



## Guidelines and criteria for membership

Own Art is a national scheme established by Arts Council England to provide interest free loans for the purchase and/or commission of contemporary visual arts and crafts. The visual arts include painting, sculpture, printmaking, glassware, ceramics, installations, artists' film and video, photography, textiles, jewellery and other unique design items.

The aims of the scheme are to:

- To increase access to owning original works of art
- To encourage increased engagement with high quality visual arts experiences across all sections of society
- To contribute to the sustainability of a network of visual arts venues and galleries across England
- To help support contemporary artists by encouraging increased sales of work across a breadth of practice

Own Art is operated by ArtCo Trading Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary company of Arts Council England) in partnership with Hitachi Capital Consumer Finance, the credit provider.

The scheme is open to all UK residents over the age of 18 (subject to status). However, our priorities are to make art more affordable for those on lower incomes, and to inspire more first-time buyers of contemporary art and craft.

### Who can apply for membership?

Membership of the scheme is open to companies, charities and other not-for-profit organisations based in England that specialise in the presentation and sale of work by contemporary artists. This includes internet-based galleries that are registered in England.



We are unable to consider applications from individual artists, or from companies that represent the work of a single artist only.

## Criteria for membership

For assessment of applications, prospective member galleries will be expected to meet the following criteria.

1. To specialise in the sale of high quality original works of art by living artists. Galleries/outlets stocking reproduction prints/posters or other mass-produced items will not normally be accepted for membership of the scheme
2. To have been trading for a minimum of 12 months at the time of application and be able to supply a copy of their most recent audited or independently inspected accounts demonstrating that the company has a positive net worth
3. To maintain a clearly differentiated exhibition space, properly signed and advertised as such. The general appearance, style and standard of display in that space to suitably reflect and underpin the quality of the work on show
4. To undertake regular marketing activities in the promotion of the profile of the gallery/outlet and the work of the artists represented. These activities should include an appropriate mix of:
  - maintaining an up to date visitor mailing list
  - production of appropriate advertising and publicity material for all exhibitions and events
  - regular mail shots
  - regular press releases
  - maintenance of a website for the gallery/outlet or web presence on appropriate shared sites
5. To actively encourage new buyers of contemporary art and craft by providing appropriate customer service and advice when needed



6. To operate from retail premises based in England which are open and available for customers to attend in person, or to maintain a website through which customers can access appropriate information online
7. To have regular, advertised opening/office hours and not be open solely on an appointment basis
8. To employ fully trained and well informed staff available during working hours to talk to visitors about the artists and works on exhibition as well as being able to effect a sale. Internet based businesses must provide contact information on their website including a telephone number for enquiries and the hours during which staff are available
9. To make available to all customers accurate and detailed information about the artists and artworks being shown, including price lists and other information that may assist the customer in making their purchase
10. To deal professionally with artists whose works are represented by the gallery/outlet and to pay a fair commission, all such monies due to be paid promptly to the artist each time an Own Art loan is agreed and the sale processed
11. Where the member is a public gallery (i.e. wholly or partly owned, managed or funded by a local authority, university or other publicly funded body) to have a written commitment to and strategy for encouraging sales. This should be observed in practice.
12. To operate a UK bank account and be capable of accepting payments by BACS
13. To hold (or be willing to obtain) a Consumer Credit Licence for credit brokerage. This is a legal requirement. Please note: Arts Council England advises that a prospective member does not apply for a Consumer Credit Licence until formally accepted for membership
14. To be prepared to attend training days as required



15. To participate in evaluations of the scheme to monitor achievements against objectives (i.e. share information and statistics with Arts Council England on audiences, turnover and artists payments relating to Own Art)
16. To effectively advertise and promote the gallery/outlet's membership of the Scheme by displaying appropriate signage and customer information about the scheme both in the venue itself and on the gallery/outlet's website (if applicable).

**Arts Council England reserves the right to suspend or terminate membership of the scheme to any member failing to comply with the terms and conditions of the scheme or whose business activities subsequently fall below the standards set out in the criteria above.**

This document contains a summary of the terms and conditions of the scheme and prospective applicants are strongly advised to read through the 'Scheme Rules' before applying for membership. This document is available to download from the Arts Council England website: [www.artscouncil.org.uk/ownart](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/ownart) or by emailing a request to [ownart@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:ownart@artscouncil.org.uk); or by telephoning 0845 300 6200.

*Last amended 31 October 2008*