



Sculpture workshop, Plockton, August 2022, *From Plockton to Portree: a boat building project* with Malcolm Mackenzie, photo by Murdo MacGillivray

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*What can we learn about love from lichen?* with Isabel Lewis, 2021. ATLAS / Artnight co-commission, photo by Winifred Brook Young

# Section 1: Purpose, Vision and Values

## Our Purpose

ATLAS Arts organises art projects across Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh. We work as part of a community to support a programme of long-term artist commissions, education projects, events, residencies, screenings, workshops and gatherings.

We make and share art, and carry the rich cultural knowledge of this place, its people, stories, species and many creative practices, contributing to the thriving arts ecology of the wider Highlands and Islands. We connect people and ideas, and generate collective resources - paying attention to building communities through creative practice. From local collaboration, we seed international connections and learning, and practice values to foster social justice and a fair and fun (art)world for all.

## Our Vision

Our vision is for a world where many ways of thinking, being, and making are celebrated. A world where everyone is able to experience art as a meaningful part of their life and learning; where art is valued for its powerful contribution to processes of renewal, as well as the ways it questions and disrupts, and cultural makers are paid securely to support time for experimentation, failure and sharing.

In this thriving economy, many forms of work are valued, and everyone can access the knowledge and resources they need to live a good life. Cultural spaces are open and lively sites for gathering and imagining - made with and for local communities. The health and well-being of all species, the land and the environment are central to how decisions are made.

## Our Values

**Art for-and-with all:** We believe art is made by and for everyone, and that it is a carrier for learning and social change. Growing the ways art is experienced, valued, and contributed to, we focus on building relationships across our projects. We support people to make and encounter art in the everyday, with free and open access to tools, knowledge and culture. We support artists, in their many forms, to make work on their terms - to do what they do best.

**A local global welcome:** Everyone is welcome here.<sup>i</sup> Our projects build attentiveness to place, belonging and local culture - wherever you are in the world. Exploring Gàidhealtachd histories and futures,<sup>ii</sup> and life in the Highlands and Islands, we expand relationships with - and responsibilities to - other places.<sup>iii</sup> We share learning across borders.

**Solidarity:** We believe that social justice is realised through community building and economic change. The care of the environment is central to our practice. We promote long-term and fair pay for artists.<sup>iv</sup> Our work is woven by threads of different lived experiences, practices, geographies, longitudes and latitudes.<sup>v</sup> We value many ways of being, thinking and making, and work with and for the people our projects address.

**Depth and empathy:** We centre deep roots and ripple effects. We are sensitive to culture and context, and take time to listen and learn.<sup>vi</sup> We work to ensure equal footing and try not to fix things.<sup>vii</sup> “Growing life from ancient stock”,<sup>viii</sup> we think carefully about how and whose stories we are sharing, who they are for and where they land. We reflect on our intentions to ensure our projects have meaning and longevity.

**Slowness:** We prioritise the well-being of those we work with. We are social and believe in slow, satisfying, and critical learning. We try to ensure there is time for creativity, reflection, criticality and pleasure in a past-paced world. We believe having time to experience art is vital for a healthy, questioning, joyful life.



*The School of Plural Futures walking with poet Maolios Caimbeul, 2021, photo by Patrick Steele*

## Section 2: Where we've come from

### A brief history of ATLAS

ATLAS Arts was founded in the summer of 2010 and became a charity in 2012. Following the 2008 closure of An Tuireann Arts Centre in Portree – a much missed resource and community gathering space – a year-long community consultation took place to explore the best way that a new, locally-befitting arts programme could be created.

The consultation (commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council, Hi-Arts, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Highland Council) was conducted with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, local community members, local artists and arts workers from across Scotland. Looking at various models of arts organisations and the challenges of working in a large and dispersed rural location, it culminated in a public meeting in Broadford Hall in September 2009. There, ATLAS was born with a remit to carry a unique kind of visual arts programming right across Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh.

Working intentionally without a fixed venue, our resources go into developing projects and



*Are You LOCALIZED?* by Tatham & O'Sullivan at the Lump, Portree, 2014, photo by Ruth Clark

programmes in different places, from a mirrored boat, to caves and woodlands, on the tidal zone, an apothecary tower, in schools, archives, and S,R&L's many community halls. We have gained local and international recognition for this place-centred approach, and for the development of ecological and climate-focused practice.

*Between 2010 and 2021, we worked with over 800 artists, supported over 1200 events, collaborated with 11000 participants, and had an audience of over 42000 people.*

Cultivating our first eight years were founding director Emma Nicolson (now Head of Exhibitions at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh), Project Coordinator Rosie Somerville, Office Manager and SCREEN IT programmer Suzy Lee (now Radio Skye's Station Manager), and Producer Shona Cameron (now Project Manager for CLIMAVORE), alongside many brilliant placements. Over the years, we have been supported by a Board of Directors chaired by Prof Norman Gillies (2010-2020), including Sorcha Dallas, Rebecca Waterstone, John White, Steven Haddow, Sue Pirnie and Sophie Morrish.

Our book, *A Commonplace Book of ATLAS<sup>ix</sup>*, 2021, outlines more about our founding years activities (available as pdf on the ATLAS Website). A full chronology of projects is at Appendix 2.

# Celebrating 10 years of ATLAS Arts in 2020

"...ATLAS built a community around the programme that allowed the artwork to exist on its own terms as well as to become the starting point for further conversation." – Niall Macdonald on his exhibition 'untitled fragments in acid green as part of Broad reach ' NEO NEO // Extreme Past in Edinburgh, 2016.

## Spanning sites and places

Including: on the radio/waves in 2011 with Zoë Walker and Neil Bromwich's *Celestial Radio* for *Bàta Brèagha /Bonnie Boat* (right) - a large-scale project combining traditional craft skills, music, pop-up exhibitions, radio broadcasts, walks and workshops; *Broadreach*, supported by Gayle Meikle, at Taigh Chearsabhadh Museum and Art Centre (2013-2015, below); Cooking Section's *CLIMAVORE* Oyster Table on the tidal zone (2017, next page); and Tatham & O'Sullivan's *Are You LOCATIONALIZED?* (below and top left of next page, 2014) in a Portree apothecary tower.



*Bàta Brèagha /Bonnie Boat*, photo by Murdo MacLeod



Tatham & O'Sullivan at Taigh Chearsabhadh for *Broadreach*, 2014, photo by Ruth Clark

232 events, with 779 artists and an audience of 454,450 across the decade



CLIMAVORE Oyster Table, Bayfield, Portree, 2017,  
photo by Colin Hattersley

## Film and radio across Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh

Including *The Call of Mist* by John Akomfrah at Dunvegan Castle in 2016, *SCREEN IT* hosting 50 films across 23 screenings in 2017-2019; the [ATLAS Arts Cafe](#) Broadcast project in 2016; and moving image co/commissions such as Margaret Salmon's *Eglantine* (2016-18).

## Artist commissions with and through the land

Including Hanna Tuulikki's *Women of the Hill* at High Pasture Cave (2015, below), Caroline Bergvall's *Ragadawn (An t-Eilean Sgitheanach, 57.5° T)* (2018), and Ruth Barker's *Place of Pillars*, 2016.

*"Slip shod stretch in unsuitable shoes, it is a meandering and unreliable ramble across the peat landscape of Skye's Trotternish peninsula, from the township of Flodigarry ("the floating enclosure"), to the river Lealt ("the half stream"). It is a circuitous loop through the Staffin crofters' uprising, past handmade dinosaurs, via biro marks on a folded map. It is a route of thought – not so much a train as a sheep track bumping its way between the lochans."*



*Women of the Hill*, performance commission with Hanna Tuulikki, 2015, photo by Simon Groom

- Ruth Barker on *Place of Pillars*

## Artworks grown with community

A *Crofters Memorial* (2014-) with Urras An Taobh Searthe/Staffin Community Trust - seeing a community-led memorial being installed near Staffin in 2023; *CLIMAVORE* schools and hospitality partnerships; and Maizlish Mole's *Mapping Portree and Skye* (2011) with Portree & Braes Community Trust, informing navigation of the village to this day.



*Travelling the Archive* (2016) publication, and memory walk maps, photo by ATLAS

## Collectively-made artworks and archival explorations

Community sock making with Deirdre Nelson's *Spin Cycle* (2013), Reimagining Kyleakin with Nicky Bird's *Travelling the Archive* (2016), and herstory making with *Women of Skye wikipedia* edit-athon (2018)

## Climate action, ecology and food security

With Keg de Souza's *Edible Places* (2014, below), *Patterns of Flora* at Raasay House with Frances Priest and Stephen Bungard in 2015, and *CLIMAVORE: On Tidal Zones* (2016-2022)



Caroline Bergvall's sunrise performance: *Ragadawn (An t-Eilean Sgitheanach, 57.5° T)* at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, 2018, photo by S. Gerrard



Keg de Souza's *Temporary Spaces, Edible Places* Kilmuir Primary, 2014, photo by Emma Nicolson





significant for us as an organisation, as an arts sector, and local community as we learn from COVID to foster collaboration and radical change in the way we collectively work and imagine the economy.



Cooking Section's Turner Prize nominated *CLIMAVORE: On Tidal Zones*, 2017-ongoing, photo by Nick Middleton

on climate crisis, connect people and celebrate Gaelic culture. In addition, our work with local young people (The School of Plural Futures, Nowhere Art Club) has become central to our programme.

Working sensitively and reciprocally in our locale has been a key aim. This has been through new collaborative projects, the creation of new artist residency with Tobar an Dualchais, and seen in the popularity of our new open access publication studio, Making Publics Press (right), as well as the success of our new community cinema equipment resource that is in frequent use by various community groups – expanding access to film and community programming across Skye.



*The Making Publics Press* in use at *The School of Plural Futures* book launch, 2021, photo by Jordan Young

The continuation of our work and programme (a new community film, seed programme, zine library, talks, a new education project, recipe book, etc) throughout COVID-19 demonstrated the resilience and flexibility of ATLAS' model of working. During this period, we focused on giving practical support through the initial community response to COVID, as well team and resource development, before developing a programme of support for local creative freelancers, opportunities for young people living locally, and new artist commissions.

Across a spectrum of visible and more intimate ways, we organised a range of smaller, quieter gatherings in **2018-21**, as well as larger celebratory events and performances. We worked with **216 artists**, organised **169 events**, ran **4 artists' residencies**, and over **2047 people** contributed to our programme.

We estimate that by receiving core investment of £150k from Creative Scotland during **2021-22**, ATLAS was able to contribute **£31,932.24** of direct cash support to artists and freelancers and **£54,059.07** of cash investment in our local economy.<sup>xi</sup>

**Three significant projects** that speak to the scale and scope (locally and internationally) of our work over these years are:

### 1. CLIMAVORE: On Tidal Zones (2016–22)



A *CLIMAVORE On Tidal Zones* performative meal with Cooking Sections at The Oyster Table, Bayfield, Portree in 2017

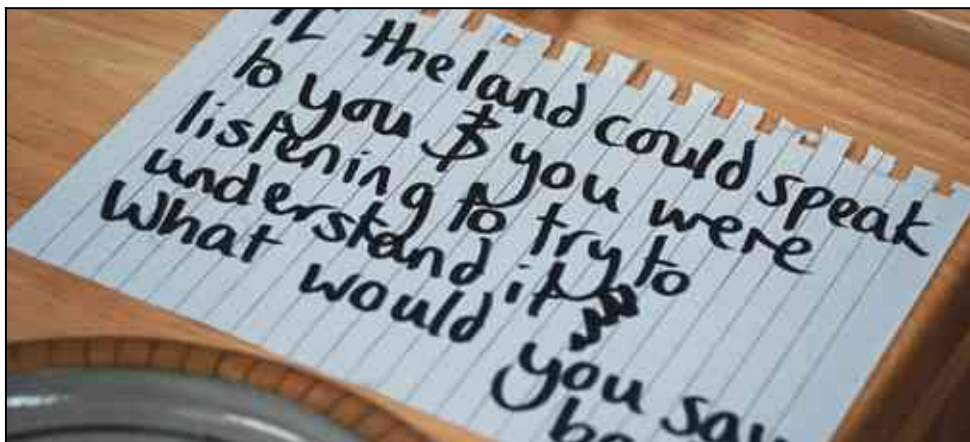
In 2016, ATLAS Arts and artists Cooking Sections (Daniel Fernández Pascual and Alon Schwabe) began to explore the question “How do we eat as humans change the climate?” From 2017 to

2021 the programme hosted a series of performative meals and discussions on the intertidal zone and regenerative aquaculture at a specially-constructed Oyster Table in Bayfield.

Gaining Turner Prize nomination, the work included school workshops, an apprenticeship programme with local restaurants, a collectively-made recipe book, two new research residencies, and a series of film screenings, walks, and talks. This extensive programme has supported sustained partnerships and cyclical economies. A key success lay in this project becoming autonomous and growing on its own, with two new permanent local jobs now supported by the independent CLIMAVORE CIC.

## 2. The School of Plural Futures (2020–ongoing)

*“Through talking, thinking, making, experiencing and grieving these subjects, we have developed a community of people dedicated to working with each other and the land towards a more harmonious world.” —Emmie McLuskey, SoPF lead artist.*



A question posed with *The School of Plural Futures* during a session in Glendale, Skye, 2021

*The School of Plural Futures* is a long-term alternative school made with and for young people in S,R&L. Led by Emmie McLuskey, the first year brought together a cohort of eight 16–25-year-olds with an expanded network of 30 co-collaborators (artists, activists, crofters, archivists, and writers) to explore the interconnected nature of climate injustice, housing crises, and the future of the Gàidhealtachd.

A much-needed space for young people locally to meet and discuss Highlands and Islands specific concerns, the school’s gatherings spread to community halls, fields and shorelines across S,R&L. Sessions included: interactive workshops on singing, film-making, interpretative cartography and monoprinting; film screenings about community, land, climate activism, mental

health and imagined futures; guest talks on community, conviviality, Scottish imperialism, decolonialism, and art; site visits to a community hydro-dam, guided walks, and poetry readings.

### 3. Dàn Fianais, Community Film (2020–22)

*Dàn Fianais (Protest Poem)* is a film portrait of Skye and Lochalsh and some of its inhabitants—human and otherwise. It was co-commissioned by ATLAS and Skye Climate Action. Artist Andrew Black created the film in collaboration with over 60 people with connections to Skye and Lochalsh. The research process included workshops, talks and conversations with local musicians, artists, *The School of Plural Futures*, storytellers, folklorists and academics telling of their place and culture—as well as remaking and renewing it.

*“This is an important film which I hope will generate further discussion on the multiple crises facing the Gàidhealtachd now. If you can, please do go along, watch, consider, and join the debate.”* —Iain MacKinnon, *Dàn Fianais* contributor.

Produced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the unfolding climate crisis, the film voices the intimate and structural ways life in Skye and Lochalsh is changing. It reflects on ways of being that are on the brink of extinction and those that endure. It was launched with several busy screenings across Skye and Lochalsh in 2021. We continue to be asked to screen the work in a range of settings locally, continuing to grow an audience with the artist and carry conversations with the work over the long term.



Andrew Black and Murdo MacGillivray filming for *Dàn Fianais*, 2021, photo by Emmie McLuskey

## Section 3: Our context

### Where we work: Skye, Raasay, Lochalsh

The ATLAS Art's office is in Portree and we work across Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh, a vast area connected by boat, bridge, Gaelic, shared stories, culture and communities. Yet while these things connect us, they are not fixed, much like the weather - a mist that settles in Ardsvar will have lifted before the Ord Road End. In each township, parish, school and village hall, you will find different people, voices and ways of doing things.

Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh covers an area of 270,656 hectares and has a human population of approximately 15,000.<sup>xii</sup> The area has a complex geology and geography: made up of coastline, islands and islets, freshwater lochs and sea lochs, hills, high mountains and moorland, peatland and blanket bog, forestry and woodland, grassland, in-bye croft and farmland. This area's histories are also complex—much more than clans and castles.

Our projects are rooted in this area and the neighbouring Highlands and Islands, responding to its histories and speculative futures, climates and ecologies, challenges and assets, and the skills and knowledges of the many different folk who call this place home. We work intentionally with no fixed venue, in different locations depending on the nature of each project, creating opportunities to make, share and take part in arts and culture across this dispersed rural and coastal location.



The Oyster Table, *CLIMAVORE* Closing meal with Cooking Sections, 2021, photo by Jordan Young

## Our changing context

The local, national and international context for this plan is one of uncertainty and change. Politically, local and national administrations are continuing to deal with the fallout of Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and conflict in Europe. A better way – long overdue – needs to emerge from these challenges – fairer work, a more equitable distribution of opportunities, a kinder society – a voice for all of Scotland’s people and places. But there is uncertainty as to who is in the driving seat for this new approach, with a changing pull-push of devolved and centralised power locally and nationally and the ongoing unresolved question of Scottish independence.



*The School of Plural Futures* with Iain MacKinnon in the shadow of Beinn na Caillich, photo by Jordan Young, 2021

How this translates into cultural policy is still to be fully worked through – the Scottish Government’s Culture Policy was published in February 2020 and will yield a new strategy for Creative Scotland as well as a Future Funding Framework. The Highlands and Islands Enterprise continues to have a strong voice in advocating for rural recovery, as well as its own cultural strategy, which recognises the role that culture plays in vibrant, inclusive places. A continuing interest in the importance of sustaining and promoting Gaelic culture and the use of Gaelic language is evident locally and

nationally. So too is an interest in the role of culture in positioning Scottish identity and communities internationally.

Economically, the context is as uncertain. Brexit and COVID-19 have been enormous disrupters, with some traditional economies having been temporarily swept away, such as tourism in the Highlands and Islands and the importance of others, such as digital connectivity, underlined. A cost-of-living crisis is exacerbating challenges that already existed for those living in poverty and for the already-increased costs of living rurally. The importance of the provision of opportunities for young people has never felt more pressing. The pandemic has seen the nature of work profoundly changed, and it has underscored the fragilities of local economies and the importance of multiple income streams. For arts organisations, it has unlocked some new funding streams, while yielding great invention in fundraising methodology. The greater flexibility of funders in the short-term is likely to lead to more competition and the requirement for greater rigour around monitoring and evaluation in the long-term—organisations will need to consider carefully who they are creating value for and what the outcomes of their work are. The over-reliance on public funding and the sources and motives of funders at large must also be carefully considered. This must include consideration of the cultural workforce here and elsewhere, including individual artists and freelancers, whose vulnerability has also been underscored by the pandemic.

Within a wider discourse of decolonial practices, the arts sector must also radically transform its working methods and priorities in ways that genuinely reflect values of social justice and solidarity. The arts are trying to carve out a space to create change, but often clumsily. The importance for cultural leaders to develop articulate and meaningful spaces in which to build collective responses to social movements such as Black Lives Matter and #metoo, and action against populist and fascist ideology globally, can not be understated.

The geography and demography of the Highlands and Islands pose unique challenges. Cultural organisations operating here need to work hard to ensure that the social, cultural and artistic programmes they present reflect their communities desires, while creating pathways for and with local young people. With rural areas consistently rising to the top of quality-of-life surveys, remote and home working paving the way for a potentially changing local community—community-led artistic practice can promote dialogue and help navigate these changes.

The rapid technological change of the last two years has many positive implications for artistic programmes, expanding access and reaching new audiences. Artists are responding, exploring new ways of making work, and improved digital connectivity has organisational as well as artistic implications. There are also challenges in the form of increased expectations that small organisations may struggle with once traditional modes of presenting and engaging audiences resume in full, and a digital divide to navigate between those online and those who aren't. Opening up to online audiences from different locations also poses questions of care and quality when discussing issues of local sensitivity. A rapidly proliferating digital infrastructure to navigate can be challenging for organisations who have to choose carefully where to invest, as can establishing the best approaches to information management, data, and cyber security. The same is true of meeting the demands of a wider legislative environment and of ensuring that governance structures remain fit for purpose as it evolves.

Finally, the organisation faces social and environmental challenges, some specific to S,R&L and some existential challenges facing the planet as a whole. Place-specific challenges include issues with recruitment, infrastructure, housing, tourism, transport, fuel costs and the higher cost of living. Our office space is not fully accessible. As referenced above, inbound and outbound travel has been significantly curtailed over the last two years, and increasing global emissions creates challenges for programming, research and changing the nature of audiences. The climate emergency is a pressing imperative artistically and organisationally – we must play our part in supporting artists engaging with these issues, while also ensuring the environmental responsibility of our own work. We should protect social and ecological gains from the pandemic period - such as strengthened local relationships, improved work-life-balance, and slower, more generative work - from the rush back to normality. We should pay attention to the sustainability and impact of local tourism long-term and guard against actions contributing to the exploitation of the island: refusing romantic, remote and unpeopled fallacies, being wary of both positive and negative impact of visitors, and of what might be being extracted from this place through our work. In the context of environmental practice we should also be wary of how ecological imperialism is happening here, for example through carbon credit schemes, corporate land buy-outs and many processes of rewilding (that close out local communities from decision making).



# Section 4: Where we are now

## Our core activities

ATLAS Arts' programme spans more than a thousand square miles across the coastlines and tidal zones, boat houses, bookshelves, schools and community halls, woods and waterways of Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh. Our activities include:



*Dàn Fianais*, Film screening at Broadford Hall, 2021, photo by Jordan Young

### Programme & Events

A busy arts programme including long-term commissions, film, gatherings, residencies, meals and workshops – across community halls, archeological sites, schools, outdoors and other spaces. Usually public but sometimes less visible, ensuring the most generative ways of having conversations and developing critical relationships.

### Residencies, Research and Opportunities

An annual programme of artist residencies and fellowships, building communities around artistic research and centring the vital

importance for artists to have time, money and space to experiment. Includes the Tobar an Dualchais Gaelic oral history residency, research residencies, production fellowships, and long-term artist placements.

### Read, Make, Borrow

A growing and mobile library of publications, community cinema equipment, sound and image recording tools, and more.

### Alternative Education

Long-term projects with artists and young people, creating spaces to gather, think with art, form new coalitions, and share knowledge and skills for the future.

### Publishing & The Making Publics Press

A free-to-access resource where anyone can print, bind and trim their own books. Through the press we



Curator Naoko Mabon's *CLIMAVORE On Tidal Zones* residency gathering in Oban, 2021, photo by Ainslie Roddick

support many small runs of locally-made books to go out into the world and share writing as research in an ongoing Chapbook series.

### Diverse Economies

Through our relationships, programme and operations, we are invested in economic values based on social and ecological justice. We support and co-create events, workshops and collaborations which make a better way of imagining the economy more visible.<sup>xiii</sup>

### Shop & Editions

We sell editions of artworks, books and other objects made with artists and local makers. The sale of each edition generates income that we share between a non-profit organisation of the commissioned artist's choice and the production of the next commission. Our editions have a three-tiered payment system: a full price that includes a pass-it-on donation, a full price, and a subsidised price. The pass-it-on donation supports a subsidised price to help make art more affordable to own.



A book being made on the Making Publics Press book binder, photo by Jordan Young



*Agus mar sin car a' Mhuiltein (And so somersault)*, a new poetry book by Maoilios Caimbeul made at the Making Publics Press, 2021

### Who we work with

Appendix 7: Market Research maps who we work with and how in detail.

### Our organisation and team

ATLAS is a small team who work to organise our activities collectively. On a normal week you will find ATLAS' staff walking or driving around Skye, Raasay or Lochalsh – putting up posters, visiting people, delivering equipment – or in wellies and waterproofs setting up for an event. We share responsibilities for some tasks between us such as social media updates, bookkeeping and cleaning.

We aim to review our staff structure and workload regularly to make sure our organisation remains sustainable and is not in conflict with our vision and values, and to ensure our organisational structure meets the needs of delivering our programme and projects, balancing our team's wellbeing, time for creativity and learning, and responsibilities. We invest in our staff: our team has annual review meetings and training and development to nurture skills, learning and ambitions – supporting our team to learn and share experiences with others in the sector and further afield.

Our whole team supports community building, connecting people and ideas through our projects and collective resources. Katharine Barrington (Programme and Administration Assistant; 0.8 FTE) is our contact for communication, access and our publication studio, and supports the delivery of our projects and operations through research, admin and logistics. Heather Fulton (Producer; full time) supports the planning and delivery of our programme and of others, developing strategy, artistic research and collaborations. Robyn Wolsey (Diverse Economies Manager; 0.8 FTE) leads on financial management, development and fundraising of the organisation. Ainslie Roddick (Artistic Director/CEO; full time) has overall responsibility for the care of the team and of artists, and for finance, operations and programme.

## Our board and governance

ATLAS is a registered charity and a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. The organisation is governed by our voluntary Board of Trustees. They meet quarterly online, three times a year, and once in person – to review our progress and policies, financial management, and support the team and artists wellbeing. This lively and highly engaged group brings a broad range of skills and experiences, and played critical roles in developing this plan, from its visioning to its actualisation, contributions in writing, advice and feedback, SWOT and PESTLE analysis, development days and moral support. As we move through our plan over the coming years, they will support us to stay on track to obtain our goals whilst upholding our vision and values.

We've recently invited new members, including a young person's representative, artist, vice-chair and chair, to bring new knowledge, experience and expertise to our organisation as we move through this next phase. We have begun work with our board to ensure the experience of being a board member is as generative and welcoming as possible, including ensuring the board meetings are not the only mechanism for good governance, feedback and support. Our Board provides direct support to our team: currently we are trialling a system where each staff member has a "Board buddy" with whom they are in direct contact and can meet as and when required – to seek advice, additional support or raise concerns.

### Our board are:

Jenny Brownrigg (chair from 2020 to 2022)	Curation, Scottish contemporary art, creative research and writing
Alexandra Ross (chair from mid-2022)	Curatorial practice, dialogical/socially-

	engaged art, law, feminist theory and practice, creative research
Susan Christie (vice-chair from mid-2022)	Rural curation and art production, public and participatory art
Anna Jobson (2016 to 2022)	Strategy and organisational development; arts, heritage and education
Donald Hyslop	Culture and creative economy, place shaping, economic and social development
Catherine MacPhee	Local history, rural activism, archiving, faeries
Freya Rowe	Business development, outdoor education, local economies
Cheryl McIntyre	Crofting, land stewardship, land skills, third-sector
AJ Stockwell	Community development, contemporary artistic practice, creative research, climate action network development in island communities
Ailish Culbertson – invited, not yet appointed	Rural activism, young people, education and support work

## Financial management, fundraising and income generation

We are experienced in managing multi-year, multi-partner budgets and have robust processes and measures in place to ensure the organisation is managed effectively. Overseen by the Director, our Diverse Economies Manager is responsible for managing accounts, cash flow and budget forecasts, assisted by our Producer and Programme & Administrative Assistant, and our Director and Diverse Economies Manager review financial performance against our budget monthly. Management accounts and cash flow reports are reviewed quarterly by the Board. Our annual accounts and payroll are delivered by Campbell Stewart MacLennan & Co. Chartered Accountants in Portree.

We have a reserves policy in place to make sure we can cover our operating costs should the worst happen. Currently this covers three months but we are working towards increasing it to six months. Our strategy for building resilience for the future involves: diversifying income streams; developing more collaborative and partnership-based fundraising; exploring alternative and diverse forms of economy based on principles of degrowth (see p28) and solidarity; and rethinking how we support the commissioning and selling of art.

## Partnerships and collaborations

As a small rural arts organisation, nurturing relationships with various partners and collaborators is key to the sustainability of our organisation – supporting all areas of our operations. Working in partnership and collaboration allows us to create a diverse and dispersed artistic programme:

enabling us to develop and produce meaningful and longer-term projects, to contribute to our local economy and cultural offering, to strengthen the aims of other charities and local organisations, to build better local, national and international audiences, to foster new contributions to the programme, and to provide valuable development opportunities for artists.

Our local collaborations are many and evolving, with a constant reciprocal sharing of ideas and resources across our community. They include local schools (*Art in Schools*, 2021), restaurants and food producers (*CLIMAVORE* 2017-2022), the Gaelic college Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Guthan na Tìre heritage project, and the oral history collection Tobar an Dualchais with whom we have an artist residency exploring Gaelic culture. In addition, we have very close ties with community trusts across Skye including Urras An Taobh Sear (*A Crofters' Memorial*, ongoing), as well as the network of community halls across S,R&L, Portree Archive Centre, CLIMAVORE CIC, Portree High School, Raasay House, Viewfield Garden Collective, and Broadford Growers Hub, to name but a few of the most recent.



Poster from Mairi Gillies' ATLAS/Tobar an Dualchais residency sharing, 2021



ATLAS/Artnight co-commission with Isabel Lewis at Braes Hall, 2021, photo by Winifred Brook Young

We work with a range of partners across Scotland and the UK - particularly in the making and distribution of books, in education settings and in sector development networks. We have contributed to podcasts, writing, and *LESS* publication distribution with *Enough! Scotland*, Scotland's degrowth network. We maintain strong links with Scottish and H&I based organisations and cultural leaders through visits, talks, hosting, and workgroups such as the "Payscales and Benchmarking" workgroup (2022), the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries (2021),

Rural Arts Network Scotland (2020-), SCANet's Taisbean Highland Curators (2020-), informal Highland Cultural Leaders meetings (with Highland RFOs), and Scottish Contemporary Art Network sharings. We support Higher Education teaching and placements (University of the Highlands & Islands Art and Social Practice MA, Glasgow School of Art Curatorial M Litt). Co-commissioned artworks include new work with Isabel Lewis and Art Night London in 2020-2021, the UK-wide tour of with Katy Paterson's *First There is A Mountain* (2019), and new texts for our *Gàidhealtachd Futures* chapbook with the Edinburgh University Press journal, '*Scottish Affairs*'

in 2021.

Developing international partnerships in line with our organisational values has focused most recently on practice related to degrowth, place-based learning and indigenous culture. In recent years we have hosted visits from diverse groups across the world to share connection and learning related to land activism and climate justice with *The School of Plural Futures* and local tradition bearers. We recently joined the Community Economies Research Network, “an international network of researchers, activists, artists, practitioners and others who are interested in ways of enacting new visions of economy.” Our connections to academic institutions are also strong and growing. Other important international partnerships have included the Finnish Institute in 2022, exploring how we nurture practices of radical localism that are in conversation with other places and perspectives.

## Strengths and opportunities

ATLAS has a range of strengths connected with the distinctive way we work as an arts organisation, the place that we work, and the community resources we have developed.

Our staff team are the cornerstone of our organisation and believe deeply in the work of ATLAS. Our team has a deep knowledge of people and local desires. Much of what they do lies in the often invisible work of connecting people and ideas, not only our own projects but in the way we support local artists, schools, community groups, students, businesses, film makers and other cultural workers to generate their own projects. They bring a depth and diversity of skills, experience, care, sensitivity and knowledge.



Heather and Katharine at the *CLIMAVORE* Oyster Table, 2020, photo by Murdo MacGillivray



Screening of *Donna Haraway: Storytelling for Earthly Survival* (dir. Fabrizio Terranova) at Skeabost Hall in 2021, one of the many halls across S,R&L, photo by Emmie McLuskey

We also have a huge set of physical resources available to local people and our programme. S,R&L has an amazing set of community halls, trusts and community spaces that we use for events. ATLAS hosts an in-demand community cinema resource, a pay-what-you-can book-making studio forming a library of community-made books (the Making Publics Press) and other equipment for borrowing such as sound recording gear at our office. With these resources we aim to be a repository for local people to develop autonomous community programming, oral history recording and to widen access to film and moving image across Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh. Understanding the importance of

open access to tools and knowledge, our office houses a growing collection of zines and books. Through sharing resources, we strengthen our connections within the communities across and in between projects.

Our board is invested not only in governance but in helping us set up events and learn about Skye's history, with experience in crofting and land management, working with young people, archival history, curatorial studies, development, project management, general management, and community engagement. We place great value on local knowledge, paying attention to the insights and experiences of the communities we work with. It is also vital to bring in additional knowledge and expertise to benefit our organisation. We have recently renewed our Board membership, bringing a diversity of new skills, experience and expertise to the organisation. These relationships form the core of our efforts: supporting artists to do their work.

The learning and sharing of Gaelic culture, language, place and history takes place across our work, through community collaboration, creative projects and the development of artistic practice. We believe that through poetry, artworks, books, fresh writing, new film, archives, alternative education projects, material cultures, gatherings and making, cultural memory is retained and new alliances are built.

Our size is also our strength: a smaller team allows us to be adaptive and responsive while aware of our own limits. Our track record speaks to our effectiveness: we are fortunate to enjoy core funding and have also counted on the regular support of other critical funders such as Highlands and Islands Enterprise and others. There are opportunities to build on some of these relationships.

We have a distinct position in the Scottish cultural ecology that is driven by the unique way we make and present art - in different spaces and in different ways across a rural/coastal area. Our programme centres people, process and place, and is rooted in local cultures, languages, histories and ecologies - wherever you are in the world. We don't need to apply resources to a fixed venue, and so can work flexibly across art forms to develop work with artists and publics with lasting meaning. We value artistic research as much as public programmes and events; providing time and resources for this slower work. We try to be self-reflective, continually drawing in learning and insight from diverse sources to challenge and improve the way we work.

## **Development areas and threats**

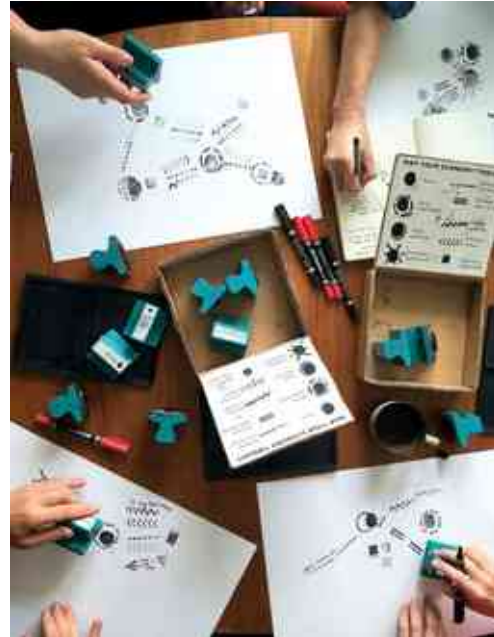
We know that we still have work to do to continue to develop as an organisation. At times, though sometimes a strength, our visibility has been a challenge. A lot of our most important work is necessarily less public and can therefore feel less tangible and valued. We have more to do to expand our audiences, as well as to feel more confident in the quality and impact of our work over quantitative aspects. We want to build our profile over the long term in ways that also demonstrate our values. We will do this through a collective approach with our programme and the building of new relationships, learning how to make ATLAS more recognisable whilst

remaining accessible, and how to break down the more exclusionary perceptions of contemporary art. The lack of a venue as a focal point of our work, size of the island, small team, lack of transport infrastructure and the geographic spread of people and activity means that growing audiences which crossover to new projects is often a challenge. Our office is also neither fully accessible nor ideally situated for local visibility.

The smaller size of our organisation can also be a challenge due to the vast geographic spread of audiences and activities, meaning that we need to focus on priorities, building efficient working practices, and effective information management. Developing new audiences meaningfully across our dispersed rural region consumes time, carbon and resources but working across this area is our remit. We always strive towards the right organisational shape that can deliver on our ambitions and prove to be resilient and sustainable while retaining our agility. Contextual challenges such as housing mean that recruitment can be difficult. At times our team and artists are stretched and we continuously guard against burn out.

Finally, we know that we need to continue to develop collaborative income streams without sacrificing our core aims, renewing our efforts to reduce our reliance on Creative Scotland's support as a proportion of our overall income. We continue to seek out new and ethical sources of contributed income from individual donors, trusts and foundations and other supporters, and we are exploring new ways of earning income from streams such as our Editions and collective income generation with the community. Our ambition is increasing in relation to these aspects with the remit of our new Diverse Economies Manager. We also know that we need to double down on our policy work, ensuring that the governance and operation of our organisation is inclusive, safe and fair and we exceed best practice in key areas such as environmental responsibility and fair work.

As discussed in the context section, it is a challenging time to be working on some of these development areas. Key threats to ATLAS include competition for, and potential loss of funding from key stakeholders, and the difficulty of demonstrating the value of our work when our focus is often on quality over quantity. A focus for this plan has been to establish clear objectives and outcomes and we know that we need to tighten up and create a sustainable approach to monitoring and evaluation so that we can better tell the story of our impact.



Artist Ailie Rutherford's *Mapping Below the Waterline* workshop, exploring local economies, ATLAS, May 2022, photo by Joss Allen



# Section 5: Our future strategy

## Summary

Over the next four years, our aim is to strengthen local collaborations and our work as a carrier of stories, artworks and the cultures of (this) place. We will make more visible the impact and importance of this work. We will develop the work we've been doing to create spaces with young people to discuss art, culture and local/global concerns. We will grow our community and the ways we welcome people, developing our vision for ATLAS as a community-made resource as well as an arts programme.

In tandem with this, our higher level aims are to create the changes we feel are necessary to foster a fairer world and economy. We are preparing for a changing planet and climate through the building of community, solidarity and the sharing of knowledge. We will support arts workers in flexible, diverse and responsive ways, enacting collective and long-term ways of working.

### **Our 6 strategic aims and objectives are to:**

- 1. Have meaningful local impact**
- 2. Carry a diverse and dispersed artistic programme**
- 3. Foster systems change and solidarity**
- 4. Support Highland and Islands cultural advocacy**
- 5. Prepare for change through collectivity and training**
- 6. Foster fair and fulfilling work for staff and artists**

### **How we'll achieve these:**

#### **1. Meaningful local impact**

- Support young people to develop skills and confidence with peers, and to take action on social justice by consolidating work with and for young people
- Widen knowledge of ATLAS as a community resource through collaboration, a more visible communications strategy, and by finding a new affordable office/space for improved community access
- Carry relationships in-between projects and welcome new audiences through a collectively-made programme and the development of useful resources

- Deepen advocacy of local issues related to young people, loss of community, culture, housing and food security through the development of our programme, alternative economies work, and community collaboration
- Consolidate our work and opportunities to develop discourse with Gaelic culture, place and local history by realising our Gaelic Plan objectives
- Sensitively measure the impact of our work by improving evaluation

## **2. A diverse and dispersed artistic programme**

- Ensure our programme is voiced and led by others as well as the ATLAS team
- Ensure our programme is locally, nationally and globally reflective; convivial, sensitive, and accessible in multiple ways through consistent analysis, flexible commissioning and improved internal and external feedback processes
- Work to break down elitism in contemporary art through celebration of art in all its forms, and in our staff/artist approach
- Increase quality of local attendance by programming more activity during the quieter winter months
- Expand access provision through a revised access policy, making our community resources more mobile, working with a range of community venues, and strong digital and travel support offerings

## **3. Foster systems change and solidarity**

- Create a degrowth strategy for the organisation exploring solidarity and sustainability in the way we commission, fundraise, administrate, budget, and programme
- Foster well-being and equity across the sector by advocating widely for slower work, alternatives to competition and better conditions for artists
- Improve income diversity (not just for ourselves) in ethical and community-focused ways through local and global community collaboration, a new approach to our editions series, our Diverse Economies role, and shared commissions
- Improve transparency and collectivity of decision-making through programme and administrative work

## **4. Highland and Islands cultural advocacy**

- Create paid opportunities and support improved networks for local creative freelancers through programme and training
- Build on the ecology of practices across Highlands and Islands contributing to a progressive and connected network of makers and thinkers by ensuring staff undertake studio visits, contribute to programmes, share learning, work with Higher Education, and collaborate with cultural organisations across the region

- Advocate for cultural provision across the Highlands and Islands through leadership, research and representation at strategic events

## **5. Prepare for change through collectivity and training**

- Make sure ATLAS is adaptable and knowledgeable as an organisation by ensuring strong team and board knowledge of local infrastructure reviews, opportunities for young people, Highland ecology, and land/housing issues, retaining flexible working practices, and developing and implementing our degrowth strategy.
- Meet legal obligations whilst addressing the high policy workload by advocating for collective policy work in the sector, and through staff training
- Prepare for recruitment challenges by maintaining attractive terms for employees, and development of future cultural workers in the area
- Articulate strategic and reciprocal local partnerships by building on existing relationships with local community organisations, trusts, educational spaces and charities

## **6. Foster fair and fulfilling work for staff and artists**

- Support artists to make satisfying, impactful work by creating open-theme, long-term commissions, with ample lead-in times and Scottish Artist Union rates of pay
- Ensure staffing structure and workload is sustainable, fair and fits with principles of degrowth by better understanding the full range of technical, professional and transferable skills held by our workers, and through further consultation
- Nurture our team and artist's effective voices so that they are able to discuss and challenge the ways we work in a safe environment by introducing clear pathways for learning, whistleblowing, complaints and development
- Build upon learning from and development of accessible job design and inclusive recruitment practice from recruitment of Assistant Producer and Maternity Cover Director
- Ensure a good balance of production time and reflection time for staff and artists, and team fulfilment through promotion of work-life balance and timetabled research time
- Ensure governance model is fair and fit for purpose through research and consultation
- Take further action on key findings from fair work analysis<sup>xiv</sup>

See Appendix 3 (Strategic Plan Aims and Objectives) for actions and measureables on the above. These cover governance, team development, advocacy, artistic support, international work, communications, solidarity work, income generation and how we plan to develop these in line with values of collectivity and 'degrowth'.

## Section 6: Realising our vision

### Degrowth and collectivity

In exploring degrowth we are recognising that there are better, existing and fairer ways of organising the economy and the planet's resources, and therefore our own organisation's work. Degrowth is not the advocacy of lower wages or recession - but of a healthier set of economic relationships that prioritise all people, the land and wellbeing.

We aim to develop our own learning and practice in relation to this over the coming four years, both behind the scenes and through our programme content and approach, and in our footnotes we recognise many people who have been part of our learning related to this thus far.

### Programme approach 2022-2026

Our artistic programme will continue to unfold through a diverse and dispersed series of artist commissions, public events, alternative education activities, long-term projects, publications, residencies and open access resources across Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh.

We will give greater emphasis to collaborative ways of building artistic programmes and spaces. Learning from projects such as *The School of Plural Futures* and *from Plockton to Portree*, co-creation will be central to the way our projects are made.

We'll build on our work as a connector of people and ideas with new regular events led by others. We will experiment with the introduction of these in a single venue, to foster recognisability and new contributions to the programme. This will help us focus on building and retaining new audiences in a less time-intensive way for our small team, in balance with programming that takes place across the thousand square miles of Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh.

Central to our work will be the development of well-paid, long-term, rigorous and open-ended artist commissions for artists from here and across the globe, working as a team to enrich artists' work over the long-term. Over the span of our strategic plan, these artists will speak from a wide range of lived perspectives and locations. We aim to co-commission two larger-scale artist projects alongside our other activities each year, with a range of local contributors to our



Boards painted by Mairi McFadyen and Ragnaid Sandilands as part of their session for *The School of Plural Futures*, 2021, photo by Ainslie Roddick

programme. Our team of 2.8-3.6 FTE (funding dependent) staff members will support this programme, as well as undertaking a large proportion of non-public connective work.

### **Each year the programme aims to support:**

- A multitude of events across S,R&L: film, performance, meals, gatherings, talks, workshops & walks with schools, community halls, and other groups/venues
- An annual curriculum of *The School of Plural Futures*, a year-long artist and young person-led alternative education project
- Two long-form artist commissions, with local, Scottish and globally-connected artists
- Two substantial Research and Development residencies to slowly seed the two future projects above
- A Gaelic artist oral history residency in partnership with Tobar an Dualchais
- A programme of film and artist moving image screenings
- Training and open access to our Community Cinema Equipment, supporting autonomous film events across S,R&L
- The Making Publics Press – an open access space to design, print and bind books
- Two new ATLAS Chapbook publications
- Highlands & Islands artists' community and advocacy events

### **Cross pollination, Gaelic, climate and healthier futures**

In recent years, we have seen how new artist commissions have been cultivated most successfully through cross-pollination with other projects and artists' research. *The School of Plural Futures* – our alternative education programme with people aged 16–25 – has seeded strong local roots and now forms the spine of this strategic programme, aiming to deepen impact and learning each year. A key aim is to secure funding for this to continue. We will grow audiences, and share stories and communal resources through our Making Publics Press publication studio, as we slowly build a library of locally-made books and artist publications and our Community Cinema Equipment.

At the heart of our new programme is the desire to create spaces to explore, learn with, preserve, and imagine the futures and cultures of the Highlands and Islands with many different people - with a guiding principle that there are many ways to relate and belong. It is a core aim to support creative projects with the Gaelic vernacular community and spaces for nuanced discussion on issues facing local communities, building relationships with Gaelic language and culture, as well as greater critical analysis and support of Gaelic visual art and what this means to artists today. This will happen across our programme as a natural and integral thread, explored through new publications, artist residencies, arts criticism and events. Our new Gaelic Plan (Appendix 4a) outlines our aims and planned actions in detail.

As our organisation prepares to meet the challenges of the climate and ecological emergency and increasingly dramatic changes at a local/global level, our programme will reflect and respond to the learning that we as a team are doing, creating opportunities with our artists and audiences for creative learning, skills development and building critical relationships. Our goal is to enrich and make more visible where this work is already happening so that we can contribute to a resilient local community and art world. The programme also unpacks some of the behaviours and approaches in the art world that are less useful to us - individualism, gatekeeping, competition, ownership, fixed commissions and overproduction - instead exploring other existing diverse economies of making, collective ownership, and more flexible, slower work. The programme will be built through slow relationships, reflection and feedback, to expand the ways we learn, including creating a new annual feedback event each year.<sup>xv</sup>



Prints made with *The School of Plural Futures*, 2021, exploring themes raised during the year long project

Whilst we value the questioning and critical role art plays in society, our future programme will also make plenty of space for simply coming together for fun and celebration - finding the best ways to come together to speak about the intentions and effects of artworks by making, growing and eating together. See our Programme Appendix (6) for more detail.

## A bubble team structure?

In relation to fair work objectives, our ultimate aim is to create a more horizontal team structure. This kind of work requires time and care, and will be undertaken as the skills, experience and needs of the team grow and change over time. Some informal work<sup>xvi</sup> has been undertaken, imagining organisational roles as part of a more emergent 'bubble' of responsibilities, and with greater sharing of budgeting and management responsibilities. However further mapping and consultation is required in relation to succession planning, training and pay structures. Over the past 3 years the difference in pay between our highest and lowest paid staff member has closed from 52% to 23%. This gap will continue to shrink in 2022-2026.

# Section 7: Recognising success and learning

## When and how to make impact visible

At ATLAS, we believe in gathering and communicating our work's complex and subtle impacts as much as the more prominent changes and success stories. Responding to our context, audiences, and those we work with, we seek to evaluate our work through methods that do not conflict with our vision, values and purpose, challenging singular, metric-based methods as the only ways of measuring and evaluating. We know that we need to better communicate our strengths, impacts and failures constructively to local communities and the wider arts ecology. Rethinking and strengthening our evaluation practice over this next strategic period will be critical in helping us to reflect, learn and evolve in meaningful ways.

## Learning as part of community

Over the last couple of years, ATLAS has undertaken several highly impactful projects that have influenced our evolving approach to learning and evaluation. One particularly influential project has been *The School of Plural Futures* (2020–ongoing). With this project the team, contributors and artists grew as part of the group – learning together rather than teaching down. The school was built slowly through walks, phone calls, messages and drives and sessions emerged quietly and less publicly – focusing on the desires of the group rather than interest from elsewhere. It made ATLAS fundamentally reassess how projects are evaluated and critically rethink our priorities in working with young people as a core part of the programme, as well as how people access and contribute to (rather than participate in) our programme. As a consequence of the school, we are shifting towards ways of working that create more opportunities for young people to play active and critical roles in the planning and delivery of our programme, growing contribution, empowerment and agency through the creation of cultural spaces together. The School of Plural Futures has already shown us that this approach makes our programme richer, more accountable, and more meaningful locally.

## Slow evaluation

Recognising that success – and failure – take many forms, our evaluation practice will evolve to capture a better range of quantitative and qualitative information. We will work towards further expanding and embedding qualitative modes of evaluation into our organisation whilst becoming more focused and discerning around the kind of quantitative information we capture. Working in a rural context, sometimes with specific groups, our success stories should emphasise lived experiences and long-term legacies over attendance numbers and statistical analysis. These stories can be more complex and time-consuming to capture. To do this, we will need to build more time and resources into our projects and operations, nurturing our team's evaluation skills, capacity and effective voices.

## Feedback processes

More time for internal reflection, analysis and critical learning will be balanced with independent feedback from artists and those we work with. Project reports will help us capture this information, build on organisational learning, and make it more readily available when appropriate. We will work with the Rural Art Network Scotland to develop collective methodologies for recognising organisational success and learning and telling more nuanced stories about our work.

Employing Quickbooks tags in our accounts, we'll better capture and document the economic impact of ATLAS within local and wider arts economies in ways that are easier to share and understand. Through the work of our DEM, we will look for ways to “identify, gather, and amplify” the diversity of economic practices that exist locally – exploring new metrics for attempting to capture the complexity and diversity of these economic practices and lived experiences.<sup>xvii</sup>

We will work towards increasing community involvement and agency in our learning and reflection processes through testing new community-led evaluation methods, developed from projects such as *The School of Plural Futures*. Alongside this, we'll develop an annual feedback event taking place in the winter with food, talks and workshops – creating further opportunity for participants to lead on reflection and evaluation in fun and more meaningful ways.

We'll develop clearer pathways for feedback to reach us, e.g., through feedback forms, informal systems, on our website and distributed at events, and explore options for creating steering groups related to long-term projects, such as *The School of Plural Futures*.

Embracing collaborative and reciprocal ways of working, there will be greater opportunity for our projects to be co-designed, co-delivered and co-evaluated. Forums, such as the “pay scales and benchmarking” workgroup, help us share and reflect upon our work with leading peers in the Scottish art sector, as well as create shared resources, collective power and advocacy.

We will work with more external sector-based peers invited in to experience the work first-hand, offering feedback and analysis of our work as well as the opportunity to influence and benefit the wider cultural sector. Through joining the Community Economies Research Network (CERN), we will have access to academic partners and collaborators to help us evaluate and share our diverse economies work beyond our sector and locale.

See our evaluation Appendix for more information on processes for gathering feedback and evaluation.



## Section 8: The path ahead



*The School of Plural Futures with Iain MacKinnon in the shadow of Beinn na Caillich, photo by Jordan Young, 2021*

We believe that our work has real impact as a connective tissue across our community. We connect people and ideas across the Highlands and Islands, support a thriving and unique arts ecology, create opportunities with young people, reinforce the work being done to celebrate Gaelic art and culture, build community resources, support local film and publishing, and commission art in a unique way that centres the long-term legacy of artists' work.

We are excited about our work and projects, and through this plan we have identified the challenges and opportunities ahead to grow this impact.

Since 2016, ATLAS has received Regular Funding for Organisations (RFO) from Creative Scotland, benefiting from the relative stability and security this funding has afforded. In 2025, RFO funding will stop as Creative Scotland transitions to a new model of multi-year funding. We have a strong case for the continuation of regular funding from Creative Scotland, but this is not a given. A standstill in funding for the 7th year in a row (as faced by all RFOs in 2023) would also have a severe impact on our ability to deliver on the bare minimum of activities and fair pay levels. Therefore a strategy to respond to these risks is vital.

From 2023 to 2024, with support from Creative Scotland's COVID recovery fund for organisations and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, we will initiate our Diverse Economies Manager role for a 16-month trial period. This new role is operationally and strategically vital for ATLAS's (de)growth and development, providing us with much-needed support in managing our finances and diversifying our income and fundraising – responsibilities that currently lie with the Artistic Director. During these 16 months, we will consolidate and define the role, adding to our already strong, evidence-based case for the necessity of this role and the need for it to be part of any core funding package ATLAS receives going forward.



Sculpture workshop in Plockton with Malcolm Mackenzie, part of a *boat build project*, 2022, photo by Murdo MacGillivray

ATLAS is increasingly aware of the potential of a new office space for our resources to be more accessible and available to more people across SRL, and to fulfil our vision of collective ownership of culture. Finding an appropriate office space is important to us but options are limited and we will need to think carefully and imaginatively about where and how best to relocate, and how this might change our work. The ethics of community ownership are important to us, and affordability also. A new location will be a chance to step towards our vision of a world

where everyone can access the knowledge and resources needed for their cultural lives to thrive.



Screening of *Dàn Fianais*, Portree, 2022, as part of *The School of Plural Future's* 'A Person is not an individual' book launch, photo by Jordan Young

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over and will continue to affect the communities we work with in very real and indeterminate ways. Politically, socially, economically and ecologically, the future is very uncertain. The repercussions of these crises are being lived here and around the world already, and have been for many years. We must learn in solidarity and make changes to continue to fulfil our core purpose of supporting artists and cultural exchange in the most fulfilling ways.

At the heart of this plan is a hope and belief that art and culture is central to the making of better futures. This plan attempts to guide us through this next period in the best, imperfect way we can.

# Section 9: Appendices

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<sup>i</sup> We have been inspired in many different ways by the work of GalGael. There is a nod here to their invitation to ‘declare yourself welcome’ as part of a [Declaration of Independence](#) marking 25 years of Govan Free State.

<sup>ii</sup> [The first chapbook](#) of ATLAS’s Making Publics Press explores these themes, with texts co-published in the Journal of Scottish Affairs, Volume 30, Issue 2, May, 2021, “[Scotland’s Gàidhealtachd Futures](#)”.

<sup>iii</sup> There is also a nod here to ‘Dig Where You Stand’ a practice discussed frequently during the School of Plural Futures as we explored the importance of understanding local history, culture and experiences of the past in order to inform better futures, mostly in reference to Alastair McIntosh’s 2004 book ‘Soil and Soul: People versus corporate power’ which examines the Eigg community buyout.

<sup>iv</sup> We pay [Scottish Artist Union](#) rates for talks, events and residencies; we pay £750+week for site visits, and artists’ fees are calculated on a case-by-case basis depending on level of work, with long-term fees paid pro rata against our Producer’s salary (or higher).

<sup>v</sup> Reflecting on our work in 2020, our team learned with the writing of [Denise Ferreira da Silva](#) and [Fred Moten & Stefano Harney](#) who speak about the need to imagine and live the world differently, rather than creating categories of people to help and boxes to tick. For more info, see our “Beyond EDI” policy.

<sup>vi</sup> For example, through the creation of a new annual feedback festival day.

<sup>vii</sup> Fix as in “correct” but also as in “institute”.

<sup>viii</sup> Contribution from board member and Portree archivist, Catherine MacPhee, during our Board development discussion.

<sup>ix</sup> Edited by Emma Nicolson and Gayle Meikle. The [book](#) charts the first eight years of ATLAS’ practice organising our activity under four thematic headings: Located, Praxis, Temporalities and Resilience.

<sup>x</sup> [CLIMAVORE: On Tidal Zones](#) began as a project with ATLAS in 2017 and in 2020 became an autonomous Community Interest Company continuing CLIMAVORE’s work in Skye.

<sup>xi</sup> Data taken from Quickbooks tags logging payments to artists and arts workers, and payments to local people and businesses. This is in addition to the four ATLAS team member salaries.

<sup>xii</sup> See, <https://nhshighland.publichealth.scot.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/SkyeAndLochalsh-PopulationAndDemography.pdf>; and <https://www.nature.scot/doc/landscape-character-assessment-skye-and-lochalsh-landscape-evolution-and-influences>

<sup>xiii</sup> We work with people across the programme in ways which crossover and support one another. We have a new Diverse Economies post focused on collective fundraising and income generation. We have begun work on monitoring our investment in local economy, and the art economy, through quickbooks tags. Also, see [Kate Rich](#), who discussed her work on interdependence at our Board development day, June 2021 as part of the preparation of this plan. Conversations with Mairi McFadyen, SCAN, [CERN](#), The School of Plural Futures, the women of [The Carrying Stream](#), artist Ailie Rutherford during her [Mapping below the waterline](#) workshop and with artist Kate Rich, as well as our year of R&D in 2019 - have been important towards our organisational thinking on diverse economies and the development of our Diverse Economies Manager.

<sup>xiv</sup> For example, exploring how we are going to measure success and regularly track progress towards diversity and opportunity goals, and evaluate how/where collaborative working benefits our organisation and workers.

<sup>xv</sup> A celebratory day gathering feedback and ideas. Inspired by GWL [Open the Door](#) feedback festival

<sup>xvi</sup> With feminist designer Naomi van Dijck, during research for the making of our new website. In a bubble structure, each person is responsible for different and clearly defined areas which flex to form a greater whole. If a bubble pops a different shape naturally emerges to fill the gap.

<sup>xvii</sup>See, <https://www.communityeconomies.org/about/community-economies-research-and-practice>