

Scottish Design Exchange target bumper pay out

The Scottish Design Exchange (SDX) which has an outlet on the Royal Mile in the Tron, will make a multi million pound payout to its independent artists and producers in the coming year.

Providing a high street retail space to its artists and designers SDX says it expects to double its sales in the next twelve months.

As well as the Tron, the not for profit also has an outlet in Buchanan Galleries in Glasgow. The hundreds of independent producers who sell their goods at SDX would otherwise be likely to pay commission to galleries of up to 60%, but instead pay a small fixed fee to rent their own space. The artisans then keep 100% of the sales they make.

The Tron has become a very popular retail space with record takings for their 21 tenants since it opened in July 2022. Out of the 21, at least 18 have had to register for VAT for the first time. Several are able to work full-time as artists now due to the record growth in sales, and most source the raw materials for their products in Scotland. The venue with its high footfall provides employment for 51 people. A majority of the tenants have had support from SDX, five others have sought help from Business Gateway and one each from Scottish Enterprise and Creative Scotland.

Now SDX says it will pay out £3.5 million to independent artists and producers in the coming year. Since launching in 2015 the art market space has generated more than £6 million in income.

SDX chief executive Lynzi Leroy, a former project manager for Shell, said the success of the Tron outlet had supercharged the business, creating opportunities for further expansion.

She said: “Just one of our outlets has created much needed stability for 21 small businesses, allowing many of them to become full-time producers, and to earn a good living.

“Given that most purchase their materials from other Scottish businesses, we are helping to create a sustainable supply chain that benefits, not just our traders, but the companies that supply them.”

Leroy added: “Since the Covid pandemic, SDX has gone from strength-to-strength and we expect further growth and expansion in the next few years.

“Despite the headwinds of a challenging economy, ours has proved a robust and resilient business model.

“Consumers clearly want to buy the kind of high-quality products that are made by our artists and designers, and which reflect their skills, talent and commitment to growing their businesses.”

Artist Liana Moran, who has sold her work through SDX outlets, including the Tron, for six years, said: “SDX promotes artists and helps push us into making our unique businesses successful, always striving to make it easier for us to make these big leaps and become profitable.

“The growth in my business from the Tron alone has allowed me to leave my part-time job and focus on my artwork fulltime. The SDX team are very hands on and always willing to help with

business advice. It is great to have their support.”

SDX signed a three-year lease with Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT), which manages the Tron building last July. If the Glasgow Foodies space is a success then SDX plan to open a food outlet in Edinburgh in the new year.

A spokesperson for SHBT said: “We are delighted to have SDX as our tenant in the Tron and that their first year of trading has been such a success. Not only have they brought opportunities to the local artists they support but as a result the Tron Kirk has been opened to thousands of visitors allowing them to appreciate the beauty and history of this significant building.”



Kryzysztof Borkoski



Rona Innes Tron Market



Lynzi Leroy, founder of the Scottish Design Exchange