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Major Gwen John Retrospective to open at National Museum Cardiff, 7 Feb-28 June 2026. Graphic image featuring The Pilgrim by Gwen John. Photo credit - Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

## NMDC news

### One month to go until 'Climate Resilience in the Cultural Sector' - new keynotes and full programme announced

There's now only one month to go until the 'Climate Resilience in the Cultural Sector' conference at the British Library on 6th March. The conference will provide practical strategies, actions and resources to support cultural organisations to prepare for the challenges of a changing climate.

Emma Howard Boyd and Bob Ward join the line up as keynote speakers, and will be in conversation together to discuss why we all need to act now. Emma chairs ClientEarth's Group Board and ClimateArc, is a co-Chair of Climate Resilience for All, and was appointed by the Mayor of London to

chair the London Climate Resilience Review. Bob is Policy and Communications Director at Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, and Chair of the London Climate Change Partnership.

The conference will be useful for anyone interested in understanding the risks and opportunities of climate change and how to increase climate resilience, with speakers from across the cultural and public sector. Tickets cost from £110 and the full agenda can be found via the link. The day has been developed in partnership by NMDC, Fit for the Future Network, Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, the V&A, the Cultural Sector FM Hub and hosts the British Library, and delivered with generous support from Arup. Eventbrite

### April's ICOM Conference - Museum Diplomacy in Action

The ICOM UK 2026 Conference will take place in Oxford from 16-17 April with a focus on museum diplomacy in action. The conference will showcase practical examples of how museums can engage in cultural diplomacy to bridge cultural divides, address global challenges, stimulate collaboration, strengthen and heal international relationships. It will explore the unique position of museums as powerful cultural diplomats in an uncertain world. Delegates can expect to learn from tangible examples of museum diplomacy in action and leave feeling empowered to think about their own role and agenda on an international stage. Early Bird tickets are available until 16 February and cost from £146.96. There are also ICOM member student tickets from £88.46. ICOM UK

## Government news

### DCMS announces £760m investment in museums

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy has announced £1.5bn investment in cultural organisations over a five-year period, including £600m for the DCMS-funded national museums, the British Library and the BFI, and £160m for regional and local museums including further rounds of the MEND fund and £13.6m to support a transition to more sustainable business models.

NMDC Chair Laura Pye said: "Today's announcement from the Secretary of State is a massive vote of confidence in the importance of culture to our nation. Investment in museum maintenance—both for regional and national institutions—is essential if we are to protect our shared heritage and ensure our collections can be enjoyed for generations to come. We are especially encouraged by the commitment to transformation funding to support the sustainability of local and regional museums. This support recognises the vital role we play in our communities, driving education, creativity, and local pride. With this renewed investment, we can strengthen our foundations and continue delivering world■class cultural experiences for everyone." Gov.uk, Guardian, Museums Association, The Conversation, Telegraph (£)

### Cultural exchange a key feature of PM's visit to China

A number of NMDC members joined Prime Minister Kier Starmer on a 3-day diplomatic visit to China as part of a cohort of 60 British businesses and cultural organisations looking to build relationships for the future. Laura Pye, Chair of NMDC and Director of National Museums Liverpool, joined Keith Merrin, NMDC Deputy Chair and Director of North East Museums, Tim Reeve, Deputy Director of the V&A, Doug Gurr, Director of the Natural History Museum, Sara Wajid, Co-Chief Executive of Birmingham Museums Trust, Paddy Rodgers, Director of Royal Museums Greenwich, Shri Mukundagiri, Deputy Chief Executive at the Science Museum and Anne Lyden, Director of National Galleries Scotland. Keith Merrin told the Chronicle Live newspaper that "this is an amazing opportunity to promote the history and creativity of the communities of north east England, as well as making connections with museums and cultural institutions in China to explore ways we can potentially work together." During the visit Liverpool was announced as the host of Chinese art collection loaned by its twin city of Shanghai, which will take place at National Museums Liverpool in October. Gov.uk, Art Newspaper (£), Chronicle Live, BBC (NML exhibition)

## Report highlights need for £7bn investment to maintain English cultural assets

Reports prepared by Purcell into the repair, maintenance and renewal needed in the English cultural sector looked at a number of different categories of assets including non-accredited museums and art galleries, historic houses, ruins and monuments. The research has estimated that the total value of necessary works is c. £7 billion. Of these the estimated cost of urgent RMR (needing to be completed within the next five years) is c. £3 billion. Of the urgent RMR, there is a reported current funding deficit of c.£2 billion. Roofs were the most frequently reported element that needed repair or replacement for which funding was not available. This is especially the case for places of worship and heritage destinations. The detailed report looks at the challenges facing the heritage sector and current sources of funding. Gov.uk (overview), Gov.uk (vol.1 Report, pdf, pg 50, see page 9), Arts Professional (£)

## NAO reports on DCMS underspend

The latest National Audit Office (NAO) report on the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, and the BBC showed DCMS group total expenditure was £7.6 billion, a decrease of £259 million (3.3%) from 2023–24. Insights from the report show that museums and galleries contributed the largest underspend, driven by increased visitor income and using their own reserves, rather than expecting additional departmental funding. Performance and productivity key takeaways include that DCMS sectors contributed significantly to the UK economy, supporting 4.9 million jobs and generating £220 billion in economic value in 2023. Key risks identified by DCMS across museums, galleries, arts, libraries and heritage sectors included financial sustainability, cyber security, people and capability, and maintenance and operation of their buildings. NAO (press release), NAO (report, pdf, 31pgs), Arts Professional (£)

**Also:** Plymouth and Bristol announce plans to bid for UK City of Culture 2029, Museums Association

**Also:** Treasury tried to axe free museums for foreign tourists in Budget, LBC

Girl in a Church by Gwen John. By Permission of Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales.

## Members' news

### The Scottish Government commits £56m to The Art Works

The Art Works project aims to create a new free-to-visit experience in North Edinburgh. It will improve access to art, inspiring creativity and improving wellbeing. This innovative building will be home to Scotland's national collection, but it will also enable more loans of art across the country. The state-of-the-art building spanning approximately 13,000 square metres will house and showcase more than 130,000 works of art when they are not on display in the National, Portrait or Modern galleries. The Scottish Government has committed £56 million in anchor funding over the next three years towards the project which forms part of the Granton Waterfront development. The funding is part of the Scottish Government's draft budget for 2026/27 which has also confirmed funding for the Museum Futures sector sustainability programme. Finance secretary Shona Robison announced that the arts and culture sectors would receive a total uplift of more than £70m compared to the previous year, taking its investment to £266.3m. NGS, Scotsman, Museums Association (Scottish Budget)

## Ulster Folk Museum confirms £50m investment for redevelopment

The Ulster Folk Museum's Reawakening project is to get a £50m investment from the NI Executive and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The 62 year old outdoor museum houses a large collection of original and replica heritage buildings, showcasing how urban and rural life was lived in Northern Ireland in centuries past. National Museums NI chief executive Kathryn Thomson said the money would transform the museum which she said had "suffered decades of very limited investment". The investment is made up of £40m from Stormont's Department for Communities and £10m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund - and it is the single largest the museum has ever received. Ulster Folk Museum, BBC, Museums Association

## Restoration begins at St Fagans National Museum of History

St Fagans Castle will be closed for three months, from January 2026, to begin essential roof repairs and conservation work, as part of a major investment by the Welsh Government into Amgueddfa Cymru's historic buildings. The castle closure forms part of £1.8million the Welsh Government is providing this financial year for improvement works across the St Fagans site. Minister for Culture, Jack Sargeant, said: "St Fagans Castle is a treasured part of our national story, and this investment will ensure it can be enjoyed by visitors for generations to come. Once the work is complete, the hope is that the public will be able to explore some of the upstairs again." Gov.Wales, M+H Advisor

## Wolfson Foundation funding awarded to NMDC members

In the latest round of funding for capital projects from The Wolfson Foundation over 100 organisations received a share of £16m. Focusing primarily on research and education, projects supported in this round include gallery refurbishments, NMDC recipients are:

- Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales - £350,000 for the National Slate Museum
- Brighton and Hove Museums - £100,000 for the restoration of Royal Pavilion Garden
- National Gallery - £500,000 towards a new research centre
- National Museums Liverpool - £200,000 for the National Slavery Museum
- Natural History Museum - £1.5m Construction of a Molecular Collections Facility in a new Collections, Science and Digitisation Centre. Wolfson Foundation, Brighton Museums, NML

**Also:** Regional museums are in crisis. We must act now to save them. Interview with Tony Butler, Maxwell Museums

**Members in the news**

- Pokémon Mania Crashes London's **Natural History Museum** Website, 27 January 2026, Artnet
- The Academy of the Arts: Will Gompertz's vision for **Sir John Soane's Museum**, 21 January 2026, Blooloop
- **National Gallery** scoops award for Van Gogh show, 15 January 2026, Museums Association
- 3,400 volunteers help **Birmingham Museums** to transcribe accession records, 13 January 2026, M+H Advisor
- Reopening long-closed galleries signals a shift in museum planning at the **Natural History Museum**, 12 January 2026, Experience UK

## Images this month

Opening on the 7 February Amgueddfa Cymru, National Museum Cardiff, 'Gwen John: Strange Beauties' is a landmark exhibition celebrating one of the greatest modern artists from Wales on the 150th anniversary of her birth. The exhibition brings together oil paintings from public and private collections across the UK and USA with rarely seen works on paper from the artist's studio collection with more than 200 items on display. The exhibition runs till 28 June 2026. Amgueddfa Cymru, Guardian (5 star review)

## Sector news

### Freelands Foundation launches £1.5m awards scheme

The Freelands Awards will champion and celebrate UK visual art organisations' commitment to art education. Every year, three winning organisations will each receive £100,000 for a recent or ongoing project demonstrating commitment to progressive art education approaches with a demonstrable impact. The Freelands Awards are an opportunity to widely recognise, support and share inspiring art education work that may not always find the spotlight. Over the next five years, Freelands Foundation will commit £1.5 million for the Awards as a central part of its mission to champion art education. Winners who receive a grant of £100,000 can use it as the organisation wishes. This funding may be used for:

- Programming costs
- Staff wages or freelance costs
- Capital development
- Equipment or materials purchase
- Organisational overheads such as rent, utility bills, and insurance costs

Expressions of Interest Close at 12pm, Tuesday 24 March 2026. There is also an application support webinar at 10.30am, Tuesday 10 February and Thursday 12 March, 11:30am - 12:30pm. Freelands Award, Webinars, Guardian

### AIM report on Effective Museum Operating Models

'Fragile to Flourishing: Museum operating models in an uncertain world' is a new report and suite of resources commissioned by AIM and jointly supported by Arts Council England and DCMS which seeks to help museums transition to a position of proactive, future readiness. Consultants Alchemy Research analysed 30 accredited museums to identify the characteristic of 'flourishing' organisations. In addition to the report a related toolkit has been devised to help museums develop and adopt their own growth mindset and systemic thinking. AIM will be looking at more detail at this in their National Conference in June. There will also be an online presentation of the research results on the 19 March, ideal for the leaders of museums of all sizes, including Chairs and trustees. This session is for the decision makers who can lead change at their organisation, you don't need to be an AIM member to attend. AIM (report and resources), AIM (online session)

### Cultural treasures worth over £59m enter public collections in 2024-25

The 2024-2025 edition of the Cultural Gifts Scheme (CGS) and Acceptance in Lieu (AIL) Annual Report covers over £59.7 million of unique cultural objects that have been transferred via either CGS or AIL from private ownership to public museums, galleries, libraries and archives. Acceptance in Lieu allows those who have a bill for Inheritance Tax to pay the tax by transferring important cultural, scientific or historic objects and archives to the nation. The Cultural Gifts Scheme enables UK taxpayers to donate important works of art and other heritage objects in return, donors receive a tax reduction. Impact case studies in the report include:

- Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool: Claude Monet: L'Epte à Giverny
- Museum & Art Swindon: Lucian Freud material: 15 copper plates and 4 prints
- The Hepworth Wakefield: Dame Barbara Hepworth: Orpheus (Maquette 1).

The report covers transfers between April 2024 and March 2025. ACE, Arts Professional (£)

### 'Empowering Safety': Collection hazards survey

The Science Museum Group is running a Collections Hazards project, 'Empowering Safety', funded by RICHeS. 'Empowering Safety' aims to increase knowledge and guidance around hazards in museum collections. They have designed a short, anonymous questionnaire, which will take 5-10 minutes to complete. The survey is open to anyone working with collections and is not limited to a single response per organisation. The survey will close on Sunday 15th February. Survey

## Help to shape insights into insurance approaches for museum collections

Arts Council England is inviting Accredited museums across England to take part in a new, sector-wide survey exploring how museums insure their collections (both owned and loaned). They are encouraging as many museums as possible to participate, to build up an accurate and detailed picture of current practice from across the sector. The survey, which is part of a wider research project, will close on 22nd February 2026**.** A full report will be produced for internal use at the Arts Council, whilst a summary report will be shared with stakeholders and may be made publicly available. If you have any questions about the survey, or need it in another format, please email mairead@culturerunner.com. Survey

## Museums Galleries Scotland launch advocacy campaign in the run up to the Scottish election

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) has announced the launch of a new national advocacy campaign ahead of the 2026 Scottish Parliament election on 7 May. The campaign aims to make a "clear and positive case" for sustained investment and recognition. It outlines four national policy asks that highlight where government action can make the greatest difference:

- Multi-year support for the Museum Futures programme
- Recognition of museums as forces for social good
- Support for museums as trusted civic spaces for inclusion
- Capital investment to reduce museums' carbon footprints and adapt for a changing climate.

MGS has created a toolkit to make it simple for museums of all sizes to take part in the campaign. It includes various templates to help museums engage with local candidates, create social media content, and send out press releases. MGS, Museums Association

The Japanese Doll - Gwen John. By permission of Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum.

## Restitution

### ICOM UK seeks clarification on the UK Charities Act 2022 and Restitution

Following recent changes in the Charities Act 2022 in respect of ex gratia disposal of charity property, including museum collections, ICOM UK sought clarification about what this means for national museums. Statutory national museums in England and Wales were excluded from these provisions when they were brought into force in November 2025. This exclusion affects the discussion about potential restitution of items from UK museum collections. In its January report, the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments (JCSI) makes it clear that 'the correct approach is to pass new legislation rather than seeking to undercut it by simply not commencing it'. In response to the JCSI's questions, DCMS has now confirmed that the exclusion decision was only temporary. DCMS will review it as part of the review of the Charities Act 2022, which is due within five years of the Act receiving Royal Assent (by February 2027). ICOM UK (statement)

### New online tool to help museums with ethics of cultural restitution

DARCA (Decision Aid for the Restitution of Cultural Artefacts) is a free online ethics tool designed to help people think carefully about whether there is a strong moral case for returning a cultural artefact in a particular situation. Designed to support trustees or other individuals facing these sorts of challenges, rather than telling users what decision to make, DARCA asks a structured set of questions that reflect issues widely discussed in existing ethical guidance and academic research. The decision aid was developed by members of the Uehiro Oxford Institute and the Institute for Art and Law, in collaboration with several external contributors with experience of restitution cases or relevant expertise in ethics or policy-making. DARCA (online tool), DARCA (blog info)

**Also:** From February 2026, the Culture in Crisis programme will be managed by the British Council, V&A

## Cultural funding pressures

### Heritage emergency declared at Stoke-on-Trent

Stoke-on-Trent, which is home to more than 275 listed buildings and four museums with Designated collections – the Potteries Museum, Etruria Industrial Museum, Ford Green Hall and Gladstone Pottery Museum, has published a 10-year plan to secure the future of their rich heritage. The city council report outlines the need for £325m in public and private funding to safeguard its historic sites and stories. The plan aims to safeguard the city's historic assets and support regeneration but recognises that the funding required is beyond the resources of any individual organisation, the report calls for "collaboration between government agencies, statutory organisations, national funding bodies, and owners of private and public assets" to prioritise the future of the city's heritage. Stoke.gov.uk, Museums Association, Arts Professional (£)

### Round up of sector cuts and funding pressures

DCMS published research on the 'non-use' value of cultural and heritage with four survey-based experiments which were focused on three UK-based museums – the Natural History Museum (NHM), the World Museum (Liverpool), and the Museum of Liverpool. The summary shows that individuals who had not visited the **Natural History Museum** in the past three years were willing to pay an average of £11.95 as an (indefinite) annual donation to preserve the museum. This provides a clear illustration that non-use value is not only conceptually important, but also economically significant. DCMS, Arts Professional (£)

The BBC reported 50 people could be made redundant following the National Trust's takeover of **Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust** which will take affect from March 2026. The **National Trust** also announced their largest ever cash donation in their 131-year history with a £10m gift from philanthropist Humphrey Battcock. The money is unrestricted and allowing the National Trust to decide how to spend the funds which will include supporting populations of white-tailed eagles, hazel dormice and beavers. BBC

A round up of news on sector cuts and the impact of financial pressures includes:

- **Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft** to close for 'period of reimagining', Museums Association
- Plea to sign museum petition, **Old Bridge House** in Dumfries, DnG24

- **Banbury Museum & Gallery** funding cuts watered down after backlash, BBC
- Museum fees begin despite fears over future at the **Museum of Oxford**, BBC
- Workers continue to strike over pay at the **National Coal Mining Museum** in Wakefield. Unison, Museums Association
- Arts Professional (£) reporting on redundancies and restructuring at the **People's History Museum** in Manchester on 12 January.
- **Glasgow**'s troubled Centre for Contemporary Arts to permanently close, BBC

Finally, **Bristol City Council** have dropped plans to cut funding for arts and cultural projects at least for the next three years. Earlier in January, the authority revealed it had bid for UK City of Culture in 2029. If successful, it could secure £10m to boost its arts scene. BBC

**Also:** Labour urged to rethink donor incentives for museums amid non-dom exodus, CityAM

## Climate Emergency

### New research on how the public wants museums to tackle climate change

Published in January 2026, a new report produced by the Cultural Philanthropy Foundation, in partnership with Climate Outreach and Wellcome, shows that British people want to see more climate change content in arts and culture. The research reveals broad support for more climate change content within culture when it's 'done well'. Highlights include:

- Audiences want cultural leadership on climate change. Across society, people want and expect climate to be talked about in what they watch, visit and enjoy.
- People care more than you think. Most people said they'd like to see more climate content in culture - especially if it focuses on solutions, community action, and local benefits, and with less onus on individual action.
- Perfection not required, and honesty welcomed. People agree that organisations, including museums, galleries and theatres, can and should show climate content - even if they're still on their own sustainability journey.
- Local life, nature and health drive empathy. People care most about climate impacts close to home that affect nature, health and the poorest households. Cultural Philanthropy Foundation (press release), Climate Outreach (research), Arts Professional (£)

**Also:** Bridget McKenzie, Flow Associates/UK Climate Museum is carrying out research into the cultural sector's ability to respond to the earth crisis in this quick survey that asks what resources are needed to do so effectively. Surveymonkey

### ACE and Julie's Bicycle publish annual environmental report

Julie's Bicycle and Arts Council England have published their new Annual Report - Culture, Climate and Environmental Programme, which shows how the sector is increasingly embedding environmental responsibility across governance, operations and creative practice. Drawing on Creative Climate Tools and Beyond Carbon data, it features over 70 stories from organisations across England. Insights include:

- 93% have an environmental policy
- 88% have an environmental action plan
- 73% have produced & programmed work exploring environmental themes
- 71% actively collaborate with others to find and share solutions to environmental issues
- 70% took steps to reduce energy use and improve efficiency
- 67% have appointed a member of their governance group or Board to oversee their environmental progress

Julie's Bicycle (Executive Summary), Julie's Bicycle (report, pdf, 37 pgs)

**Also:** 'The past is an underused tool': An Elizabethan mansion's secrets for staying warm, BBC

A Corner of the Artist's Room in Paris, Gwen John. By permission of Amgueddfa Cymru-Museum Wales. Purchased with the assistance of the Derek Williams Trust and the Estate of Mrs J. Green.

## Digital and tech

### Digital Arts recognised by Arts Council as a separate discipline

Arts Council England has introduced Digital Arts as a new discipline, the first to be added in over 20 years. Digital Arts will sit alongside the existing disciplines (Theatre, Dance, Music, Visual Arts, Combined Arts, Museums, Libraries and Literature) as a recognised area of practice. The move aims to place Digital Arts on an equal footing with ACE's other artforms, sending a clear signal that this work is valued and integral to the future of the arts in England. As a new discipline it creates new opportunities to bring artists and organisations together, supporting networking, knowledge-sharing and the development of communities of practice across the country. It will include digital storytelling, socially engaged digital practice, immersive installations, interactive and game-based art, virtual production, AI and generative systems, data-driven art, digital craft and decentralised technologies. ACE, M+H Advisor

### DCN Podcast on the impact of AI on web searches

This half hour podcast with Monica Thomas and James Akers from the Digital Culture Network is a good introduction to why AI summaries are affecting website visibility and searches. It looks at :

- What SEO really means today and why it's not just about keywords anymore.
- Why AI is reshaping Search and what that means for arts organisations.
- How to optimise your website for both traditional search and AI-driven discovery.

Not just worrying about change but embracing opportunities, this podcast is a useful starting point for thinking about how visitors come to your website and content. DCN

**Also:** Publishers fear AI search summaries and chatbots mean 'end of traffic era', Guardian

## Conferences and events

### Call for proposals and booking open for the 2026 Museums Association Conference

The November MA Conference titled 'Museums Connecting Communities' will be hosted in Birmingham at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. This year's conference celebrates how the sector is finding inventive ways to work with communities through challenging times to create a positive future for all. Proposals to present at the conference on the theme of communities are open until 23 February. Book by 31 March 2026 for an early bird discount of 10% when you use code 26CONF10. Online tickets for students/volunteers members start at £60. The whole conference for members costs £385 and £580 for non-members. There is also a cheaper rate for attendees from eligible small institutions. MA

### AIM Conference June 2026

This year's AIM conference will be hosted by Ushaw Historic House, Chapels and Gardens and Beamish, The Living Museum of the North, Co Durham. Early bird tickets are now on sale, with the best rates for AIM members. The conference theme is 'Independent advantage: Rethinking your museum operating model'. Drawing on new research into the sector's most effective business models, the sessions will unpack the essential strategies and practical steps your institution needs to succeed. Early Bird All-in-One tickets which including socials cost £345.60 for members. Individual day tickets for members are £153.60 and £228 for non-members. AIM

### ICON 2026 Conference in Edinburgh

Running from 24-25 June in Edinburgh at the Assembly Rooms, the Institute of Conservation's biennial offers an opportunity to celebrate the work of professional conservator-restorers, shining a spotlight on the transformative power of the Conservation profession. There are speakers from Imperial War Museums, National Museum of the Royal Navy, National Galleries of Scotland and Amgueddfa Cymru who will be sharing presentations, panel discussions, and interactive exchanges that bridge disciplines and push the field forward. Tickets cost from online student members £50 to full conference member rates of £265 Early Bird and non-member Early Bird rate of £370. ICON

### InnovateX 2026: The Experience Economy Forum

The Science Museum in London will be hosting InnovateX from ExperienceUK on 10 March which will bring together creative pioneers, designers, technologists, and strategists to explore how experiences are driving value, engagement, and transformation across industries, from visitor attractions and cultural venues to immersive entertainment and digital experience design. Join 250+ leaders, creators, and strategists from across the Experience Economy - from leisure attractions and destinations to developers, investors, architects, creatives and technologists. Student tickets are £50, ExperienceUK Members cost £270 (incl VAT) and non-members £360 (incl VAT). InnovateX

## Funding news and opportunities

### Call for Hosts: Collaborative Conservation Skills Internship Programme

Icon is inviting organisations to express interest in hosting a fully funded internship focused on the conservation of modern materials. This placement will explore the unique conservation challenges posed by new and emerging materials increasingly found in museum collections and heritage contexts. Modern materials include plastics, pigments, binders, coatings, fabrics, and objects incorporating electronic or digital components, as well as those used in contemporary artworks and time-based media such as film, video, and digital installations. Placement Requirements:

- Host organisations must have access to in-house expertise to support the placement and enable the intern to develop their knowledge and skills in the conservation modern materials.
- Opportunities may be designed for early-career or mid-career professionals seeking to further develop their conservation skills.
- Host organisations must be based in the UK.
- Placements may be 3, 6, or 12 months in duration, depending on the projects available and the host's capacity. Twelve-month placements are preferred.
- Public and private sector organisations are welcome to apply, provided they have appropriate insurance and robust health and safety measures in place.

This fully funded programme provides £25,000 to support the delivery of each internship. How these funds are allocated will depend on the management route chosen by the host organisation. Please note that funding is based on a 12-month placement; funding for shorter placements will be pro-rated accordingly. To apply for funding, hosts should complete the Host Application Form and submit it to accreditation@icon.org.uk by Monday 2 March 2026 and 10am. There is a drop-in session on Friday 13 February 2026, 11-12noon. This is designed to help organisations understand what hosting involves, including expectations, the level of support available from Icon. ICON, ICON (drop-in session)

### Tru Vue and ICON Conservation & Exhibition Grant Scheme

Under the scheme, small heritage institutions are able to apply for grant funding up to £3,000 to support the delivery of conservation projects that enable the safe display of an object in their collection. They are looking to support projects that do one of the following: Conserve and protect an object or objects already on display, or enable an object that is not currently on display to be conserved and made accessible to visitors in a safe way. There are two components to the scheme: Glazing materials supplied by Tru Vue® (value estimated up to £4,000) and funding to cover the materials, supplies and/or support needed to deliver the project. The cash award is up to £3,000, there are at least 7 grants available. the deadline for submissions is Friday 27th February 2026, 5pm. ICON

### Art Deco Society Conservation grant

The Art Deco Society (ADSUK) are offering a grant of up to £500 for a museum or heritage group to help them pay for conservation costs of a specific object in their care. The object can be anything from the early twentieth century which has strong Art Deco features. With Art Deco covering such a broad range of mediums, any object will be considered. Applications close on 31 March. ADSUK

Seated Tortoiseshell Cat by Gwen John. By Permission of Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales.

## Appointments

Director of the National Maritime Museum Cornwall (NMMC), **Richard Doughty**, will retire at the end of June 2026, after a career spanning five decades. Stepping into the role as Interim Director of the Museum is current Head of Public Programming, Stuart Slade. NMMC

**Joe Hill** has been appointed the new Director and Chief Executive at Yorkshire Sculpture Park taking full responsibility from 14 April 2026. Hill is currently Director and CEO of Towner Eastbourne,

a position he has held for eight years. YSP

The Hayward Gallery has named **Sally Tallant** as their new Director. Born in Leeds, Tallant, is currently in charge of the Queens Museum in New York. Guardian

The National Gallery has appointed **Patrick Elliot** as their first Curator of Modern Paintings, a new position created as part of the Gallery's recently announced Project Domani. Elliott joins the National Gallery after 36 years at the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh, where he worked as Chief Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. National Gallery

**Lucy Littlewood** is to succeed Gareth Thomas at the Bath-based American Museum and Gardens on 1 March. Her previous roles include Director of the St Martin-in-the-Fields Trust and International Director of Arts Development at the British Council. American Museum

**Claire McKeown** will be joining the British Museum as Director of Capital Projects & Estate, she joins from ZSL where she is Director of Estate Transformation. McKeown also spent nearly six years as V&A East Project Director. LinkedIn

Manchester Museum, part of the University of Manchester, has appointed **Sam Kalubowila** to the newly-created position of Head of Learning and Participation, reinforcing its commitment to values-based practice. He brings more than 20 years' experience in roles at Arts Council England and The University of Manchester's Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE Centre. Manchester Museum

## Obituary

Obituary | Clare Gittings, 1954-2025 - Museums Association

## Catch up

New city fashion museum gets funding boost, 31 January 2026, BBC

First arrest after high-value museum raid, 29 January 2026, BBC

Courtauld announces two new contemporary galleries for 2029, 29 January 2026, M+H Advisor

Arts centre's community council structure helps audience grow by nearly 50%, 26 January 2026, Arts Professional (£)

Germany returns stolen fragments of Bayeux Tapestry to France, 16 January 2025, BBC

## International news

Thieves Steal Dutch Museum's Entire Silver Collection, 23 January 2026, ARTnews

Madrid's Prado museum does not want 'a single visitor more', 16 January 2026, Sunday Times (£)

Snøhetta designs atrium with radiating galleries for Beijing Art Museum, 14 January 2026, Dezeen

'A very tough moment': how Trump has put museums in jeopardy, 13 January 2026, Guardian

Rijksmuseum to Open New Sculpture Garden With Works by Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, 13 January 2026, ARTnews

## Jobs

Posts being advertised on the NMDC jobs board this month include:

- IT/AV Technician - Royal Air Force Museum
- Full Time Gallery Team Member - Fixed Term Contract - Wallace Collection
- Events Assistant - British Museum
- Exhibitions Assistant - Tate
- Events Operational Manager - Black Country Living Museum

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