

## **LEITH SCHOOL OF ART**

### **Recruitment of**

#### **Director(s)/Chair of the Board of Directors**

Leith School of Art is a dynamic independent art school, situated in North Leith, which is well-known for its outstanding teaching and vibrant sense of community, warmth and friendliness. The Board of Directors works closely with senior management in determining the School's strategic direction and fulfilling its mission to offer a distinctive range of art education opportunities to all, regardless of background and means.

With a number of current Directors approaching the end of their terms of office in the next two years, Leith School of Art would like to hear from individuals who believe that they have something to offer by serving on the School's Board of Directors, and are interested in playing a part in the future of this highly regarded art school.

Previous experience of Board work is not a requirement. We welcome applications from members of all communities who share our vision, aims and objectives and can offer relevant skills and expertise.

As part of this search, the Board wishes to identify a successor to the current Chair of Directors, Alistair Hector, whose term of office comes to an end in 2022/23.

#### **About Leith School of Art**

Now in its 34<sup>th</sup> year, Leith School of Art in Edinburgh is an independent college of the visual arts which has built an outstanding reputation for the quality of its courses.

Leith School of Art was founded by artist/teachers Mark and Lottie Cheverton "to create a School with a vital artistic life where both tradition and innovation work together allowing students to produce work of distinctive quality and character". Their commitment to an inclusive, holistic ethos and strong sense of community still characterises Leith School of Art today.

Another distinguishing characteristic of the School is the unusually high tutor-student ratio, which enables each student to be nurtured and challenged to reach their full artistic potential in the broader context of their learning and flourishing as a whole person. Our students learn to look with thought and feeling, engaging both intellectually and intuitively, whilst developing the technical skills that enable them to create work of a very high standard.

Leith School of Art offers a full-time year-long Foundation Course designed particularly for aspiring art college entrants. The course covers a range of art practices and is recognised for its excellence by top art colleges in the UK and abroad. We also offer a range of year-long part-time courses including Painting, Drawing, Contemporary Art Practice, Figure, Landscape and Printmaking. In addition, we deliver a rich programme of short courses through day and evening classes, weekend workshops, community classes, dedicated courses for schools within the Schools Outreach Programme, and a popular Summer School. In total, some 300 students enrol each year.

We recently introduced an innovative Structured Graduate Residency scheme, offering graduates an opportunity to develop a body of new work as a springboard to a postgraduate degree or a career as a practising artist.

Leith School of Art has a dynamic, talented and extremely committed staff team who are fundamental to the School's success. There are approximately forty staff including part-time members.

As a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, Leith School of Art operates on a not-for-profit basis, with a turnover of around £780,000 p.a. Alongside course fees, fundraising is a vital source of income.

The School occupies the former Norwegian Seamen's Mission church in Leith. The original building has been adapted and extended to provide a range of attractive studio spaces, a sculpture court, library and gallery areas. In 2014 the School expanded again by leasing a beautiful 1930s church hall at St James Church, near to the main site on North Junction Street, and further studio space has been acquired on a lease basis at the nearby Leith Custom House.

For a comprehensive description of the School and its courses please visit our website at [Leith School of Art](#), where the current prospectus and further information can be found.

### **The Role of Directors at Leith School of Art**

Please refer to the attached *Summary of Directors' Responsibilities at Leith School of Art* which outlines the obligations which Directors undertake on appointment to the Board, as defined by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

#### **Governance and leadership**

The Directors of Leith School of Art are the Trustees of the charity.

The Board of Directors is collectively responsible for ensuring that the charity is well administered and compliant with the requirements of OSCR and other relevant statutory bodies. While the Board agrees matters of strategy and principle and is accountable for the School's activities and outcomes, the day-to-day management of the School and the exercise of executive responsibility are delegated to senior staff.

The School's senior leadership are the Principal and the Business Manager, who also acts as Company Secretary. Full Board meetings are attended by the Principal and the Business Manager as a matter of course, and from time to time by other staff responsible for specific areas.

The regular business of full Board meetings includes a report by the Principal on the School's activities and developments, financial reports, reports on marketing and fundraising, updates on Friends' and Patrons' activities, Health and Safety.

#### **Appointment as a Director**

The maximum number of Directors who may serve at any one time is twelve. Two Directors are nominated by the Ramsden family (defined as relatives by blood or marriage of the late Mrs Charlotte Ramsden or Cheverton, co-founder of the School) and other Directors are appointed by joint resolution of current Directors.

Apart from the Ramsden family nominees, each Director is appointed for a term of three years in the first instance. This is renewable for a further term of three years, making six years the 'standard' term of office. Thereafter a Director's term may be extended for up to three more years in three annual renewals, making nine years the maximum term of office.

Each new Director is required to sign a declaration that they are a fit and proper person to serve as such and is not disqualified in any way from serving as a Company Director or Charity Trustee. As a matter of course at each Board meeting Directors are required to declare any conflict of interest.

#### **Serving as a Director**

All Directors serve in a voluntary capacity.

### **Board meetings**

Full Board meetings are held as a rule four or five times a year - two in the first term, one each in the second and third term, and, if required, one at the end of session. The second meeting (in late November or early December) is held in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting of the Company. If circumstances require, additional emergency meetings may be called.

Board meetings are generally held on weekdays in the late afternoon and normally last around two hours.

The Board normally meets in person in Leith at one of the School's campuses, but as a Covid-19 contingency, recent Board meetings have been held by Zoom video conference. We are trialing a hybrid model in the coming year with a mixture of in-person and online meetings.

### **Board structure**

In addition to the full Board, there are two sub-committees – Finance, and Fundraising & Development - which report to the Board and provide extra focus and support in their respective areas. Other work is carried out through ad hoc working groups to address specific issues as may be appropriate from time to time and Directors may be called on to contribute their expertise in these as occasion arises.

### **Directors' involvement in the wider life of the School**

Beyond the formal activities of the Board, Directors are encouraged to discover and share in the wider life of Leith School of Art and to show their support of its work in informal ways. Directors are particularly encouraged to attend the School's main exhibitions - the Christmas Exhibition in December and the End of Year Exhibition in June - and are welcome at other events such as Corridor Exhibition openings and Friends and Patrons events. Enrolment on courses is open to Directors. Directors can also keep up to date with news from the School via the LSA website and the School's social media feeds.

### **The role of Chair**

The Board elects one of their number to be Chair at the Annual General Meeting.

The Chair's primary responsibility is to chair meetings of the Board of Directors.

The Chair also has a particular role on behalf of the Board, and with the Board's authority, to:

- support, advise, and act as a sounding board and 'critical friend' to the Principal
- provide a channel of communication between Board and staff
- act as a figurehead and ambassador for the charity as appropriate (e.g. representing it at functions)
- lead the Board in fulfilling its collective responsibility towards the charity
- trouble-shoot as required in conjunction with other Directors and/or senior management.

Beyond preparation for and attendance at Board meetings and School events where the Chair's presence is desirable, the time commitment required of the Chair is variable. In normal circumstances some weeks go by with little or no call being made on the Chair's time, sometimes it may amount to one or two hours in a week. The key requirements are availability and willingness to maintain a regular and open channel of communication with senior leadership. The Chair needs to allow as much time as it takes to fulfil the role as outlined above, but not so much as to become involved in the operational domain of the School.

## **Vice-Chair**

The position of Vice-Chair is currently vacant. The Board would like to appoint a new Director in the capacity of Vice-Chair on the understanding that they would become Chair in due course on the retirement of the current Chair, i.e. there would be a period of overlap and familiarisation with the workings of the School for the Chair-Elect before they assume office as Chair.

## **Person Specification**

To make an effective contribution as a Director at Leith School of Art it is essential above all that you:

- Are passionate about the purposes, vision and values of Leith School of Art.

In particular you should:

- Have an interest in and be committed to art education as a force for good in society
- Identify with and be committed to promoting Leith School of Art's core aims, especially the overarching aim to offer a distinctive range of art education opportunities to all, regardless of background and means
- Be aware of and respectful towards the heritage of the School, its faith origins and founding vision
- Be able to contribute relevant knowledge, networks and expertise that complement those of the current Board and add to its capacity to fulfil its collective responsibilities of trusteeship
- Be able to contribute to meetings with cogency and integrity, and be willing to challenge positions with tact and good intent
- Be a good listener, open to challenge and able to change your mind when necessary, in the interests of the charity
- Be a team player and accepting of collective responsibility
- Have sound judgement and discretion.

### ***Note:***

- The current Board combines skills and experience from the spheres of education, the arts, business, finance, HR, charities, and the caring professions. Expressions of interest will be welcome from any of these backgrounds. With a view to the replacement of current expertise in due course, we will be especially pleased to hear from those with a background in education and accounting and finance, and those who could add to the skills set from backgrounds in property/buildings, the third sector and/or fundraising.

### ***In addition to the above the Chair must:***

- Be able to lead the Board as a team in making good decisions in the interests of the charity, chairing meetings with authority, clarity of purpose, good judgement, and tact
- Have excellent presentation and communication skills
- Be able to fulfil the role of Chair outlined above in a way that is conducive to positive working relationships within the Board and between the Board and senior management, and always serves the interests of the charity.

## **The rewards of being a Director at LSA**

Service on the Board of Directors is unremunerated but 'job satisfaction' is high. It is satisfying and fulfilling to know that you are playing a key part in shaping the future of an art school which has had a profound impact for good in the lives of thousands of young people and adult learners, and continues to do so.

It is a privilege and a pleasure to share in the life of a small but dynamic independent art school, which is well known for its outstanding creativity and vibrant sense of community, ethos of care, and holistic philosophy of art teaching.

## **How to apply**

At this stage, we wish to connect with people who feel that they may have something to offer as Directors of Leith School of Art and are interested in the possibility of joining the Board.

We will welcome applications from members of all communities who share our vision, aims and objectives and can offer relevant skills and expertise.

We plan to hold an initial informal conversation with each interested party to get to know each other and explore the matter further with a view to establishing whether there is a mutual interest in proceeding to the next stage. A more formal interview process will follow designed to lead to one or more appointments being made.

Any invitation to join as a Director will be subject to approval by the full Board.

Please note your interest in confidence by writing to the current Chair, Alistair Hector, c/o Leith School of Art, 25 North Junction Street, Edinburgh EH6 6HW or by email to [chair@leithschoolofart.co.uk](mailto:chair@leithschoolofart.co.uk) attaching a CV and a statement outlining your motivation and how your experience makes you a suitable candidate for the role of Director, and, if you wish to be considered, for the role of Chair.

Please indicate clearly whether you wish to be considered solely for the role of Director or for both the role of Director and Chair.

The deadline is Monday 24 January 2022, and invitations to an initial informal conversation will follow in early February 2022.

The commencement date of any appointment will be negotiable and subject to confirmation at the 2022 AGM.

## **Additional information**

For further information please refer to the following:

- [Leith School of Art - Summary of Directors' Responsibilities](#)
- [Leith School of Art Strategic Plan - update Sept 2021](#)
- Charity Details of Leith School of Art in the [OSCR Register of Scottish Charities](#)
- [OSCR's Guidance and Good Practice for Charity Trustees](#)

Available on request:

- The most recent annual Report and Financial Statements of Leith School of Art
- The Memorandum and Articles of Association and Aims of Leith School of Art