



CULTURE, HERITAGE & ARTS
ASSEMBLY.
ARGYLL & ISLES

THE MALI COLLECTION ARTIST COMMISSION

A CHARTS Commission for Artists, Designers and Makers

Artist Fee: £1500

Deadline for applications: 23.59pm, 28 June, 2026

Successful artist to supply artwork by: 7 August 2026

ABOUT

CHARTS invites proposals from artists, designers, and makers to create **a new artwork inspired by the Mali Collection.**

The commission forms part of a wider programme, currently considering the potential of support for the future acquisition, care, interpretation and public engagement of the Mali Collection in Argyll. The commissioned artwork will be used to support awareness of, and engagement with, the collection and its future public life.

The first application of the artwork will be as a limited-edition silk scarf, produced in support of the project and launched at a fundraising event at the Garrick Club, London, in October 2026.

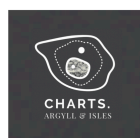
This commission offers an opportunity to engage creatively with a remarkable collection of artefacts, materials, craft traditions and cultural histories, and to create a contemporary response that connects the collection's past with its future.

Please see [Key Information for Applying](#) and [To Apply](#) for more information.

ABOUT CHARTS

[The Culture, Heritage and Arts Assembly, Argyll and Isles \(CHARTS\)](#) is a membership-led charity supporting artists, makers, heritage practitioners, cultural organisations and creative communities across Argyll and Bute and the islands.

CHARTS works to strengthen the cultural sector through advocacy, partnership development, professional support, artist opportunities, heritage initiatives and public engagement programmes. The organisation brings together arts, culture and heritage organisations, independent practitioners and communities to develop collaborative projects that contribute to the social, cultural and economic development and wellbeing of the region.





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As part of its heritage development work, CHARTS is currently supporting plans for the future acquisition, conservation and public presentation/dissemination of the Mali Collection through Campbeltown Museum, and associated learning and engagement programmes and venues.

ABOUT THE MALI COLLECTION

The Mali Collection is a remarkable collection of over one hundred artefacts assembled in Mali between 1978 and 1979 by Janice E. Hughes CBE.

Collected during a period of extensive travel and work across the country, the collection provides a unique and personal insight into the everyday material culture, craftsmanship, mercantile and creative traditions of Mali.

Unlike many museum collections that focus on ceremonial, religious or elite objects, the Mali Collection is rooted in domestic life and purposeful utility. It comprises baskets, gourds, textiles, jewellery, musical instruments, leatherwork, pottery and household utensils; objects made to be used, carried, worn, shared and passed between generations. Together they tell stories of making, exchange, community, movement and cultural continuity.

The collection reflects the rich diversity of Mali's diverse peoples and traditions, including the Bambara, Dogon, Fulani, Malinké, Soninke and Tuareg communities. Throughout the collection are examples of sophisticated craftsmanship, geometric pattern-making, woven structures, carved surfaces, spiral etched motifs, decorative detail and the skilled use of natural materials including fibre, leather, wood, clay and non-precious metal.

The collection was assembled over years, during Janice Hughes' work with a co-operative of more than four hundred spinners and weavers in Ségou. At a time when severe drought threatened the future of a weaving workshop and the livelihoods of those who depended upon it, she helped secure funding, training and support that enabled the workshop to continue. The collection therefore represents not only an archive of objects, but also a record of relationships, shared learning, resilience and cultural exchange.

Mali has long been a crossroads of trade, ideas and cultures. Historic centres such as Djenné, Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu formed part of extensive trading networks connecting West Africa to North Africa, the Middle East and beyond. The objects within the collection reflect this long history of movement, exchange and creative influence.



As the collection is poised to enter a new chapter in Scotland, CHARTS seeks to commission a contemporary artist, designer or maker to create a new artwork inspired by the forms, materials, patterns and stories within the collection.

THE COMMISSION

This commission offers an opportunity for a contemporary artist, designer or maker to engage with a significant collection of images depicting Malian artefacts and to create a new artwork inspired by its materials, forms, patterns and histories.

The selected artwork will form part of CHARTS' programme, which aims to support the future acquisition, care and public engagement of the Mali Collection in Argyll and further afield.

The commissioned artwork will be used to support awareness of, and engagement with, the Mali Collection. The first application of the artwork will be as a limited-edition silk scarf produced in support of the project and launched at a fundraising event at the Garrick Club, London, on 14 October 2026.

Artists should therefore consider how the artwork may translate successfully into a textile format while retaining its integrity as an original artwork.

The commission is open to artists, designers and makers working in any visual discipline.

KEY INFORMATION FOR APPLYING

Visual Inspiration and Source Material

Artists are encouraged to draw inspiration from the collection's rich visual language and may wish to explore:

- The forms and silhouettes of domestic objects
- Basketry structures and woven textiles
- Geometric, spiral and repeated motifs
- Surface decoration and carved imagery
- Jewellery and adornment traditions
- Natural materials including fibre, leather, wood, clay and metal
- Traditional craft techniques and processes





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- Themes of making, inter and trans cultural exchange, migration, memory, resilience and cultural continuity

Please see the [Mali Collection Catalogue and supporting images](#) for primary research material. The catalogue and images are intended as sources of inspiration rather than a prescriptive design brief.

Artists are not expected to reproduce individual artefacts or create literal illustrations of objects from the collection. Instead, applicants are encouraged to develop a personal and contemporary response informed by their own artistic practice.

Particular consideration should be given to how pattern, colour, composition and imagery might translate successfully into a printed textile format.

Who can apply?

This opportunity is open to current CHARTS members. If you are not a member you can register for free [here](#).

Applications are welcomed from:

- Visual artists.
- Designers.
- Textile practitioners.
- Printmakers.
- Illustrators.
- 2D and 3D craft practitioners.

Commission Fee and Budget

Artist Fee: £1500

The fee is inclusive of:

- Research and development.
- Concept creation.
- Artwork production time.
- Meetings and correspondence.
- Preparation of final digital artwork files.

Any additional expenses will be agreed in writing in advance with the commissioned artist.





Deliverables

The commissioned artist will provide:

- One original artwork inspired by images from the Mali Collection.
- A high-resolution print-ready digital file.
- An accompanying short artist statement (maximum 200 words).
- Any technical information required for reproduction and production purposes.

The final artwork must be converted, copied or supplied as a high-quality print-ready digital file by **7 August 2026** to allow sufficient time for proofing, production and delivery ahead of the October launch event.

The artwork should be capable of adaptation to a range of print formats, including a **90cm × 90cm printed silk scarf**.

The commissioned artwork should function as a significant contemporary artwork in its own right while also lending itself to reproduction and public engagement activities associated with the project.

Copyright and Licensing

Copyright in the original artwork **will remain with the artist**.

The selected artist will grant CHARTS a non-exclusive license to reproduce the artwork as part of the Mali Collection project and for associated fundraising, educational, promotional and publicity purposes.

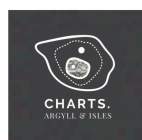
The first application of the artwork will be produced as a limited-edition silk scarf.

Any future use of the artwork beyond the agreed project activities, including potential future editions, prints or other commercial applications, will be subject to a separate licensing agreement between CHARTS and the artist.

TO APPLY

This is a single-stage open call.

Late applications will not be accepted.





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To apply for this commission, please forward an application with the subject line **Mali Collection Artist Commission** by **23.59pm, 28th June** to Kirstenm@chartsargyllandisles.org along with EDI form.

Applications must include:

1. A statement of interest (maximum 250 words) outlining their proposed approach to the commission. (PDF or Word document).
2. Up to six examples of relevant previous work. Website and/or social media links (optional).
3. A short CV or biography (no more than 2 A4 pages, with a minimum font size 11 as a PDF or Word document).
4. Equalities Monitoring: Please complete our equalities monitoring form [here](#).

Applicants are not required to submit finished designs or speculative artwork.

Following review of submissions, one artist will be selected and commissioned to create the final artwork.

The decision of the selection panel will be final.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be assessed against:

- Quality and originality of artistic practice.
- Strength of response to the themes and visual qualities of the Mali Collection.
- Suitability of the proposed approach for translation into a textile format.
- Feasibility of delivery within the project timescale.
- Potential to create a distinctive and compelling artwork that supports awareness of the collection.

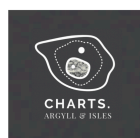
For any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact:

Kirsten Millar

Interim Assistant Director

Kirstenm@chartsargyllandisles.org

www.chartsargyllandisles.org



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