

The Pipe Factory, Kelvin College Hard Hat Tour. Credit: Emma Semple

Glasgow Kelvin College & Strange Field Industry Partnership in Art & Design 2025–26

Year One Evaluation Report

STRANGE FIELD

Glasgow Kelvin College

Made possible with Heritage Fund

Summary

Industry as the condition for learning.

Collective thinking as the engine of sustainable cultural infrastructure.

Equity as the condition for thriving communities and a creative workforce.

This report evaluates the first year of a leading industry partnership between Glasgow Kelvin College (GKC) Art & Design Department and Strange Field — an independent arts organisation and registered charity based at The Pipe Factory and French Street in Glasgow's East End.

The partnership is unique within Scottish further education: a structured, embedded collaboration giving college students direct access to a working contemporary arts organisation, professional artists, and real community audiences. It is rooted in a shared conviction that a creative education and career must be genuinely accessible to all — and that the future of our creative industries, growing at a rate x7 faster than any other industry in Scotland, depends on it.

Strange Field and Glasgow Kelvin College share an approach where communities are the producers and shapers of a diverse cultural life in Scotland. The partnership evidences a smart, replicable pooling of resources through cross institutional collaboration to the benefit of students, our local creative workforce, the communities we work with, our staff and our shared partners.

Year One at a Glance

1	20+	2
Artist in Residence 7-month NHLF-funded residency	Community Workshops Partners: PEEK, Halliday, BCLC, St Mungo's Secondary & Whitehill Secondary	Public Exhibitions HNC embedded curriculum showcase at The Pipe Factory + HND end of year exhibition at Strange Field
9	80+	33
Workshops & Artists Talks Visiting Artist Workshops & Talks: Gabrielle Lockwood Estrin, Coral Brookes, Eden Bø Dower, Hussein Mitha, Morwenna Kearsley.	Young People and Adults engaged through community and schools workshops Partners: PEEK, Halliday, BCLC, St Mungo's Secondary & Whitehill Secondary	Young People and Adults gained accredited learning experience in the arts Partners: PEEK, Halliday, BCLC, St Mungo's Secondary & Whitehill Secondary

Why This Partnership Matters

"I was never sure of where I wanted to go after finishing college, it was always a stressful thing for me to think about however, I got to speak to so many different artists during my time as college through Strange Field who showed me you can do anything with art and go anywhere you like, it showed me that art really was freeing. I cannot thank Kelvin College and Strange Field enough for everything, I have changed as a person and an artist throughout my time with them."

—GKC Art & Design student, 2025–26

Scotland's creative workforce is statistically evidenced as being disproportionately white, middle-class and university educated — and narrowing. Creative FE participation is in documented decline at precisely the moment when further education serves the students most excluded from creative life: working class, care-experienced, neurodivergent, adult returning, refugee and ESOL learners (PEC Report 2024). This partnership offers a bold, evidence-based response. It demonstrates that partnered arts organisations in collaboration with further education can be a site of rigorous, ambitious, industry-connected and community rooted cross-disciplinary practice capable of contributing to a reversal of that trend.

In Glasgow's East End — one of the most deprived areas in Western Europe, a mile from world-class cultural institutions — the gap between creative aspiration and creative access can be structurally addressed. Declining creative FE provision has measurable consequences for individuals, communities and the cultural life of Scotland. FE in partnership with grassroots cultural workers and infrastructure is the most powerful lever for closing this gap.

FE Opportunity

- FE arts enrolments in Scotland fell from 7,320 to 3,395 between 2016–17 and 2021–22 — a decline of 54% (SFC, 2024).
- Scotland's creative workforce is disproportionately white, middle-class and Central Belt-based (SDS, 2024) — without FE intervention, this will worsen.
- Students from lower income households make up only 24–33% of UK art school populations despite representing a far greater share of the public (Cultural Majority Report, 2023).
- Four in five applicants to UK art schools on average are turned away (UCAS).

HE Dominance

- HE graduates represent the overwhelming majority of institutionally supported and resourced creative practitioners in Scotland and globally.
- Artists from working class backgrounds are systematically underrepresented across the creative industries — nearly all those represented by galleries and institutions come from university backgrounds (Cultural Majority Report, 2023).
- Fine art and creative programmes remain among the least diverse in terms of socioeconomic background of entrants across Scottish FE and HE (SFC, 2024).

Addressing Equity

- The sharpest decline in arts participation in Scotland is in FE — not universities — precisely where students are most likely to be adult returners, carers, neurodivergent or from areas of multiple deprivation.
- Glasgow Kelvin College serves a higher proportion of widening access, care-experienced, working class, neurodivergent, adult returning, refugee and ESOL students than comparable HE institutions (SFC, 2024).
- Glasgow's East End is rich in cultural heritage and among the most deprived areas in Western Europe yet sits adjacent to world-class cultural infrastructure with which its communities have minimal structural connection.



Curator in Residence Talk and Workshop with Eden Bø Dower, Sense of Urgency Project Cohort, Strange Field.

Why This Matters

- Every citizen of every age deserves the right to purse the full spectrum of knowledge, opportunity and education, free from the foreclosure of particular disciplines and careers to narrow demographics.
- The creative industries are deeply integrated in all aspects of our world and shape the visual language of public life — advertising, architecture, film, digital environments, healthcare communication and public space. When produced by a narrow demographic, the values and assumptions of that demographic become the cultural default.
- Inequality of creative opportunity reproduces itself across generations — children without access to creative education are less likely to enter creative careers or see culture as for them.
- Cultural participation is consistently linked to improved mental health, community cohesion, educational attainment and economic mobility (AHRC Cultural Value Project; WHO Arts and Health Report, 2019).
- The creative industries are growing at 7× the rate of the wider Scottish economy (SDS, 2025) — yet the preparatory workforce structures exclude the majority of Scotland's population.

Transformative learning theory (Mezirow) identifies the conditions of live industry encounter — disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, real stakes — as the conditions for deep learning. Malaguzzi's concept of the third teacher positions environment and encounter as active curriculum. Both frameworks directly underpin this model.

Researchers Beck and Cornford have documented the disappearance of local art schools across the UK and with them the loss of spaces where working-class students encountered the most advanced cultural debates of their time leading to some of our most loved musicians, artists and writers. This partnership is a deliberate act of reclamation.

Year One: Activity & Outputs

1. Artist in Residence

We provided a sustained residency opportunity for an artist to create work towards a major commission in the college context alongside students through studio crits, tutorials and workshops.

2. Community Visual Arts Placements

We provided support and training for students to run their first community workshops with our local community partners and schools including PEEK (Possibilities for East End Kids), Halliday Foundation, Bridgeton Community Learning Campus, St Mungo's Secondary School and Whitehill Secondary School.

3. Open-Source Teaching & Workshop Resources

We produced an example teaching pack of how our historic buildings can be used to deliver SCQF Level 7 - 10 Art and Design units embedded in the existing FE Curriculum. Glasgow Kelvin students produced their own open-source workshop plans which will be permanently available through Strange Exchange Library for arts educators to use in their own community settings.

4. Collective Curating & Exhibition Making

We platformed local graduates work at Strange Field's venues to gain their first experience in curating, collective practice and exhibition making supported by visiting artist's talks and workshops in a historic and architecturally significant large-scale venue.

5. Artists Support Network

We are launching an inaugural network in June 2026 for FE graduates to keep in touch and access advice and opportunities following college. Currently most arts spaces tacitly act as this for HE graduates, where key forms of capital are accumulated and perpetuate a closed social field of practice. We address systemic underrepresentation by explicitly focusing on FE.



Eva Jack, Saturday Session at Strange Exchange. Credit: Ingrid Mur

1. Artist in Residence

We work in partnership to provide space for practicing artists to work with and alongside our students.



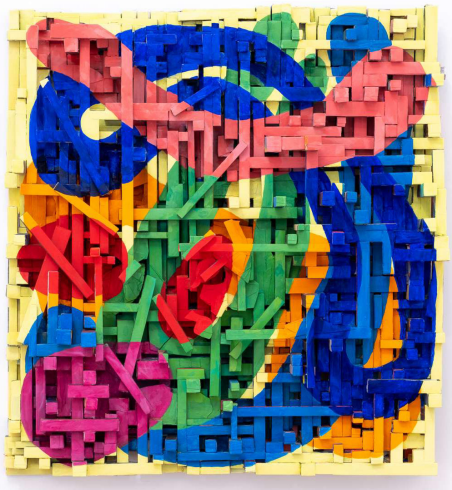
Gabrielle Lockwood Estrin, Royal Drawing School

Glasgow Kelvin College hosted artist Gabrielle Lockwood Estrin as Artist in Residence over seven months, funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund via Strange Field's Murmuration programme, founded and led by Coral Brookes. Students were given direct, unmediated access to a practising artist working towards a major public commission — an experience unavailable in standard FE classroom settings – and one which paralleled the students own as they worked towards their own public art projects and proposals for real sites and contexts across the city. Students engaged through tutorials, crits, professional talks and skills-based workshops exploring Gabrielle's process and conceptual approach, and observation of the full arc from commission brief to final public artwork.

Impact and outcomes

- Students experienced professional artistic process as live curriculum — not as illustration or example but as direct encounter.
- Embedded a model of industry presence within the college that is replicable and fundable through external residency programmes.
- Deepened students' understanding of how professional practice is sustained, commissioned and developed over time.
- Demonstrated that FE students benefit significantly from paragogic approaches to teaching connecting practitioner experience with academic and technical learning (Creative PEC, 2024).
- Provided an artist at a key stage of their career, the opportunity to apply their skills in the FE context and gave the time, facilities and resources to develop a new major body of work.
- Glasgow Kelvin College and Strange Field demonstrated that collaborating and sharing resources could meet the strategic objectives of both institutions for the benefit of young people, students, artists and the communities they operate in.

"All of the workshops and talks were fun, interesting and engaging. I gained many new perspectives on looking for inspiration in small places, absorbing the art world and its qualities, working with people and communities and presenting my artwork in effective ways. This effort elevated my learning experience with Glasgow Kelvin College."



'Entangled' by Gabrielle Lockwood Estrin. Credit: Sam O'Donnell

"I feel like having another artist in the residence of the college is really helpful and inspiring.. they get to share their insights of the industry and their own creative methodology. It's also great for students to ask questions and gives you an insight in living the creative world. "

2. Community Visual Arts Placements

We use and create open educational resources – freeing up teacher time, building student agency and making our best work available beyond institutional walls.

HND students designed and delivered their first series of community visual arts workshops across the East End of Glasgow, in partnership with PEEK, Halliday Foundation, Bridgeton Community Learning Campus, Whitehill Secondary School and St Mungo's Secondary School. This was a landmark transition: students moving from the role of learner to the role of practitioner and educator.

Professional mentorship was provided throughout by Strange Field and GKC staff Coral Brookes, Beth Dynowski and Jane Telfer-Harkins, alongside modelled workshops from practising artists who have worked with Strange Field's programmes - Morwenna Kearsley, Hussein Mitha and Curator in Residence Eden Bø Dower. All workshop plans are being permanently archived in Strange Exchange Library as open-source resources for arts educators.

Impact and outcomes

- Students gained their first professional experience as community arts practitioners — planning, facilitating and critically reflecting on real sessions with real participants.
- Provided training in community arts facilitation rarely available within FE, HE or Industry — a critical skill for artists for whom teaching is a primary route to a sustainable income.
- 80+ community participants engaged who gave significant positive feedback.
- 17 open workshop resources created and permanently made available freely to the wider arts and education sector.
- Directly addresses the skills gap and absence of peer support in the community arts workforce.

Open Educational Practice

- Additionally, this project directly demonstrated a replicable model on the following national and international agendas:
- In a financially constrained FE environment, shared and open resources represent genuine efficiency without sacrificing quality.
- OER (Open Educational Resources) evidence shows collaborative resource creation increases staff capacity and student ownership of knowledge (UNESCO OER Recommendation, 2019).
- Student-led resource creation increases engagement, deepens learning and builds graduate-level skills in curation, communication and digital publishing (MIT Open Courseware research; Open University UK).
- Scotland's Open Education Declaration aims to foster awareness of all forms of open education practice across all sectors of Scottish education and to promote open education practices and use of open educational resources to widen access to lifelong learning at all levels, both formal and non-formal.

"I really enjoyed delivering a workshop it taught me a lot of new things especially how to navigate working with children. I had so much fun after overcoming the initial nerves and wish it wouldn't have ended. I value how this experience will be really good for me in the future especially with potential jobs."



Murmuration Project. Credit: Coral Brookes

3. Designing Public Artwork for Cultural Heritage Contexts & Embedded Curriculum at The Pipe Factory

We use key architectural sites as intersections of our shared history, present and future, where students realise their work in public spaces.



Clay Pipes. Credit: Ingrid Mur

HNC students engaged with the cultural and architectural history of The Pipe Factory —Strange Field's first venue in a historic building in Glasgow's East End — as a live context for creative production. Students started the year on site, speaking with founders of the organisation and learned research skills through visual, textual and oral methods. They ended the block installing and exhibiting on site in Strange Field's container space in The Barras.

The live brief of making work for the opening of The Pipe Factory's refurbished space in the street level windows was embedded in existing SCQF Level 7 module. Critically, this was not a simulated or classroom-based exercise: students produced their first public-facing artwork within a genuine professional arts environment, developing an authentic understanding of what it means to make work for a real audience in a real space.

Teaching resources were developed and are being made freely available as an open educational resource — including an example pack demonstrating how the site, organisation and historic building can be used to deliver SCQF Level 7–10 art and design units. Through this, the framework is now in place for colleges across Scotland to engage with Strange Field and The Pipe Factory on live project briefs for their own student groups. This was education rooted in place, history and community.

Impact and outcomes

- The embedded curriculum model enacts a conviction shared by both partners: that FE is not preparation for more education but a distinct, vital and under-represented site of creative practice, tangible practical experience and pedagogy — one that does not require students to carry high levels of cultural or financial capital to access.
- Provided early-stage artists with access to professional cultural venues, heritage, architecture and exhibition contexts to experience the intersection of disciplines and possible future pathways and integrate directly within their own work.
- Advanced the organisation's mission to centre diverse artists - access to professional space and public audience was built into the curriculum as a right, not a privilege.
- Students gained hands-on work experience within a professional arts context and a direct, credible route toward degree-level study or employment with demonstrated work in their portfolio and CV.
- Curriculum delivery was shaped by Strange Field's sector reputation and proximity to internationally acclaimed practitioners, supporting the standard and ambition of student work.
- Students were exposed to the practical realities of founding and sustaining a creative organisation, including financial, marketing and community engagement dimensions.
- The public artwork delivered within a heritage context modelled a replicable approach to culturally situated arts education.
- Demonstrated clear proof of concept for embedding live professional briefs within FE curriculum delivery.

"I enjoyed the experience of making artwork and exhibiting it at the pipe factory, it was a great experience and it was fun to learn about the history of the pipe factory and the barras were it was located, doing this project helped me get to know about were ive came from and helped me try new things and explore new places."



The Pipe Factory

4. Collective Curatorial and Exhibition Practice at French Street

We provide training and a unique platform for early career artists, illustrators and designers to realise ambitious work in historic, large scale cultural venues.

Students conceived, curated and delivered a significant public exhibition at French Street — a historically significant site of working-class heritage in Glasgow's East End. Working across each dimension of professional exhibition-making — spatial planning, audience development, hospitality, team working, marketing, logistics, technical installation and public presentation — students produced a show for a real audience in a large-scale working arts organisation's venue. Neither partner could have delivered this alone. It is among the most tangible outcomes of the partnership's first year.

The work on view spanned an eclectic and diverse range of themes across contemporary art, design and society. From experiments in painting and printmaking that explored memory, ageing, popular culture and social housing, to urgent global concerns such as animal conservation realised through sustainable sculptural forms — the exhibition held energy, ambition and distinctly individual voices.

The exhibition also presented selected public art projects and community work led by students through workshops and collaborative projects undertaken throughout the year. These projects spoke to the vital role of creativity within the wider community, demonstrating how art connects people and place — generating shared experiences that reach well beyond the studio.

The artists, designers and illustrators in this cohort each selected their own site, generating proposals for public artworks by negotiating site, context, concept, audience and form. Selected works were then fully realised in public — including Samuel Moreno's new mural for Ruchazie Pantry, Rachel Robins' painting for Oran Mór, Sean McLaughlin's poster campaign for St Dominic's Primary and Ksenia Hranovska's performance on Buchanan Street.



'Somnaria' End of Year Exhibition, French Street, Strange Field.

Impact and outcomes

- Students left with a demonstrable, portfolio-standard public exhibition — a professional achievement that supports progression to degree-level study, employment or independent practice.
- Demonstrated that FE arts education and graduate practice is rigorous, transformative and publicly significant on its own terms.
- Provided access to professional exhibition space without the financial or cultural capital that normally gatekeeps it — enacting Strange Field's commitment to refusing extractive models.
- Created genuine public visibility for early-stage artists beyond competitive and elite art school offerings.
- Provided explicit training in exhibition making that is normally left to chance, supporting a diverse group of learning styles to access the same knowledge, opportunity and experience.
- Engaged a large and varied audience, including young people who heard from graduates on their experience making it a more tangible future pathway, to local audiences who experienced an exhibition of artists and designers studying in their community.

"A key moment for me was experiencing the high level of professionalism at Strange Field...everything was excellent, and for the first time, I felt that my work was curated and presented in a truly professional way. This moment changed how I see myself as an artist, giving me the professional confidence I needed and making me certain about continuing my future career in contemporary art and exhibitions."

5. Creative Support Network

Glasgow Kelvin College and Strange Field through this partnership are launching an inaugural Artists Support Network, specifically designed for FE graduates. Most early-stage opportunities and arts networks tacitly function as development infrastructure for HE graduates — spaces where social, cultural, financial and educational capital accumulates and a closed field of practice perpetuates itself as evidenced by research (Creative Majority Report 2023). This network is a direct structural intervention: giving FE graduates access to the connections, opportunities, peer support and professional socialisation that HE graduates receive. The network will enable graduates to stay in touch, share opportunities, access exhibition and commission calls, and build collective practice after leaving college.

Impact and outcomes

- Addresses the post-study cliff edge at which most widening access students lose connection to the sector.
- Directly responds to Creative Majority Report (KCL, 2023) recommendation to build coordinated post-education pathways into the creative sector for underrepresented groups.
- Builds the social capital and professional network that FE-background artists are currently structurally denied.
- Creates a long-term, low-cost infrastructure for graduate support that requires minimal ongoing institutional resource to sustain.

"With Strange field their help and support was invaluable as they were very supportive in helping us finding our ground as artists. Places like this should be supported and preserved at all costs. This is priceless and I cannot thank enough to everyone involved. I am forever grateful for this amazing experience and just sad that it came to an end."



Coral Brookes at Saturday Sessions. Credit: Ingrid Mur

Student Testimony

I have to thank the GKC Art department as it is outstanding. Spaces are nothing without the people that make them. All teachers involved in the Art courses at the college from level 5 to level 8 have been one of the best teachers I ever had as they really helped me finding myself as an artist. With Strange Field their help and support was invaluable as they were very supportive in helping us finding our ground as artists...places like this should be supported and preserved at all costs. This is priceless and I cannot thank enough to everyone involved. I am forever grateful for this amazing experience and just sad that it came to an end.

I think when I saw the public's reaction to my art at the exhibition has stayed with me, it built my confidence and people saw my vision. Strange Field helped me in that way.

A key moment for me was experiencing the high level of professionalism at Strange Field...everything was excellent, and for the first time, I felt that my work was curated and presented in a truly professional way. This moment changed how I see myself as an artist, giving me the professional confidence I needed and making me certain about continuing my future career in contemporary art and exhibitions.

I was never sure of where I wanted to go after finishing college, it was always a stressful thing for me to think about however I got to speak to so many different artists during my time as college through Strange Field who showed me you can do anything with art and go anywhere you like, it showed me that art really was freeing. I got excellent advice off of the artists on what universities could be good for me. I cannot thank Kelvin College and Strange Field enough for everything, I have changed as a person and an artist throughout my time with them.

I believe I am more confident as an artist and I have a lot more opportunities and different career path ahead of me that I would have never considered before my time at Kelvin college.

I think the whole experience of getting to run my own workshop was so beneficial, the initial thought of it terrified me but the more I planned the more I got excited and the workshop went amazing! I really enjoyed it and it inspired me to pursue it further as a side hustle.

Gabrielle was absolutely fab, so kind and understanding, and brilliantly talented. She showed us a unique style of printing that was unknown to me, opening my mind to new techniques in an easy to understand way in a friendly environment is extremely valuable to me and my work.

I valued that it showed me that there are many different ways to pursue a career in art and that education is not the only route into the industry.

It helped me build confidence at my workshop, helped me to come out of my shell and communicate with the young people who were at my workshop.

Given the fact that this was my first experience with presenting a community workshop, it went very smoothly. Coral and the Strange Field team supported me a lot with set up, presenting and activities. The kids who came along to my workshop were very sweet and enthusiastic, and I'm happy that I provided them with a space where they could relax and participate in fun art activities.

I think knowing artists that are doing work in our city is really important, there was such a broad spectrum of these artists work, all really interesting. I think again this is good as you can then see different pathways you could potentially take as an artist. I really valued how upfront the artists were when asked questions, they also all really took interest in our class's work. The workshops were crucial for our development phase and really helped us try new materials and different approaches.

I really valued my time with each artist that came into the college, I especially enjoyed the opportunity to engage in the workshops as it was helpful for initial research and development towards my own project. I also enjoyed the chance to play with materials and try things I haven't done before through the workshops. I thought that the talks were engaging and informative it was really good to hear the different opportunities artist have today and made me feel excited about working in the art world after education.

I think is important to have this awareness of how it is to work in art in the outside world and having these perspectives from artists is very important for students.

I thought it was really helpful to have someone who I could ask about the logistics of my designs as well as seeing someone else's design process, seeing how they would approach a task or design problem. Also learning more about people who are in the industry seeing how they have made a career that I might not thought of before.

I feel like having another artist in the residence of the college is really helpful and inspiring. Because they get to share their insights of the industry and their own creative methodology. It's also great for students to ask questions and inspiring for some. It also gives you an insight into living the creative world.

It gave me experience leading creative activities with children and helped me understand how art can encourage participation, creativity, and confidence.

I really enjoyed delivering a workshop it taught me a lot of new things especially how to navigate working with children. I had so much fun after overcoming the initial nerves and wish it wouldn't have ended. I value how this experience will be really good for me in the future especially with potential jobs.

I really valued the whole experience of being able to plan and deliver my own workshop, I never realised how much I enjoyed doing it and I think it's something I want to pursue further as a career. I don't think I would've felt so inspired if it weren't for this experience. I think it's such an amazing thing to be able to do as part of the course.

I think the experience of meeting an artist that is working in the industry was really beneficial as they were open to talking about their process and how they got to be successful in the art world.

I really enjoyed the exhibiting my work at Strange Field it was a great opportunity that I would have never have had without this course or even something I would do on my own, it will also help me in the future if I get the chance to apply for something like this as I have done it before so I will be a lot more confident as an artist.

All of the workshops and talks were fun, interesting and engaging. I gained many new perspectives on looking for inspiration in small places, absorbing the art world and its qualities, working with people and communities and presenting my artwork in effective ways. I learned a lot, and every artist was very friendly, nice to talk to and answered questions. This effort elevated my learning experience with Glasgow Kelvin College.

It was really good to have that engagement with artists working in such variety of fields in the art world.

I hope Strange Field continues to work with college graduates. It is a fantastic opportunity that should be developed further for new artists.

Being given a space and relative freedom to use the space at my disposal. Having direct ties with working artists through Strange Field was also pretty valuable. I really valued the experience in event management.

I liked being able to work with a local community and being given a space to talk about my work and provide a fun space for teens to play and experiment. It's also given me ideas on how I can use creative workshops in my own local community as an artist.

Outcomes by Stakeholder

Stakeholder	Key Outcomes
Community	• Stronger connections between East End residents and cultural activity in their area • Increased access to exhibitions, workshops and participatory creative events • Intergenerational and cross-community engagement through student- and artist-led projects • More inclusive cultural provision for people historically excluded from the arts which makes arts org and education pathways realistic and feasible
Students	• Hands-on, industry-embedded experience in professional creative environments regardless of cultural, social and financial capital • Enhanced employability through meaningful workplace learning in the creative industries • Strengthened progression routes from FE into professional practice • Improved confidence, vocational readiness, and creative identity • More equitable access to the creative industries for those facing financial, social or cultural barriers
College	• Established GKC as a sector leader in innovative, industry-embedded arts education in Scotland • Distinctive curriculum offer unavailable at any other mainland FE or HE institution • Strengthened progression pathways: L3/4/5/6 → HNC → HND → Employment or L3/4/5/6 → HNC → HND → BA/Hons → Employment • Enhanced reputation for widening access, community engagement and employability outcomes • Strategic partnerships with professional arts organisations and working artists
Strange Field	• Sustained educational partnership enhancing organisational stability, visibility and footfall in the local area • New audiences and long-term community engagement through student projects and exhibitions and regular community classes • Strengthened funding prospects through evidenced educational and community impact and partnered funding applications • Strong relationships with systematically underrepresented artists contributing to the organisation's core mission • Integration of education and professional practice within the venue's programme • Addresses measurable equalities Strange Field is aiming for - 91% of group considered themselves working class and 75% as neurodiverse.
Staff	• Teaching in a dynamic, industry-embedded environment with access to professional networks • Opportunities for collaborative co-delivery, CPD and engagement with visiting practitioners and lecturers • Increased visibility of staff expertise within Scotland's arts and education sectors • A strengthened community-focused and informed cultural infrastructure

Citizens of Glasgow need realistic and practical ways to enter into and thrive post-study. This programme is a scalable model of how study can integrate progression routes, excellence in industry and strong communities.

This partnership directly supports Strange Field's four strategic priorities:

Advance Contemporary Art by Centring Diverse Artists
By working with early-stage artists and platforming those who are demonstrably structurally underserved by local and national arts infrastructure — including the hierarchical and competitive structures of art schools and their graduates which is the basis for the majority of all those who enter the field — and by training the next generation, the partnership builds the conditions for a more socially just cultural field.

Build Community-Owned Cultural Infrastructure
The partnership models what it looks like when a further education institution and an independent arts organisation work together to create something neither could deliver alone — a demonstrable model of collaboration between crucial existing cultural infrastructure, towards wider efforts of the equitable distribution and ownership of cultural resources.

Refuse Extractive Models
Rather than requiring young people and adults to abandon creative ambitions entirely if they face barriers to education, this partnership creates a pathway grounded in community, craft and professional practice — one that does not demand high levels of cultural or financial capital to access.

Centre Arts Education as a Radical and Rigorous Practice
The partnership treats further education not as a lesser form of arts learning but as a distinct, vital and under-represented site of creative practice and pedagogy — one with its own ethics, methods and transformative potential.

The partnership directly supports Glasgow Kelvin College's three strategic priorities:

Progression
Developing people towards opportunity — helping them access and progress to a wider range of life-enhancing opportunities and employment that best suit their needs through experience, qualifications and work. Students are provided with a direct route to degree-level study and hands-on work experience to enhance their knowledge and aptitude, fostering grounded and ambitious approaches to what they can achieve after study.

Excellence
In learning and skills — ensuring that we design and deliver high-quality learning and skills that are relevant to learners' needs in their workplaces, communities and the economy. Strange Field has a reputation for excellence in the field, having supported hundreds of internationally acclaimed artists, designers, curators, musicians and performers, with major festivals on site. Our students benefit from immersion in the creative sector, making it tangible and accessible.

Enterprise
Equipping people and growing businesses — encouraging enterprise skills and attitudes that will better serve our learners throughout their working lives, support the creation of new businesses, and support competitiveness and growth in our local businesses and economy. Our students learn directly how to found a creative organisation: its structures, financial viability and acquisition, marketing and community engagement.

Looking Ahead

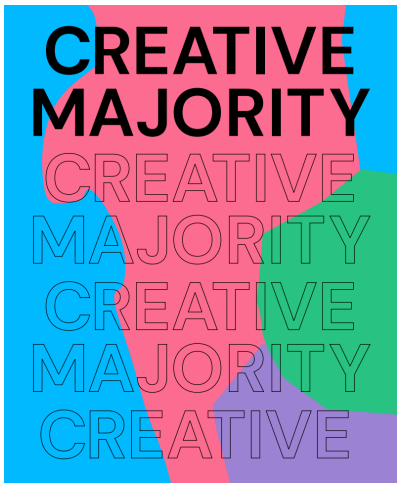
Year One has established the foundation for a partnership with long-term sustainable viability and significance — for students, for the East End community, and for arts education in Scotland. The activity delivered to date demonstrates strong proof of concept and a robust model for industry-embedded FE arts education.

Building on this foundation, GKC and Strange Field are committed to:

- Expanding the design, scale and reach of community visual arts placements across East End partners including schools.
- Developing collaboration between the GKC Communities Team and Strange Field to address the evidenced community ask for arts activity in their area and absence of regular art and design community class provision in the area from their local further education provider — providing availability of opportunity, building confidence and creating a first route into further learning.
- Deepening the embedded live industry briefs curriculum offer across both HNC and HND levels and feasibility for L5/6 cohorts.
- Widening cross-department collaboration on live industry brief curriculum offer across Kelvin, including Engineering, Construction and Health and Social Care.
- Developing the Artist in Residence model to include greater student co-creation, co-design and graduate opportunity.
- Contributing to sector-wide research and advocacy of FE and industry partnerships and widening access in the arts.
- Pursuing joint funding opportunities that evidence community impact and educational innovation.
- Creating and publishing open educational resources through Strange Exchange Library.



Erika Silverman Leading Hard Hat Tours, The Pipe Factory. Credit: Ingrid Mur



Making the Creative Majority, APPG for Creative Diversity / King's College London, 2023

GKC & Strange Field Year One: Evidence Against Creative Majority Policy Recommendations

Recommendation Area 1: Widening Participation

Creative higher education and higher education institutions need to change and adapt to diversify their undergraduate intake. Widening participation interventions require whole sectoral and institutional commitment — a multi-agency approach that facilitates both access to higher education and routes into employment. ("Policy Recommendations 2023: Making the Creative Majority") The widening participation framework should start with the acknowledgement that experience of, and access to, creative education across the UK is not equal.

How this partnership meets it

- Glasgow Kelvin College serves a higher proportion of widening access, care-experienced, working class, neurodivergent, adult returning, refugee and ESOL students than comparable HE institutions (SFC, 2024) — the partnership is structurally embedded within precisely the institution the report identifies as under-resourced and under-recognised.
- The partnership explicitly refuses a deficit model: it does not ask students to adapt to the institution but designs the curriculum around their actual lives, goals and contexts.
- The Artists Support Network specifically addresses the post-study gap — the moment most widening access students lose connection to the sector.
- 17 young people and adults gained accredited learning experience through community partners including PEEK, Halliday Foundation, Bridgeton Community Learning Campus and local secondary schools which gave tangible experience of possible streams of income and employment.

Recommendation Area 2: Revision Of Creative Education Provision Including Community Cultural Participation

The report urgently advises a revision of creative and cultural education provision, including primary and secondary education and local community cultural participation spending — with targeted provision from the early years foundation stage through to key stage 4. Effective widening participation requires engagement beyond higher education, drawing on a range of services including secondary-level education, social care, and creative economy employers. ("APPG for Creative Education - What Works in Widening Participation")

How this partnership meets it

- Community visual arts workshops delivered in partnership with PEEK, Halliday Foundation, Bridgeton Community Learning Campus, St Mungo's Secondary and Whitehill Secondary — reaching pre-entry learners and community participants not yet in formal education.
- The partnership provides a continuous journey: community workshops → college entry → professional practice → Artists Support Network — the multi-stage, multi-agency pathway the report calls for.
- HND students designed and delivered community workshops themselves, modelling a replicable approach to community-embedded arts education.
- 80+ young people and adults engaged through community and schools workshops in Year One — extending widening participation beyond the college walls into the community. This addressed a key factor identified in diminishing FE Art & Design enrolments (PEC 2024), through the narrowing of curriculum focus in secondary schools.

Recommendation Area 3: Work-Integrated Learning

Work-integrated learning can offer students advantages in creative labour markets, giving individuals real-world insight into job roles, soft skills, contacts and networks, and access to subsequent employment. Work-integrated learning provides a way of levelling the playing field between the unregulated world of open-market internships and the need for work experience to access creative jobs. Curricula need to be designed to fostering inclusive workplaces rather than merely adapting to poor working practices found in the creative economy.

How this partnership meets it

- The Artist in Residence model embedded a practising professional artist within the college curriculum for seven months — giving students unmediated access to a live commission process from brief to completed public artwork.
- HNC curriculum was formally embedded within Strange Field's venue, The Pipe Factory — students learned within a professional arts environment, not a simulated classroom version of one.
- Students produced their first public-facing artwork within a genuine professional arts context — this is work-integrated learning by design.
- Community visual arts placements gave HND students their first experience as practitioners rather than learners — planning, facilitating and reflecting on workshops with real community participants, mentored by professional artists. This a realistic and viable employment option in future.
- Public Art Practice projects embedded the creation of client, audience and funder facing proposals for real contexts.
- The public exhibition gave students practical experience and skills applicable to a range of jobs – interpersonal skills, marketing, logistics, audience engagement, installation and spatial design.
- All of this was structured, scaffolded and curriculum-embedded — the antithesis of the exploitative open-market internship the report identifies as a primary driver of inequality.

Recommendation Area 4: Open Market Internships And Monitoring

Open-market internships can be a major source of inequality in the creative economy. DCMS and its non-departmental government bodies, such as national Arts Councils and Creative Scotland, should do more to monitor negative working practices and penalise organisations that use unpaid interns.

How this partnership meets it

- The partnership provides a fully funded, curriculum-embedded alternative to unpaid open-market internship culture — students gain professional accredited experience as a right built into their programme, not a privilege requiring financial means or personal connections.
- Strange Field's explicit commitment to refusing extractive models directly enacts this recommendation: access to professional exhibition space, industry encounter and community placement is provided as part of education, not sold or gatekept.
- The partnership itself builds a cultural infrastructure for cultural workers that reduces dependence on informal networks.

Recommendation Area 5: Addressing The Class Crisis In Creative Education

The class crisis is clear. Managerial and professional middle-class origin individuals make up over half of all applications, offers and acceptances on creative courses. Routine and manual working-class origin students have worse application to offer and offer to acceptance ratios than any other social group.

Higher education, as evidenced by the research, is the overwhelmingly dominant route into work in the creative economy. Yet efforts to widen participation and pathways into higher education are currently not resulting in a more diverse workforce.

How this partnership meets it

- The partnership directly addresses the class gap by building genuine professional infrastructure at FE level — where working class students are — rather than treating student ambition as purely preparation for an HE system that continues to exclude them structurally.
- Each aspect of this partnership explicitly modelled and provided training in a live industry context of the skills needed to work in the creative industries, not leaving it to chance or by osmosis, building the confidence and professional relationships that are central to demystifying the industry and finding individual and collective agency.
- The French Street exhibition gave students their first public exhibition in a building which is part of the city's working-class heritage — professional visibility without requiring the financial or cultural capital that normally gatekeeps it.
- The Artists Support Network explicitly addresses the post-study social capital gap: most arts networks tacitly function as professional development for HE graduates; this network is specifically designed for FE graduates.
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Recommendation Area 6: Sharing Effective Widening Participation Practice

Sharing effective widening participation practices for creative higher education is difficult because of data and research approach issues. ("APPG for Creative Education - What Works in Widening Participation") HEIs offering creative courses must work to translate effective practices into the creative higher education context, to reflect students' strengths and enable their potential. Following the model established by the Athena SWAN Charter, HEIs should develop a framework that recognises and rewards good practice in widening participation across higher and further education.

How this partnership meets it

- Year One evaluation report is a deliberate act of public documentation — building the evidence base the sector currently lacks for FE-embedded, community-rooted arts education.
- Open educational resources produced and archived through Strange Exchange Library make effective practice available across the sector.
- Example teaching packs demonstrating how to deliver SCQF Level 7–10 art and design units within a live professional venue are freely available for other colleges to adopt and adapt.
- The partnership commits in Year Two to contributing to sector-wide research and advocacy on FE arts education and widening access — directly responding to the report's call for coordinated evidence-building.

Recommendation Area 7: Coordinated Policy Vision For Routes Into The Creative Sector

There are many moving pieces but a lack of coordination. A policy vision is needed for routes into the creative sector that offers clear pathways recognising individuals' needs, mapped onto the type of support — whether skills or formal qualifications — needed to realise the contributions and creativity that diversity can bring.

How this partnership meets it

- The partnership models exactly the coordinated, multi-stage pathway the report calls for: school engagement → community workshops → FE study → embedded industry experience → public exhibition → artists support network → professional practice.
- It is the only partnership of its kind in Scottish FE — a structured, sustained and embedded collaboration between a college and an independent contemporary arts organisation that spans the full arc from community access to professional entry.
- It directly supports Glasgow Kelvin College's three strategic priorities of Progression, Excellence and Enterprise as an integrated model — not three separate agendas.
- It demonstrates that this coordination is possible without additional government infrastructure, given will, shared values, and genuine partnership between education and grassroots arts organisations. education and grassroots arts organisations

Summary Table

Creative Majority Recommendation	Year One Evidence
Multi-agency widening participation from community upwards	Workshops through community partners, PEEK, BCLC and secondary schools
Revise creative education to include community cultural participation	17 community workshops; 80+ participants; accredited learning for 17
Work-integrated learning embedded in formal qualifications	Artist in Residence; embedded HNC and HND curriculum at The Pipe Factory and Strange Field; Community Visual Arts Placements
End exploitative open-market internship culture	All professional experience curriculum-embedded, accredited, funded, scaffolded and professionally mentored
Address class crisis — build routes outside HE dominance	FE-level professional exhibitions; Artists Support Network for FE graduates
Share and document effective widening participation practice	Year One evaluation report; Strange Exchange Library; Open-source teaching packs
Coordinated pipeline from access to employment	Full arc: community → FE → industry encounter → exhibition → graduate network

This partnership does not claim to have solved the structural inequality the Creative Majority Report documents. It offers at small scale and with limited resource, a replicable model that directly enacts the report's recommendations — and to have done so in the community, city and educational context where the need is most acute.

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Supporting References
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