Background

The cultural importance of Robert Burns within the English speaking world cannot be overstated. He has forever marked Scottish culture and this has had a significant impact internationally. His works are known and loved, and the 25th of January is celebrated, throughout the world. There are statues in his honour in many capital cities around the world, and in most towns and cities in Scotland:

These statues are key to this proposal. They form a network of international connections that will be explored visually. Many of the key works are by a small number of notable artists and are significant sculptures in their own right.

250th Anniversary 2009

2009 is the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns. Scotland's Year of Homecoming is a major project sponsored by the Scottish Executive. The aim of the Homecoming project is to encourage people the world over to visit Scotland in 2009, and to promote inward investment into Scotland.

The team

Chris Fremantle and Murdo Macdonald have prepared this proposal. Murdo Macdonald is the Professor of History of Scottish Art at the University of Dundee and a leading expert on Robert Burns. Chris Fremantle is a cultural historian, consultant in the arts and heritage, and was previously Director of the Scottish Sculpture Workshop.
The proposal

This initiative has two elements, a commission of a new series of photographs, and an international touring exhibition.

Year of Homecoming 2009

This project will make a significant contribution to the Year of Homecoming by generating interest in Robert Burns and the cities of Scotland.

The new commissioned work will bring a contemporary edge to the legacy of Robert Burns, connecting and engaging with young people and those interested in contemporary art.

The touring exhibition will be seen in locations particularly relevant to the ambitions of the Homecoming Project (USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, England and Northern Ireland). The exhibition will draw attention to the connection between these countries and Scotland and turn the statues into introductions to Scotland.

Commissioned series of photographs

A photographer will be commissioned to develop a suite of new work taking statues of Burns as key reference points. The photographer will travel to selected locations overseas and in Scotland. They might for instance take the view from the eye-level of the statue as a consistent starting point. The result will be a new group of work which captures the significance of Robert Burns in the contemporary social and spatial context across the world.

The process of selection of the artist will start through discussions with key photographers such as Thomas Joshua Cooper and Robin Gillanders, and will draw on the expertise of Gloria Chalmers at Portfolio and Malcolm Dickson at Streetlevel, both of which are client funded organisations of the Scottish Arts Council.

Touring Exhibition

The exhibition will consist of:

- the series of photographs,
- interpretation panels,
- a publication,
- education resources,
- marketing material for Homecoming 2009.

The exhibition will aim to focus on the contemporary relevance of Burns and his place in the cultural and social life of cities.

The exhibition will be shown in Scotland and in each of the cities where the selected statues are located including (for example) London, New York, Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland, Dunedin, Detroit, Montreal, Vancouver, Winnipeg during 2008 and then in Scotland in 2009.

Within the interpretation and publication the significance of the artists creating the statues will be drawn out. The process by which statues in bronze are made and how they come to be reproduced might also be explored.
Some of the Famous Scots who made statues of Burns

Sir John Steell 1804-91

Steell's statue is in Dundee, New York (Central Park), Dunedin, London and of course a copy of the bust in the monument at Alloway.

Sir John Steell was born in Aberdeen, and moved to Edinburgh at a young age. He was appointed Queen Victoria's Sculptor in Scotland, and created many of the public statues in Edinburgh. These include the equestrian statues of the Duke of Wellington outside Register House, which was dubbed 'the Iron Duke in bronze by Steell', Alexander and Bucephalus in front of the City Chambers, together with the statue of Sir Walter Scott at the centre of the Scott Monument.

Steell is buried in the Old Calton Cemetery (Edinburgh).

(from 'Gazetteer for Scotland')

D W Stevenson 1842 - 1904

Stevenson's statue of Burns is at the bottom of Leith Walk in Edinburgh, and in Toronto.

Born at Ratho, to the west of Edinburgh. Stevenson trained in Edinburgh and was an apprentice in the studio of the sculptor William Brodie (1815-81). He went on to complete his studies in Rome (Italy).

Stevenson then helped Sir John Steell (1804-91) create the Prince Albert Memorial in Edinburgh's Charlotte Square. His statue of William Wallace on the Wallace Monument near Stirling is well known. He contributed figures to the Scott Monument, in Edinburgh's Princes Street Gardens and in the same city sculpted the statue of Hygeia within St. Bernard's Well alongside the Water of Leith. Other sculptures include the poet and song-writer Robert Tannahill (1884) in Paisley, as well as Burns' love Highland Mary (1896) in Dunoon. Stevenson exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy from 1859. (from 'Gazetteer for Scotland')

G A Lawson 1832 -1904

Lawson created statues of Robert Burns at Ayr (1891); Belfast (1893); Halifax, Nova Scotia; and Melbourne, Australia (1904).

He trained at the Trustees School, Edinburgh, before setting up a studio in Glasgow. After visiting Rome, he settled in Liverpool where he won the Wellington Monument competition with his architect brother Andrew Lawson (1864). From 1866 he lived in London but maintained contact with artists and patrons in Scotland.

He also executed figures of Robert The Bruce; Baillie Nicol Jarvie and Diana Vernon on the Scott Monument, Edinburgh (1874); the statues of Lord Cochrane, Valparaiso (1874); Joseph Pease, Darlington (1875). (From Glasgow – City of Sculpture by Gary Nisbet).
Method

There are a series of tasks that need to be achieved to deliver this project. They break down into a sequence of questions.

- Who is the artist?
- What are the international connections?
- Who are the supporters?
- What does the legacy of memorialising Robert Burns say to us today?

There are a series of stages to achieving the project:

- Fundraising – this initiative would suit a commercial sponsor, in particular one who collected contemporary Scottish art, and would also be eligible for support from the Scottish Arts Council.
- Selecting the artist – as noted above extensive consultation will take place with experts in contemporary photography to support selection of the artist.
- Commissioning management
- Touring exhibition management
- Marketing and education
- Evaluation
### Very Draft Budget

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<tr>
<th>Cost centre</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Cost Estimate</th>
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<td>Management (including research, commissioning artist, commissioning catalogue)</td>
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<td>Artists' Fee</td>
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<td>Travel</td>
<td>Airfares, local travel, accommodation, subsistence</td>
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<td>Touring exhibition costs</td>
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<td>Catalogue</td>
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A more detailed budget will be prepared following initial research and development.
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