

# Scotland to get first virtual art gallery for pupils

Innovation means students can exhibit work nationally

## EXCLUSIVE

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IMAGINE a national gallery packed with all the best works of art by young artists from across Scotland.

It is an imposing complex of buildings, with walls lined with paintings, alongside photographs and short-film exhibits from students – although you will have to visit by computer.

Pupils from primary and secondary schools across Scotland will soon have the opportunity to exhibit their art work in a new national

virtual art gallery – the first to be developed in the world.

Under the CANVAS initiative, teachers will be able to upload digital images of pupils' artwork into galleries in a computer-generated world developed by curriculum body Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS).

Pupils can then enter the virtual world as a character, called an avatar, and walk round individual local authority galleries looking at the paintings, films or photographs on display.

In addition, pupils can leave

short films or voice recordings about their own artwork which can be viewed or listened to by anyone visiting the computer-based gallery.

Visitors can also interact with the artists asking questions which can be answered at a later time or simply leaving comments.

Eventually, after the pilot stage of the initiative is complete, LTS hope pupils visiting the galleries from different parts of Scotland will also be able to "talk" to each other live as their avatars walk round.

They also have a large

exhibition space in the virtual gallery which could be used to display some of the best artwork in Scotland, the artwork of teachers or of professional artists.

Access to CANVAS, which stands for Children's Art at the National Virtual Arena of Scotland, will be hosted on the Glow computer network, which links most schools in Scotland.

Derek Robertson, national adviser for emerging technologies and learning with LTS, said CANVAS had the potential to enrich the understanding pupils had of their artwork



and that of others.

“This is an innovative development on a number of different levels.

“The fact pupils can have artwork on display in a space where pupils from across Scotland can view it is exciting in itself.

“Where the project really comes into its own is where pupils can explain their artwork to others and receive feedback.

“The potential that we could host live chat between pupils about the artwork would, we believe, foster greater interest in and wider understanding of art.”

The virtual gallery has been developed by an Aberdeen-based company called Second Places, who make virtual worlds for business clients such as BP and The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

Pupils form Auchterader

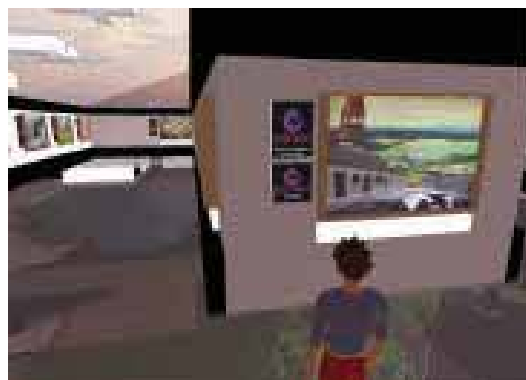
Community School helped with the concept, which was partly designed by Dumfries-based consultants LWD. It will be officially launched at the Scottish Learning Festival in Glasgow later this month.

Meanwhile, in a separate development, West Dunbartonshire Council is currently looking for artists to support and deliver creative learning in schools.

The artists will be used to complement the council’s development of the arts in line with the new school curriculum.

Mhairi Currie, the council’s arts and education links officer, said: “We are looking for people educated to degree level or similar with experience in arts education, from a variety of arts disciplines including, new media, visual art, film, craft, textiles, music and dance.”

### ‘Pupils can explain their artwork to others and receive feedback’



ALTERED IMAGES: A sneak preview of what the national virtual art gallery for Scottish pupils to display their work might look like.





**ART ATTACK:** Pupils Lauren Aston and Heather Stevenson work during an art class at Williamwood High School, Glasgow. Picture: Mark Mainz

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