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Room 34, The National Gallery. A Distinct Style: British Painting 1740-1800. Part of C C Land: The Wonder of Art. © The National Gallery, London.

## NMDC news

### ICOM UK 2025 Conference addresses climate and social emergencies

This year's ICOM UK Conference 'Regenerative Museums for Sustainable Futures' took place in Liverpool on 1 and 2 May.

On Day 1 Lucimara Letelier, Director of RegeneraMuseu, Vice Chair of ICOM Sustain, Brazil and Researcher at the University of Leicester set the scene with a keynote exploring the potential for regenerative museums through 'an adaptive resilience pathway in response to climate and social collapse' from her leading research. Speakers from across the globe then brought the theme to life with case study examples from Australia, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Egypt, Iran, Kenya, the UK and the USA.

Ineza Umuhoza Grace, CEO of The Green Protector, Co-ordinator of the Loss and Damage Youth Coalition and 2023 Global Citizen Prize winner, Rwanda closed the day with an inspiring address. Day 1 sessions were recorded and will be available on the ICOM UK website shortly.

Day 2 invited participants to engage deeper with conference themes through a range of workshops including environmental and ethical collections management, loss and damage, climate activism and sustainable design for museum spaces.

The ICOM UK 2025 Conference was a collaboration between ICOM UK, NMDC and RegeneraMuseu – a Brazilian organisation dedicated to regeneration and museums led by Lucimara Letelier. As a partner of the conference NMDC was delighted to welcome Lucimara to the Organising Committee this year and we are incredibly grateful for her vital contribution to the curatorship of the programme. Her engagement and expertise in co-developing the programme were instrumental, with themes, speakers, and activities deeply informed by the insights from her pioneering research on Regenerative Museums. To learn more visit: [www.regenerativemuseums.com](http://www.regenerativemuseums.com)

The Conference was kindly supported by Barker Langham, the British Council, Narro Associates, National Museums Liverpool, the University of Liverpool Museums and Collections, and our media partner, Blooloo. Thanks to all who participated in making this year's conference a success. [ICOM UK](#) (review of the conference) [ICOM UK](#) (full conference programme)

## Members' news

### King and Queen open National Gallery Sainsbury Wing

The Sainsbury Wing originally opened by Queen Elizabeth II on 9 July 1991 is due to reopen to the public after refurbishment on 10 May 2025. King Charles III and Queen Camilla visited on Tuesday 6 May to officially reopen the Sainsbury Wing after the 2-year capital project. Visitors will be able to view 'C C Land: The Wonder of Art' which showcases over 20 new loans and eight new Bicentenary acquisitions, alongside a rehang of the existing collection. The Gallery also announced a five-metre work of art by Sir Richard Long will greet art-lovers along the Sainsbury Wing staircase. In a busy month for the National Gallery press team, announcements were also made on the acquisition of a large 16th-century mystery altarpiece not exhibited in public for over sixty years at a cost of £16.4 million, made possible thanks to the support of the American Friends of the National Gallery. [NG](#) (Sir Richard Long), [NG](#) (altarpiece)

Early reviews are in from the Observer's Laura Cummings - [Art: the National Gallery is reborn](#) and Nancy Durrant in the Times - [Inside the radical £85m revamp of the National Gallery](#), the Financial Times - [The National Gallery's rehang is a fine achievement — proof that it is a sanctuary of beauty](#) and Apollo Magazine - [The National Gallery unwraps its birthday present](#).

**Also:** The architect at the heart of the National Gallery's reinvention: 'Just Stop Oil were stupid and naive', [Telegraph](#) (£)

## **Tullie doors open on a £4.5m revamp**

Tullie, a museum, art gallery and community hub in Carlisle, opened their doors on the 26 April with new revitalised spaces including a modernised welcome area and entrance, a brand-new shop, and the newly developed Carlisle Gallery. As part of the works, the Grade I Listed Gatehouse, a central feature of Carlisle's streetscape, has also undergone a major restoration. The building has now been removed from the Heritage at Risk register following a full refurbishment, ensuring its preservation for future generations. The project has been made possible with Government support including funding from the the Town Fund and Future High Streets Fund and a further £2 million administered by Arts Council England. The refurbishment of Café Tullie has also been supported by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. A grant from Historic England supported a full refurbishment of Tullie's Grade I Listed Gatehouse alongside direct funding Cumberland Council.

[Tullie](#), [BBC](#), [Museums Association](#)

## **Beamish named in Art Fund Museum of the Year shortlist**

NMDC member Beamish, The Living Museum of the North, in County Durham, is one of the five contenders for this year's Art Fund Museum of the Year Award, with a prize pot of £120,000 going to the eventual winner and runners up awards of £15,000 going to each of the other finalists. All of this year's nominees are based outside of London for the first time in four years, with the other contenders including Chapter, an international centre for contemporary arts and culture in Cardiff, Compton Verney in Warwickshire, home to six art collections and a sculpture park, the Golden Thread Gallery in Northern Ireland, and Perth Museum in Scotland, which reopened in March 2024 after a £27 million redevelopment project.

Judges for this year's prize include historian David Dibosa, Chief Executive of Amgueddfa Cymru Jane Richardson, comedian Phil Wang, artist Rana Begum and Jenny Waldman, Director of Art Fund and Chair of the judging panel. The winner will be announced on Thursday 26 June at a ceremony at the Museum of Liverpool. [Art Fund](#), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#)

## **National Museums NI launches new corporate strategy**

National Museums NI, which includes four museums - Ulster Museum, Ulster Folk Museum, Ulster Transport Museum and Ulster American Folk Park - and acts as custodian for 1.4 million objects, has published a new strategy which runs from 2025-2030. The strategy positions the museums and collections as change-makers, amplifying impact through identity, peacebuilding, environment, and innovation, to shape bold solutions for our future. The strategy also includes the steps National Museums NI are taking to reach their goals. An example of their drive to bring environmental impact is shaped through 'Environmental Volunteering' in partnership with The Conservation Volunteers at the Ulster Folk Museum, which includes hands-on projects such as hedge-laying, traditional gardening and habitat creation across the museum's expansive site. The Museums Association also reports that National Museums NI is advancing redevelopment plans for all four museums. These include a £50m revamp of the Ulster Folk Museum. [National Museums NI](#) (strategy), [Museums Association](#)

## **Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery reopens history galleries**

The refurbished history galleries at Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery are the latest spaces to reopen at the museum as part of their phased redevelopment plan. Since its closure in 2019 the trust which runs the museum has been working on the Grade II\* building's heating, electrics, lifts and roofing. The refurbished history galleries includes a permanent exhibition on Birmingham's origins and people through the years was originally opened 12 years ago. [BMAG](#), [Museums Association](#)

## **Acceptance in Lieu scheme benefits National Gallery and V&A**

Two works owned by Jacob, 4th Baron Rothschild will be joining the collections of the National Gallery and the V&A through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme. The National Gallery will receive *King David* (1651) by renowned Bolognese painter Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (1591–1666), known as Guercino, reuniting it with the two works both created to be its pendant. The V&A will receive the marble relief *Edward and Eleanor* (1790) by John Deare (1759–1798), one of the most talented Neoclassical sculptors working at the end of the 18th century. Jacob, 4th Baron Rothschild (born 1936) died in February 2024 and also served as Chair of Trustees at the National Gallery between 1985 and 1998. [National Gallery](#), [V&A](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

## Members in the news

- **Tate Modern:** 25 jaw-dropping and unforgettable moments from the first 25 years, 1 May 2025, [Guardian](#)
- **Natural History Museum** digitises 6 millionth specimen, 28 April 2025, [M+H Advisor](#)
- Union in talks with **Tate** over restructure to cut staffing costs, 24 April 2025, [M+H Advisor](#)
- **Norfolk Museums Service** reveals 'financial pressure', 23 April 2025, [Arts Professional](#) (£)
- **National Portrait Gallery** Teams Up with FRAMELESS for Immersive Experience at MediaCity, 15 April 2025, [Experience UK](#)
- Open air museum **Beamish** lists two cottages on Airbnb, 10 April 2025, [M+H Advisor](#)
- \$3m painting "one of the most important **Tate** has received", 3 April 2024, [M+H Advisor](#)

## Images this month

Images this month celebrate the reopening of the Sainsbury Wing at the National Gallery. As part of the Gallery's 200th birthday celebrations the C C Land: The Wonder of Art is a once in a generation rehang of the National Gallery collection featuring 1,000 works of art. [National Gallery](#)

## Government news

### Creative industries and growth boosted with new UK-India cultural agreement

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy signed a new bilateral Cultural Cooperation Agreement with India's Minister for Culture and Tourism, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Friday 2 May. She was joined on the trip by a delegation of senior leaders from VisitBritain, the British Film Institute and the Science Museum, to drive further collaboration between British and Indian creative businesses and cultural institutions. The agreement will open the door for increased UK creative exports to India and enable more partnerships between UK and Indian museums and cultural institutions, helping to grow UK soft power. Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, said: "*The V&A is delighted to contribute to the new UK-India cultural partnership. It will increase our ability to loan more objects from our world-class collection, and build strategic relationships with the booming Indian arts scene across design, fashion, photography, and performance.*" [Gov.uk](#) (press release), [Gov.uk](#) (speech)

### Government responds to consultation on UNESCO convention on intangible heritage

The Government has published a response to the consultation on implementing the UNESCO 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), which consisted of 16 online roundtables attended by over 500 people, and over 1,100 survey responses submitted via the online portal and by email. The response has been agreed with the Devolved Governments and it acknowledges that living heritage is a broad area that covers a number of different policy areas so there will often not be a one-size-fits all answer. Key points in the response include:

- The benefits of inclusion in the inventories are likely to vary for each item and community, but may include greater awareness, recognition, as well as opportunities for greater engagement and collaboration.
- The inventories will be iterative and there will be regular open calls for communities to submit their living heritage. They are not a mapping tool, register or record of living heritage in the UK and are not intended to be an encyclopaedia or archive.
- An item being included in the inventories does not automatically mean there is any responsibility or obligation from any organisation, body or government to directly support that item.

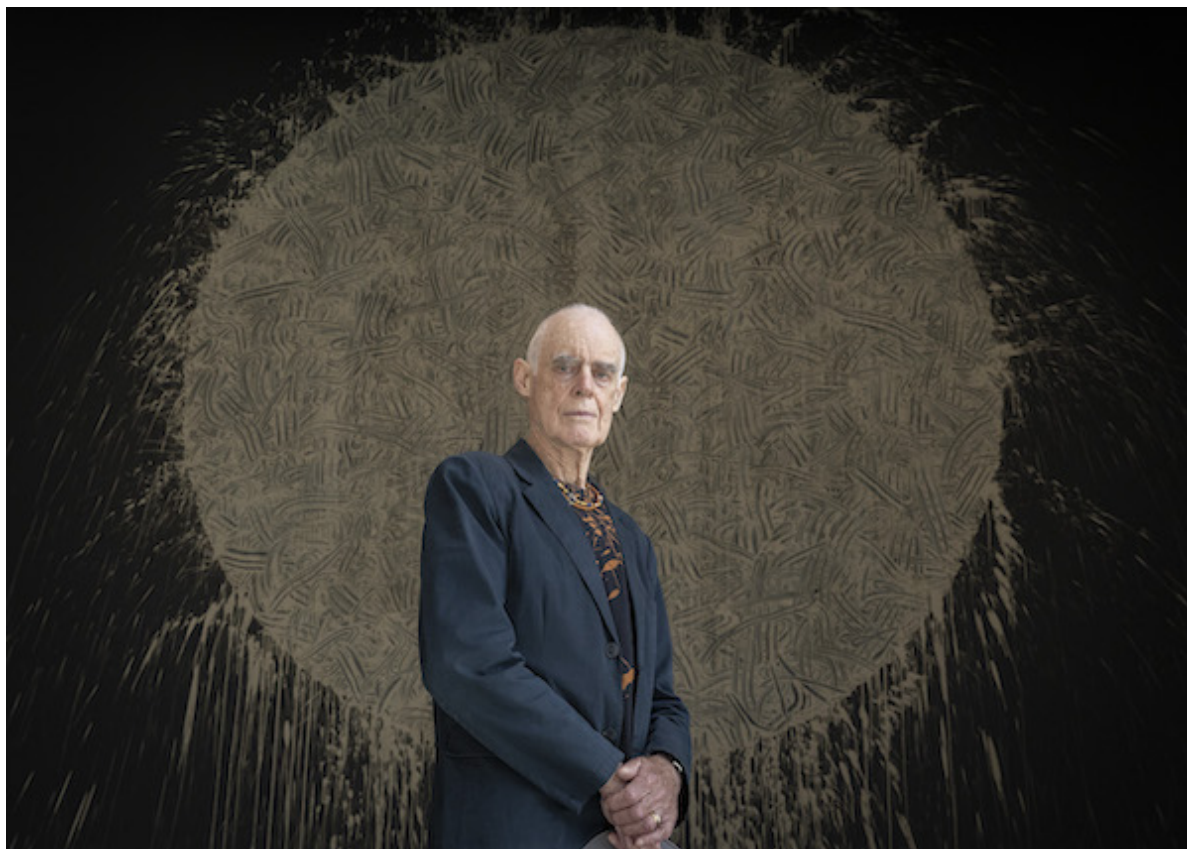
The next stage of the inventory process will be an open call for submissions, when a shorter, more concise and accessible guidance will be published. [Gov.uk](#)

### ACE Review survey extended to June 2025

The deadline for submitting responses to the ongoing review of Arts Council England has been extended to 12 noon on 30 June. The survey was originally due to close at the end of April. The survey provides an opportunity to shape the review of Arts Council England and influence the future of the organisation. The survey starts with a profile section consisting of up to 10 questions. The remaining questions are optional, consisting of 32 questions across 6 themed sections. You can view the questions on the website before beginning the survey. [Gov.uk](#)



**Also:** ACE Chair Nick Serota warns of political interference in arts if ACE is abolished, 23 April 2025, [Arts Professional](#) (£)



Sir Richard Long in front of his *Mud Sun, 2025*; River Avon mud on gesso © Richard Long; Photo: The National Gallery, London.

## Sector surveys

### Heritage Science Data Service Survey

Heritage science is uniquely inter-disciplinary and covers disciplines including archaeology, conservation, materials science, art history, physics, robotics and computer science. The National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF) is undertaking a consultation on behalf of the Heritage Science Data Service (HSDS), as part of the Research Infrastructure for Conservation and Heritage Science (RICHeS) programme. RICHeS was launched in October 2024, when UKRI Arts and Humanities Council (AHRC) unveiled 31 projects to create a distributed infrastructure of heritage science collections and equipment to grow the UK heritage economy and protect cultural heritage for future generations. If you create or use Heritage Science data as an employee, volunteer or student, you are encouraged to complete the first User Needs survey. The survey asks about your familiarity with heritage science and seeks input on the development of the HSDS. It should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete and you can respond as either an organisation or an individual. The survey will remain open until 31 May 2025. [NHSF](#) (website), [NHSF](#) (survey)

### Tackling Online Harms - Cultural Sector Survey

The Space, the independent not-for-profit organisation that supports the sector with digital work, has opened a survey to capture thoughts on the polarising opinions on social media. They are currently trying to understand more about the challenges organisations and individuals are facing when working online - and the steps you may be taking to manage the risks of online criticism. The short survey is confidential and the results will be published later in the year. [The Space](#)

### Two surveys from NEMO aim to look at sustainable development and digital collaboration

NEMO, the Network of European Museum Organisations, has recently launched two new surveys:

- Towched - aims to collect information on how museum collections across Europe are currently used in educational and participatory activities that contribute to sustainable development. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete and is intended for museums, cultural institutions, educators, NGOs, universities, and others involved in using collections for education. The Horizon Europe funded project Towched explores the role of arts, culture, and heritage in fostering inclusive, lifelong learning based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a Human Rights-Based Approach. Central to the project is the belief that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is not limited to formal schooling, but represents a continuous, community-driven process of social learning. It aims to capture how current museum collections are being used, understand experiences of planning, collaboration and evaluation and highlight barriers. [NEMO, Towched](#)
- ECHOES Consultation – aiming to help shape the European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage (ECCCH), a shared digital space for professionals and researchers across Europe. The collaborative Cloud will offer access to data, scientific resources, training, and advanced digital tools tailored to the sector's needs. This shared platform aims to revolutionise the way heritage professionals and researchers collaborate, modernising workflows and processes. [NEMO, ECHOES](#)

## Cultural funding and cost of living

### Petition calls for investment in the arts in 2025 Spending Review

The Campaign for the Arts has launched a petition asking the UK public to support calls for investment in the arts in the upcoming Spending Review.

The petition urges Chancellor Rachel Reeves to make the arts part of the Government's plans for a decade of national renewal by:

- Restoring the funding removed from the DCMS budget this year by 2026–27.
- Sustaining real-terms growth in DCMS budgets in each year of the Spending Review period, as is planned for overall departmental spending.
- Extending the Government's commitment to growing funding for schools and local councils, both of which are vital for public access to the arts.

The petition notes that the UK has one of the lowest levels of government spending on culture among European nations, and that the DCMS budget has already shrunk by 6% this year. It states: "The arts are not a luxury, but an essential ingredient in a healthy society. For us to thrive, the arts must too." [Campaign for the Arts](#)

### Families spending less as more visitor fees introduced

In the latest Heritage Pulse survey, run in conjunction with Arts Professional, 50% of respondents had seen a decline in shop sales and donations. The survey also noted that family attendance is increasingly driven by events with many sites reporting that grandparents are a growing driver for attendance but not spending. [Heritage Pulse](#)

### Round-up of the impact of cultural funding pressures

- [M+H Advisor](#) reported that Wollaton Hall in **Nottinghamshire**, run by Nottingham City Council, has introduced a 'pay once, visit all year' entry fee for adults.
- The [Museums Journal](#) reported **York Museums Trust** appeals for investment to stem falling visitor numbers. The charity manages five sites in York on behalf of the council: York Art Gallery, Yorkshire Museum, York Castle Museum, Museum Gardens and York St Mary's Church. Funding challenges and deteriorating buildings mean the trust is at a "critical juncture in its existence".
- The [Financial Times](#) reported that **Sotheby's** had approached several English councils offering to value their art collections. [M+H Advisor](#)
- Following on from news on the BBC website in December 2024 that **Cannock Chase** in Staffordshire was due to close, the [Museums Journal](#) reported that Cannock Chase District Council had finally closed the museum after 36 years to save its £255,643 annual subsidy in order to address a £1.3m budget shortfall.

## Sector reports

### CEBR report shows indirect economic impact from the arts and culture sector

A new report by the Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) for Arts Council England has found that public funding in the arts and culture sector generates indirect economic impact - or "spillovers" - that support the continued growth of the creative industries and wider economic development. These benefits ripple across key policy areas including investment, innovation, employment, exports, skills, public health, and regional regeneration. Key points include:

- The wider arts and culture sector contributed £19.1 billion in GVA in 2023. In that same period the arts and culture sector employed 251,500 people, a 0.6% increase in jobs from 2019.
- The arts and culture sector also outperforms much of the wider economy in terms of productivity.

The report also highlights the six ways public funding in arts and culture drives economic value and the nine 'spillover' effects, including impacts on stimulating investment and improved health and wellbeing, providing further evidence of how publicly funded arts and culture organisations generate economic value across the sector and wider economy. [Arts Council England](#) (press release), [ACE](#) (blog post Nick Serota), [ACE](#) (report, pdf, 58pgs), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

### UK City of Culture Programme results in more than £1bn of additional investment

A new study carried out by Warwick Business School on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport reported that the combined investment of Derry/Londonderry (2013), Hull (2017) and Coventry (2021) generated a cumulative media value of £596m, on programme delivery costs of £103.1m. It is also estimated that 539,209 citizens from host cities have engaged and participated with the UK City of Culture (UK CoC) programme. In addition, an estimated 2 million visitors from across the UK and further afield visited host cities for events and activities. The study also estimated that an additional investment of over £1 billion can be linked to the local economies of the host cities, with roughly 25% of that investment coming from the private sector, demonstrating that the UK CoC attracts additional investment. [Gov.uk](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

### Freelancers report makes key recommendations to the creative sector

Creative UK's 'Forging Freelance Futures' report captures the responses of 1,272 freelancers in the creative and cultural sector highlighting the challenges and opportunities they face. Freelancers make up 30% of the workforce in the creative sector, and there was broad consensus amongst survey respondents and focus group participants on the need to embed business skills into arts education to ensure that FE and HE leavers were not only creatively skilled, but also equipped to respond effectively to engager's needs and navigate the realities of freelance work. The key policy recommendations outlined in the report include the appointment of a Freelance Commissioner, curriculum revision, sick pay provision, parental leave extension and payment protection. [Creative UK](#) (press release, report, pdf, 44pgs)

## Diversity and inclusion

### Access Culture report

The Indigo Share: Hot Topic report on Access Culture was undertaken in collaboration with All In, the new arts access scheme for deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent people in the UK and Ireland. The 55 page report aims to explore the experiences of disabled audiences engaging with cultural venues across the UK, to support venues in identifying areas for improvement and creating more welcoming spaces for all. 85 cultural organisations shared a survey with their audiences which resulted in 12,709 responses. Key findings include:

- Finding information – disabled visitors are far more likely to check accessibility in advance, yet 71% struggle to find clear information, often due to unclear websites and missing details
- Booking tickets – disabled visitors are nine times more likely to struggle with online booking, with most unable to fully communicate their access needs, leading to frustration and exclusion.
- Physical accessibility – seating availability, transport, and physical access remain the biggest barriers, but social, financial, and sensory factors also play a key role in attendance.

- Confidence in attending – confidence is a major barrier, with 39% of disabled visitors unsure their needs will be met, and 38% missing cultural events due to accessibility uncertainty.
- Technology use – while technology is widely used, disabled visitors are more likely to use digital tools like mobile ordering and QR codes but may also face challenges with them.

It is worth noting that 66% of respondents were 55 or over and 19% of audience responses came from museums. 90% also self described as white/white British. [Indigo Share](#), [Access Culture](#) (report, pdf, 55pgs)

### **NEMO report on diversity and inclusion in European museums**

This new report from NEMO (Network of European Museum Organisations) has a number of case studies highlighting good work going on across Europe, it also includes the results of a survey of NEMO members looking at diversity and inclusion terminology and where this work sits within the museum organisational structure. Included in the case studies is the work of Museum Detox around inclusive language and the Museums Association's decolonisation work in the UK. There are a number of toolkits listed and further reading, providing a good starting point for further work in this area. [NEMO](#) (press release), [NEMO](#) (report, pdf, 26 pgs)

## **Climate emergency**

### **Glasgow Women's Library Net-Zero Handbook**

GWL (Glasgow Women's Library) is aiming to reach 'operation net-zero' by 2030. In this 55 page handbook GWL explore the methodology for the process of reaching their goal as well as a technical methodology for the energy modelling. It explains the surveys they undertook including a Retrofit Assessment and came to a 'Fabric First' approach - to change 1. Fabric First, 2. Operations, 3. Services, 4. Renewables, 5. Further Works. The handbook provides a useful starting point when thinking about minimising waste and energy efficiency. [GWL](#) (website), [GWL](#) (handbook, pdf, 55pgs)

**Also:** Activate climate's 'silent majority' to supercharge action, experts say, [Guardian](#)





Self Portrait in a Straw Hat, 1782 (oil on canvas). Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, 1755 - 1842.  
Copyright National Gallery.

## Collections, heritage at risk and repatriation

### Repatriation of collections in Manchester, Northern Ireland and London

There have been a number of museums returning collections as dialogue continues in UK institutions over the ethics of displaying human remains and items that are sacred to indigenous communities. Manchester Museum have taken their repatriation work as a starting point to develop relationships and co-curation opportunities with the communities involved. Further details include:

- National Museums NI held a ceremony to repatriate human remains and sacred objects to Hawai'i. The event at Ulster Museum in Belfast was part of an ongoing process to return ancestral remains to Hawai'i, and the event was attended by representatives from OHA, Hui Iwi Kuamo'o, National Museums NI and the US Embassy. [National Museums NI](#), [Museums Association](#)
- Manchester Museum co-curated an exhibition with Aboriginal community members as part of a repatriation process at the museum. The ongoing collaboration was formed after the museum returned 174 objects to Warnindilyakwa people in 2023. [Museums Association](#)
- The Natural History Museum held a ceremony on 10 April to mark the return of ancestors to communities in Queensland, Australia. The ceremony, hosted with Australia's Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, Queensland Museum and Traditional Custodians from Queensland communities, involved the return of 36 First Nations ancestors. [NHM](#), [Museums Association](#)

### Birmingham Museums acquire South Asian archive

The South Asian Diaspora Arts Archive (SADAA), which reflects the work of British South Asian artists who arrived in the UK post-partition from 1947 onwards, has been acquired by Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The archive spans visual art, music, literature, dance and theatre and features a wide variety of text-based and visual material, including excerpts of fiction, poetry and plays, photographs, manuscripts and writers' notes, artworks, leaflets, programmes of events, stage and costume drawings of theatre and dance performances, lyrics, CD and record covers, and music scores. [Birmingham Museums](#), [SADAA](#)

### Export bars placed on two paintings by 18th century artist Brunias

Export bars have been placed on two paintings of the island of St Vincent by 18th century artist Agostino Brunias, depicting the island through the lens of the British Empire. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest has recommended the decision on the export licence applications for both paintings will be deferred until 15 July 2025. The recommended prices are £240k +VAT and £180k +VAT. [Gov.uk](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

### Charles Darwin archive recognised by UNESCO

The Charles Darwin Archive, a collaboration between Cambridge University Library, the Natural History Museum, the Linnean Society of London, English Heritage's Down House, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and the National Library of Scotland, has been recognised on the UNESCO International Memory of the World Register, highlighting its critical importance to global science and the necessity of its long-term preservation and accessibility. The UNESCO International Memory of the World Register includes some of the UK's most treasured documentary heritage such as the Domesday Book and the Shakespeare Documents, alongside more contemporary materials including the personal archive of Sir Winston Churchill. [UNESCO](#), [NHM](#)

### Lecture from Culture in Crisis on war and places of worship

The V&A Culture in Crisis programme in collaboration with Westminster Abbey has programmed a lecture on Tuesday 27 May 6.30-8pm on 'Destruction, Restoration and Commemoration'. The event will discuss the way that religious sites have recovered and rebuilt in the wake of conflict. Drawing on examples from both the Second World War and the modern day, speakers will explore how the memory of wartime damage has been commemorated within religious spaces and reflect on the symbolic role that they hold within their communities. Part of Westminster Abbey's 'Beyond Victory' season of events, tickets cost £5 per person with a booking fee and will be held at St. Margaret's Church, Parliament Square. [V&A](#) (Culture in Crisis), [Westminster Abbey](#) (Beyond Victory), [Eventbrite](#) (tickets)

## Digital

### Social media after 'X'

The debate continues on where to focus your organisation's social media presence. The [Art Newspaper](#) reported on the institutions that have been 'quietly quitting' the platform 'X': "On average, the top 20 most followed museums lost almost 2% of their X followings. The loss is likely down to users deleting their accounts, rather than people un-following specific museums." [Buffer](#) has provided some interesting data on which sites are getting the most engagement, with LinkedIn coming out on top - it may be a good place for sector professionals to connect but it is unlikely to replace the museum visitor audience reach on 'X'. If you are trying your hand at on a new platform this link from [Hootsuite](#) on the best times to post on social media may be of use.

**Also:** Case Study: National Museums Scotland: Leading the way in Website Carbon Reduction, [Digital Carbon Online](#)

## Leadership CPD

### Clore 2025 Emerging Leaders and Leadership Pulse

Two Clore programmes are now open for applications for those stepping into leadership for the first time or for those mid-career who want to reignite their focus and passion. Leadership Pulse consists of two five-day residential workshops and is aimed at leaders who have been working in a leadership or change-making role in arts and culture for a minimum of 5 years. It includes coaching sessions to support you in your next steps. Costs are subsidised by Arts Council England and Clore Duffield and range from £1,000 +VAT to £2,400+VAT depending on the size of your organisation. Applications close on Thursday 22 May. [Clore](#) (Leadership Pulse)

Emerging Leaders is a five day intensive course for early-career cultural leaders for participants with 2-5 years' experience. It is a self directed programme that is heavily focussed on self-reflection, rather than taught content. Costs range from £600+VAT to £1,200+VAT. Applications close on Thursday 22 May. [Clore](#) (Emerging Leaders)

### GEM Emerging Leaders Programme this November

The GEM Emerging Leaders Programme is for professionals looking into taking their first steps into a leadership position. The programme covers:

- What leaders do and how they do it.
- Knowing the numbers, governance and driving proficiency.
- Persuasion and other people's currencies.
- My contribution and next steps.

The sessions run online with one in-person (location tbc) across four Fridays from 7 to 28 November 2025. The course costs £275 for members and £330 for non-members. [GEM](#)





Central Hall, The National Gallery, Image and Identity: Full-Length Portraits 1550-1900 . Part of C C Land: The Wonder of Art © The National Gallery, London.

## Funding news and opportunities

### Foyle Foundation completes its grant giving programme with £18m legacy

The Foyle Foundation has announced £18m in funding for legacy projects of long-term benefit, national importance and strategic value, as it completes its 25 year grant giving journey. By the end of 2025 The Foyle Foundation will have distributed more than £180M to over 7,000 charities and schools across the UK, primarily in the fields of arts and learning. The legacy grants include -

- £798,000 to the Art Fund for Mini Wonders – an Early Years Innovation in Museums programme and Teacher Art Pass: Digital Platform
- £1m to the British Library for the creation of a new Learning Centre and Viewing Gallery at their Boston Spa, Yorkshire site
- £2m to the National Gallery towards their Bicentenary programme.
- £2m to the V&A Storehouse for the Foyle Creative Centre encompassing two creative studios and two workshop spaces.

The 12 strategic grants announced today have a value of £15.4M. Two further projects will be announced later this year bringing the total funding in 2025 to over £18M. [Foyle Foundation](#)

### Health and Wellbeing in Museums fund launches

Funded by the Julia Rausing Trust and managed by the Museums Association, the Health and Wellbeing in Museums fund will make 10 grants of £50,000 to £75,000 that will enable the development and continuation of groundbreaking health and wellbeing programmes in UK museums during a time of financial crisis and increasing demand for services. The fund is designed to enable museums to build on their existing, leading health and wellbeing work. This means museums should have:

- A proven track record for the work you are doing
- A strategic commitment to health and wellbeing at your museum
- A clear idea of how you would like to develop your work



The fund can support “next stage” of work which you have previously undertaken, but you should be able to explain the need for the work, how you will improve or extend your impact and what legacy you hope to build with the funding. The deadline for final submissions is 26 June 2025. There will be a second round in 2026. [Museums Association](#)

### Digital funding from The Space

Arts or cultural organisations, including museums, libraries, community organisations and local councils based in England are invited to apply for a digital commission of up to £16,000 (including VAT) to develop your project (£8,000 for audio projects). The commissions will help deliver a creative digital project (video / audio / interactive / immersive experience) with funding as well as support. The Space can also help with elements your organisation may not be familiar with in the context of a digital project, e.g. digital production, content distribution, audience development and online rights. It is an opportunity to develop and deliver a creative project for an online or in-person audience using digital elements that your organisation has perhaps not worked with before. The deadline for applications is Thursday 29 May. [The Space](#)

### Arts, Health and Wellbeing funding in Wales

The Arts, Health and Wellbeing National Lottery funding programme is run by Arts Council Wales to support partnerships from across the arts, health, social care and third sectors to provide high-quality creative projects that deliver health and wellbeing benefits for the people of Wales. Projects that address one or more of the following health challenges and priorities are eligible to apply:

- Nature
- Mental health
- Health inequalities
- Physical health and wellbeing
- Staff wellbeing - within the healthcare and/or arts workforce.

Applications should be developed by a partnership/consortium of organisations and artists and must include both a health and arts partner (as well as a nature partner if your project focuses on Arts, Health & Nature). Proposals are invited at three levels of funding - £500-£15,000, £15,001-£35,000 and up to £50,000 (projects over £50,000 may be considered in exceptional cases). The Fund opened on 2 April and will close at 1pm on 28 May. The Fund will then open again on 6 August and close at 1pm on 1 October. [Arts Council Wales](#)

### Small Grants Fund from Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS)

Museums Galleries Scotland has opened its Small Grants Fund to non-accredited museums for the first time. The grants are part of £2.4m investment programme which includes a new Repair and Adaptation Fund offering capital grants of up to £100,000. The Small Grants Fund can support small scale project work, acquisition of equipment and other resources to address a time specific need and preparation and scoping work to inform future strategic development. Accredited museums applying to this fund can benefit from up to £15,000 and non-accredited museums £10,000. The Repair and Adaption Fund will support capital costs that directly increase the resilience of museums, or improve accessibility through projects that address capital repair issues and adaptations that go beyond the limitations of a museum's core maintenance budget. In order to be eligible organisations must be able to demonstrate compliance with the Scottish Government's Fair Work First policy which requires workers to receive payment of the real Living Wage. Accredited museums applying to this fund can apply for grants of up to £100,000. The deadline for the Small Grants Fund is 11 June 2025, the Repair and Adaption Fund is opening shortly with a deadline of 6 August. [MGS](#)

## Conferences and events

### National Heritage Science Forum first conference in July at UCL

The National Heritage Science Forum are running their first conference on 10 July 2025 at University College London. It will explore the role of heritage science research and innovation in addressing global challenges across three principle themes:

- The economic value of heritage science
- Towards sustainable historic buildings
- Digital innovation in heritage science

The day will include speakers from English Heritage, the National Trust and Historic Environment Scotland. Registration is open until 20 June, NHSF Member rate is £75 (members of Icon are eligible for NHSF member rates), non-member £150 and students £50. There are 6 bursaries to support wider access to the conference covering the cost of the ticket price, and successful applicants will be asked to write a blog about the conference for publication through the NHSF blog. Applications for a bursary need to be a 200 word statement on how it would benefit you, with a deadline of 29 May 2025. [NHSF](#)

### **MuseumNext Digital Summit, July and call for papers**

The Digital Summit is a virtual global conference, held from 16-17 July 2025, run by MuseumNext. The event will share inspiring case studies and actionable strategies and speakers include Lawrence Chiles, Head of Digital at the National Gallery in London, Chelsea Bracci, Director of Digital Projects at the Tenement Museum and Emma Flynn UX Designer at the Natural History Museum. Individual tickets cost £130, Unlimited Tickets (unlimited people from your organisation) cost £260 and a season pass giving institutional access to the next six events costs £999. [MuseumNext](#)

MuseumNext are also looking for speakers for three events:

- [Digital Collections Summit](#) in September. Call for speakers [here](#). Deadline 28 June.
- [Creative Museums Summit](#) in October. Call for speakers [here](#). Deadline 20 July.
- [Museums & Social Media Summit](#) in November. Call for speakers [here](#). Deadline 20 July.

### **Visitor Attractions Conference 2025**

The 2025 Visitor Attractions Conference will be held in London at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre. Running on 16 October 2025 it will feature 30 speakers covering topics that include:

- Sustainable transport to your attraction
- Excellence in visitor communications
- Latest Tourism Legislation and Policy
- Defending the Bottom Line: how to monetise your attraction

Speakers include Jane Richardson, Chief Executive, Amgueddfa Cymru-Museum Wales and Bernard Donoghue, CEO and Director of ALVA (Association of Leading Visitor Attractions). Tickets are available at an Early Bird Rate until 29 August costing £239 +VAT for individuals, £215 +VAT group rate and £75 +VAT student fee. [VAC](#)

### **How AI Will Transform Museums - Museum-iD - November 2025**

This study day from Museum-iD will take place on 5 November at the London Museum Spaces, and will explore how AI will redefine museum operations, curation, engagement, and creativity. Aimed at curators, educators, marketers, collections managers and digital specialists, the event will include practical applications and case studies of AI in museums with a strategic approach to leverage AI benefits while mitigating the risks. Tickets are available on a sliding scale from £177 – £137, with 20% of tickets available at a reduced rate for museum workers who may often be excluded from training and professional development opportunities, including people of colour, LGBTQ+ and working class members of staff, people with a disability, front of house staff, students, freelancers, those working at small independent museums, and people new to the sector. Reduced rate tickets are £97 – email [info@museum-id.com](mailto:info@museum-id.com) to check availability and to book a ticket at the reduced rate. [Museum-iD](#)



The National Gallery – Sainsbury Wing, Gallery 56. *Looking at Nature: European Painting 1430-1540*. Rehanging of NG292: *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* (completed 1475). Part of C C

Land: *The Wonder of Art*. © The National Gallery, London

## Openings

### Leicester's Jewry Wall Museum to open in July

The revamped Jewry Wall Museum in Leicester will open to the public on 26 July following a £16.8m redevelopment programme. The museum is a Leicester Museums & Galleries site and part of Leicester City Council and tells the story of the Roman site at Jewry Wall, which is the tallest surviving section of Roman masonry in Britain. It also features the remains of a Roman bath house and more than 100 Roman artefacts discovered across Leicestershire. The eight year project which was impacted by Covid and constructors going bankrupt has introduced a new £12.50 entry fee for visitors for an annual ticket (children under 4 go free and over 4 cost £6.25) which has been criticised by a Conservative Councillor at Leicester City Council. [Jewry Wall](#), [BBC](#), [Museums Association](#) (fee criticism)

### Dulwich Picture Gallery to open transformed green spaces in September

'Open Art', Dulwich Picture Gallery's major redevelopment project, its first revamp in 20 years, includes an expansion of the gallery's Sculpture Garden and a new ArtPlay Pavilion, a permanent timber play space for under-eights. The Gallery Cottage will also be extended to create The Canteen, which will serve as a school lunch area as well as a family café and shop on weekends. [Dulwich Picture Gallery](#), [Museums Association](#)

- **Also:** Hackney Museum secures £2.2m for major transformation plans, [M+H Advisor](#)
- **Also:** Potteries Museum and Art Gallery to Undergo Major Refurbishment for 2026 Reopening, [Experience UK](#)
- **Also:** Bruce Castle Museum and Archive set to re-open for Heritage Quarter Open Day this Sunday, [Haringey Council](#)

## Appointments

Glasgow Life has appointed **Kay Morrison** as Chief Executive replacing Susan Deighan who is retiring after 30 years. Morrison joins from South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture where she has been Chief Executive for three years. Previously Chief Executive of Falkirk Foundation, the official charity partner of Falkirk Football Club, Morrison will take up her role on 7 July 2025. [Glasgow Life](#)

Historic England Chief Executive Duncan Wilson will be replaced by a job share from October 2025. The public body which cares for England's historic environment announced that **Claudia Kenyatta** and **Emma Squire** will take on the leadership role. Kenyatta joined Historic England as director of regions in 2018, after two years as a director at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and Squire joined Historic England in November 2023 as Director of Regions (also a job share with Claudia Kenyatta). Before this, she spent nearly six years as Director of Arts, Heritage and Tourism at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Claudia also has a role as Chair of the Board of Trustees at Battersea Arts Centre in London and they are both members of the Mayor of London's Cultural Leadership Board. [Museums Association](#), [English Heritage](#)

**Liz Bates** has been named as the new National Lottery Heritage Fund Director for the Midlands and East of England, having joined the team in 2020. Bates succeeds Robyn Llewellyn who steps down after three years as director and 30 years with the Heritage Fund. Before joining the Heritage Fund Bates was Assistant Chief Executive at InvestSK and Chief Executive Officer of Heritage Lincolnshire. [Arts Professional](#) (£), [Heritage Fund](#)

Trent Park Museum Trust has announced **Giuseppe Albano** as the new director for Trent Park House of Secrets, which is due to open in Enfield, London in Spring 2026. Albano was director of the Freud Museum from 2022-2025, and prior to this he served as Curator and Director of the Keats-Shelley House in Rome. Trent Park House was remodelled by Sir Philip Sassoon in the 1920s and home to World War Two 'Secret Listeners' whose operations helped turn the tide of war. [Trent Park House](#)

Four former London Museum colleagues, **Katie Balcombe**, **Laura Bates**, **Jamie Reece** and **Andrew Marcus** have launched communication consultancy, Tangram. Offering strategic communications expertise, the four worked at the London Museum (formerly the Museum of London) across different dates from 2011 to 2022. [M+H Advisor](#), [Tangram](#)



## Catch up

Museums grapple with implications of Supreme Court ruling on sex, 2 May 2025, [Museums Association](#)

Discovery Point Secures Funding to Advance Maritime Heritage Redevelopment, 29 April 2025, [Experience UK](#)

Friends of the Bowes Museum group to close after 75 years, 24 April 2025, [Museums Association](#)

'Heritage in worse condition than it's been for 50 years' - Simon Thurley, 9 April 2025, [Museums Association](#)

'The government just doesn't get tourism': VisitBritain chief outlines dismay with budget cuts, 7 April 2025, [Independent](#)

## International news

Museum's Benin Bronzes Are Reclaimed by Wealthy Collector, 25 April 2025, [New York Times](#) (£), [MFA Boston](#)

Trump cuts federal grants to plantation museum focused on reality of slavery, 25 April 2025, [Guardian](#)

Climate activist found guilty of "defacing" Degas work at US National Gallery of Art, 11 April 2025, [Blooploop](#)

US culture cuts: Grants worth millions cancelled, 10 April 2025, [Arts Professional](#) (£)

Turmoil at Bavarian state museums as director quits and state prosecutor investigates, 7 April 2025, [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [ARTnews](#)

## Jobs

Posts being advertised on the [NMDC jobs board](#) this month include:

- [Facilities Manager - National Museums Liverpool](#)
- [Research and Knowledge Exchange Manager - Imperial War Museums](#)
- [Collection Manager: Storage and Moves - British Museum](#)
- [Schools Programme Manager \(Leeds\) - British Library](#)
- [Collection Systems Project Manager - Fixed Term Contract - Wallace Collection](#)

This newsletter can also be read online at <http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/news/newsletters/>