes people who were already working in these areas before coming to Scotland, and those who weren't able to pursue their practice in their home country. Many of whom have fled places where cultural censorship made it impossible for them to express themselves in open society.

Objectives delivered

The objectives of the residency were to deliver an artist residency at Cove Park to:

- Support older artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds; through an
- Accessible and supportive recruitment process; with
- Bespoke shared workshops for participants as part of the programme.

This section of the report considers how the partners delivered on these objectives and reflects on the successes and issues arising. Findings are drawn from documentation created for the project, and interviews with the participants and the project partners.

Shaping the residency

In the autumn of 2023, the partners brought together their expertise in residencies, support for artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds, and creative development for older people, to design a bespoke pilot project. The pilot was resourced through the drawing together of partner funds from Creative Scotland, The Bridge Awards, Comic Relief and in-kind support.

The partners all contributed to the design of the programme, and the call out and application information and interview and selection process. The opportunity was promoted through each of the partners' networks.

All partners took part in the interview and selection process, to the development of a booklet of information for successful applicants to read before their arrival at Cove Park.

The original budget allowed for a five-day residency for five artists incorporating appropriate translation and access costs. In practice, there would be less draw on the budget for translation and access costs which meant the project could support six artists rather than five.

Each artist had access to their own self-catering accommodation and studio space at Cove Park, with an award of £550 towards travel, food and materials costs.

Key outputs:



All three partners brought a wide range of skills and experience to the planning and design process for the residency.



Recognising that each partner was of a small scale and already “working to capacity,” by pooling resources they were able to manage the project between them, ensure a fully accessible residency approach, and each diversify their work.



The partnership enabled deeper learning and understanding for each organisation through the process of working together and drawing on each other's experience.

Accessible and supportive recruitment process

The partners drew on their collective experience to shape an accessible, bespoke recruitment process for the project.

The process

Co-prepared application guidance was shared online through partner websites and social media, and through e-newsletters to stakeholders and contacts in the partners' networks. Interpreter support was budgeted and available for those making applications.

Application Information

The application guidance was created as an accessible word document, with an overview of the planned residency, information about each of the partners and their purpose, details about Cove Park's private accommodation and studio spaces and shared self-catering and social facilities.

The guidance states who the opportunity is for ("artists or cultural practitioners from refugee and other migrant backgrounds based in Scotland, and aged 40 or over") and that it is open to creatives working in a broad range of artforms including (but not limited to) visual arts, curation, theatre, dance and choreography, music, composition, songwriting, craft, design, architecture, food and cultural heritage.

Further access support was noted in the guidance ensuring applicants that interpreter support would be available for the duration of the residency for those who needed it, that selected artists would receive an award of £550, plus a travel and materials allowance, with an option for those with caring responsibilities to be able to apply for additional accommodation to support their attendance on the residency.

The guidance makes clear the partners understand that some applicants may not have the right to work and states that those "who do not have the right to work or any recourse to public funds will receive the equivalent in the form of necessary equipment, courses or vouchers of their choice."

Application support

The process allowed for a number of application routes (e.g., online application form, audio or video formats) and asked for examples of recent creative work which could be supplied in a range of formats (e.g., images, film or video, audio, text).

Named contacts and contact details for applicants wishing further clarification or assistance in making an application was included, and noted "Cove Park working with Cross Borders at Scottish Refugee Council can offer guidance and support with this process" in-person or via Zoom, and with interpreter and/or travel support.

In addition to the guidance, two online information sessions were scheduled to support those interested in applying to the pilot.

Interview and selection

Interviews were conducted online and were intended as an informal opportunity for the partners and applicants to respond to questions.

Following selection for the residency, artists were supplied with orientation information prior to their arrival at Cove Park. This was prepared by the partners together and included details about the accommodation, what to bring, programmed activities and workshops.

Four of the selected artists had been involved in Scottish Refugee Council projects previously. Two had seen or been forwarded Luminate information about the opportunity via their own networks.

The majority of those selected were visual / multidisciplinary artists. While the specific ages of the selected artists are not known, interview discussions suggest the majority were 40-50 yrs.

Key outputs



Overall, the application materials and interview process were clear and followed best practice in terms of accessibility.



The partners had not set a target number for applications but felt the 12 achieved were about right for this new and bespoke opportunity.



The artists appreciated the bespoke criteria of the opportunity stating it had given them confidence this was an opportunity “to fit us and support us” with more chance of being successful than through an open competitive fund.



As the selected artists did not require translation or access support, the partners were able to extend the opportunity from their target of five artists, to six.



The artists felt the application materials and process to be easier than others they had undertaken where “you have to break your brain to work out what they are looking for.”



The artists found the interview process useful for clarifying details about the residency itself. The partners found the interviews useful in considering how well the group might gel and work together over the residency.



All the artists felt they had understood the focus of the opportunity as set out in the guidance.



Of the six selected artists, the majority were working in a multi-disciplinary and/or visual art form, which may reflect the networks of the partners.



One artist made an in-person visit to Cove Park after selection and in advance of attending the residency which they had found helpful in preparing for the opportunity.

Reflections for the future

The majority of the artists selected found the application process easy and straightforward. Minor suggestions for improvement were:

- One artist with dyslexia found preparing the application in English challenging and suggested having the application information and instructions in an audio format.
- Two artists found the request for a creative practice CV difficult to fulfil as previous professional experience was in other fields. Clarity about how important (or not) the CV element of the application is, could be helpful in future.

The artists had found information supplied relating to fees, payments, receipts and invoicing a little confusing, and noted that payment of 50% of the fee up front, and 50% later had caused cash flow issues for some. This reflection was shared by the partners who plan to manage this differently in future.

The pilot was promoted as an opportunity for creatives working across a broad range of artforms, although the majority of those selected were visual / multidisciplinary artists. Broader promotional networks may result in a wider range of artists and creatives applying in future.

Bespoke residency content

The application guidance sets out the partners' objectives for an open and accessible residency with bespoke shared workshops enabling the artists to "focus upon their own work and interests, and to come together with other residents to take part in creative workshops and events."

As host, Cove Park's Director and staff team were in regular communication with the artists during the residency week. Luminare, Scottish Refugee Council and Cross Borders staff made site visits and joined the artists in some workshop and social activities.

Three workshops were scheduled for the artists to take part in during the residency, delivered by trainers and facilitators known to each of the partners.

Key outputs



In general, the artists in the group who were earlier in their creative careers found spending time with the artists in the group with more experience, or who had been in Scotland for longer, particularly helpful for developmental learning.



For artists trying to re-establish or re-start their creative practice, the residency and association with Cove Park was an important marker in itself:

"I graduated in 2003 and had been practising as an artist for ten years. Arriving here, I don't have anything. So, I am a beginner again."



All the artists appreciated the scheduled workshops and generally thought, while the content was not directly related to their creative practice, that they had been interesting.



For most, simply having access to a dedicated and purpose-built workspace was the most important thing.

"Having my own studio. Having my own space and time to create. A perfect view. I just wanted more time to paint."



Studio visits with their peers and members of the Cove Park team were particularly appreciated by the artists who valued being able to have their work and ideas seen, shared and discussed.

Reflections for the future

In interview, most of the artists felt that the scope of the programme had been optimistic for the timeframe, noting that "If the aim was for practice development, there was not enough time."

In addition, some of the artists felt that workshop content aligned to establishing an individual's creative practice in Scotland could be helpful in future:

"How to understand the structures. How do galleries work? How to get to curators and make contacts? How to find work? How to evidence your career and experience? How to break in! I am invisible here."

Outcomes learning

This section of the report considers how well the project delivered against the aims set by the partners which were to:

- Support the creative practice development of older artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds;
- Help develop connections and peer support between the artists and partner organisations; and
- Explore the needs of older artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds.

The findings are drawn from interviews with the artist participants and the project partners.

Creative practice development

One of the aims of the pilot was to support the creative practice development of older artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds. Based on evaluation interviews held immediately following the residency this aim seems to have been partially met, although it is possible that follow up with the artists six months or a year from the residency could surface further positive impacts.

Outcomes

Several of the artists had been without a dedicated making space for some time. Some had caring responsibilities, others had jobs, others had newly arrived in Scotland and were in temporary accommodation. As a result, all the artists reflected that for them the opportunity to have access to a studio, and to have dedicated time without 'real world' demands to enable them to deeply think about their practice, had been incredibly precious. For some, the experience was transformational:

"I want to emphasise again how important it was that I was in a setting that was far away from my 'refugee experience'. I don't want to delve into theoretical discussions about 'labelling' and 'what's in a name?'... All I want to say is that I felt alive, I felt like a fish IN water - something I haven't felt for a very long time. It was incredibly beneficial for me to be there and be with people who are already established artists."

There was no requirement or pressure from the project partners for the artists to deliver an output from the residency. Instead, the expectation was that the artists would take a self-determined approach.

For some of the artist this had meant they were able to "relax and explore their creativity" and open themselves to the experiences offered by the workshops.

For others in the group, particularly those trying to re-build or re-ignite a creative career, the lack of requirement for an output was surprising. Those artists expressed that, as a professional opportunity they felt they should make the time count and have 'something to show for it' and therefore set expectations on themselves for the week in terms of outputs and outcomes for their practice.

“I was worried. I wanted to make time count. It would have been useful for me to feel I would have an output.”

For those artists who had set their own targets several felt, when reflecting in interviews, that they had been optimistic about what they could achieve in the time available.

Duration

Whilst all the artists felt they had benefitted from the residency, and were grateful for the opportunity, most felt the residency had not been long enough to see development in their creative practice. This view was shared by the partners.

While the artists had found the joint activities and workshops enjoyable, most felt they had broken into the available five days, resulting in a slightly disjointed or frustrated creative work process. This resulted in some of the artists, on realising they weren't going to achieve the targets they'd set themselves, 'giving themselves over' to the week and to having a different kind of experience to the one they had imagined.

Reflecting on the experience the artists suggested that, ideally, more time was needed for the artists to acclimatise and settle into the residency space to enable deeper thinking and connection with their own creative practice, and with each other.

Overall, for optimal creative development outcomes in future, the artists suggested designing a residency for fewer artists but for a longer duration i.e., for a minimum of ten days (incorporating two weekends) or ideally a two-week residency. If, however, a future budget could only extend to five days, the artists advised allowing at least three of those days as “uninterrupted” for creative practice.

Developing connections and peer support

One of the aims of the residency pilot was to help develop connections and peer support between the participating artists, and between the artists and the partner organisations. From interviews with the artists and the partners, this seems to have been highly successful.

Connecting as a group

In interviews, all the artists and partners commented on how quickly the group had seem to gel, with one noting “I think it is something that can't be predicted or anticipated.” Generally, the feeling was that the activities and social time the artists spent together, particularly cooking and eating together, had helped to foster this “instant connection.”

“You have already heard us raving about our instant connection and the family we formed right away. But I also go so much information and knowledge from my colleagues. Among all the fun and dancing, I managed to talk to all of them about their creative practice. They shared quite a lot of information with me: about their experiences at other residencies, about Glasgow art scene and so on.”

The artists also talked about having a “common language” of experience. While they may have been at different stages of their creative practices, and were in different stages or situations

personally, they expressed a desire to look out for and support each other in the residency, and to share learning about their experiences as artists in a new country.

“I fully understood the importance of a creative collective – but I couldn’t have imagined what I would get from this residency. It was very much beyond my expectations.”

In interviews they talked of learning from each other in different and meaningful ways. One artist reflected on seeing their peers challenging and pushing themselves during the week, which they felt had only been possible because of the level of trust that was built in the group. For others (particularly for those who had been in Scotland for a shorter length of time) being with peers who understood their circumstances and the challenges they were facing “with no judgement” had been very powerful.

“It was interesting to see someone push themselves. To try, with the others around them. To gain confidence, trust, power – to see that important act.”

Post-residency, the artists set up a WhatsApp group through which they plan to stay in touch and plan to continue to build their relationship.

Connecting with the partners

In interviews the artists expressed excitement at having been selected for the residency. For some, there was expectation about how the opportunity might help position their work in Scotland by association with Cove Park.

One artist noted that “breaking in” to the sector was particularly hard if you did not feel “a strong root into the country or sector.” For them, time spent in discussion with Cove Park’s Director, receiving studio visits from the Cove Park team, and being able to network with other artists resident at Cove Park beyond their group, was a “validation” allowing them to feel again on equal footing with peers.

“Being at Cove Park was a reality where I had a sense of place, belonging and meaning above all. I felt like whatever I did creatively before was finally validated, and it means a lot to me.”

One artist expressed having felt self-imposed pressure to make the most of the opportunity and its association with Cove Park:

“How can I represent myself in such a short time. Show my abilities. Show Cove Park. At home there are so many other ways to do this.”

Across the group there was a strong desire to build an ongoing relationship with the partners. All felt it had been particularly helpful to connect with each of them during their visits to Cove Park, and hoped there would be an opportunity for that to continue in some way. This was a view shared by the partners who had a desire to maintain a relationship with the group in some way, capacity allowing.

“Being with the artists on the final day was very moving. Seeing how they had gelled as a group, seeing the warmth and how they valued their relationship with the other artists.”

All the artists were keen for the partners to understand their appreciation for, and the impact of the residency, and felt it important the partners continue to develop the partnership and the opportunity in some way in future. There was also high interest in return visits to Cove Park and being part of the partners' networks for future opportunities. In turn the partners felt they had learnt a lot from their time with the artists with whom they intended to maintain contact.

For the partners also, the experience of working together had confirmed their aim to collaborate again, with the pilot raising "lots of other possibilities and thinking" which they felt could be explored in future planning. Potential for the residency to align with the Scottish Government's New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, or to partner with local authorities were mentioned.

The needs of the artists

One of the aims of the pilot was to help develop connections and peer support between the artists and partner organisations. From interviews with the artists and partners this aim seems to have been successfully met, with valuable learning emerging for the partners which will help to inform future work together.

Professional development

All the artists valued the residency opportunity, agreed that they had gained interesting and useful support from the shared activities but suggested, in future, priority should be given to self-determined creative practice. The partners also felt in future that fewer workshops, or programming them for later in the day so as not to detract from studio time, could be explored.

The artists spoke of needing time for "adjustment – I have to find a balance to my art in the UK" and the need to explore, understand and re-learn different practice boundaries, particularly in relation to religious and social themes.

In addition, several of the artists talked with urgency about the need to establish or re-establish a professional career, and to integrate into the professional Scottish visual art sector. In relation to this, the artists spoke of the challenges they had experienced in understanding and navigating Scotland's cultural sector, its structures and the behaviours of its creative communities.

The artists expressed a need for, and a gap in provision around, development support for artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds in how to build professional connections and establish a reputation in an unfamiliar environment. While this might not be within the scope or role of the partners' organisations to deliver, there may be other organisations who future artists in a shared programme could be signposted to.

The partners noted having programmed scheduled workshops around "their own area of offer." As small organisations, each with a particular focus, there was also an understanding that catering for everyone's need in a group programme was challenging. On reflection, the partners felt that having longer time between the selection process and the residency might enable more consultation with the artists, and result in shared interests and needs being met.

Sharing and presenting work with peers

In interviews, some of the artists said they would have liked an opportunity to network beyond

their own group. For example, evening sessions where the artists could share their work with, and learn about the work of, the other residents and the staff at Cove Park for greater developmental learning, and broader connection making.

Studio visits from their peers and Cove Park staff had been particularly appreciated by the artists who expressed how valuable and positive it had been to have their work and ideas seen, shared and discussed.

The artists understood the aim of the pilot, recognised the need of the partners to promote the initiative as they did, and they all appreciated and valued taking part in the opportunity. Some felt, however, that this meant their professional profile and experience as an artist came second to being an artist from a 'refugee and other migrant background' who were promoted together irrespective of their creative practice, career stage or experience.

This point reflects some of the nuances and challenges of what the project was aiming to achieve across a matrix of partner-led interests i.e., an opportunity for creative practice development; for older artists; from refugee and other migrant backgrounds.

While the artists largely understood the pilot criteria as being beneficial to them accessing the opportunity, it led to some (not all) of the artists feeling a professional discomfort about being presented *through* these criteria only. This resulted in some of the artists being reluctant to re-post promotional content about the residency, or to direct their professional contacts to information about the pilot on the partner's websites. It is likely, however, that this is something that could be easily resolved in a future programme through a communications plan.

Finally, through the interviews, the artists noted some needs and made suggestions for the future, some of which are outside the scope or capacity of the partner's to fulfil, but are included here for reference. These include:

- Workshops, talks or presentations to support professional development.
- Access to mentoring, perhaps drawing on the experience of artists who had been settled in Scotland for longer and had established their practice.
- Follow-up activity several months after the residency to check-in with peers, signpost to further support or opportunities and continue to build and strengthen a peer network.

Key finding

While the partners felt that they would not necessarily change the aims they had set for the programme in future, there was agreement that further thinking is needed around how the aims could be expressed or pitched through a future residency programme:

"Narrow down the expectation of the residency for the artist. Who is it aimed at? What stage of artist? What gaps can be filled?"

Suggestions coming through the interviews in relation to this can be summarised as:

- For creative development of artists and a network – consider selected artist career stages; align development activities to support their professional needs; consider how selected artists and their work are profiled through partner communications.
- For a stronger focus on supporting artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds in Scotland – consider potential for selected artists to collaborate on an output or outputs which explore their shared experiences; development activities that support

artist communication with wider audiences; partner channels and networks to help share outputs and promote better understanding of refugee and displaced people in Scotland's communities.

- For a stronger focus on supporting the needs of older artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds – consider setting a higher minimum age (50+ years) for the residency; develop channels and communications to reach an older target audience; align development activities and events to their support needs; post-residency opportunities to connect with established creative ageing networks.

Summary conclusions

This was a highly successful, impactful and innovative pilot programme which resulted in a positive and affirming experience for the participants, and which stretched and informed the thinking and understanding of the partners.

This was the first time the three partner organisations had collaborated on a project, and each was able to make a unique contribution, together delivering a programme they could not have realised alone. The partners felt it had been a highly positive collaboration that had enabled a fully diverse offer which had helped them diversify their work and broaden their understanding – stating “these experiences and partnerships are rare.”

The objectives set by the partners were met, enabling six rather than five artists to share in the project, which took place on time and to schedule. The artists’ experience of the application and interview process was positive, and their experience at Cove Park provided a valued creative practice experience, professional validation, and for some a transformational experience. Some minor adjustments to the process and programme were suggested, but overall, the artists taking part felt the residency had been “beyond my expectations.”

An aim of the pilot was to impact the creative development of the participating artists. While this was not fully realised, it seems to have simply been down to timeframe constraints. Everyone agreed that five days was not enough to achieve this aim. Budget allowing, a future residency should aim to allow a minimum of ten days and, in an ideal world, two weeks.

Irrespective of the duration of any future residency, all felt a need to prioritise the time available in future programmes for creative practice, with workshops and activities scheduled more discreetly, and those activities reflecting (as far as possible) artists’ professional needs.

The artists all highlighted practice and social benefits as a result of the opportunity. Having access to a private studio and materials was particularly appreciated, as was having time and space to themselves, and being able to make connections and new friendships with the residency group and the partners. The artists also talked about having a “common language” of experience. While they may have been at different stages of their creative practice, and been in different stages or situations personally, there was a desire to look out for and support each other in the residency, and to share learning about their experiences as artists in a new country.

All the artists were keen for the partners to understand their appreciation for, and the impact of the residency, and felt it important the partners continue to develop the partnership and the opportunity in some way in future. There was also high interest in return visits to Cove Park and being part of the partners’ networks for future opportunities. In turn the partners felt they had learnt a lot from their time with the artists with whom they intended to maintain contact.

For the partners also, the experience of working together had confirmed their aim to collaborate again, with the pilot raising “lots of other possibilities and thinking” which they felt could be explored in future planning. They remained committed to the aims they had set for the programme and feel there is potential for the residency to be augmented in future, potentially through alignment with the Scottish Government’s New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, or through partnering with local authorities.