

*Individual  
Project Proposal*

01.04



30.04

*Made by Jingyi Zhong*

*2025*

*Momentary Metamorphosis  
Artistry Awakens in  
Abandoned Spaces*

# CONTENT

- *Themes and Goals*
- *Artists and Medium*
- *Artworks*
- *Format*
- *Site*
- *Target Audience*
- *Reflection on EDI*
- *Timeline*
- *Budget and Funding*

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## Themes and Goals

The interest in exploring abandoned Spaces stems from the fact that contact with abandoned Spaces can inspire deep reflection and discovery, evoking thoughts about history, memory, and personal identity (Solnit, 2006). Abandoned Spaces can also provoke contemplation of romantic beauty, historical depth, and presence (Dillon, 2014). These places provide another way for us to experience history and decay, helping us to reassess what is valuable and meaningful in society (Edensor, 2005). For example, in China, an abandoned electronics factory was converted into an active contemporary art space, whose director Zhu Pei mentioned: "We felt that it should emphasize activities rather than static galleries, and should be flexible enough to accommodate a variety of art forms, from painting to performance" (Pearson, 2016). And Torgeir's research on industrial sites explores how these places are transformed from derelict industrial sites into cultural landmarks (Tai, 2001), providing an emotional dimension to the project.

In addition, I conducted research on the Hidden Doors project in Edinburgh. Since 2014, the project has developed derelict Spaces in the city, such as the Market Street Vault, the Old Leith Theatre, the former National Cinema building, and the Granton Gas Works disused warehouse, transforming these sites into vibrant art Spaces (Hidden Door, 2023). I also followed the artwork of Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) graduates exploring abandoned Spaces. Therefore, I believe that exploring and reusing abandoned urban Spaces can not only rekindle cultural vitality but also promote social and environmental sustainability. By transforming these forgotten places into centers of art and community activity, we not only beautify the urban landscape but also enhance the cohesion of the community and the sense of belonging of residents.

Hans Ulrich Obrist's curatorial philosophy provides important theoretical support. He stressed that "we must try to go beyond the curatorial approach of objects" (Smith, 2012, p.291), arguing that exhibitions should be dynamic processes of constant development and change, rather than fixed displays (Obrist, 2015). Based on this, I chose to locate the exhibition in an abandoned space in the hope of deepening the audience's immersion and promoting a natural dialogue between the artwork and its environment.



# Artists and medium

**This exhibition focuses on the work of two 2023 Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) graduates - Prince Shen and Cheng Xu. Their installations, drawings and photographs relate in depth to the theme of the project.**

## **Zishen Wang | Cracks in Development**

Through a series of installations and graphic works, Zishen's Cracks in Development explores the cracks in urban space and how these cracks map the emotional lives of city dwellers. His work provides a dual visual and emotional insight into how artistic interventions can transform people's perceptions of abandoned and forgotten spaces. In addition, his work encourages viewers to look at urban fissures from different perspectives, aiming to transform negative urban experiences into positive emotional repercussions, directly echoing the goal of our project, which is to enhance environmental and community rejuvenation through artistic creation.

## **Xu Cheng: Leny Quarry | Revival of an Abandoned Landscape**

Xu Cheng's Leny Quarry | Revival of an Abandoned Landscape uses abandoned landscapes as a stage for artistic intervention, exploring the revival of ecological and social values of abandoned spaces. By bringing art and design into natural and abandoned environments, Xu's work demonstrates how these spaces can be reactivated and the potential of abandoned landscapes can be seen in a new light. This fits perfectly with our project's vision of transforming abandoned spaces into community resources.

## **Artistic Collaboration | Hidden Door**

Collaboration with Hidden Door's Board of Directors has allowed us to incorporate the perspectives and works of more emerging artists into this exhibition. This cross-border collaboration not only enhances the innovative and inclusive nature of the exhibition, but also helps viewers to see the infinite possibilities of abandoned spaces as places for cultural and artistic experimentation.

# Artworks

Zishen Wang  
Cracks in Development



Wang, 2023, *SPACE Unter-schied*, [poster]



Wang, 2023, *Whispers of Cracks*, [installation]



Wang, 2023, *Cracks and Me & Cracks in the Cube* (left & right), [book]



Wang, 2023, *Whispers of Cracks*, [installation]

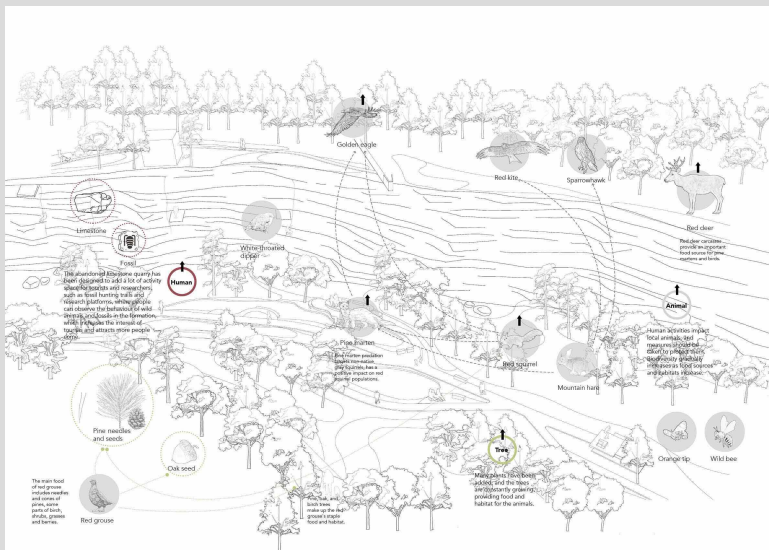


Xu, 2023, Aerial View

# Cheng Xu Leny Quarry | Revival of an abandoned landscape



Xu, 2023, Dynamic system



Xu, 2023, Aerial View

# Artworks



These are examples of Hidden Door's past work in transforming abandoned spaces into art centres.

# Hidden Door



Images are from the hidden door website, 2023

# Format

## The exhibition will be a group show with public programs

### Artist Exchange Sessions

**Time: 4.8**

**Curator: Jingyi Zhong**

The Artist Exchange will be held regularly at Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) for 2.5-3 hours, inviting artists Zishen Wang and Cheng Xu to meet with the audience face-to-face to discuss in-depth their artistic explorations of discarded spaces, their creative processes and the concepts behind them. The event aims to deepen the audience's understanding of artworks and the reuse of abandoned spaces, while increasing interactivity and engagement through a Q&A session. Snacks and drinks will be prepared for participating guests after the Q&A session. The goal of the networking session is to inspire the audience, especially young artists and students, and to promote a broader discussion on the environment, social change and cultural preservation, thus enhancing the educational value and cultural impact of the exhibition as a whole.

### Interactive Installations and VR technology

**Time:4.15**

**Curator: Jingyi Zhong**

By setting up interactive installations such as the modular art wall, the audience can directly participate in the art creation and express their views and feelings about the abandoned space, which transforms the traditional viewing experience from a passive receiver to an active participant. At the same time, the use of VR technology can provide an immersive experience, allowing the audience to explore and perceive the history and future possibilities of the abandoned space from a new perspective. Interactive devices and VR technology not only facilitate participation, but are key features in creating engagement (Jacucci et al., 2010).

### Seminars and Workshops

**Time:4.25**

**Curators: Jingyi Zhong, Jiahan Mi, Yixuan Zhang**

The seminars and workshops organized in collaboration with Hidden Doors will delve into the cultural, social, and environmental significance of abandoned spaces, transforming these sessions into a platform for in-depth discussion and interactive learning. These sessions will feature presentations, panel discussions, and case study reviews by artists and experts who work with abandoned spaces in their work, giving participants a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by these environments. The workshops will be organized in conjunction with the curatorial projects 'life stages' and 'Rebuilding the Tower of Babel: Reflections on the Linguistic Utopia of Contemporary Art', where participants will be provided with small decorative objects for the different exhibitions to recreate and We will provide participants with small decorative objects for the different exhibitions to recreate and propose creative ideas for their interventions in abandoned spaces using specific scenarios so that they can better understand and experience the power of art in abandoned spaces. The target audience for these seminars and workshops included artists, urban planners, environmentalists, students from the Edinburgh College of Art, and members of the local community interested in cultural and environmental revitalization projects. These educational events aim to inspire creative solutions and foster a community of practice that understands the transformative potential of reusing abandoned spaces.





# Site

The location of the exhibition will be on the outskirts of the ECA, which has released its redevelopment plan this year, and using the soon-to-be-redeveloped part of the ECA as an exhibition space can spark a dialogue about the past, present, and future. For feasibility, I plan to make creative use of the construction site, for example, by working with the arts organization (Hidden Door) and the construction team to understand the site's specifics and possible security restrictions. This can help determine where and how the artwork will be displayed, or consider using the building envelope, temporary structures, or spaces within the site as exhibition spaces. Waterproofing is also installed for the works on display to ensure the safety of the artworks during the exhibition.



## Why ECA

First, ECA is a prestigious college with a rich art and design tradition, with a strong academic atmosphere and cultural capital. Such an environment provides an ideal backdrop for art exhibitions. Secondly, ECA is conveniently located in the centre of Edinburgh, making it easier to attract local and international visitors. Such a location helps increase the visibility and engagement of the exhibition, making it easier to become part of the city's cultural activities. Finally, in light of ECA's ongoing campus redevelopment plans, the choice to host the exhibition here can take full advantage of the ongoing construction and renovation activities.

ECA's redevelopment plan is designed to maximize the capacity and quality of existing space use, rather than to build new buildings, which is in line with the curatorial theme of reuse of abandoned space. At the same time, ECA was chosen as the exhibition venue, It is not just about having new functions in it continuously, giving life to new landscapes (Anzani, 2020). In addition, it can also help the public to seek more emotional commonality and spiritual touch when visiting the exhibition, pursue the real experience of scene space, and feel the atmosphere and situation created by the theme space (Kang et al., 2023). Therefore, this kind of "under construction" space can provide a unique display environment for artworks, and increase the level of works and the depth of interpretation.

# Target Audience

1

## Art enthusiasts and critics:

Individuals interested in emerging forms of artistic expression and contemporary art exhibitions who seek to learn about the latest art trends and artists.

3

## Students and educators:

All ECA students and teachers, as well as educators in related disciplines, can understand and explore the exhibition's content from an educational and academic perspective.

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## Urban planners and City council

People with actual decision-making power over urban regeneration and cultural policy-making who are concerned with the effective use of urban space.

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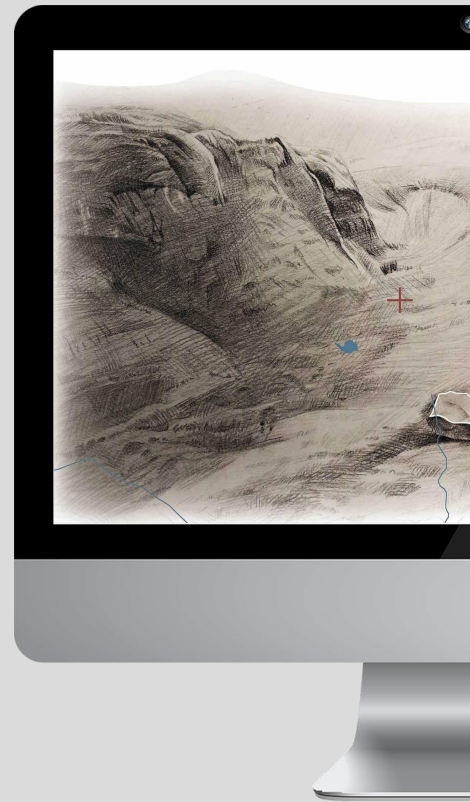
## Community members and residents:

People who live near the ECA and have a direct interest in and influence on how the space around them can be reused and revitalized.

4

## Historical and cultural researchers:

Researchers interested in urban development, historical preservation, and cultural heritage who have an in-depth research interest in abandoned spaces' historical and cultural value.



# Reflection on EDI

**Physical Feasibility:** Ensure that the exhibition venue is accessible, including entrances, lifts and toilets accessible to wheelchair users.

**Information Feasibility:** Provide guided tour materials in multiple languages, including exhibition labels, brochures and audio tours, as well as special interpretation services that take into account people with visual or hearing impairments.

**Economic Feasibility:** free exhibitions to ensure that the exhibition is accessible to visitors of all economic conditions.

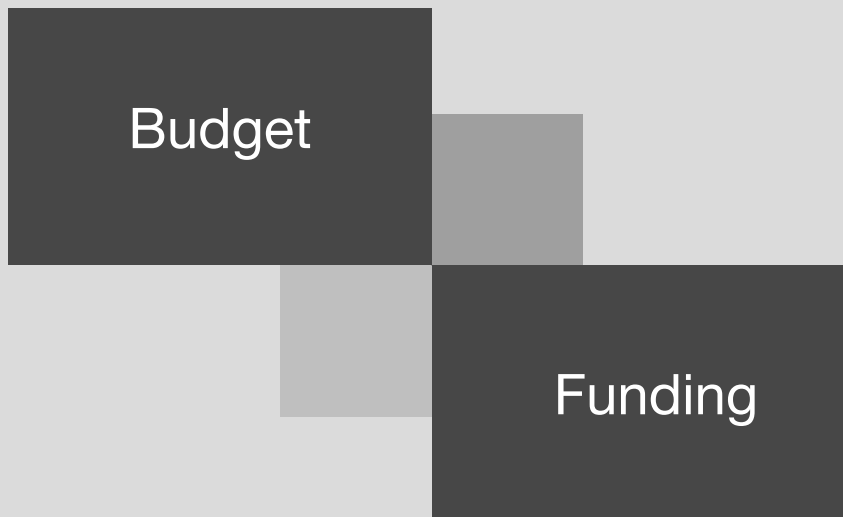
**Educational Feasibility:** Increase participation at the educational level by organising seminars, lectures and interactive workshops to make the content more accessible to audiences of different ages and backgrounds.

# Timeline

This exhibition lasts four months from pre-planning to the final exhibition, with preparation from January to March and the exhibition in April. It is divided into six phases

<b>Time</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Main Activity</b>
01.01 –15.01	1	Project Launch & Initial Preparation  Artist and artwork selection
16.01 –31.01	2	Finalise the exhibition venue. Preliminary design of exhibition layout and use of space.
02.01 –28.02	3	Identify material, equipment and technical support needs.  Confirm production and shipping schedules for all artwork. Begin production or adjustments to artwork needed for the exhibition.
01.03 –15.03	4	Conduct internal previews and gather feedback from the team.  Adjust the exhibition layout or presentation of work based on feedback.
16.03 –31.03	5	Gather feedback from the media and key viewers for final adjustments.
01.04 –30.04	6	Ongoing exhibitions with regular guided tours and interpretation services. Arranging exhibition-related workshops and artist exchange programmes. Solve any emergencies that may be encountered

Expense Item	Budget (£)
Artwork Production and Installation	500
Promotional Materials (Posters, booklets, etc.)	50
Exhibition Opening Event (Beverages, Snacks, etc.)	80
Travelling expenses (field trips, contacting artists, etc.)	100
Curator/Artist Fees	1000
Potential Special Events (Workshops, Lectures, etc.)	150
Miscellaneous (Contingency)	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>2080</b>



Income Item	Amount (£)
Creative Scotland Open Funding for Individuals	1500
Crowdfunding	500
Own Resources	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>2080</b>

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