

GCC

Stocktake Report 2025

Executive Summary

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The full report will be released on 26 November 2025.

Made possible by:

HAUSER & WIRTH **CHRISTIE'S**

For more information contact info@galleryclimatecoalition.org or visit galleryclimatecoalition.org.

For press enquiries, contact Isabel Davies, isabel@sam-talbot.com and Gwyneth Tambe-Green, gwyneth@sam-talbot.com

Introduction

Art sector climate leaders are proving that 50% emissions reductions are possible – but the sector will only reach collective goals with urgent scaling.

The GCC Stocktake Report brings together data and insights to tell a compelling story – meaningful decarbonisation is not only achievable, it’s proven. The report provides the clearest picture yet of where progress is happening, where the gaps remain, and how ambition must accelerate in the second half of this decisive decade.

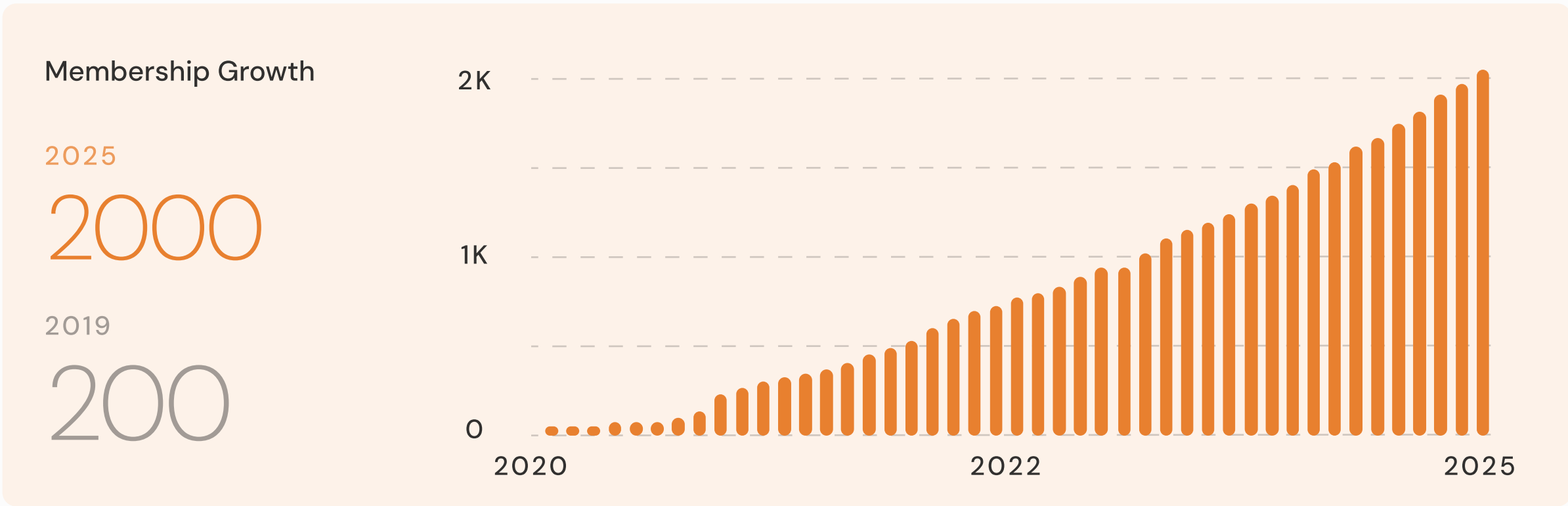
Launched in 2020, GCC has evolved from a grassroots initiative into a global coalition of more than 2,000 members representing a network of over 25,000 professionals. In that time, its membership profile has transformed. What began as a London-based group of mainly commercial galleries has expanded into a truly international community encompassing the full visual art ecosystem. Today, members span more than 60 countries across six continents, with non-profits, institutions, and artist studios now forming the largest share of the coalition.

This evolution reflects both the sector’s growing global engagement with, and the mainstreaming of, climate responsibility across the arts. GCC is no longer a niche initiative within the art market, but a cross-sector movement uniquely positioned to unite commercial, institutional, and creative actors around shared environmental goals.

It remains the only membership organisation of its kind operating at an international scale, driving collective decarbonisation across the visual arts and mobilising the sector around a shared mission: transitioning to low-impact operations and inspiring wider climate action.

Five years ago, the sector was starting almost from scratch – little data, limited knowledge, and no clear pathway forward. Today, GCC’s Stocktake Report serves as a strategic checkpoint for a rapidly growing community in a world where humanity will surpass the 1.5°C target within the next decade. It reflects on progress to date, drawing out lessons learned, and identifies the questions that will shape the coalition’s next phase. **At the midpoint to 2030, the choice before us is clear: stay ambitious, accelerate and strengthen our collective role as cultural leaders in the climate transition.**

As governments gather at COP30 in Brazil to assess global progress on the Paris Agreement, the visual arts are doing the same – taking stock, learning from experience, and reshaping strategy to accelerate action in the decisive years ahead.



Key Insights

At a glance

Early adopters are on track to meet 2030 carbon reduction goals

79%

Among members who began tracking their footprint in 2019, 79% are on track to meet the coalition target of a 50% reduction by 2030.

Vast majority of members reporting since 2019 are seeing reductions

89%

Among members who began tracking their footprint in 2019, 89% are seeing tangible reductions.

The 'Big Three' confirmed

80–95%

Flights, freight, and building energy account for 80–95% of operational emissions across all member types.

Environmental responsibility is accelerating

80%

80% of surveyed members now have green teams (up from less than half in 2022); over half complete annual carbon reports.

Emissions are heavily concentrated among larger operators

22%

The largest 22% of organisations are responsible for around 50% of sector emissions, showing that targeted action by a relatively small group can drive significant impact.

Potential carbon savings if early adopter strategies were scaled to entire visual arts sector

5M_{tCO₂e}

If GCC's leading members' actions were replicated sector-wide, the visual arts' carbon footprint could drop by over 5 MtCO₂e – equal to a small country's emissions.

Key Insights

Early adopters are on track

The data provides the clearest evidence yet that climate action in the visual arts is both possible and effective. Five years into GCC’s ten-year mission, the numbers confirm what our members have demonstrated in practice – emissions can be reduced when they are measured and managed effectively.

A clear link between measuring and reducing emissions is apparent. **Reporting is the foundation of accountability and action.** Each new carbon report not only helps an organisation identify and reduce its own impact, it strengthens the collective dataset that enables better tools, sharper analysis, and more effective sector-wide decarbonisation. Closing this data gap is both a challenge and an opportunity, one that every organisation can contribute to by reporting, sharing insights, and helping to build the collective picture of an environmentally responsible art world.

Early Adopter Reductions

89%

Of members have reduced their emissions

79%

Are on track to meet or exceed our 2030 goal of 50% reductions

Counting organisations who have been tracking emissions since 2019

11% have not made a reduction

89% of members made a reduction in emissions

79% of members made a 25% reduction in emissions
On track for a 50% reduction by 2030

Key Insights

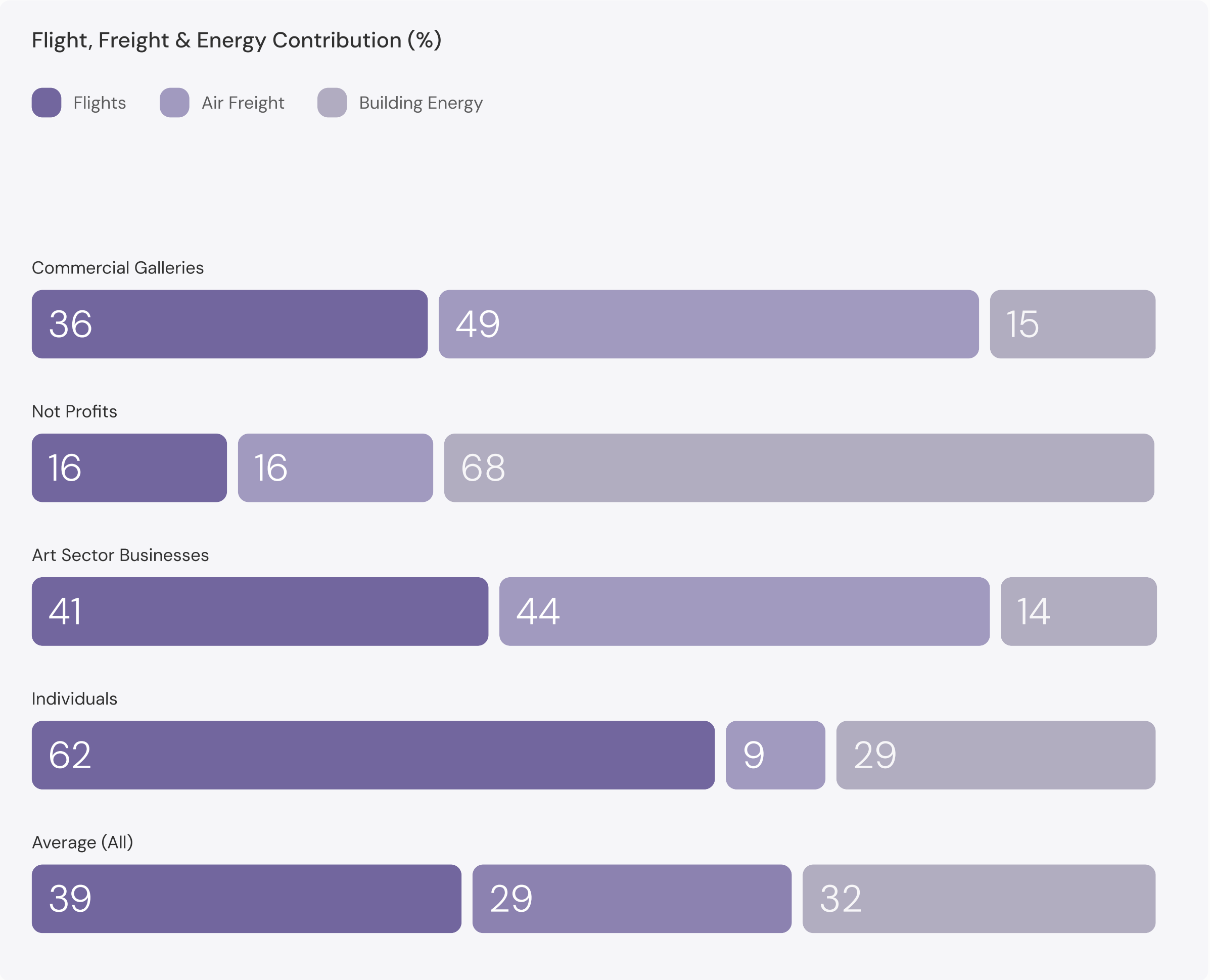
Three sources account for 80–95% of emissions

Data shows that almost all operational emissions across member types and scales come from freight, flights, and energy, which together account for 80–95% of total operational emissions.

- Commercial Galleries**
Air freight and staff flights are the major contributors. Across all galleries and years, 49% of emissions came from air freight, 36% from staff flights, and 15% from building energy. Profiles vary with gallery size, but shipping and travel consistently account for the majority of their footprint.
- Non-profits & Institutions**
Building energy is the primary driver. Across all non-profits, 68% of emissions came from energy, with 16% each from air freight and staff flights. For smaller organisations, energy represented 57% of emissions, but flights were disproportionately higher (37%) as even a few trips can outweigh their energy footprint. Medium-sized organisations had 55–70% energy emissions, with flights slightly outweighing freight, while the largest institutions recorded 72% energy, 19% air freight, and 10% staff flights.

- Art Sector Businesses**
Engage in a diverse range of activities, making it difficult to define a representative carbon profile for the group. Despite this, the larger arts businesses exhibit annual emissions comparable to those of the largest commercial galleries. For example, major art fairs report roughly 50% of emissions from freight and 33% from staff flights, while auction houses see flights, freight, and building energy collectively account for around 70% of total emissions.
- Artists and freelancers**
Footprints vary widely depending on activity, scale, and travel patterns. The average individual’s footprint was roughly 3.9 tCO₂e from flights, freight, and energy, representing 72% of their total emissions, with the remaining 28% from other activities (commuting, materials, etc.).

The numbers confirm GCC’s assumption that a few predictable activities dominate the sector’s carbon footprint. Effective decarbonisation depends on coordinated action across these three levers.



Key Insights

Scaling GCC’s model across the art sector could save the equivalent of 5MtCO₂e a year by 2030

A “scale-up” exercise used GCC Carbon Calculator data, public data, and sector insights to estimate the visual arts sector’s climate impact and highlight opportunities for action. Figures are illustrative rather than definitive.

Key Findings

- The visual arts sector emits an estimated 11–13 MtCO₂e per year, including emissions from travel, freight, energy and materials across galleries, studios, non-profits, individuals, and the wider ecosystem.
- Matching the reductions achieved by early adopters across the sector could cut 5 MtCO₂e a year by 2030.
- The sector-wide emissions breakdown (once scaled) results in: flights – 43%, air freight – 26%, building energy – 14%, other transport and materials – 17%
- The largest 22% of organisations generate half of all emissions. The largest 0.04% of organisations account for around 5% of emissions – roughly 140 times their proportional weight.

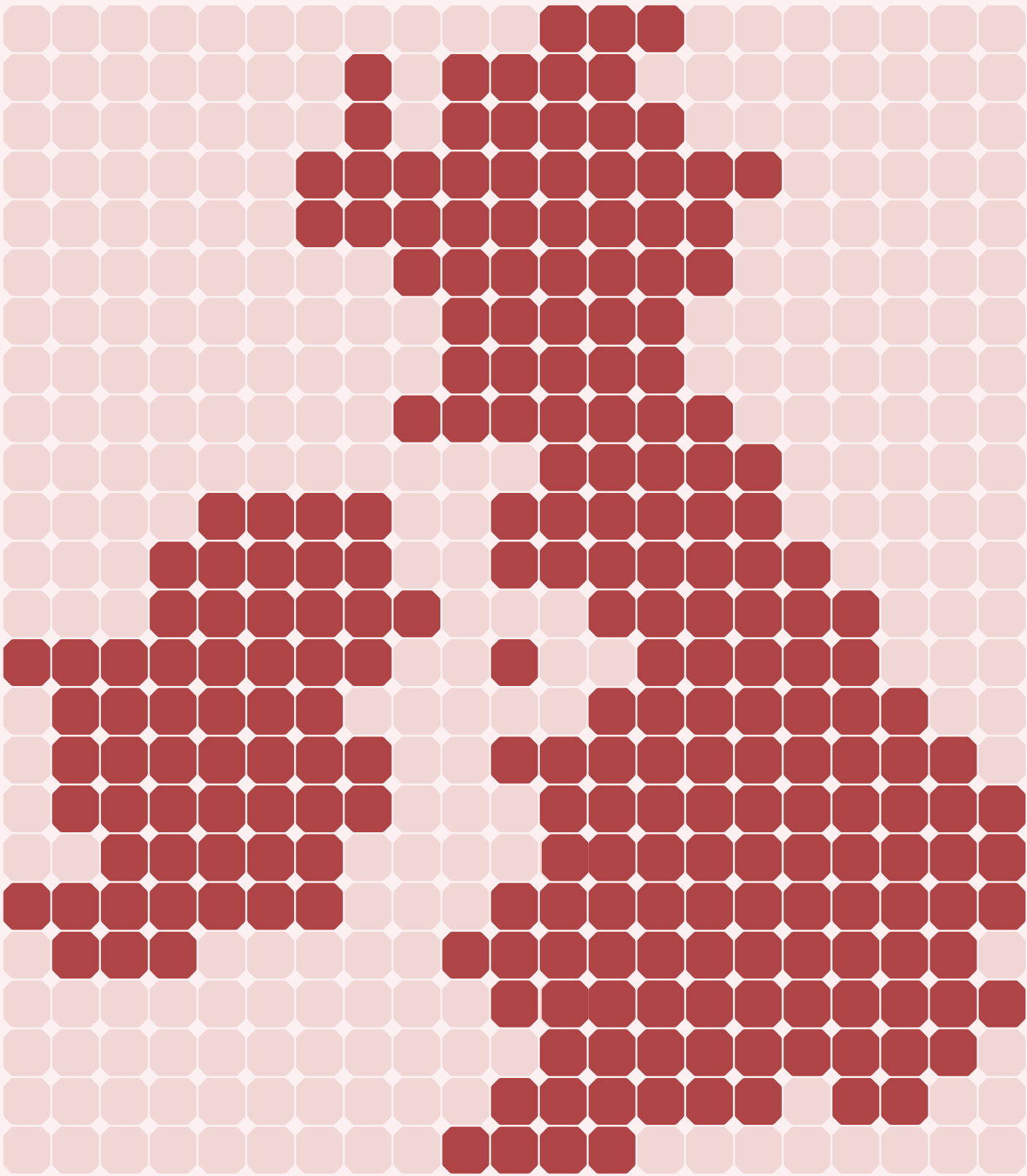
Implications

- Roughly 30% of the operational footprint (building energy, surface transport, materials) could shift to low-carbon alternatives with investment and effort, without radically altering current practices. However, the majority of emissions come from aviation, which demands a more fundamental rethink of how the visual arts operate.
- Smaller organisations and individuals make up 78% of the sector yet account for half its emissions. Their collective action is essential to meet 2030 goals.
- While larger organisations have the resources and influence to drive systemic change, smaller players are often more agile and can test solutions and pressure bigger institutions to move faster.
- The visual arts sector is well positioned to lead on climate action. With coordinated effort, it could cut millions of tonnes of CO₂e annually – setting a visible example of a low-carbon sector.

Potential Carbon Savings if Adopted Sector-Wide

5MtCO₂e

Reduction in emissions if the cuts achieved by GCC’s most engaged members were scaled up to the entire art sector, equivalent to installing solar panels on every home in the UK and Ireland.



Beyond the Carbon

What the footprints don't show

Data captures what can be measured – carbon, kilowatt hours, and freight miles – but it doesn't show how much the culture of the visual arts has changed in just five years. Today, climate action is no longer a specialist concern but a shared professional value.

GCC's latest member survey shows a change in practice with 94.5% of responding members meeting some or all coalition commitments, and 60% going further. Green teams and emissions-reduction plans are now widespread, with GCC's member survey showing that active green teams have risen from under 50% in 2022 to 80% today.

The sector's influence, however, extends far beyond its own footprint. By embedding sustainability into culture and operations, organisations are shaping values and public imagination – inspiring peers and setting new standards. GCC's member survey findings show that knowledge is no longer the primary barrier; the challenge now is capacity – the time, funding, and staff needed to translate ambition into sustained action.

GCC's coalition model is helping overcome this challenge. 97% of members surveyed say it drives sector-wide progress, and 90% report tangible improvements within their organisations. Collective momentum is building, turning conviction into measurable impact and laying the foundation for a transformed visual arts sector.

Artists and cultural institutions wield influence far beyond their operational emissions. Culture sits upstream of policy. It shapes the stories, values, and public imagination, paving the way for policy. As Economist Mariana Mazzucato argues, culture is vital public infrastructure – it generates the creativity and shared values that drive flourishing. By decarbonising, collaborating, and demonstrating best practice, the visual arts can amplify their moral and imaginative authority – turning creative leadership into a catalyst for systemic change. This will be a crucial role for GCC in the years ahead, and one our strategy is evolving to support.

Proportion of surveyed members with Green Teams

2022

47%

2025

80%

80% of surveyed members now have green teams (up from less than half in 2022); over half complete annual carbon reports.

Conclusions

At the midpoint of GCC’s 2030 climate goals, the Stocktake marks a pivotal moment to assess progress, renew ambition, and align the sector around the next phase of collective climate action. The report’s findings show how far we’ve come and what’s needed if we are to face the next five years head-on:

- Change in Culture: Despite political and economic challenges, a cultural shift is underway, and momentum is building across the industry.
- Measure for Results: GCC’s recommended best practices deliver results – the solutions exist, and the methods work.
- Scale for Targets: The 50% reduction target by 2030 is achievable – but only with urgent scaling.
- Focus on Impacts: Freight, travel, and energy must be transformed and embedded as standard practice.
- Call for Leaders: Major players, artists, and institutions must lead, raise ambition, and drive the transformation our industry urgently needs.

As GCC evolves to meet the challenges of the next five years, our mission remains clear: to equip, connect, and accelerate the visual arts towards a low-impact, regenerative future. The insights from this Stocktake will directly shape our next strategy – grounding it in data, trends, and the collective wisdom of our coalition.

Published in 2025, alongside COP30 in Brazil, the full Stocktake report situates the visual arts firmly within the global climate dialogue – making the sector’s contribution visible and accountable at this decisive moment for the planet.

Decarbonisation remains essential – it is the foundation of credible climate action – but it does not, on its own, address the wider systems that shape behaviour and decision-making across the arts. Nor does it capture the full potential of culture to influence values, inspire collective imagination, and accelerate societal transformation.

Environmental responsibility can no longer be an add-on – it’s essential to the sector’s vitality in a rapidly changing world. The visual arts can lead this urgent transformation, showing how creativity and innovation can drive change. The task ahead is clear: we must measure, reduce and lead,

The forthcoming full report expands on these headlines with detailed data analysis, case studies, and insights from across the sector, offering a deeper understanding of the progress made, the challenges ahead, and the pathways to collective impact.

“Climate action is about collaboration. No single discipline, sector or voice is enough — but together, through coalitions like this, we can shift culture, challenge power, and drive real progress.

HEATH LOWNDES, DIRECTOR, GCC

Credits

Thank you to our sponsors:

HAUSER & WIRTH CHRISTIE’S

GCC extends its deepest thanks to Hauser & Wirth and Christie’s for their generous sponsorship of this landmark Stocktake Report. Their support has made it possible for GCC to keep this work open-access, ensuring that vital data, insights, and resources remain freely available to the entire visual arts community.

Both organisations have been steadfast supporters of GCC since 2020, serving as Active Members and members of the Supporters Circle, and consistently demonstrating environmental responsibility through action and advocacy. By embedding sustainability into their operations and supporting sector-wide initiatives like this report, Hauser & Wirth and Christie’s continue to set a powerful example of leadership within the global art market. Their backing of the GCC Stocktake Report 2025 not only reinforces their commitment to climate accountability but helps to establish new standards for collaboration, transparency, and shared responsibility, proving that when the industry works together, meaningful change is possible. GCC is proud to have partnered with both organisations on this milestone project.

Lead Researcher
Aoife Fannin, GCC Project Manager

Contributing Author
Heath Lowndes, GCC Director

Environmental Advisor
Danny Chivers

Designer
David Naftalin

Copy Editor
Emma Hutton

GCC Team
Nicola Ferrao, Operations Manager & Lula Rappoport, Community Coordinator

Press & Communications
Sam Talbot, Isabel Davies and Gwyneth Tambe-Green

Hauser & Wirth
Cliodhna Murphy, Global Head of Environmental Sustainability

Christie’s
David Findlay, Head of Sustainability

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