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'Versailles: Science and Splendour'. Science Museum from 12 December 2024. The 'Marie Antoinette' perpetuelle, Breguet, No. 160, Paris, 1783-1820 © The Museum for Islamic Art, Jerusalem.

## NMDC news

### Next NMDC Chair

Laura Pye, Director of National Museums Liverpool, has been elected by fellow NMDC members to take over as Chair when Maria Balshaw's term ends in April 2025.

Members agreed that Laura is ideally placed to chair the diverse NMDC group, with her track-record of successful advocacy and leadership at both regional and national museums. Laura has been a member of NMDC's Executive Committee since 2019, and will take over as Chair on 1st April for a term of four years. It will be the first time the NMDC Chair is held by the director of an institution outside London.

Laura said: "NMDC plays a unique role in bringing national and regional museums together, promoting collaboration and partnership and utilising the nationals' close relationship with government to advocate for all UK museums. It's a challenging time for our sector, but I look forward to continuing NMDC's vital work in making the case for investment and support for museums as NMDC Chair."

## Museum land management survey

Research into UK museum and heritage land ownership is being undertaken by M-E-L Research on behalf of AIM (Association of Independent Museums), NMDC, Arts Council England and the Welsh Government. A survey is running until mid-December which hopes to capture the experience of managing and/or owning land in the sector. This includes land of any size, from a rooftop or terrace to thousands of acres. The research aims to understand how museum and heritage venues with outdoor space are approaching land management to diversify their income streams, broaden their audiences and contribute to sustainability goals. [AIM](#) (research information), [Survey](#), [Survey questions](#) (pdf, 5pgs)

## Save the date - ICOM UK Conference May 2025

The ICOM UK annual conference will take place on 1 and 2 May 2025 in Liverpool. With a focus on 'Regenerative Museums for Sustainable Futures' the event will discuss ideas, share inspirational projects, and reflect on challenges related to climate and social emergencies through sustainability, sustainable development, and regenerative design frameworks. The conference is a collaboration between ICOM UK and NMDC, with support from National Museums Liverpool, Marketing Liverpool and Barker Langham. Information on the programme and how to book will be available shortly. ICOM UK members will get priority booking at a discounted rate. [ICOM UK](#)

## Members' news

### Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums expand and launch rebrand

From the 26 November Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums will be known as North East Museums and from 1 April 2025 will expand into Northumberland taking on the management of Northumberland County Council's museum venues - Woodhorn Museum in Ashington, Hexham Old Gaol and Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum. The new partnership will take the total number of venues managed by North East Museums to 12. Keith Merrin, Director of North East Museums said: "This is a hugely positive and significant moment for both our organisation and our partners to ensure that by working together we can deliver the best museums, galleries and archives for the people of our region and visitors from all over the world." [North East Museums](#), [Museums Association](#)

### Ashmolean Museum acquire Fra Angelico masterpiece

Major grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Art Fund and The Headley Trust have helped the Ashmolean Museum raise the £4.48m needed to acquire Fra Angelico's Crucifixion, a masterpiece of Italian renaissance art. Painted in the 1420s the artwork had been in the UK for over two centuries, and was placed under an export bar to prevent it leaving the country. A public crowdfunding campaign and contributions from over 50 major donors helped to secure the painting for future generations. The acquisition will inspire a rehang of the Ashmolean's Italian Renaissance galleries which have not been redisplayed since 2009. The painting will also serve as a teaching resource for the University of Oxford where it will be of particular interest not only to the History of Art and History departments but also to the Department of Theology and Religion. [Ashmolean](#), [Guardian](#), [BBC](#)

### British Museum receive record breaking donation of Chinese ceramics

The Sir David Percival Foundation has donated a private collection of 1,700 Chinese ceramics to the British Museum. Estimated to be worth £1 billion the donation is the largest gift in the British Museum's history. The collection has been on loan to the museum since 2009 in a specially designed bilingual room. Director of the British Museum Nicholas Cullinan said: "I am humbled by the generosity of the Trustees of the Sir Percival David Foundation in permanently entrusting their incomparable private collection to the British Museum. These celebrated objects add a special dimension to our own collection and together offer scholars, researchers and visitors around the world the incredible opportunity to study and enjoy the very best examples of Chinese craftsmanship." [British Museum](#), [Guardian](#), [BBC](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

### Manchester Museum shortlisted for European Museum of the Year prize

Manchester Museum will compete against 41 museums from across Europe as one of only two UK nominations in the European Museum of the Year Award 2025. The nomination follows Manchester Museum's £15m redevelopment and reopening in February 2023. The Sainsbury Centre in Norwich has also been shortlisted for the prize run by the European Museum Forum. The winner will be announced in Poland on 25 May 2025. [EMF](#), [Manchester Museum](#),

### The Burrell Collection in Glasgow is named Scotland's best new building

RIAS (Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland) have named the refurbished Burrell Collection as the Andrew Doolan Best Building in Scotland award for 2024, following the museum's £68.25m refurbishment in 2022. The expansion and renewal of the 20th century building originally designed by Barry Gasson Architects was undertaken by British studio John McAllen + Partners and involved expanding the museum's collection space as well as improving access into and around it. [Museums Association](#), [Dezeen](#)

### National Science and Media Museum announces reopening date

The National Science and Media Museum will reopen to the public on Wednesday 8 January as Bradford becomes the UK City of Culture for 2025. The museum will celebrate its reopening weekend with 'A Grand Day Out' in partnership with Aardman that will include screenings of Wallace & Gromit and model making workshops. [National Science and Media Museum](#), [BBC](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

### Members in the news -

- **Brighton Museum** relaunch their Pavilion dome funding campaign, [BBC](#)
- Lottery funding bid proposed to fully reopen **Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery**, [BBC](#)
- Hawking Building review - the **Science Museum's** giant new shed of the weird and wonderful, [Observer](#)
- King Charles named royal patron of **National Galleries of Scotland**, [Times](#)
- 'Lunch with the FT' featured an interview with the **British Museum's** Director Nicholas Cullinan, [FT](#)
- Tristram Hunt, Director of the **V&A** was featured in the Economist 'Tristram Hunt explains why museums are turning themselves inside out', [Economist](#) (£)

### Images this month

Images this month come from the Science Museum's new exhibition 'Versailles: Science and Splendour' which opens on Thursday 12 December and runs to Monday 21 April 2025. Visitors will be transported to the world of the French royal court to discover spectacular objects including a watch designed for Marie Antoinette. [Versailles: Science and Splendour](#)

## Government news

### Uncertainty over museum projects as Government re-looks at capital funding decisions

The Museums Association reports that the Government is re-looking at £100m of Levelling Up funding which included grants for six cultural regeneration projects. A statement from the Government said: "Given the need to make savings, the government has announced that it is minded to withdraw funding from the Levelling Up Culture Projects and Capital Regeneration Projects announced by the government at Spring Budget 2024, but will consult these places before making final decisions." The funding includes £15m for the National Railway Museum in York towards its £95m masterplan; £10m for National Museums Liverpool's waterfront transformation project; £2.6m for the V&A Dundee in Scotland; £5m for the National Poetry Centre and £10m for British Library North, both of which are under development in Leeds; and £10m for Venue Cymru in Llandudno, Wales. [Museums Association](#)

### House of Lords debate raises impact of the Budget on arts, heritage and cultural organisations

In a House of Lords debate on Thursday 14 November, Baroness Amanda Sater brought forward a discussion on the impact of the UK Budget on arts and heritage organisations. Whilst welcoming tax reliefs for theatres, orchestras and museums she also mentioned the reduction in day-to-day DCMS resource spending budget and the potential decision to withdraw Levelling Up funding for cultural projects, as well as the impact of National Insurance rises. [House of Lords](#)

**Also:** Art Fund's response to the Budget, [Art Fund](#)

### Consultation opens on Digital Markets Bill

The Department for Business and Trade has launched a consultation on the measures set out in the Digital Markets Competition and Consumers Bill (DMCC) for subscriptions and memberships. It is open until 10 February 2025 and covers issues relating to cooling-off periods, reminder notices, cancellations of contracts and refunds. The Bill will affect museum membership schemes and NMDC will be responding to the consultation. [Department for Business and Trade](#)

### Full Labour Shadow Cabinet appointed

Stuart Andrew, MP for Daventry, has been appointed as Shadow Culture Secretary by Conservative Party Leader Kemi Badenoch. The [Institute for Government](#) has a good overview of the Shadow Cabinet with a look at their experience. Andrew was MP for the West Yorkshire constituency of Pudsey from 2010 prior to the 2024 election. [Guardian](#), [Parliament.UK](#) (Stuart Andrew profile), [Gov.uk](#) (profile), [Stuart Andrew](#) (personal website), [Civil Society](#)



Pineapple in a pot, by Jean-Baptiste Oudry, 1733. © Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN © Christophe Fouin. 'Versailles: Science and Splendour'. Science Museum

## Cultural funding

### More local museums in the firing line as local authority funding pressures continue

The [Museums Association](#) reported on a number of local authority museums that are facing closure because of the squeeze on funding in the face of increasing demand. [Auchindrain Township Museum](#) in Argyle Scotland, which preserves the last traditional farming village to survive the highland clearances of the 18th and 19th centuries, is now closed to visitors for the winter and is unlikely to reopen due to the loss of public funding past March 2025. All staff have been informed they are at risk of redundancy.

The BBC reported that Cannock Chase District Council in Staffordshire plans to close the [Museum of Cannock Chase](#) and the Prince of Wales Theatre as part of budget cost cutting measures to protect frontline services. The council said it was facing a £1.3m shortfall in its 2025-26 budget, closing the theatre and museum would save the council more than £350,000 a year. The BBC noted if councillors agreed to the closure there would be a consultation which residents could comment on before a final decision in February 2025. [BBC](#)

Housed in the historic Grade I listed Church of St Mary-le-bow, near Durham Cathedral, **Durham Museum** has been open since 1972. The accredited museum tells the story of the social, economic and cultural life of Durham especially between the 18th and 20th centuries. Costs, maintenance and repairs of the heritage building have proved too much for The Bow Trust, the charity which runs the museum. Discussions are currently being held with Durham City Council on finding a new home for the collections. [Chronicle Live](#), [Cultured North East](#)

Other museums facing closure include [Alyth Museum](#) in Scotland, [Daily Record](#) and [Abbey House Museum](#), in Yorkshire, [Yorkshire Evening Post](#)

### Scottish museums face financial pressures as draft budget commits additional £34m to arts and culture

The draft Scottish Budget 2025-26 published on 4 December commits an additional £34m to arts and culture. Within this, a further £20 million will be provided to Creative Scotland for its multi-year funding programme in 2025-26. Funding will also increase by £4.5 million for Scotland's National Collections and £1 million for the National Performing Companies. The Culture Collective programme will be restarted with £4 million to benefit Scottish communities, community organisations, individual artists and freelancers. There will also be £4 million allocated for a new Scottish Culture & Heritage Capacity Fund, which recognises the significant challenges faced by heritage and culture organisations across Scotland. The Scottish National Party also committed to increasing arts and culture funding by £100m ahead of 2028-2029, [Gov.Scot](#). In a response to the budget Arts Professional published a piece welcoming the increase but sharing concerns on the pressures that remain on council budgets. [Arts Professional](#) (£), [Creative Scotland](#) (budget response), [Herald](#), [Scotsman](#)

The increase in funding comes at a time when the Museums Association reported findings of a Museums Galleries Scotland survey from October 2024 that three quarters of the 114 respondents faced a real-terms decrease in their income in 2023/4. with 11% concerned that their organisation was at risk of closure in the next 12 months. 'Scottish museums' finances are 'more fragile than ever'. [Museums Association](#). Meanwhile on the 20 November the Standard highlighted a new campaign backed by leading creative figures calling on the Scottish Government to #InvestInCulture. The campaign notes that £5 billion is added to the Scottish economy each year from the creative industries and calls for ministers to confirm a 'coherent timeline' for reaching the promised increased investment of £100m annually by 2028/9, including an incremental rise of £25m expected in 2025/26. [Standard](#), [Invest in Culture Campaign](#). Lucy Cascot, Chief Executive of Museums Galleries Scotland, also wrote in the Herald about the uncertain future facing Scotland's museums. [Herald](#)

### Tourism tax mooted to help support Welsh cultural ecosystem

The Art Newspaper reported on 26 November that the Welsh government was considering a tourist tax introduced from 2027 which would raise money for local communities and promote heritage. If passed by the Welsh government the bill would give local authorities the option to introduce a levy of 75p per person per night stay in hostels and campsite pitches and £1.25 for any other accommodation. [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Gov.Wales](#), [Telegraph](#), [BBC](#)

- **Also:** Museum boss says Derby might need tourist tax to balance the books, [Derby Telegraph](#).
- Culture minister 'painfully aware' of financial crisis facing civic museums, [Museums Association](#)
- 'There's very little council money left for the arts', [BBC](#)
- Museums' Millions: huge contribution to St Albans Visitor Economy, [St Albans Times](#)

## Sector news

### Visitor numbers to DCMS museums and galleries still down on 2019 figures

The latest DCMS statistics for visitors from July to September 2024 were released on 28 November. The figures show that between July and September 2024 there were 12m visits to DCMS sponsored museums and galleries. Overall visits have been generally rising but numbers are still down 14% on the equivalent pre-pandemic period in 2019. Numbers were also 4% lower than the equivalent period last year. [Gov.uk](#) (press release), [Gov.uk](#) (data tables), [Arts Professional](#)

**Also:** Tourism minister plans new visitor economy council and 50m UK visitors, [M+H Advisor](#)

### NEMO statement on museums facing political interference

Following on from their conference 'Can we talk? Museums facing polarisation' and a survey carried out in August 2024, Nemo, the Network of European Museum Organisations, have issued a statement addressing the increasing challenges museums face due to political interference and societal polarisation. The statement underscores the essential role museums play in fostering democratic values and open dialogue. Summaries of the conference can also be found on the NEMO website. [NEMO](#) (statement), [NEMO](#) (conference summaries)

### ACE explores 'radical' new business models for arts organisations

Arts Professional reported on a speech given by Tonya Nelson, Executive Director, Enterprise and Innovation at Arts Council England, at the Cultural Governance Alliance and Clore Leadership 'Governance Now' event in early November, where she referred to working with organisations to look at 'radical' new business models. [Arts Professional](#) (£)

**Also:** Vaizey moots arts and culture mergers to ensure 'sustainable future', [Arts Professional](#) (£)

## Collections

### Towards a National Collection publish a 'call to action' to unlock the potential of digital collections

The 'call to action', consisting of 10 recommendations, has been published by the UKRI AHRC Programme 'Towards a National Collection' following five years of research into the UK's cultural heritage collections. The policy document 'Unlocking the potential of digital collections - a call to action' invites cultural heritage organisations and funding bodies to come together to develop an inclusive, unified, accessible, interoperable and sustainable UK digital collection. Each of the 10 recommendations are supported by case studies and sample training materials. These training materials provide comprehensive guidance for small and medium-sized organisations, covering digitisation tools and processes, preservation techniques and the application of open data standards.

Running from January to March there a number of free sessions to introduce the resource - 'Towards Digital Collections; Resources for Galleries, Libraries, Archives & Museums and training materials' which consists of 7 modules, 10 training videos and 16 supplementary worksheets or factsheets.

Maria Balshaw, Director of Tate and Chair of NMDC said: "Towards a National Collection offers a once in a generation chance to unite the extraordinary wealth of materials held across the UK's museums, galleries, libraries and archives. Working together to create a unified digital collection will broaden public access even further, providing an indispensable source of knowledge. Today's recommendations make great strides towards unlocking the potential of our national collections. I urge leaders and practitioners across the arts and heritage sector to assist in progressing this transformative opportunity." [TaNC](#) (policy document), [TaNC](#) (training materials), [TaNC](#) (online sessions)



### Input requested for Towards a National Collection evaluation survey

The Towards a National Collection research and development programme has opened an Impact Evaluation Survey for those working, studying or volunteering in the UK galleries, libraries, archives, museums, and heritage sectors. The survey seeks views on the future needs and direction of the sector and will be important for influencing future support from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and other funders. The survey will be live until 22 December. [TaNC evaluation survey](#)

### Survey to understand the pressures on Local Authority archaeology services

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists are running a survey in collaboration with MSDS Heritage with funding from Historic England. They are looking to hear the opinions of those who have interacted with local authority archaeological services now or in the past as a way to garner thoughts and comments on the threats and opportunities that these services face. Museum services are included in the definition of local authority archaeological services. There is also an option to declare an interest in taking part in focus groups in 2025. [Survey](#)

### Two Temple Place open up a call for proposals for their 2026 and 2027 exhibitions

Two Temple Place in London, run by the Bulldog Trust, showcase regional collections and encourage themes that haven't been celebrated in other exhibitions from artists, communities, and geographies that are underrepresented or that highlight untold stories. Examples include 'Sussex Modernism' from 2017 in partnership with 9 Sussex museums and galleries, and 'Cotton to Gold' from 2015 which shared the industrial collections from the North West in partnership with three publicly owned museums in the North West. Costs for the exhibition are paid for by Two Temple Place. Production, materials, transport, publicity and management costs will be covered and managed by them as well, and a fee is paid to the curator. The deadline for the Jan-April 2026 proposals is 20 December 2024. [Two Temple Place](#) (website), [Two Temple Place](#) (Call for proposals, pdf)

### Unlocking the English Portrait Miniature from Fitzwilliam Museum

This fascinating project from Fitzwilliam Museum, part of Cambridge University Museums, is the outcome of technical research work on 16th and 17th century miniatures. This online resource features the technical images and interpretation of analytical results generated during an initial pilot study, as well as during the further analytical campaign, and will ultimately include close to one hundred miniatures. Featuring miniatures from several different institutions it allows you to zoom in to see the detail of the painting whilst also having the option to expose the miniature under natural and raking light, x-ray and ultra violet views. [Fitzwilliam Museum](#)

## Reports

### Culture Commons reports on the future of cultural devolution in the UK

Culture Commons and 30 partners have come together to report on a four nations open policy development programme exploring how the creative sectors might make the most out of devolution, and use this significant period of change to address some of the deep-seated policy challenge currently faced. The report shares 6 policy principles including:

- Harness the lens of place
- Back local authorities to maintain their role as anchors
- Engage communities in decision making at all tiers of governance
- Facilitate decision making across wider spacial scales
- Move away from purely competition-based methods of funding
- Enable multi-agency decision making.

Published in November, the digital report also has 20 recommendations directed at decision makers at the local, regional and national levels. [Cultural Commons](#)

## Foreign Direct Investment in the Creative Industries, a State of the Nation report from Creative PEC

Part of their 'State of the Nation' series, Creative PEC published the Foreign Direct Investment report on the 20 November. The report is timed to align with the UK Government's forthcoming industrial strategy. Key takeaways include:

- On average, 10% of all inward UK FDI projects between 2013-2023 are accounted for by the creative industries.
- The UK is second only to the USA for the location and generation of FDI creative projects globally.
- The creative industries share of inward FDI has fallen from a peak of 12% in 2021.
- Regional forces that attract FDI location are different across creative sub-sectors and that the existence of regional creative clusters may have an important role in attracting FDI. [Creative PEC](#) (website), [Creative PEC](#) (report, pdf, 50pgs)

## 'Creative Corridors' report from RSA and ACE could be the key to unlocking investment

In this report from the Royal Society for the Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce, Arts Council England and Creative PEC, 'creative corridors' are offered as one potential mechanism for harnessing growth. Using the existing examples of the 'Northern Creative Corridor' and 'Thames Estuary Production Corridor' the report shows how working in this way can stimulate economic growth by increasing linkages - supply chains, R&D Partnerships, or networks of people in the labour market. [RSA](#) (website), [RSA](#) (report, pdf, 36pgs)

## Inclusion

### LGBTQIA+ Resource launched at the NEMO 2024 conference

The Network of European Museum Organisations new resource 'LGBTQIA+ inclusion in European museums: An incomplete guideline' was shared at the recent NEMO conference and offers policies, scenarios and practical tips to make museums more inclusive and welcoming for LGBTQIA+ individuals, cultures and histories. It provides a useful overview of European national policies and a bibliography for further reading. NEMO have also published a stand alone 4 page ethical guideline summarising key insights. [NEMO](#) (resource), [NEMO](#) (guideline)

## Digital

### Bluesky continues to mop up the 'X'/Twitter exodus

Amongst the daily news of organisations leaving 'X'/Twitter the [Guardian newspaper](#) decision to leave the social media platform announced on 13 November has highlighted the number of mainstream media organisations leaving Elon Musk's site post the 2024 US Election. [Arts Professional](#) have written on the number of arts organisations adopting Bluesky as their social media of choice, part of 6 million new users since Sept 2024. Joe Vaughan from the Museum of English Rural Life has written a guide for the [Museums Association](#) on how museums can thrive using the new social media site Bluesky. Whilst [USA Today](#) reported that Bluesky had hit 20 million users with more than 2.5 million users signing up the week after the US election.

For those deciding to make the move but feel a little daunted there are a number of 'Starter Packs' out there which allow new users to quickly connect to sector colleagues. [Museum of English Rural Life Starter Pack](#) and [Museums Association Starter Pack](#)

We the Curious, the Bristol based science centre, also [announced](#) they were leaving 'X' following a 70% decline in social media engagement since since October 2022. NEMO, the Network of European Museum Organisations, have also [decided to leave](#).

### **GLAM-E Toolkit aims to help cultural organisations share their digital collections**

The Open GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) Toolkit is aimed at any cultural organisation and can be used to develop an open access programme and release collections for public use. The toolkit includes sections on Assessing and Mitigating Risk, Copyright Clearance and Metadata. 24 organisations have worked together on this resource and it has been produced by legal experts from the University of Exeter and New York University's Engelberg Centre on Innovation Law & Policy. Dr Andrea Wallace, from the University of Exeter, UK Director of GLAM-E Lab, said: "We have shown it doesn't take radical reform or lots of money for organisations to make these changes. Adopting an open access approach can begin with small steps towards open, freeing up staff to focus on more mission-critical work, including the public programming that can open up new revenue streams for income generation. [GLAM-E Lab](#)

**Also:** Rijksmuseum launches AI tool to help make connections in 800,000-strong collection, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)



Part of the Mannequin of Madame du Coudray to teach midwifery. © Musée Flaubert et d'histoire de la médecine, Métropole Rouen Normandie. 'Versailles: Science and Splendour'. Science Museum.

## Young people, skills and careers

### DCMS Youth Survey Pilot Report highlights popularity of visiting historical places

DCMS' new Youth Survey is intended to provide insights into the level of access to out-of-school activities and was published on 7 November. From a prompted list of 10 activities visiting an historic place was the third most common activity at 70% with visiting a museum or gallery at 57%. 49% of young people found out about activities through their school or college. The figures were lower for those children who received free school meals. Participation in activities is also segmented in the survey comparing 10-12 year olds, 13-15 year olds and 16-19 year olds. [Gov.uk](#) (executive summary), [DCMS Youth Survey Report](#)

### GEM Toolkit - Work Experience, Work Placements, and Inclusive Pathways

GEM have launched this new toolkit supporting museums and heritage sites in creating meaningful, inclusive, work-based opportunities for young people. The toolkit includes case studies for ideas to engage primary school children and ideas for secondary school pupils and older students. It also highlights research from 'Work Experience For All' which shows only a third of 16-18 year olds had work experience and pupils from private schools were twice as likely to have done multiple work placements than their state-educated peers. There are also lots of links and resources included to help with further research. [GEM](#) (website), [GEM](#) (toolkit, pdf, 37pgs)

### Sutton Trust reveal inequalities in access to creative industries

In research released on 14 November, Sutton Trust have highlighted the extent to which the creative industries remain elite professions. Amongst those aged 35 and under, there are around four times as many individuals from middle class backgrounds as working class backgrounds in creative occupations. Yet while just 20% of the UK's working class individuals in employment have a degree, three times as many working class people in creative jobs have one, underscoring the importance of equal access to higher education for all young people. [Sutton Trust](#) (press release), [Sutton Trust](#) (Research, pdf, 128pgs)

### Art UK launch 3 year research initiative into visual literacy

The Robson Orr Visual Literacy Research Initiative seeks to measure the impact of visual literacy tools on students' visual literacy and social and academic outcomes. The project, funded by Sybil Robson Orr and Matthew Orr, will also look to compare the effects of visual literacy skills on and wider learning outcomes of using original artworks versus digital images in educational settings. It will be run in collaboration with the Government Art Collection and the University of Oxford. The aim of the research and resulting report is to provide the evidence to government to support the establishment of visual literacy as the fourth pillar of education in order to ensure that it is fully embedded in the curriculum. [Art UK](#)

**Also:** Creative Universities 'facing liquidity issues', [Arts Professional](#) (£) Based on a report - 'Financial Sustainability of higher education providers in England: November 2024 update, [Office for Students](#)

**Also:** National Apprenticeship Week runs from 10-16 February 2025, Skills for Life have published a Toolkit for employers to support involvement and a guide to themes across the week. [Skills For Life](#)

## Climate emergency

### Arts Council England publish their latest 'Culture, Climate and Environmental Responsibility' Annual Report

Produced in conjunction with Julie's Bicycle the report which covers the first year of the new portfolio 2023-2026 analyses the self-reported data, carbon impacts and environmental measures submitted by 591 organisations. Environmental data was gathered by Julie's Bicycle's Creative Climate Tools and the 29 page report includes key insights and case studies. Unsurprisingly energy accounted for the most significant impact area with accounting for 54% of total emissions, with 80% of energy emissions generated by 16% of organisations in the portfolio. Other notable insights include:

- 90% of organisations have an environmental policy.

- 84% of organisations have an environmental action plan.
- 28% have a budget for environmental initiatives.
- 59% have appointed a member of their governance group or board to oversee environmental progress.
- 72% of organisations have taken steps to save energy and be more energy efficient.
- When it comes to exhibition and production materials, 74% recycle their materials and re-use or re-purpose materials onsite. [Julie's Bicycle](#) (website), [Report](#) (pdf, 29pgs), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

### Arts Council Wales publish a 'Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts'

The 'Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts' was produced collaboratively with Natural Resources Wales as part of Arts Council Wales' Creative Nature Programme. The plan sets out a vision, goals and shared beliefs related to how the arts can engage with climate justice. The 53 page document outlines two goals: an arts sector which supports creativity that inspires people to take action on climate justice; and an environmentally sustainable, decarbonised and globally responsible arts sector grounded in social justice. Each goal has a timeline and actionable steps. [Arts Council Wales](#) (website), [Arts Council Wales](#) (report, pdf, 53pgs)

- **Also:** Cop 29 'The forgotten factor': nations at Cop29 call for official recognition of role culture can play in climate recovery, [Art Newspaper](#) (£) and Outcome on Culture-Based Climate Action met with disappointment at Cop29 in Baku, with focus shifting to Cop30 in Belém, [Europa Nostra](#)
- **Also:** What do museums really think about climate protests? [Apollo Magazine](#) (£)



Jean-Dominique Cassini's Map of the Moon, engraved by Jean Patigny after Jean-Dominique Cassini, 1679. © Observatoire de Paris. 'Versailles: Science and Splendour'. Science Museum.

## Awards

### Applications open for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2025

Could you follow in Young V&A's footsteps and become Art Fund Museum of the Year for 2025? Winners receive £120,000 main prize with four shortlisted finalists also receiving £15,000. For 2025 the judges, in addition to the achievements of your organisations, are looking to hear about the wide range of people that make your achievements possible and bring your museum or gallery to life. There is an applicants webinar on 17 December 12-1pm for those who want to know more about the process. Applications are open until 27 January 2025. [Art Fund](#)

### Museums Change Lives Awards from the Museums Association

Announced at the 2024 Museums Association Conference in Leeds in November, the awards recognise and celebrate outstanding work by UK museums delivering social impact. The four winners are:

- Best Museums Changes Lives Project: Manchester Art Gallery - Families of the World
- Best Small Museum Project: Hastings Museum & Art Gallery - Illuminating Invisible Histories: Flavours Without Borders
- Championing Social Justice Award: Perth Museum, Culture Perth & Kinross - Unicorn
- Radical Changemaker Award: Marian Gwen. [Museums Association](#)

### Heritage Volunteering Group Volunteer Leader of the Year

Congratulations to Kate Powell, Volunteering Manager at Manchester's Science and Industry Museum who has been named as Volunteer Leader of the Year. The award recognises Kate's achievement in boosting volunteer engagement and satisfaction, and her impactful collaborations with local partners that have enriched both the museum and its community. [HVG](#)

### Fantastic For Families name 2024 winners

The three categories for the Fantastic For Families Awards represent the outstanding opportunities created for families and older people to access creative opportunities and enhance wellbeing through arts and cultural activities. Best Family Arts Activity Winners included the Family SEND Programme at London's Autograph gallery and Playtime at the Whitworth in Manchester. Best Age Friendly Outreach Winner was the Wiltshire Music Centre and the Audience Impact & Innovation Winners included the National Maritime Museum outdoor playground 'The Cove'. [Fantastic For Families](#)

## Funding news and opportunities

### 21 Youth-led projects funded through Historic England

Funded through Historic England's 'History in the Making' programme which runs for 18 months, each project will be co-curated with young people aged 13-25. The 21 projects which include a new mural on Newcastle's Byker Wall estate; a podcast series documenting the history of Masjid Ibrahim mosque in Newham; and an augmented reality trail exploring King's Lynn's queer histories, will receive £15,000 each. The projects aim to engage young people with local cultural history and includes four projects which align with Bradford's 2025 UK City of Culture programme. [Historic England](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

### Deadline approaching for National Portfolio Creative People and Places funding

Arts Council England Creative People and Places Funding 2026-29 focuses on parts of the country where involvement in creativity and culture is significantly below the national average. Applicants can apply for between £750,000 and £1m for a period of three years both existing and new Creative People and Places programmes can apply. The deadline for submissions is 6 January 2025 and there are 142 eligible locations that are encouraged to apply. [ACE](#)

## Clore Duffield announces £5m investment in school trips to museums

The £5m investment from Clore Duffield will run over the next 5 years and will focus on schools in specific priority local authorities in England, with £1m available in the first year for between 8 and 10 schools in Blackpool and Cornwall. The money will provide 6 fully-funded off-site trips for every child in primary schools and at least 3 off-site trips for every child in secondary school. Vivien Duffield, Chair of the Clore Duffield Foundation, which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year said: "I always remember the excitement of my childhood visits with my school, opening the door on another world, giving me a life-long passion for the arts and a belief in the power of cultural experiences to transform young lives." The deadline for schools to apply is 31 January 2025. [Clore Duffield](#), [Museums Association](#)

## BFI National Lottery Screen Heritage Fund

Supporting the UK's public screen heritage sector, the BFI National Lottery Screen Heritage Fund supports organisations to widen access, develop skills and build resilience. The BFI's National Lottery Funding Plan 2023-2026 allocates £7.9m of National Lottery funding over three years across four strands:

- 1 - Project funding
- 2 - Organisational skills funding
- 3 - Individual skills funding
- 4 - Resilience funding - (applications closed)

The investment is aiming to increase the diversity of people engaging with screen heritage, support moves to reduce carbon emissions and expand outreach and co-curation opportunities. There are a number of online Q&A sessions for applicants to find out more on - Monday 16 December 2-3.30pm, Tuesday 14 January 2-3.30pm and Monday 17 February 2-2.30pm. If you'd like to join a session, email [screenheritagefund@bfi.org.uk](mailto:screenheritagefund@bfi.org.uk) to register. The fund is open year-round on a rolling basis. [BFI](#)

## Conferences and events

### Let's Get Real Conference 2025: Value?

The Audience Agency has announced details of the 2025 Let's Get Real Conference, to be held on Friday 24 January 2025 at MShed in Bristol. The conference will offer insights into the strategic challenges facing the sector and methods for supporting positive internal change and deepening engagement, as well as opportunities to meet and network with sector support organisations with digital experience.

Keynote speakers include Trish Thomas, Head of Digital Innovation at London Museum on 'Unlocking digital value: A transformation journey' and Professor Angela Chan, Head of Inclusive Futures for CoStar on 'How emerging tech connects communities and cultures to add value'. The conference will also include case studies from experiments carried out by cultural organisations on this year's Let's Get Real programme including Shakespeare's Globe, Bradford Museums and Galleries, The Box and National Trust. [The Audience Agency](#) (full programme, speakers and ticket booking)

### Visitor Studies Group Conference May 2025 - Call for Speakers

The London Transport Museum will host the Visitor Studies Group Conference on Friday 2 May with a title of 'Valuing Audiences: Measuring, Responding to, and Understanding Audience Values and Experiences'. A call for conference proposals on the topic of 'Value' which is open to a range of formats closes on Monday 20 January at 5pm. [VSG](#) (proposal submission)

### AI to be tackled at an online virtual conference from MuseumNext

On the 26-27 March the MuseumNext AI Virtual Conference will explore how AI is shaping the museum landscape from enhancing visitor experiences to streamlining operations. The online conference will also be available on-demand for 12 months. Early Bird individual tickets purchased before 1 Jan cost £88 and an Early Bird Unlimited ticket which allows multiple delegates from one organisation to access the event costs £188. [MuseumNext](#)



### Cultural Enterprises Conference 2025

The 2025 Cultural Enterprises Conference will be held in Liverpool on 12-13 March, sessions confirmed so far included talks from Rachel Cutress at Young V&A on 'Redesigning Volunteering', Georgina Hallett from the Old Royal Naval College on 'Sustainable Commercial Strategy for Cultural Institutions' and 'Building your Venue Hire and Filming Business' from Christina Pascoe, the National Venue Hire Manager at English Heritage. 2-day Early Bird Members tickets are available for £315, the 2-day Early Bird Non-Member price is £630. Trade show only tickets are free. [Association for Cultural Enterprises](#)

### Cambridge Cultural Heritage Data School April 2025

This in-person programme for researchers, professionals and volunteers from the cultural heritage sector runs between 7-11 April 2025. The Cambridge Cultural Heritage Data School will focus on the theme of Data Preservation, exploring technologies and infrastructure or managing cultural heritage data. In an era where cultural institutions are often making their collections freely available online, questions around data provenance, data protection, and data security remain crucial. Applications are due by Sunday 5 January 2025. Standard fees cost £750 per person. [Cambridge Digital Humanities](#)

### Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy Courses for 2025

The Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy have a full programme of courses for 2025 with topics including - Trustee Leadership, Digital Fundraising, Essentials in Legacy Fundraising and Application Writing. Courses are run online and over two half days and cost £50 to £75 +VAT. Training Bursaries are also available with £10 tickets. Courses dates are available in January, February and March. [Arts Fundraising](#)

## Museum openings

### Public outcry on closure of People's Story Museum leads to council u-turn

The People's Story Museum in Edinburgh was temporarily closed due to staff shortages which then led on to a proposed permanent closure over autumn and winter to save costs. The decision on closure has been reversed following protests from local campaigners, with Edinburgh Council resuming the seven-day opening schedule from Monday 2 December. [BBC](#), [M+H Advisor](#), [Edinburgh News](#)

### Rural Life Living Museum fundraises to secure its future

Surrey's Rural Life Living Museum in Farnham raised £150,000 from over 25,000 individual donors during a three month fundraising campaign after expenditure exceeded income and threatened to close the museum. Old Kiln Museum CIO who own and run the museum will use the money to return capital borrowed from its reserves, and bring in professional help to guide its income-generation strategy. The museum now plans to launch its first Patrons scheme, a Corporate Sponsorship programme and events in 2025. [Rural Life Living Museum](#), [M+Heritage Advisor](#)



**Atlases carrying a celestial globe, Pierre Lartigue and Louis Pierre Florimont Lennel, 1777. ©  
Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN. 'Versailles: Science and Splendour'. Science Museum.**

## Appointments and resignations

**Andrew Lovett**, Chief Executive of the Black Country Living Museum, is joining the Arts Council England Board for a term of four years from 1 December 2024. Andrew is a member of NMDC's Executive Committee and steps down from the role of Chair of the Association of Independent Museums in January 2025 after six years in the role and three terms as a Trustee. [Gov.uk](#), [AIM](#)

Museums Galleries Scotland has appointed **Duncan Dornan** as new Board Chair. Duncan joins the board following his recent retirement as Head of Museums and Collections at Glasgow Life. He is also a member of the ICOM UK Committee. [MGS](#)

Queer Britain, the UK's first LGBTQ+ museum based in London by King's Cross Station, has announced **Andrew Given** as its new director. Given joins from English National Opera where he has worked for fourteen years as the Director of Development leading fundraising campaigns. The museum was established in 2018 and founding Director Joseph Galliano-Doig announced his intention to step down earlier this year. [Museums Association](#),

The Vagina Museum in London has appointed temporary Interim Director **Zoe Williams**, who has been Head of Communications and Fundraising since 2019, as permanent Director. **Stacey-Leigh Dolan**, who is Head of Programmes at the National Football Museum in Manchester, will also be joining as the new Chair of Trustees. [M+H Advisor](#)

**Miren Arzalluz** has been named as the new Director General of Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, assuming full responsibility from 1 April 2025. Arzalluz is currently Director of Paris' Fashion Museum - Palais Galliera. She has a master's degree in art history from London's Courtauld Institute of Art and another in comparative politics from the London School of Economics. [Guggenheim Bilbao](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

The Director at the Peace Museum, **Joe Brook**, is stepping down after ten months in the role. Brook was appointed to the Bradford museum as it was in the process of moving to a new location at Salts Mill in Saltire. The museum re-opened to the public in its new location in August 2024. [M+H Advisor](#),

## Catch up

**Podcast** - The 300th edition of the Art Newspaper's 'Week in Art' podcast brought together Gus Casely-Hayford, Director of V&A East, Nicholas Cullinan, Director of the British Museum, and Karin Hindsbo, Director of Tate Modern, to debate the future of museums covering topics including sponsorship, political protest, climate change and connecting to audiences as well as the issue of free entry. [Art Newspaper](#) (£) (news article), [The Week in Art](#) (podcast, 15 Nov, 59mins)

Permanent funding needed to address museum colonialism, 29 November 2024, [Times](#)

Government review urged to remove bias from the curriculum and swap school trips to museums and theatres for football club tours and graffiti workshops, 20 November 2024, [Times](#)

UK's National Lottery at 30: who are the culture sector's winners and losers?, 9 November 2024, [Arts Newspaper](#) (£)

Launceston Town Council respond to concern over deterioration of historic museum, 7 November 2024, [Cornish & Devon Post](#)

Wales' National Slate Museum closes for £21m redevelopment, 6 November 2024, [Blooploop](#)

## International news

Plan to cut Berlin arts budget will 'destroy' city's culture, directors warn, 27 November 2024, [Guardian](#)

Turmoil as Slovak National Gallery as department heads offer their resignations, 28 November 2024, [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Slovak Spectator](#)

Rotterdam's new museum of migration, Fenix, to open in May, 22 November 2024, [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Designboom](#)

Cutting-edge labs, a rainforest gallery and guesthouse: Nigeria to open art museum for 21st century, 18 November 2024, [Guardian](#)

New Alphonse Mucha Museum to open in Prague's Savarin Complex by 2025, 18 November 2024, [Experience UK](#)

## Jobs

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

- [Engagement Officer \(Skills development\) - Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery](#)
- [Funded Conservation Internship - British Library](#)
- [Research Manager - National Gallery](#)
- [Active Gallery Producer - Tullie](#)
- [Workshop and Studio Technician - Derby Museums Trust](#)
- [Digitisation Manager \(Access\) - Imperial War Museums](#)

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