

**CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SCOTLAND'S CULTURE AND TOURISM SECTORS**

**SUBMISSION FROM conFAB**

**Organisational Story:**

The lockdown measures have had a significant and devastating effect on our organisation. At the time of lockdown we were about to receive long awaited confirmation on a funding application which would have provided the majority of our income for the year. Lockdown conditions have meant we have not been able to progress that work and have lost that income.

We are in the process of exploring what we can offer digitally. However, we have very genuine concerns about the health impacts of such extensive use of the screen and digital technology. We are also very aware of the barriers of access to these offers for artists and audiences alike. What we can offer digitally will in no way be enough to sustain the organisation.

All funding – arts and otherwise - is now focused on coping with the lockdown measures. What the long-term outlook is for any type of funding and what will be available after lockdown measures have been released is very uncertain. As a small project funded organisation we are not able to benefit from any of the Government support packages.

The arts are an experiential and a human experience. All arts forms have people gathering as intrinsic, integral and essential elements of that experience. Even visual art, writing and composition ultimately lead to people gathering together. A work of visual art when put on a screen ceases to be a painting and becomes a photograph, a piece of theatre ceases to be theatre and becomes a film whether - it is broadcast live or not.

Not being able to gather is and will devastate the arts sector. If the government are absolutely convinced that restrictions on public gatherings are essential and that there is absolutely no other solution – such as providing PPE or offering us softer social distancing measures etc. etc. - then I ask them to have some very big ideas about how they are going to sustain the sector.

As an artist I am effectively being refused the right to work so I'd like to know what the long-term support packages are, what funds will be available to reignite the sector when they do consider it safe to lift restrictions and what extensive fully funded retraining packages are going to be on offer for those of us who will not have the opportunity to practice our art again.