



## **Art, Poetry and Zine Opportunity for 2025 National Exhibition**

### **Opportunity:**

The charity Nourish Scotland is looking for students to contribute their artistic talent to a unique travelling exhibition taking place from March to November 2025. This exhibition has plans to visit 20 venues across Scotland, including prominent locations such as the Scottish Storytelling Centre and Scottish Parliament.

### **Exhibition theme:**

This exhibition is part of Nourish Scotland's campaign to reintroduce public diners to the UK. Public diners are government-subsidised restaurants—places that provide affordable, nutritious meals to all. This form of public infrastructure would provide a valuable avenue away from crisis response and charitable food aid and towards a universal approach. These restaurants would be a space where anyone could access an affordable nutritious meal and, importantly, a place you'd want to visit.

Our vision is inspired by the historic success of British and Civic Restaurants established in the 1940s. At their peak, over 2,000 of these restaurants were serving meals across the UK—comparable in number to today's Greggs! Archival records suggest that Edinburgh was home to at least 15 state-sponsored restaurants – the closest one to the University on Bristo Place Road served over 950 meals a day in 1942! These diners were more than just places to eat; they were vital community hubs, with walls decorated with art from the National Gallery and murals celebrating local heritage. Nourish is also inspired by modern equivalents such as Poland's Milk Bars and Singapore's Hawker Centres, which continue to offer affordable communal dining. Despite their success, British Restaurants faded from the public consciousness after World War 2.

Nourish Scotland believes the concept of public diners can address contemporary challenges by promoting social cohesion, the right to food and sustainable food production. Through this exhibition, we hope to bring the idea of communal dining and state-supported restaurants back into public and policy discourse—and we're asking students like you to help us do that either through your poetry or art.

You can learn more about our public diners campaign (available here: <https://www.nourishscotland.org/projects/public-diners/>).



**What Nourish is looking for:**

1. Artists = Producing and collaborating on mural art and/or illustrations to work alongside collated text and archival material
2. Zine creators = Designing and producing a Zine on the exhibition material to raise awareness of public diners
3. Creative writers/poets = Submitting an original poem that explores the past, present or future of the public diner. Your poem could delve into the history, cultural significance, or the role of the public diner in society. Alternatively, you might imagine what a public diner in Scotland could look like in the 21st century. While not a poem, an example piece by Rebecca May Johnson called 'I Dream of Canteens' gives a great sense of these themes (available here: <https://dinnerdocument.com/2019/04/30/i-dream-of-canteens/>). Any style of poetry is welcome and one A4 page should act as a guideline for length.

**Note:** *Please avoid focussing on food poverty for this project. While public diners are very much promoting the human right to accessible and affordable food, we want our exhibition and its material to showcase public diners as a universal approach that isn't targeted at any one particular social group. The same way that we don't perceive one particular social group using other forms of public infrastructure like public parks, libraries and transport.*

**How to Get in Touch:**

If you'd like to be considered for this opportunity or have any questions, we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch with us at [josie@nourishscotland.org.uk](mailto:josie@nourishscotland.org.uk).

Selection will begin in the New Year.