

## Terms of Reference 2025 - 2026

<b>Name of body</b>	Contemporary Visual Arts Network East Midlands (CVAN EM) [the Network]
<b>Role of body</b>	To shape and oversee the highest quality delivery of agreed activity with maximum impact, ensuring its relevance to the region’s visual arts community.
<b>Mission</b>	CVAN EM celebrates and supports arts and culture in the region, fostering an inclusive long-term future for the sector, emphasising equity and access for all arts workers.
<b>What we do</b>	<p>CVAN EM is the free-to-access Contemporary Visual Arts Network for the East Midlands, working alongside 8 other independent regional networks to amplify voices, debate, and democratic change across the sector. We are part of the national <a href="#">Contemporary Visual Arts Network</a>, overseen by CVAN England, an organisation where visual arts<sup>1</sup> meet policy change. Our strength lies in our network.</p> <p>CVAN EM celebrates and supports arts and culture in the region, encompassing Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, and Rutland. Through our deeply rooted regionality and understanding, we nurture regional and cross-regional connectivity and engagement through participation, working in partnership with artists, arts workers, and organisations<sup>2</sup> across the East Midlands to build sustainable infrastructures, present opportunities and deliver professional and artist development activity.</p>
<b>Priorities</b>	<p>Priorities for 2025-26, focusing on strengthening the contemporary visual arts sector within the region. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting a sustainable arts infrastructure: CVAN EM works to enhance the regional arts ecosystem by providing development opportunities for artists and arts workers. Through programmes like the <i>Art Technician Training Programme</i>, providing vital skill-building opportunities for arts professionals, ensuring their career sustainability and supporting talent retention to the region.</li> <li>• Fostering inclusivity and equity: A major focus is creating equitable access for all arts workers, challenging and removing barriers to artists and arts workers from under-represented backgrounds created via societal structures and often mirrored in the arts and cultural sector. Including ongoing support to organisations in developing fairer more equitable approaches to working with freelance artists and arts workers.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> CVAN EM considers the **visual arts** to focus on contemporary artistic practice and include fine arts, crafts, photography, moving image, live art and performance, socially engaged art, new media and digital art, and any crossover with design, architecture or other creative disciplines.

**Contemporary art practice** reflects the complex issues that shape our changing world. Through their work contemporary artists might explore personal or cultural identity or offer critiques of social and institutional structures. In the process, they often raise difficult or thought-provoking questions.

<sup>2</sup> Organisations can include, galleries, projects, festivals, art-led spaces, artist studios, museums, and other sectors support initiatives that support, employ, programme or commission artists and/or arts workers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building (cross)regional connectivity: Increase collaboration across the Midlands, helping artists, arts workers and organisations to thrive through networking, investment and shared opportunities.</li> <li>• Profile raising: Raising the profile of the region’s visual arts and cultural sector and in turn raising CVAN EM’s profile regionally and nationally through the delivery of ambitious public facing activity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aims</b></p>	<p><b>1. Improve long-term support for artists and arts workers.</b></p> <p>By working on long-term projects, we can ensure that artists and arts workers are provided with more and more substantial paid opportunities to support artistic and professional development, commissioning and inform decision making.</p> <p><b>2. Directly impact on programming, commissioning, and working practices across the region.</b></p> <p>By ensuring decision making is a collaborative process with many and various voices around the table with more arts workers and organisations having a greater stake in future CVAN EM activity and governance.</p> <p><b>3. Centre fair and equitable practice in leading by example.</b></p> <p>By ensuring diverse representation in leadership, maintaining transparency, and provide accessible opportunities for underrepresented artists. Activity will address systemic racism with anti-oppressive policies and include training. Regular reviews of practices will ensure accountability.</p> <p><b>4. Become more relevant and ambitious.</b></p> <p>By building enduring relationships and partnerships with artists, arts workers, and organisations across the region to ensure that Network development is a collaborative process informed by open dialogue and mutual care.</p> <p><b>5. Raise awareness of visual arts practice in the East Midlands outside of the region.</b></p> <p>By supporting artists and arts workers to gain access to opportunities beyond the region as well as better highlighting work that is already taking place within the East Midlands, CVAN EM can raise the region’s profile.</p>
<p><b>Objectives</b></p>	<p>Define what we will do to achieve the aims:</p> <p><b>1. Improve long-term support for artists and arts workers.</b></p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve opportunities for more arts workers to connect with and benefit from engagement with the network, with emphasis on ACE’s <a href="#">Priority Places</a>, rural localities and cultural ‘cold spots’.</li> </ul>

- Apply for more substantial long-term funding opportunities, with greater investment and commitment from regional partners including HEIs.
- Devise, resource and deliver funded, subsidised and free training opportunities for artists and arts workers.
- Improve CVAN EM's visibility, imbedding a more strategic approach to marketing and engagement.
- Be strategic in cross-regional connectivity, working more directly with Contemporary Visual Arts Networks located in other regions.
- Continue to reinvest funds into the region's arts and cultural work force.

**2. Directly impact on programming, commissioning, and working practices across the region.**

Objectives:

- Engage in ongoing and open dialogue through regular 1-2-1 sessions and forums with artists, arts workers and organisations to better understand how CVAN EM can best support and impact on work taking place across the region.
- Commission and publish research, policy and strategy with the aim to positively impact on programming, commissions and recruitment across the region.
- Nurture existing initiatives and networks between organisations and arts workers in the region by making connections and supporting growth with a focus on EDI.
- Continue to develop CVAN EM's Steering Group so that a diversity of artists and organisations have a stake in the network and vested interest in how it can support and champion them.
- Increase opportunities for training and sharing of knowledges across the region by researching, identifying, and initiating opportunities for shared learning.

**3. Centre fair and equitable practice in leading by example.**

Objectives:

- Ensure leadership and governance includes a diverse cross-section of the community and is representative of the locality.
- Work with and learn from CVAN EM host organisation, New Art Exchange.
- Maintain transparent decision-making processes to highlight access and inclusivity in project development, fundraising and selections.
- Improve physical and digital accessibility for all events and activity.
- Develop anti-racist policies through ongoing research and regular training.
- Co-develop programming with artists and arts workers from backgrounds currently under-represented in the sector.
- Ensure all artists and arts workers are paid fairly for their contributions to the Network's governance, development and programming.
- Implementing accountability mechanisms including equal opportunities monitoring and regular reviews.

	<p><b>4. Become more relevant and ambitious.</b></p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With ongoing input and support from its host NPO, CVAN EM can be more relevant and ambitious, better serving and championing the region’s unique arts ecology.</li> <li>• Engage in ongoing and open dialogue through regular 1-2-1 sessions and forums with artists, arts workers and organisations to better understand how CVAN EM can support and impact on work taking place across the region.</li> <li>• Continue to develop and support CVAN EM’s Steering Group to better reflect society centring artists and art workers from backgrounds under-represented within the contemporary visual arts.</li> <li>• Develop a strategic fundraising plan to have the maximum impact on delivery whilst ensuring investment of time, capacity and resources are carefully managed.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Raise awareness of visual arts practice in the East Midlands outside of the region.</b></p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devise, develop and deliver more long-term programming with an increased focus on public outcomes and sector visibility.</li> <li>• Increase support available to a great number of artists with a focus on identifying and removing barriers to access.</li> <li>• Build and strengthen relationships with organisations across the region, engaging in dialogue to positively impact on commissioning and activity that actively champions representation and presents to audiences and participants online and in person programming that better reflects their lived experiences.</li> <li>• Support in shaping and championing the East Midlands as a region leading in fair and equitable practice.</li> <li>• Better highlight work taking place within the region and work by the region’s artists taking place nationally and internationally.</li> </ul>
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	
<p><b>Host agreement</b></p>	<p>CVAN EM is an Unincorporated Association<sup>3</sup> hosted by New Art Exchange (NAE) and part of the Nation CVAN Network. We receive £35,000 per annum via NAE’s Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding settlement. CVAN EM contributes to NAE reporting quarterly on Network activity.</p> <p>Additional CVAN EM programming and project-based activity is made possible via Network fundraising, partnership working and support from CVAN England.</p> <p>CVAN EM provides NAE with £3,200 per annum to cover hosting fees in supporting the administration of the Network.</p>

<sup>3</sup> An **unincorporated association** is a group of individuals who come together for a common purpose, but without forming a separate legal entity like a company or charity. These groups typically function based on mutual agreement (such as a constitution or set of rules) but do not have the legal status of a corporation.

	<p>CVAN EM maintains autonomy over Network activity.</p>
<b>Host organisation</b>	<p><a href="#">NAE</a> is the UK’s largest gallery dedicated to contemporary visual arts from the Global Ethnic Majority. The organisation sets out to reshape the contemporary art narrative by championing diversity and inclusivity and by providing a platform for underrepresented voices in the art world.</p> <p>NAE’s vision is for talent from the Global Ethnic Majority to be recognised, nurtured, and celebrated. The organisation champions inclusivity and equity in the creative industries. We’re committed to a fair, equitable, inclusive and equal art world for everyone. This work is supported by a collaborative and inclusive approach through our embedded citizen-led decision-making model.</p> <p>In 2024 NAE became the first cultural institution in the world with a permanent citizen assembly as a key part of its leadership structure.</p>
<b>Finance</b>	<p>All funds received and paid by CVAN EM pass through NAE and are administrated by the organisation’s Finance Officer.</p> <p>CVAN EM is responsible for providing NAE with an annual budget and maintaining detailed annual cashflow and reporting.</p> <p>CVAN EM has a Barclays Community Bank Account in the registered name of ‘East Midlands Visual Arts Network’. The account maintains two authorised signatories, CVAN EM’s Director and Chair.</p> <p>CVAN EM’s bank account is used to receive funds on the occasion that the Network is in receipt of a grant from a trust or foundation that requires funds be transferred to an account registered to CVAN EM. Funds received to CVAN EM’s Barclay’s Community Bank Account will be transferred to NAE for administrative and audit purposes.</p>
<b>CVAN EM Director</b>	<p>Colette Griffin (part-time, 18.5 hrs per week), (2021- ). CVAN EM’s Director is employed by NAE and line managed by Saad Eddine Said, NAE’s CEO and Artistic Director.</p> <p>Colette was recently appointed Director of <a href="#">Contemporary Visual Arts Network West Midlands</a> (CVAN WM) hosted by DASH and part of a vibrant, National Network (CVAN) leading a collective agenda for policy change across the visual arts. Colette has over three years’ experience working with CVAN as Director of CVAN EM, a role she now carries out alongside her work with NAWM.</p> <p>Colette was Artist Development Curator at Primary (2020-2024), an artist-led contemporary visual arts organisation in Nottingham and a director of New Midland Group, delivering the NMG Development Programme (2020-22).</p>
<b>CVAN EM Chair</b>	<p>Saad Eddine Said, CEO and Artistic Director, New Art Exchange (2022- )</p> <p>Before his appointment at NAE he was Director of Home in Slough, a Creative People and Places project, and was Co-Founder and former Co-Artistic Director of the charity Terre Sans Frontiere in Morocco. In 2019 he curated the Occupy season at Battersea Arts Centre and the London City Take Over.</p>
<b>CVAN EM Steering Group</b>	<p>Saad Eddine Said (New Art Exchange, Artistic Director &amp; CEO), Saziso Phiri (Independent, Curator), Amrit Doll (Leicester City Council, Arts Officer), Emer Grant (NN Contemporary Art,</p>

	Artistic Director & CEO), Harriet Plewis (Independent, Artist and Educator), Harry Freestone (BACKLIT, Operations Manager), Jenny (Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, Curator), Lucie De Lacy (LEVEL Centre, Engagement and Projects Coordinator), Lucy Lumb (The Hub, Visual Arts Development Coordinator), Mandeep Dhadialla (Leicester Print Workshop, Artist and Tutor), Niamh Treacy (FORMAT International Photography Festival, Coordinator).
<b>ACE Relationship Manager</b>	Sarah Reed
<b>STEERING GROUP</b>	
<b>Membership</b>	Up to 14 representatives from regional organisations and artists and arts workers located across the East Midlands. Steering Group members act as advisors and advocates.
<b>Sponsored membership</b>	Steering Group members sponsored by CVAN EM, or a partner organisation will be paid a stipend of £200 to attend each quarterly meeting.  Payment will be made upon invoice to CVAN EM.  Sponsorship is reviewed annually, based on available funds.
<b>Un-sponsored membership</b>	Steering Group members representing organisations will not receive a stipend to attend quarterly meetings, we ask that the organisation (employer) in question supports the member (employee) to attend.
<b>Recruitment</b>	Recruitment centres learning, equity, knowledges, experience, and skills found in organisations and the freelance creative workforce across the East Midlands, with emphasis on representation across all counties and the region's <a href="#">Priority Places</a> .  CVAN EM reviews recruitment processes annually to ensure guidance is accessible and transparent and the selection of new members is fair and equitable. Selection is supported by current Steering Group members.  Steering Group members employed in organisations will represent that organisation and not simply themselves as individuals.
<b>Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take place quarterly in April, July, October and January.</li> <li>• Take place online or in-person, for in-person meetings there is the option to join remotely via Zoom.</li> <li>• Members attending online meetings or any other online CVAN EM activity are asked to refer to the <a href="#">Digital Code of Conduct</a> ahead of time.</li> <li>• In-person meetings take place across organisations represented on the Steering Group.</li> <li>• Agendas and papers are shared by the Director at least 1 week in advance of the meeting.</li> <li>• The date and time of the next meeting will be confirmed during the previous meeting by and in agreement with the entire group.</li> <li>• Minutes are shared by the Director no later than 1 week after a meeting.</li> <li>• An in-person Steering Group Development Day takes place annually, facilitated by an external arts and cultural consultant.</li> </ul>
<b>Attendance</b>	Members are required to attend all quarterly meetings and an annual Development Day.  If a member is unable to attend a meeting, they must brief the Chair or Director on any matters arising. If a member is unable to attend meetings on more than x2 consecutive occasions the Chair or Director will contact them regarding their commitment to the Steering Group.

<p><b>Key responsibilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Director to help them set and achieve measurable aims and objectives for CVAN EM.</li> <li>• Contribute to network wide conversation and activity.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for partnerships and funding.</li> <li>• Represent and champion CVAN EM within the sector and region, promoting CVAN EM and the wider network to relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>• Demonstrate an interest in and enthusiasm for developing the role of CVAN EM in the sector, supporting it to strive for excellence.</li> <li>• Support positive relationships with key stakeholders, including ACE.</li> <li>• Attend x4 Steering Group meetings per financial year.</li> <li>• Support recruitment for future new Steering Group members.</li> <li>• Contribute to an annual review of the Steering Group’s responsibilities to CVAN EM and CVAN EM’s responsibilities to its Steering Group members.</li> <li>• Support the development of ‘subgroups’ within the CVAN EM Steering Group, with different focus areas to ensure individuals have greater say and impact.</li> </ul> <p>CVAN EM is an Unincorporated Association which means there are no personal liabilities associated with Steering Group membership.</p>
<p><b>Expenses</b></p>	<p>Expenses as necessary are available to cover travel for attendance at in-person meetings for sponsored Steering Group members.</p>
<p><b>Tenure</b></p>	<p>Tenure is 4 years (max.), this is to ensure a level of ‘turnover’ that ensures the opportunity for new voices to feed into the ongoing change and development of CVAN EM.</p> <p>Members can end their tenure at any time, by informing the Director or Chair.</p>
<p><b>Meeting objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that CVAN EM is meeting the aims and objectives set out in this document.</li> <li>• Shape and oversee the highest quality delivery of agreed activity with maximum impact, ensuring its relevance to the region’s visual arts community.</li> <li>• Review progress made against delivery plans and objectives.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for partnerships and funding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Zero tolerance</b></p>	<p>We have a zero-tolerance policy to any behaviour of a sexual nature, that affects the dignity of people participating, which is considered as unwanted, unacceptable, inappropriate, and offensive to the recipient, and that creates an intimidating, hostile, unstable or offensive environment.</p> <p>We have a zero-tolerance policy to homophobia, transphobia, ageism, racism, ableism, sexism, xenophobia, or any other prejudice based on ethnicity, nationality, class, gender presentation, language ability, asylum status or religious affiliation.</p>
<p><b>Letter of agreement</b></p>	<p>New members will receive a Letter of Agreement referencing this document, they will be asked to read, approve and sign this at the start of their tenure.</p> <p>If the terms of the letter of agreement are broken the member will be asked to end their tenure.</p>