



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Màiri McAllan MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic
Scottish Government

15 July 2026

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Proposed closure of Cooper Gallery Dundee

Congratulations on your appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic.

As you may be aware, I was recently elected Convener of the Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee. The Committee has received correspondence from the Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) regarding the proposed closure of Cooper Gallery Dundee (annexed below).

The Committee invites you to respond to the concerns raised by SCAN, and to outline the Scottish Government's view on the proposed closure.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Harvie MSP
Convener

Annexe: Correspondence from Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN)

25 June 2026

Dear Mr Harvie,

Proposed Closure of Cooper Gallery Dundee and Subsequent Staff Redundancies

I am contacting you in your capacity as convenor of the of the Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee.

I write on behalf of Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN), to express serious concern about the proposed closure of Cooper Gallery – a significant cultural and civic institution in the heart of the University of Dundee.

Founded in 2012, SCAN is Scotland's member-led network for artists, curators and arts organisations. We represent over 355 named members across the country, including Cooper Gallery, who contribute greatly to Scotland's cultural and civic life.

Cooper Gallery is internationally recognised as a distinctive platform in Scotland for its radical curatorial research, international approach and focus on critical discourse in contemporary art and culture. It is a member of Plus Tate and has received widespread recognition due to the pioneering work of Director Sophia Yadong Hao and the team in curatorial practice, pedagogy and research.

The gallery provides a platform for work of national significance, bringing important and recognised artists to Dundee. The gallery is also a crucial development ground for students, emerging curators and artists. Its impacts are felt not just by local audiences but across Scotland and the UK.

We have written to the leadership of University of Dundee, urging them to reconsider this proposal and invest in the future of this vital arts venue. We also believe there is a now a strong case for the Scottish government to identify an immediate sustainable solution that protects the future of the gallery and the jobs of those involved. Yesterday, all four political parties from Dundee City Council have released a written joint statement to the Scottish Government calling for proposed future job losses at the University of Dundee to be halted.

SCAN recognises that the University is facing difficult financial decisions. The proposed closure of Cooper Gallery may save a small amount of money in the short term, but it will come at a much greater cost in the long run. A vital resource for staff and students working at the university, alongside links to art education with an engaged public audience would be lost.

This act of closure by University of Dundee leadership would dismantle an institution that has taken decades to build. Ultimately, yet another proposed closure of gallery space adds to the significant precarity for the contemporary arts sector across the country.

For us, and for our community, it is deeply concerning that there is an apparent lack of understanding and recognition of Cooper Gallery's unique contribution as a research-led university gallery. SCAN is concerned that the full value and contribution of Cooper Gallery may not be reflected in the current proposal for closure.

We know that the Scottish Government is committed to culture and supportive of all artforms and creative expression, as well as the wide-ranging benefits socially, economically and for wellbeing. We call upon Scottish Government to provide further scrutiny of this decision-making process. We also urge you to work with the University of Dundee to identify an immediate and sustainable solution that secures the future of Cooper Gallery and protects the specialist jobs and expertise it supports.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Moore Deputy Director

Briefing notes:

Cooper Gallery at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee is internationally recognised as a distinctive platform in Scotland for its radical curatorial research, international approach and focus on critical discourse in contemporary art and culture.

The gallery was opened in 1953 and has hosted exhibitions by Heather Phillipson (2023), The Otolith Group (2023), Rosalind Nashashibi and Lucy Skaer (2022), Phil Collins (2019) and Paul Noble (2011, 2018), all of whom have been nominated for the Turner Prize.

A full overview of exhibitions, events, publications and international projects can be found here: [Cooper Gallery | University of Dundee, UK](#)

Alongside widespread support for Cooper Gallery from the public and the contemporary art community, all four parties in Dundee City Council have released a written joint statement to the Scottish Government calling for proposed future job losses at the University of Dundee to be halted. [More details here](#).