

In this month's edition:

- [NMDC move to Bluesky](#)
- [NMDC members recognised in the 2025 New Year Honours list](#)
- [National Gallery reopening date set for 10 May](#)
- [Black Country Living Museum and IKEA collaborate on new room set to celebrate heritage design](#)
- [Independent review into Arts Council England will be led by Baroness Hodge](#)
- [Culture, Media and Sport Committee's 'State of Play' inquiry hoping to open up debate in the sector](#)
- [UK government signs agreement with Saudi Arabia to share cultural and creative expertise](#)
- [New research shows the health and wellbeing benefits of arts and culture](#)
- [New visitor economy council plans to boost UK visitors](#)
- [Measuring the Economic Value of Digital Culture - Art UK case study](#)
- [Cultural Gifts Scheme and Acceptance in Lieu Annual Report 2023/24](#)
- [New draft toolkit for managing archaeological finds](#)
- [Historic England's Workforce Diversity survey shows the sector has a long way to go to diversify](#)
- [Julia Rausing Trust announces grants totalling £4.3m to museum and galleries](#)

...and much more.

[Section headings](#) | [NMDC news](#) | [Members' news](#) | [Government news](#) | [Cultural funding](#) | [Sector news, surveys and partnership opportunities](#) | [Reports](#) | [Tourism and visitor data](#) | [Digital](#) | [Collections](#) | [Diversity and inclusion](#) | [Climate emergency](#) | [Continuing professional development](#) | [Awards](#) | [Funding news and opportunities](#) | [Conferences and events](#) | [Appointments and resignations](#) | [Obituary](#) | [Catch up](#) | [International news](#) | [Correction](#) | [Jobs](#)



**Anselm Kiefer: Early Works, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 14 Feb-15 June 2025.** Anselm Kiefer (b. 1945) *Wer jetzt kein Haus hat* (Whoever has no House now), 2023. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of White Cube. © Anselm Kiefer. Photo: Georges Poncet

## NMDC news

### NMDC move to Bluesky

The National Museum Directors' Council will no longer be sharing information via the social media platform 'X'. You can find us on Bluesky [@nmdcnews.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/nmdcnews.bsky.social)

We are also on Instagram [@nmdc\\_news](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

In recent NMDC newsletters we have covered the cultural sector's move to Bluesky and you can catch up with relevant articles here:

- Guide | How museums can thrive with a little Bluesky thinking, Nov 24, [Museums Association](#)
- The main advantage Bluesky has over Twitter (Besides the obvious one), Oct 24, [Forbes](#)
- How to switch from Twitter/X to BlueSky in 2024, and why you might want to, Sept 24, [Creative Boom](#)

If you are making the move the Museums Association has a '[Starter Pack](#)' which will help you to quickly connect to UK museums. The Museum of English Rural Life also have an '[Arts & Culture Starter Pack](#)'. You can also search for Starter Packs if you have a more niche research interest or museum focus: [Bluesky Starter Packs](#).

### Save the date - ICOM UK Conference May 2025

The ICOM UK annual conference will take place on 1 and 2 May 2025 in Liverpool. The event titled 'Regenerative Museums for Sustainable Futures' 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. NMDC and ICOM UK members will get priority booking at a discounted rate. [ICOM UK](#)

## Members' news

### NMDC members recognised in the 2025 New Year Honours list

Gabriele Finaldi, Director of the National Gallery, has been awarded a knighthood in the King's New Years Honours list for 2025. Finaldi has been Director of the National Gallery since August 2015 and has been recognised for his services to art and culture. Finaldi said in a statement: "I am profoundly humbled by this honour and would like to express my gratitude for the recognition accorded to me and the whole National Gallery staff's commitment to public service, especially in the Bicentenary year of the institution's founding."

Tony Butler, Executive Director of Derby Museums Trust and a member of NMDC's Executive Committee, was awarded an OBE for services to the arts, and Kim Streets, Chief Executive of Sheffield Museums, received an MBE for services to culture. Other awards included a CBE for Roger Bland, former Keeper of the Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory at the British Museum, an OBE for Paul Roberts, keeper of antiquities at Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, and an MBE for Jane Lawson, Director of Development at the V&A. [Gov.uk](#) (press release), [Gov.uk](#) (full list), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

### National Gallery reopening date set for 10 May

The major redisplay of over 1,000 works of art at the National Gallery has been announced as 'CC Land: The Wonder of Art' and will open to the public on 10 May. The redisplay coincides with the reopening of the Sainsbury Wing after more than two years of building work. It will follow a broadly chronological arrangement with a series of rooms featuring the work of individual artists. The making and meaning of art will be explored with a look at the importance of gold, the use of oil and the impact of pastel. The new displays will also celebrate artists who have been inspired by other artists, pairing paintings such as Vigée Le Brun (1755-1842)'s Self Portrait in a Straw Hat (1782), inspired by Rubens's Portrait of Susanna Lunden(?) ('Le Chapeau de Paille') (probably 1622-5). The revamp is named after the Hong Kong-based property investor CC Land Holdings. [National Gallery](#), [Museums Association](#), Opinion - [Times](#)

Also: New perspectives: Annabelle Selldorf brings a fresh angle to the National Gallery's Sainsbury Wing, [Art Newspaper](#) (£), Carbuncle or coup? A sneak preview of the new-look National Gallery, [Times](#) (£)

## Black Country Living Museum and IKEA collaborate on new room set to celebrate heritage design

A new historic room set at IKEA Birmingham inspired by the menswear shop, H. Morrall's Gentlemen's Outfitters, at the Black Country Living Museum (BCLM). The room set showcases the PAX and KOMPLEMENT ranges and transports customers to the elegance and style of the 1920s and 1930s. H. Morrall's Gentlemen's Outfitters opened at the Museum in 2010 after being translocated from Hall Street, Dudley. Claire Packer, Head of Audiences & Communications at BCLM, said: "We're delighted to collaborate with IKEA Birmingham and bring heritage and retail together. The past continues to influence the present, and we're delighted to support IKEA Birmingham with this room set. You wonder what founder Harry Morrall would make of modern retail today, especially with flat caps a staple on the high street again." [BCLM](#), [Express & Star](#), [YouTube](#)

## Science and Media Museum reopens with a little help from Feathers McGraw

Bradford's National Science and Media Museum, part of the Science Museum Group, reopened on 8 January with a giant model of Wallace and Gromit super-villain Feathers McGraw which has been created to welcome visitors back. Closed for a redesign and refurbishment since 2023, the reopening comes as Bradford celebrates becoming UK City of Culture for 2025. [Science and Media Museum](#), [BBC](#), [Yorkshire Post](#)

NMDC members in the news:

- RN Museum hit by cyber attack, [Arts Industry](#), [National Museum of the Royal Navy](#)
- The replicas that could end the Elgin Marbles row, [Telegraph](#) (£)
- London-based Studio Weave wins competition to revamp British Museum entrance, [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Museums Association](#)

## Images this month

Images this month come from the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford from their 'Anselm Kiefer: Early Work' exhibition which runs from 14 February to 15 June 2025. The group of 45 early works made during the period 1969–82 will feature paintings, watercolours, artist books, photos and woodcuts rarely displayed in the UK before. The exhibition will also include three new paintings from Kiefer's own collection, chosen by the artist especially for the Ashmolean show, which is organised in partnership with the Hall Art Foundation. [Ashmolean Museum](#)

## Government news

### Independent review into Arts Council England will be led by Baroness Hodge

The Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) confirmed on 17 December that the postponed independent review of Arts Council England (ACE) will be led by Labour Peer Baroness Margaret Hodge, the former Culture Minister. The review will explore how to improve access to arts and culture in all areas of the country to drive access to opportunity. Beginning in early 2025 the Terms of Reference will be agreed and published in due course, although the press release from DCMS highlights the key priorities of the review which include:

- Exploring ACE's role in supporting excellence across the country, ensuring that everyone is able to participate in and consume culture and creativity, regardless of their background or where they live.
- Exploring how ACE engages with its partners and stakeholders at all levels to ensure that national and local priorities work harmoniously to benefit the public.
- Evaluating ACE's role in developing a strong and vibrant creative sector which supports both grassroots creativity and internationally renowned works of art.
- Considering ACE's role in the wider cultural funding ecosystem, and mechanisms to strengthen the role of local voices in decision making.
- Assessing ACE's mandate to ensure it is clear and appropriate for the 21st century and it is able to deliver high quality arts and culture on a national, regional and local level.

The expert advisory panel advising Baroness Hodge will also be announced early in 2025 with the conclusions and Government response to be published in early 2026. [Gov.uk](#), 'Arts Council England review to avoid 'debate between excellence and access' [Museums Association](#), 'Nandy confirms new ACE review headed by Hodge will consider 'wider cultural funding ecosystem', [Arts Professional](#) (£), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

## Culture, Media and Sport Committee's 'State of Play' inquiry hoping to open up debate in the sector

The 'State of Play' inquiry from the Culture, Media and Sport Committee, headed by Dame Caroline Dinenage, MP, will hold four to six evidence sessions a year to explore themes or sectors that have been submitted by an open call to members of the culture, media and sport world. The rolling inquiry is asking the following questions to those considering submitting a topic for discussion:

- What is the topic that you want the Culture, Media and Sport Committee to examine?
- What are the challenges or opportunities that require consideration?
- To what extent are these challenges or opportunities shared across DCMS sectors?
- What is the role for the government and/or parliament in dealing with these issues?
- Are there any upcoming deadlines, milestones or other time considerations the committee should be aware of (excluding the government's Spending Review and Industrial Strategy)?
- Is there any other recent or upcoming work from governments, trade bodies or other relevant organisations on these issues?

The initial deadline for the first round of submissions is midnight on Friday 21 February.

[Parliament.UK](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

## UK government signs agreement with Saudi Arabia to share cultural and creative expertise

On the 9 December DCMS signed a bilateral agreement to share the UK's expertise in culture, heritage and tourism with Saudi Arabia. As part of this agreement Historic England is finalising a new partnership deal with the Saudi Heritage Commission to cooperate in the field of cultural heritage and conservation. The programme of cooperation will see heritage experts from the UK and Saudi Arabia sharing their knowledge and skills to support the preservation of cultural landmarks in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A second partnership deal will see DCMS and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) collaborate with the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) to help them boost inbound visitor numbers and spend, upskill their local people and market the city around the world. As part of the government's growth mission, it also represents a commercial opportunity for UK organisations, who stand to benefit from long term working relationships, new business opportunities and increased visibility in Saudi Arabia, while also driving further tourism to the UK. [Gov.uk](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

**Also:** Membership of the new Creative Industries Taskforce announced, [Gov.uk](#)

## Cultural funding

### Welsh draft budget published on 10 December allocates culture an additional £6m

The Welsh Government has allocated an extra £5m in resource funding and an additional £16m-plus in capital funding for culture, heritage and sport next year. The overall draft culture budget for 2025-6 (encompassing arts, culture and historic environment spending) will increase by £6 million (6%) next year according to the Campaign for the Arts. There will be an extra:

- £1.2m for the Arts Council of Wales
- £2.1m for Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales
- £1.7m for the National Library of Wales
- £1.2m for local culture and sport
- £1m for the historic environment (via Cadw, RCAHMW and the National Botanic Garden of Wales)

Arts Council of Wales's draft Grant-in-Aid budget from the Welsh Government will be £31.588m, up from £30.493m for 2024/25. Following scrutiny of these plans by the Senedd, the Final Budget 2025-26 will be published on 25 February 2025 with the final vote on the budget is scheduled for March 2025. [Gov.wales](#), [BBC](#)

Responses to the budget include: [Arts Council Wales](#), [Campaign for the Arts](#), 'Outlook for Welsh culture sector remains 'challenging' despite budget boost', [Museums Association](#)

**Also:** A Senedd Committee report published on 9 January shows that, after a decade of cuts, Wales ranks third from bottom of European countries in terms of spending per person on recreational and

sporting services and second from bottom for cultural services. [Senedd Wales](#) (press release), [Senedd Wales](#) (full report, pdf, 96pgs), 'Wales trails behind most European countries in arts and sports funding, report finds', [Guardian](#), [BBC](#)

**Also:** Three quarters of Northern Ireland's arts funding goes to Belfast, [Arts Professional](#) (£), [Belfast Telegraph](#)

**Also:** National Galleries Scotland warns artworks and attractions 'at risk' over inadequate SNP Government funding, [Scotsman](#)

### New Year but same old problems

Long term funding issues continue to concern the sector with two recent summaries of the issues facing cultural organisations in 2025:

- 'We haven't seen positive things yet' - UK arts bodies urge clarity on funding six months after Labour victory, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)
- 'Hundreds of theatres and museums face closure as crisis in sectors laid bare', [Independent](#)

**Also:** Move of Walsall Leather Museum labelled 'downgrade' as petition launched, 14 December 2024, [Birmingham Live](#)



**Anselm Kiefer: Early Works, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 14 Feb-15 June 2025.** The artist - Anselm Kiefer, at work in his studio  
Photo courtesy Barbara Klemm.

## Sector news, surveys and partnership opportunities

### Touring Exhibitions Survey asks for feedback

Culture Connect have partnered with Touring Exhibition Organisation to launch the third touring survey which is now live. The 'Cultural Dialogue Survey 2025: The Future of Touring Exhibitions' aims to better understand the global touring exhibition sector. The survey is open to all professionals involved in the hosting, touring, production and promotion of cultural exhibitions. The results from the last two surveys exposed key trends, challenges and opportunities for the sector and can be accessed via the website. The survey is open until 10 February, it should only take 5-8 minutes and all responses will be anonymised. [Survey](#), [Culture Connect](#) (previous reports)

## Reminder - Museum and Heritage Awards and Art Fund Museum of the Year deadlines approach

Applications for the Art Fund Museum of the Year Award for 2025 are open until 27 January. The 2024 award was won by the Young V&A taking home a prize of £120,000, the remaining four finalists will also receive £15,000 each. The deadline for the Museum and Heritage Awards is Friday 31 January with new categories this year including the 'Visitor Accessibility Award'. [Art Fund](#), [M+H Awards](#)

## British Museum's National open call for 'Where we are...' partners

'Where we are...' is a UK-wide national programme for young people aged 16–24 that co-produces meaningful local projects in arts and culture. Supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the programme aims to engage young people who are under-served in the museum sector. The programme is delivered through a collaborative partnership between the British Museum, a local cultural organisation, a local third sector organisation, and young people. By working in this way, the programme aims to:

- Remove some of the barriers to engagement that young people face within the cultural sector.
- Create a sense of agency in young people that can be reflected into their communities.

The British Museum is inviting cultural and third sector organisations from all over the UK to pair together and apply to become a Key Partner for the final year of the programme year 2025-2026 (application booklet is in the webpage link and attached). The deadline for applications is Monday 27 January 2025 at 5pm and there is a [webinar](#) on Monday 20 Jan 5-6pm to find out more. [British Museum](#)

## Strikes continue at Natural History Museum, Science Museum and V&A

Security guards at three museums in London have continued a dispute over pay and conditions. The security guards work for external contractor Wilson James and belong to the United Voices of the World Union. After walkouts in December, new strikes are planned from 17 to 21 January. [UVW](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#)

## Reports

### New research shows the health and wellbeing benefits of arts and culture

A new DCMS report produced by Frontier Economics has looked at the health and wellbeing benefits of arts and culture and attempted to ascribe a monetary value to those benefits for individuals and society as a whole. Because the estimates are in a comparable format (pounds and pence), they can be used as benchmarks to understand the impact of health and wellbeing outcomes relative to other outcomes (such as educational outcomes). For adults aged 30 to 49 the report estimates a value of £992 per person per year and £8 billion of wider societal benefits per year. Most (£7bn) of the £8bn benefits to society that culture and heritage bring about comes from people's improved quality of life and the rest is from improved productivity at work. [DCMS](#) (report), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#)

## Tourism and visitor data

### New visitor economy council plans to boost UK visitors

Towards the end of November at the Tourism Alliance Conference, Tourism Minister Chris Bryant vowed to increase overseas tourism to museums and heritage attractions with plans to boost visitor numbers to 50 million annually. Bryant also announced a new Visitor Economy Advisory Council, to be made up of tourism and hospitality experts. Following on from this focus on tourism below are a number of statistics around the visitor economy as we prepare for English Tourism Week which runs from 14-23 March:

- **Historic England** has published evidence on the contribution of the heritage sector to the visitor economy. It finds that heritage-led tourism in 2023 created £12.5 billion in economic activity from international tourists, £11.4 billion in domestic day visits, and £4.5 billion from domestic overnight trips. [Historic England](#)

- **Tourism Alliance's** Tourism Facts for 2024, show the value of UK tourism to the UK economy at £77.5bn GVA (Gross Value Added) which is 3.2% of UK GVA. [Tourism Alliance](#)
- The annual **Anholt Nation Brands** Index study which track's the UK's image overseas shows that overall the UK's nation brand remained strong at 5th out of 50 nations in 2024. Culture and tourism remain areas of strength for the UK – tourism retained 6th place for the fourth year in a row with historic buildings and vibrant cities retaining 5th, while culture dropped one rank from 4th to 5th place. [Visit Britain](#)

[Gov.uk](#) (full text speech), [M+H Advisor](#) (speech), [VisitBritain](#) (English Tourism Week Toolkit)

## Digital

### Measuring the Economic Value of Digital Culture - Art UK case study

This DCMS paper which focuses on Art UK as a case study for measuring the economic value of digital culture is useful for the cultural sector more widely, as it advances the evidence base for using such economic value calculations around digital services. Most of the economic value studies tend to be focussed on tangible/physical offerings like museums, rather than digital ones. For Art UK, the estimate of aggregate annual economic value is £71.4m a year (compared to the annual costs of running the charity of £1.5m). It is worth noting that the study only covers Art UK's audience in the UK (40% of the total) and only makes an aggregate estimate for 'use value', not the 'non-use value'. Andrew Ellis, Chief Executive of Art UK, has also written a blog which summaries the report for a general audience. [DCMS](#) (pdf, 40pgs), [Art UK](#) (blog)

### Bloomberg Philanthropies Digital Accelerator Programme announces new participants

The Digital Accelerator program from Bloomberg Philanthropies which help arts organisations sustain innovations and investments, and strengthen tech and management practices that are key to their long-term success, has announced a new cohort of 200 non-profit cultural organisations. The 200 participants across the USA and the UK will have access to funding, expert technical assistance and leadership development over two years to strengthen their digital infrastructure with the principal goals of growing revenue, increasing fundraising, engaging audiences, improving operations and developing programming opportunities. NMDC members selected to join the programme include the Black Country Living Museum, Brighton & Hove Museums, Fitzwilliam Museum, Glasgow Life, Imperial War Museums, National Galleries of Scotland and National Library of Scotland. [Bloomberg Philanthropies](#), [BCLM](#), [Fitzwilliam Museum](#)

### OFCOM - Online Nation 2024 report gives insights into online trends

The 2024 Online Nation report produced by OFCOM provides a useful look at trends in social media, time spent online by different age groups and popular platforms. It tracks the decline in influence of 'X'/Twitter and highlights that Reddit was the fastest-growing large social media platform in the UK, reaching more than half of UK online adults by June 2024. One in 20 people do not have access to the internet at home with generally older age groups 55+ more likely to be without, with affordability given as a reason by more than a quarter of those who don't have access at home. There are also insights into the use of generative AI and the most popular search engines. [OFCOM](#) (pdf, 116pgs)

**Also:** This blog on MuseumNext from November 2024 is a good overview of the key insights from the Discovering Online Collections Report produced by One Further in 2023. In case you missed the report it features data from 50 organisations and acts as a benchmarking tool for developing and improving access to online collections. [MuseumNext](#)

**Also:** Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds: TikTok names viral Yorkshire video among best content in 2024. [Yorkshire Post](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)



**Anselm Kiefer: Early Works, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 14 Feb-15 June 2025.** Anselm Kiefer (b. 1945) *Innenraum (Interior)*, 1982 Watercolour and graphite on paper, 77.5 x 68.5 cm Hall Collection. Courtesy of the Hall Art Foundation. © Anselm Kiefer. Photo: Steven Brookes Studio.

## Collections

### Cultural Gifts Scheme and Acceptance in Lieu Annual Report 2023/24

The newly published Cultural Gifts and Acceptance in Lieu Schemes' Annual Report illustrates how over £45million of cultural objects were allocated to UK museums, galleries, libraries and archives between April 2023 and March 2024. The report includes impact case studies which look at a number of individual acquisitions which include:

- Johann Sebastian Bach: *Cantata Auf Christi Himmelfahrt allein*. This is the complete autograph manuscript score for the cantata Bach composed for Ascension Day.
- Bridget Riley: *Banner I*. *Banner I* uses the combination of variegated red, white and blue stripes to generate oppositional optical light and luminosity within the composition.



- LS Lowry: *River Scene, Sunderland. River Scene, Sunderland* is one of the largest and most successful of all Lowry's industrial scenes. It shows the River Wear at Sunderland Docks, specifically the Lambton Coal Drops.

The Cultural Gifts Scheme enables UK taxpayers to donate important works of art and other heritage objects to public museums, galleries, libraries and archives to benefit the nation. In return, donors receive a tax reduction based on a set percentage of the value of the item they donate.

Highlights include:

- Sir Frederic, Lord Leighton: Study for *Flaming June*. This is the only known preparatory oil sketch for Leighton's late masterpiece *Flaming June*, now recognised as one of his most famous and well-loved paintings.
- Lanto Syngé collection of needlework: This significant collection focuses on early English textiles with some additional pieces from other countries such as France, India and China. [Arts Council England](#) (website), [ACE](#) (report, pdf, 72pgs), [M+H Advisor](#)

### Roman mosaics and Alan Turing's notebooks are amongst the objects under export deferrals

On the 18 December the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest listed a number of items that have been placed under temporary export bars to give a final opportunity for institutions and individuals in the UK to acquire them for the public to enjoy. The list includes the Fairhaven panels, the only known surviving works of Flemish artist De Vély that have been valued at over £1.6m, Roman mosaics from AD 300-50, valued at £560,000, originally discovered at a Roman villa at Fullerton in Hampshire, and Alan Turing's unpublished 'Deliah' project papers valued at just under £400,000. The 'Delilah' project at Hanslope Park aimed to develop a portable encryption system or voice scrambler to protect military secrets in the field. [Gov.uk](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£) (Fairhaven panels)

### New draft toolkit for managing archaeological finds

Developed by Historic England as part of the Future for Archaeological Archives Programme, the 'Toolkit for Managing the Ownership of Archaeological Finds in England' is designed as an important new resource for individuals involved in the management, recovery and archiving of archaeological materials. It offers guidelines to ensure the secure and legal transfer of ownership of archaeological material, thereby supporting effective archival practices and planning policy. The toolkit consists of a model deed of transfer and guidance covering principles of ownership, advice on transferring ownership of the material archive, procedures for arranging transfer of ownership, and guidance for planners, landowners and planning applicants/developers. The draft toolkit is subject to a consultation period of nine months between January and September 2025. Historic England welcomes all feedback, which can be submitted via this short [form](#) or by emailing [FAAP@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:FAAP@historicengland.org.uk), [Collections Trust](#)

## Diversity and inclusion

### ACE provide details of the Elevate programme which will support diverse-led organisations

The Elevate programme from Arts Council England is designed to support diverse-led organisations by developing and strengthening their resilience and governance. This round of Elevate will run in a different way to previous rounds and is more closely linked to the National Portfolio Investment Programme 2027. By diverse-led, ACE mean organisations where 51 per cent of their boards and senior management identify as Black, Asian and ethnically diverse, disabled, female, LGBTQIA+ or from a lower socio-economic background. There are three parts to the support:

- Part 1 - throughout 2025 this is open to all diverse-led creative and cultural organisations and will include sessions on governance, finance, risk and business models. The sessions will be open to any diverse-led creative and cultural organisation.
- Part 2 - from April 2026 to March 2027 diverse-led organisations that are new joiners to the National Portfolio will be able to apply for additional investment of up to £120,000 to continue their development as they prepare to join the National Portfolio in April 2027.
- Part 3 will continue to provide support for those diverse-led organisations once the National Portfolio commences on 1 April 2027. More information on this support will be published closer to the time.

The eligibility information was published on 5 December 2024 along with the timeline for the next National Portfolio Investment launch in Spring 2025. [ACE](#) (timeline), [ACE](#) (Elevate programme)

### Historic England's Workforce Diversity survey shows the sector has a long way to go to diversify

Published on 10 December the survey from Historic England captured 546 responses with 90% of participants describing their ethnicity as white. Over 90% of those in higher managerial positions also described their ethnicity as white. A statement from Historic England said the findings "collectively paint a picture of a sector facing challenges in diversity and inclusion, particularly in areas of ethnic representation, disability employment and social mobility". The survey found that almost 20% of the workforce identify themselves as disabled, and 25% identify themselves as neurodivergent. 67% of the sector have a full-time, permanent contract, but this drops to 50% of disabled people. Historic England will use the findings for a series of roundtable discussions in early 2025, inviting participants with lived experience and expertise to inform the discussions and set action plans going forward. [Historic England](#), [Museums Association](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

## Climate emergency

### Call for involvement in Oxford Archaeology Biodiversity project

A new project led by Oxford Archaeology and funded by Historic England is undertaking a survey of stakeholders involved in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to examine how and to what degree the Historic Environment is currently being included in BNG projects and practices. The short (5-10 minutes) questionnaire is open until 31 January 2025. There are two separate questionnaires for those who work in a local authority - <https://forms.office.com/e/3FfTvcFFJ4> and for professionals who work outside of a local authority - <https://forms.office.com/e/jkv7UpMHyg>. [Oxford Archaeology](#)

**Also:** German Museums Association launches 'sustainable museums' certification, [NEMO](#)

**Also:** How Amsterdam's Drift Museum is working to create more energy than it uses, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)



**Anselm Kiefer: Early Works, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 14 Feb-15 June 2025.** Anselm Kiefer (b. 1945) Margarethe - Sulamit (Margaret - Shulamite) , 1981 Watercolour on paper, 42 x 56 cm Hall Collection. Courtesy of the Hall Art Foundation. © Anselm Kiefer

## Continuing professional development

### Spring funding opportunities from the Paul Mellon Centre

The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art has a number of grants and fellowships available for individuals from £2,000 to £60,000 to support research investigating British art or architectural history, available to individuals at different stages of their careers. In particular the New Narratives funding which is awarded in the spring is designed to increase the diversity of perspectives among individuals in the field of British art history. Applications close on 31 January. [Paul Mellon Centre](#)

### Jonathan Ruffer curatorial grants

Designed to help curators undertake research projects by supporting travel and other practical costs, the Jonathan Ruffer curatorial grants are for curators, museum professionals and researchers and are distributed through Art Fund. Applicants need to be employed by or working with a UK museum, gallery or arts organisations and the funding can, for example, go towards UK and international travel and accommodation, training courses and subscriptions. Grants range from small grants up to £2,000 and large grants over £2,000. There is no fixed deadline for small grant applications and a deadline of 17 March 2025 for the next round of large grants. [Art Fund](#)

## Funding news and opportunities

### Julia Rausing Trust announces grants totalling £4.3m to museum and galleries

The Julia Rausing Trust have announced a total of £16.7m in heritage grants to cathedrals, botanical gardens and museums and galleries. As part of the £4.3m to support smaller regional museums across the UK, the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) has been awarded £600,000 for the Museum Fundamentals grant programme distributing grants of up to £20,000 for collections care - covering documentation, research and minor improvements to buildings and environmental conditions to ensure collections are looked after. The Museums Association has also received £1.5m for a forthcoming Health and Wellbeing in Museums Fund, a three year programme of grant making launching in Spring 2025 with 20 grants between £50,000 and £75,000. [Julia Rausing Trust](#) (press release), [Museums Association](#), [AIM](#)

As part of this programme of funding AIM have launched the Museum Fundamentals grants combining the existing collections care and conservation support from the Pilgrim Trust with new funding from the Julia Rausing Trust. The new grant will allow small and medium sized museums to create projects based on their collection needs, which improve knowledge, care and access to our nation's heritage. Grant awards are up to £20,000 and the closing date for expression of interest is 5pm Friday 7 February 2025. You need to be an AIM member to apply for this funding. [AIM](#)

### Pilgrim Trust conservation grants awarded

Collections care and conservation grants, funded by the Pilgrim Trust and distributed by AIM, resulted in 20 organisations offered support totalling over £63,000. Seven organisations were awarded Audit Grants including the Working Class Movement Library, Yorkshire Air Museum and Blindfold Fashion Museum. Five organisations received Collections Care Grants including £10,000 to Gainsborough's House and £7,610 to Bodmin Keep. Eight museums also received Remedial Conservation Grants including £7,325 to the Port Sunlight Village Trust, £1,765 to the Stromness Museum for the rehousing and conservation of the George Ellison Seaweed Collection and £6,330 to the Museum of Wigan Life for the conservation of archives belonging to silk manufacturers Charles Hilton and Son. [AIM](#) Applications for the next round of grants are open until Friday 28 March 2025. [AIM](#) (2025 applications)

## Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund opens for applications

Distributed through the Museums Association, the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund has a dual focus on collections and inclusion. There are two types of grants available including core grants to single museum organisations for strategic development of their inclusive collections work, and partnership project grants for museums and community organisations working equitably with collections to achieve shared aims for inclusion. Grants of up to £100k over a maximum of three years are available with around 12 grants per year in two funding rounds. Applications should outline work that explores and influences key themes in social and climate justice, such as wellbeing, decolonisation, climate crisis, antiracism and others. The deadline for a submission of the expression of interest form is 5 February 2025 with second stage applications in May and grants awarded in late June. [Museums Association](#)

## Conferences and events

### Museum storytelling explored with the Happy Museum Project

On Tuesday 4 February the Happy Museum Project are running an online session titled 'Museum storytelling for transformative change'. This interactive workshop will approach storytelling through the lens of system change - how might this help us (and our audiences and communities) to explore and imagine new possibilities, and to build confidence in our capacity to create the conditions for meaningful and transformative change for a thriving future? The session is devised and led Peter Lefort who runs the Green Futures Network at the University of Exeter. Peter is leading an innovative programme bringing a transformative model of systems change to grassroots and organisational social and environmental action. Running from 12.30-2pm ticket prices are £10. [Eventbrite](#)

The Happy Museum Project can also now be found on [Bluesky](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

### Attingham Trust courses for 2025

Attingham's study courses provide those who work in the museums and heritage sector the ability to engage with houses, palaces, gardens and collections through focused, on-site study. The courses also provide opportunities to develop professional relationships around the world and Attingham alumni make up an international network of professionals from museums and heritage institutions. There are five courses in 2025 and scholarship funding is available Application forms and more information on each course can be found online at the links provided:

- [The London House Course](#), 1-7 April 2025 (deadline 17 Jan)
- [The Attingham Summer School](#), 29 June -13 July 2025 (deadline 31 Jan)
- [Royal Collection Studies](#), 31 August – 9 September 2025 (deadline 14 Feb)
- [New Perspectives in Country House Studies](#), 21-25 September 2025 (deadline 14 Feb)
- [The Attingham Study Programme: from Granada to Madrid](#), 12-18 October 2025 (deadline 14 Feb)

### Building Resilience Webinar from Julie's Bicycle - preparing for climate change

Running from 11am-12.15pm on Wednesday 29 January, this free webinar from Julie's Bicycle will explore the risks posed by rising temperatures and extreme weather. It is an opportunity to discover strategies to adapt buildings and collections for a resilient future and will offer practical approaches to managing climate impacts, with guest speakers including Watershed Bristol. The sessions is for estate, facilities, and energy managers in cultural organisations. [Julie's Bicycle](#)

### Kids in Museums: Rethinking Museums online conference

This online conference from Kids in Museums will focus on family, society and careers, with case study presentations, interactive workshops and panel discussions. Sessions include talks on queer museum content and children, giving children a practical way to tackle climate change and offering accessible work-based learning opportunities for young people in museums. Ticket prices range from £30 for the recording, to £75 for larger organisations for attendance and recording. The conference is on 5 February from 10-4.30pm. [Kids in Museums](#)

### **Heritage Interpretation from GEM**

The Group for Education in Museums is running a Heritage Interpretation course from February to April 2025 which will help participants develop their understanding and application of interpretative good practice. Aimed at professionals with responsibility for planning, delivering or managing learning programmes or interpretation across the heritage sector, the virtual course takes place over 6 weeks and brings together heritage learning and interpretation professionals to share practice, ideas and approaches. The course runs from 10-12 noon on Wednesdays from 26 February to 2 April. Costs for non-members are £190 and for members £150. [GEM](#)

### **Afghanistan: Breathing Life into Heritage in a Fragile State**

The V&A's Culture in Crisis Programme has scheduled this free in-person talk at the V&A London on Tuesday 25 February from 2-3.30pm. The event brings together two cultural professionals who have been working in Afghanistan for over seventeen years to discuss their work, engagement with local communities across the country, and the role heritage protection can play as an integral part of peace building and reconciliation processes. The session will explore the current landscape of cultural projects and their politics, discussing the funding challenges they face, referencing past and current projects aimed at engaging the current de facto government, disparate communities and non-state actors within cultural heritage preservation activities. [V&A](#)



**Anselm Kiefer: Early Works, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 14 Feb-15 June 2025.** Anselm Kiefer (b. 1945) Die Etsch (The Adige) , early-1970s Watercolour, gouache and ink on paper, 56 x 41 cm Hall Collection. Courtesy of the Hall Art Foundation. © Anselm Kiefer. Photo: Mark-Woods.com

## Appointments and resignations

**Dr Xa Sturgis**, Director of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, has been appointed as Academic Director of the Oxford Cultural Leaders (OCL) as they mark their 10th anniversary. Dr Sturgis succeeds Professor Paul Smith, co-founder and Academic Director of Oxford Cultural Leaders, who is retiring. Designed and delivered by Oxford University's Gardens, Libraries & Museums in partnership with the Saïd Business School, OCL is an internationally acclaimed programme aimed at senior management professionals within the cultural sector who want to redefine their identity as leaders. [OCL](#)

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy announced on 17 December that Arts Council England Chair **Sir Nicholas Serota's** tenure has been extended by 18 months. The press release from DCMS, which also confirmed the independent review of Arts Council England, stated the extension has been granted to provide stability during the review process. Serota's term appointment ran from 1 February 2017 and was due to end on 31 January 2025. [Gov.uk](#), [Arts Professional](#)

**Frankie Kubicki** has been named as the new Director of the Charles Dickens Museum in London and will take on the role from March 2025 following current Director Cindy Sughrue departure. Sughrue has been in post for nearly 10 years and leaves as the museum celebrates its centenary in 2025. Kubicki is currently Deputy Director: Programmes & Collections at the museum and joined eight years ago as a curator. [Dickens Museum](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

Glasgow Life have announced the resignation of Chief Executive **Susan Deighan** after 18 years of service. Deighan helped create the charity in 2007 and was appointed Chief Executive in 2022, having held senior positions including Deputy Chief Executive and Directory of City Marketing and External Relations. She will formally step down on 27 June 2025. [Glasgow Life](#)

## Obituary

### Rosalind Savill (12 May 1951 - 27 December 2024)

Tributes have been paid to Rosalind Savill, Director of the Wallace Collection from 1992 to 2011, who died after a short illness at the end of December. Savill began her career at the V&A before moving to the Wallace Collection where she was appointed Assistant to the Director in 1978. In 2000 she was awarded a CBE for her services to the study of ceramics and in 2009 was named Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire. [Guardian](#), [Telegraph](#)

## Catch up

Local Welsh treasures saved and restored with UK Government funding, 23 December 2024, [Gov.uk](#)

Minister approves plans for multimillion-pound museum in Derry-Londonderry, 20 December 2024, [Museums Association](#)

DCMS expects to lose over £25m in Covid loan repayments, 18 December 2024, [Arts Professional](#) (£), [Civil Service World](#)

Paisley Museum redevelopment costs spiral by £12.5m, 17 December 2024, [Museums Association](#)

£191 million repairs and revamp of Barbican Centre approved with work to 'start in 2027', 5 December 2024, [Standard](#)

## International news

Unesco beefs up protection for cultural heritage in Ukraine, 26 December 2024, [Art Newspaper](#), [Euronews](#)

Berlin government approves €130m culture cuts, 23 December 2024, [Art Newspaper](#), [Euronews](#)

Climate Museum to open in permanent home in New York, 23 December 2024, [Bloomberg](#)

India, France sign pact for world's largest museum in Delhi, 21 December 2024, [Times of India](#)

Saudi Arabia to contribute €50m to Pompidou renovations in Paris, 12 December 2024, [Euronews](#)

## Correction

### The Robson Orr Visual Literacy Research Initiative

In the December 2024 Newsletter the Robson Orr Visual Literacy Research Initiative launch was erroneously attributed to Art UK. The 3 year research initiative which seeks to measure the impact of visual literacy tools on students' visual literacy and social and academic outcomes was launched by the funders the Robson Orrs. The partners working in collaboration on this project are Art UK, the Government Art Collection and the University of Oxford. [Art UK](#), [University of Oxford](#)

## Jobs

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

- [Senior Events Manager - Museum of the Home](#)
- [Development Manager - Sir John Soane's Museum](#)
- [Apprenticeship and Skills Pathway Manager \(fixed term, 13 months maternity cover\) - RAF Museum](#)
- [Head of Brand Licensing - University of Oxford](#)
- [Senior Engineering Manager, Estate & Facilities - London Museum](#)
- [Junior Designer - National Portrait Gallery](#)

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