



Aberdeen
Archives,
Gallery &
Museums

Annual Review

June 2024 – May 2025



Provost Skene's House



Aberdeen Art Gallery



Aberdeen Maritime Museum

ABERDEEN ARCHIVES, GALLERY & MUSEUMS

Who we are: The city's collection has grown over centuries, and has been shared with the public since 1885, first through Aberdeen Art Gallery, then the wider museums and archives services at Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Archives, Maritime Museum, Treasure Hub, Provost Skene's House and Tolbooth Museum. Exploring, re-interpreting and using the collection can help all of us explore our past, share our present and inspire our future, showing the best of Aberdeen to the world.

Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums (AAGM) is a public sector organisation and forms part of Aberdeen City Council. The team also provides care for and access to the Aberdeenshire Council's accumulated archive and strives to achieve the same ambitions for that collection as it does on behalf of Aberdeen City Council.

Our purpose is to share the city's collection in engaging ways.

To do this we need to care for and understand the collection, create opportunities for people to access the collection and venues, promote and enhance what's on offer, become more resilient and sustainable, and ensure we are relevant and accessible to all.

Our vision is to be a place for people to explore Aberdeen's identity and culture, and its connections to the world – making Aberdeen a better place to live, work and visit.

We want to collect contemporary art and craft, objects with meaning and connection, and new and old stories about the city to reflect our city's culture in its many forms – creating a record of our city and its place in the world for future generations. We aim to contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous city. We want to open the doors to curiosity, enquiry and discovery, and look after the wonderful cultural collection and historic buildings we have been entrusted with.



331,528
total admissions



222,516
Art Gallery admissions
including Spectra



80,001
Maritime Museum
admissions



28,258
Provost Skene's House
admissions



753
Treasure Hub
admissions



85,560
social media followers



450,274
web page visits



Global link clicks top 10

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| 1. UK | 6. Germany |
| 2. South Korea | 7. France |
| 3. USA | 8. Ireland |
| 4. Singapore | 9. Spain |
| 5. Canada | 10. Japan |



£89,336
grants secured



£54,156
donation box income



£493,684 (net)
total commercial income

Collections, Archives, Gallery & Museums

- Aberdeen Art Gallery and Regional Museum opened in 1885
- 150,000+ objects
- One of Scotland's 51 "Recognised Collections of National Significance"
- Full Accreditation under the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme

eMuseum

- <https://emuseum.aberdeencity.gov.uk/collections>
- Every object record online
- CC0 image downloads
- Aberdeen Built Ships
- Exhibitions
- Archaeological Sites
- City Plaques

Collective Imagination
BERLIN 2025





104

objects and documents
added to the collection



96,467

entries searchable in the
online archives catalogue



154,475

records searchable
on e-museum



293,327

e-museum visits



707

enquiries answered



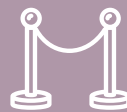
7,500

objects audited
and reviewed



44

museum collections
research visits
(Archives closed during
this period)



12

new exhibitions in
collection galleries



21,866,672

Wikimedia views



£48,396

external grants awarded
for acquisitions and
commissions



£12,029

grants awarded by
Aberdeen Art Gallery
Trusts for acquisitions

friends
of
Aberdeen Archives,
Gallery & Museums

£16,475

awarded by the Friends
of AAGM for acquisitions
and commissions

Acquisitions

AAGM's collections and archives make a major contribution to the **cultural identity** of Aberdeen. This year, thanks to a combination of donations, bequests, gifts and funding from the Friends of Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums, Aberdeen Art Gallery Trusts, National Fund for Acquisitions, Art Fund and Contemporary Art Society, **104 new objects** and **documents** have been acquired.

Highlights include:

- **Self-portraits** by artists Annalee Davis and Richard Maguire commissioned by AAGM as part of the Friends of AAGM funded *Self-Portrayed* project, to increase representation and diversity in the self-portrait collection.



Self-portraits displayed in Gallery 1

- **View from the Aeroplane**, a moon jar inspired by a flight maker Akiko Hirai took over Alaska, purchased with grants from the National Fund for Acquisitions and the Friends of AAGM.



View from the Aeroplane, Akiko Hirai

- **Radiolaria I**, by Cathrine Holtet, winner of the Scottish Potters Association Anne Lightwood Memorial Award for best work.
- **Selkie** by Claire Partington, a ceramic sculpture of the mythical creature in human form, purchased with grants from the Contemporary Arts Society and Aberdeen Art Gallery Trusts.



Radiolaria I, Cathrine Holtet © Cathrine Holtet

Collection rationalisation

Through rationalisation we are working to make the collections more sustainable, relevant, accessible and dynamic.

The journey so far:

- July 2024 – Museums & Galleries Scotland-funded Rationalisation Officer recruited
- November 2024 – rationalisation themed Treasure Hub Open Day and associated exhibition
- 462 individual objects reviewed and database records improved
- 18 historic missing items located
- 22 objects transferred to new more relevant homes
- 27 objects recycled



Collection exhibitions

Exhibitions help us to share the **remarkable objects and archives** in the city's care and the fascinating stories they hold, with visitors to our venues.

This year we installed **12 new** permanent collection exhibitions including:

- **Reading Between the Lines**, an exhibition of recently conserved embroidered samplers dating from the 1700s and 1800s, providing insights into the lives of the girls who sewed them and the social, political and religious environments they grew up in. Conservation supported by Friends of AAGM.



- **Works on Paper – Women Artists**, works from 12 contemporary practitioners highlighting the depth and diversity of AAGM's drawing, print and photography collections.



- **Tales of the Tall Ships**, marking the arrival of the Tall Ships Races in Aberdeen in summer 2025, the exhibition makes connections between these iconic vessels and the city's maritime past, present and future.



- **What's Your Treasure – Museum Misfits?**, exploring why objects end up in museum collections, considering what keeps them relevant and asking if we should care for everything forever.
- A display documenting the **2023-25 mass move of Archives collections** out of St Peter's School, Old Aberdeen.

Conservation

We **care for and conserve objects** so we can share them today and ensure they remain **accessible** to future generations.

This year's highlights include:

- Recruitment of AAGM's first **Care and Conservation Officer**.
- Securing **funding** from the Mrs Marguerite McBey Trust for a **five-year programme** of fine art conservation, re-glazing and frame restoration.
- A grant of £3,000 from the Friends of AAGM towards the **conservation of *Homage to Yuri Gagarin*** by Derek Ashby. The large-scale sculpture will be displayed later in 2025 as part of an exhibition marking 140 years of Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen Art Gallery.

Loans

Loans to other museums and galleries help to **build Aberdeen's profile** nationally and internationally.

This year we have loaned 10 objects and artworks including:

- **The Red Jersey**, a painting of her young son Kit by Mabel Pryde Nicholson, to the Grange Museum and Art Gallery, near Brighton & Hove, for the first exhibition dedicated to Nicholson in over 100 years – **4,168 visitors**.



The Red Jersey, Mabel Pryde Nicholson

- **Still Life** by Vanessa Bell to MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, for the exhibition *A World of Form and Colour*, rated **5 stars in the Guardian newspaper** culture review – **16,192 visitors**.
- **Family Group** and **The Nosegay** by Philip Connard for the exhibition *Eternal Summer: paintings by Philip Connard* at The Atkinson, Southport – **24,000 visitors**.

Access

Providing **access** to our collections and **research** means we can **support engagement** with and **learning** about the collections for online and physical visitors, researchers, and cultural, heritage and educational organisations.

This year we have:

- Photographed **156 paintings** and scanned **691 prints**.
- Commissioned **James McBey** biographer Alistair Soussi to produce the first full **transcription of the artist's diaries**.
- Answered **research enquiries** from across the globe including America, Canada, Australia and South Africa.
- **Presented the lecture** *Lost and Found – Searching for Objects and Information at Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums* at the conference *Collective Imagination* alongside representatives from **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, Yale Centre for British Art and **Musée d'Orsay**.
- Shared Aberdeen's Chinese decorative art collection and the James Cromar Watt bequest at the **Chinese Art in Scotland: Collections Access, Display and Learning** roundtable discussion at the **University of St Andrews**.



Chinese Cloisonné enamel moon flask

“ Thank you to the Aberdeen Treasure Hub team for offering this invaluable experience – helping to connect the rich history of design with the next generation of creators. ”

Feedback from Gray's School of Art

Moving home

The Archives team completed the **move out of Old Aberdeen House** – the first stage in the journey to provide **improved access** to and **storage** of the City and Shire's Archives.

This year, supported by **20 volunteers** they have:

- appraised and condition checked over **9,000 items**
- labelled and re-located over **7,000 boxes**
- spent **20 days** transporting and **heavy lifting** the collections, including glass slides from Second World War Red Cross hospitals, maps, oversized volumes and ledgers, and **thousands of architectural plans**
- **re-opened a public service** at the Town House
- eaten more than **130 packets of biscuits!**



Shelves of volumes and ledgers before packing began



Empty shelving relocated to the Town House

During the move staff and volunteers encountered many **archival items** for the first time. Stand out **favourites** were:

- this photographic **poster of Aberdeen postal staff** – when you've stopped looking at the facial hair, consider the ratio of male to female workers
- a scrapbook created by Kittybrewster School to mark **Queen Elizabeth II's coronation**



CULTURAL LIFE IN THE CITY





9,686 tickets sold

Wildlife Photographer of the Year
(touring exhibition)



5,451 tickets sold

Artist Textiles
(touring exhibition)



19,869

participants in
public programme events



35

pay-what-you-can
Lunchbreak Concert



7,317

Lunchbreak Concert
attendees – 41% increase
on 2023/4



22

lunchtime talks



936

lunchtime talks attendees
– 68% increase on 2023/4



32,040

Art Gallery visits during
Spectra light festival over
four evenings

“

Seeing (Picasso's) iconic motifs emblazoned on cocktail culottes and a colourful rain mac is quite the showstopper.

”

The Scotsman ★★★★★

“

It has been a great experience working with Aberdeen Art Gallery; bringing exhibitions to the city and participating in talks, workshops and events there was a highlight of the Fashion and Textile Museum's year.

Fashion and Textile Museum

”



Did you know?

70% of our performances and events are free or pay what you can.

Through the **special exhibitions** and **activities** we programme, and the vibrant mix of **festivals and events** hosted at our venues, AAGM makes a **significant contribution to Aberdeen's cultural life** – attracting both new and repeat **visitors into the city centre**.

Special exhibitions

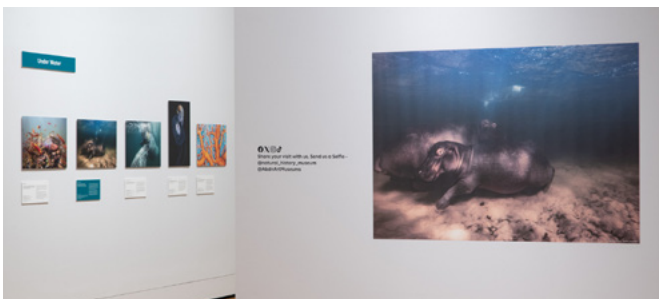
The programme featured **major touring exhibitions** at Aberdeen Art Gallery:

- **Wildlife Photographer of the Year** from the Natural History Museum, London showcased the best of photography talent from around the world. It gave visitors the opportunity to get up close to some of the world's most extraordinary species, the lives they live and the challenges they face.



- We worked with the Fashion and Textiles Museum, London to bring the exhibition **Artist Textiles – Picasso to Warhol** to the city following an international tour. The show explored textiles and fashion as popular artforms in 20th century Britain, Europe and the United States through rare examples of textiles by leading artists including **Salvador Dalí, Sonia Delaunay, Barbara Hepworth, Henri Matisse, Joan Miró, Henry Moore, Pablo Picasso and Andy Warhol**.

**fashion
+ textile
museum**



- Legend, myth and modern-day science combine in **Monsters of the Deep – Science Fact and Fiction?** which opened in May 2025, taking the visitor on a journey from the medieval mind to the modern-day mysteries of the ocean. Programmed to complement **The Tall Ships Races** visit to the city in July, the exhibition explores the deep sea, ancient and modern stories of strange creatures, separates fact from the fiction and examines what really lurks beneath the waves and why tales of **monsters** persist.



A range of events complemented the exhibition including a lecture with celebrated Scottish wildlife photographer and cameraman, **Raymond Besant** who gave an insight to the thrills and adventures of a career which has seen him travel worldwide.



Partnership projects

Each year an **exciting range** of projects that help us **connect with our diverse audiences** are made possible by partnership working.

This year's partners include:

- **Aberdeen Artists Society** and a selected group of its members to produce the exhibition *Process, Process, Process*. Unusually there was no finished artworks on display – rather the artists provided an insight into how the creative process works, sharing their ideas, the tools they use and methods of working.



Process, Process, Process.

- **Peacock**, Aberdeen's printmaking studio – continuing their 50th anniversary celebration with the **New Aberdeen Bestiary**, an exhibition featuring prints by seven international artists displayed together for the first time at the Gallery.



- **NESCol** – delivering the Maritime Portrait Photography Project to capture the diverse careers and people involved in local maritime industries. The results will be emblazoned across the Tall Ships event site this summer.



- **Science in Your World**, a Science Museum Group programme, growing the confidence of the AAGM team to explore and share science in Aberdeen's collections with visitors from all ages and backgrounds.



- **Edinburgh City Council** worked with us to bring the **Travelling Gallery** - the contemporary art gallery in a bus - to the city with an exhibition called *After Glass* featuring work by Rachel McBrinn and Alison Scott. The bus toured to Northfield Community Centre (40 visitors), Lochside Academy (104) and Union Terrace Gardens (81).



- Working alongside **Citymoves**, **Sound Scotland**, the **University of Aberdeen**, **Aberdeen Performing Arts** and **Jazz Scotland** we **hosted over 20 events as part of city festivals** including Dancelive, **soundfestival**, WayWORD, Granite Noir and Aberdeen Jazz Festival.

We were also delighted to work alongside **national partners** including **Scottish Ensemble**, **BBC Radio 3**, **Dunedin Consort** and **Lyon & Turnbull**.

A love of music

Enjoyment of and participation in **making music** in our venues helps us to reach new audiences and stay connected with old friends.

This year's '**high notes**' include:

- The premiere of the Tall Ships Anthem for the much-anticipated Tall Ships visit, performed by Primary 4 pupils from Abbotswell School in Aberdeen Art Gallery. ***The Sea Journey***, by Clara-Jane Maunder, follows the journey of a sailor as they return to Aberdeen after a long time at sea.
- The **broadcast** of three of our Lunchbreak Concerts on **BBC Radio 3** as part of their **New Generation Artists**, with performances by Alim Beisembayev, Ryan Corbett & Geneva Lewis, and Chaos Quartet.
- **Banter and Beats** – with support from The Doric Board, we celebrated 'oor mither tongue' of Doric with an evening's entertainment by North East rapper Jackill, Loud Poets Grand Slam winner *Jo Gilbert*, and acclaimed singer and musician *Iona Fyfe*.
- **Student masterclass with Royal Scottish National Orchestra** – hosting musicians from the RSNO for three sessions working with school pupils from across Aberdeen, all of whom receive in-school tuition from Aberdeen City Music School.



Aberdeen City Music School users

- **Student Masterclass with Imma Setiadi and Nigel Clayton** – pupils from Aberdeen's music schools took part in a free piano masterclass led by Professor Nigel Clayton and Imma Setiadi. Over the course of the day, students had an opportunity to enjoy a **four-hand piano recital** by Nigel and Imma and hear about the concert programme in more depth, before each sharing a piano piece they prepared.



- **Production Pathways** – working with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Aberdeen Performing Arts and North East Scotland College, to provide a production arts day for **80 Aberdeen city school pupils** on lighting and sound on the stage of His Majesty's Theatre and delving into the art of design for theatre at Aberdeen Art Gallery.



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland



City festivals and events

We are a **major contributor** to the city's **vibrant events programme**:

This year we:

- Hosted **Dame Zandra Rhodes** for an evening of conversation with Dennis Nothdruff, Head of Exhibitions at the Fashion & Textile Museum and curator of the exhibition *Artist Textiles: From Picasso to Warhol* at the Art Gallery. The **sell-out evening** focused on the unique collection of fashion and textiles on show in the exhibition and also saw **Dame Zandra sign copies** of her new book *Iconic: My Life in Fashion in 50 Objects*.

Dennis Nothdruff led several curator tours of the exhibition and a special workshop – *How to draw like a fashion designer*.



Dame Zandra and Dennis in Gallery 18, Aberdeen Art Gallery

- Ran a programme of events as part of the city's first **Festival of the Sea**, celebrating all things maritime and marking one year until the **Tall Ships Races** visit Aberdeen. Throughout July 2024, we hosted performances, workshops and events for families and adults. Our maritime programme consisted of **38 events** and reached over **1,500 people**.
- Re-imagined the **Cowdray Hall** as a forest, a marshland and a treacherous mountain as we welcomed 80 avid gamers to *The Radiant Vault*, a day-long **Dungeons and Dragons** event.



Festival of the Sea event

FIND YOUR
OWN STORY!





1,376

pupils visited
Aberdeen Art Gallery



759

pupils visited
Aberdeen Maritime
Museum



105

pupils visited
Provost Skene's
House



62

pupils visited Aberdeen
Treasure Hub



204 adults
290 children

attended free family fun events



93

adults attended free
workshops



173

people took part in pop-up Treasure
Box object handling sessions



146 Art Gallery
182 Maritime Museum

visitors enjoyed Art Gallery and
Maritime Museum Discovery Tours



410

visitors came along to our regular
Treasure Hub Open Days

“

Before starting the placement, I was extremely nervous going into new environments but this is such a supportive and encouraging setting. I feel proud of what I have been part of.

Aria Chahal, RGU student, AAGM Audience Acquisition team intern

”

“

I absolutely loved my time on placement and have been telling all my fellow fine art students about the incredible experiences and opportunities I had during my 2 weeks as part of the AAGM team.

James Downie, Gray's School of Art, student placement

”

FIND YOUR OWN STORY!

We develop and host a wide range of **informal activities, educational experiences and training opportunities** designed to help everyone find their own story.

This year's highlights include:

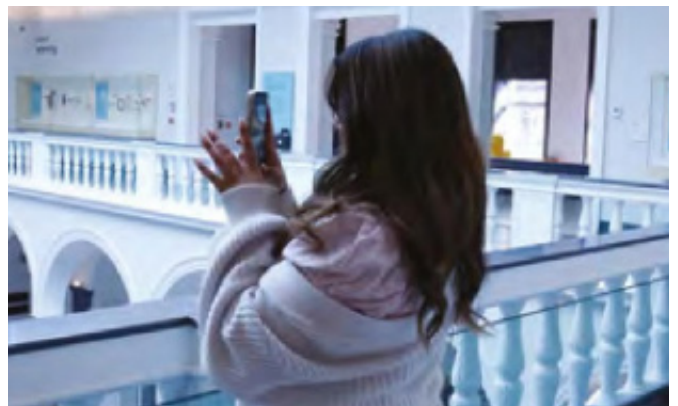
- **Our World in Science... our Sensory World**, a workshop, developed by **specialist ASN teacher** Karen Gebbie-Smith for the AAGM team, offering practical ways to interpret museum objects based on **how our senses connect us to the world**.
- Launching a **Bloomberg Connects** free digital guide for Provost Skene's House – since September 2024 **182** users have used the app to explore the house, its history and contents.



**Bloomberg
Connects**

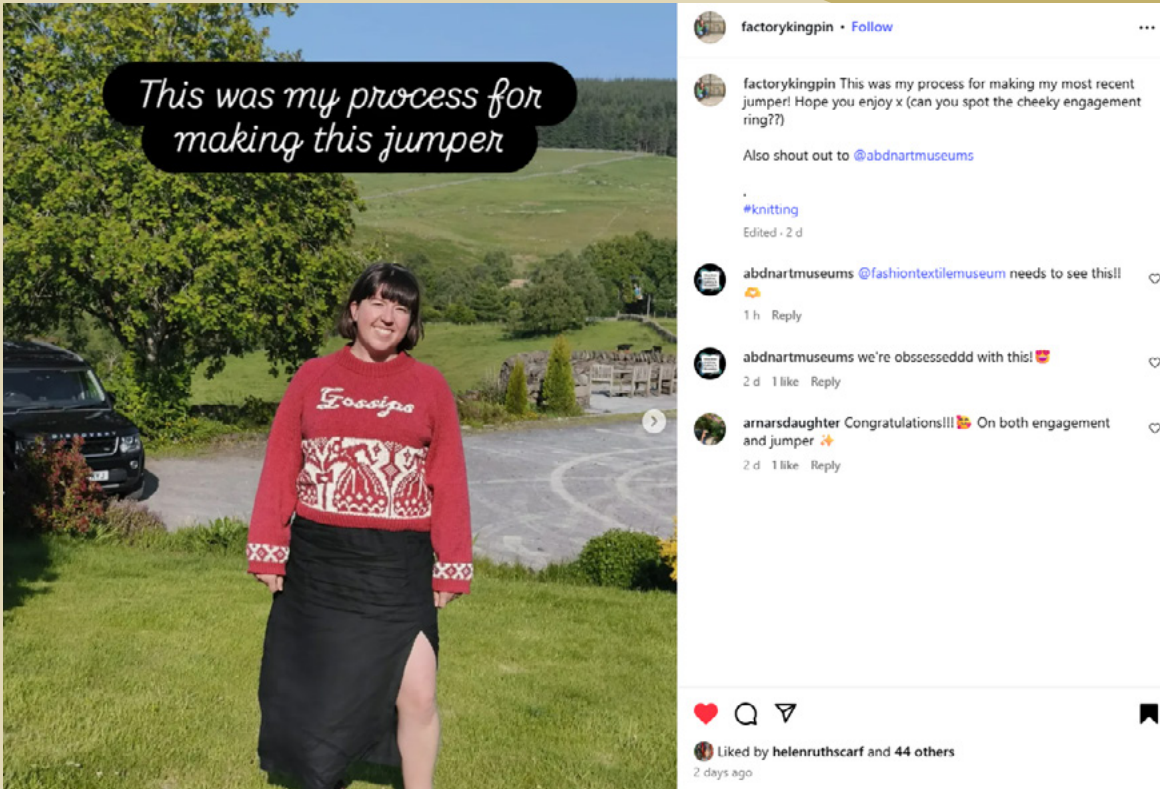


- Supporting **146 S1 pupils at Lochside Academy** to take a scientific approach to sensory exploration with the **Science in Your World Mystery tins** sessions. Pupils followed this by visiting the Art Gallery to explore the collection and made their own cyanotype photographs.
- Collaborating with **60 pupils from Manor Park Primary, Northfield**, to explore rationalisation – what objects should stay in the museum collections.
- Welcoming **40 pupils** to *Wild Life photographer of the Year* **science themed workshops** in the Art Gallery. The pupils learned about **animal conservation and the climate crisis**, and participated in activities that supported **literacy and creativity** across learning.
- **Hosting** James Downie, 3rd year Gray's School of Art student for a **placement** working across **Public Programme** activities including exhibitions, school and family programmes and events. And Aria Chahal, RGU student for a **12 month internship** in the **AAGM Audience Acquisition team** focussing in generating light-hearted content on our social media platforms to reach new and younger audiences.



Intern Aria Chahal at work in the Gallery

GETTING TO KNOW YOU... ALL ABOUT YOU!



@Factorykingpin designed and knitted a 'gossip' jumper inspired by fabric on display in *Artist Textiles: From Picasso to Warhol* at the Art Gallery



12,437
Instagram



2,351
Threads



15,155
Facebook



67
Bluesky



1,350
TikTok



54,200
Twitter/X



85,560
total followers



Friends of Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums talk

friends
of Aberdeen Archives,
Gallery & Museums

265
membership of the
Friends of AAGM

“

The exclusive Friends' previews are an excellent opportunity to see exhibitions as they open.

”

New member of the Friends of AAGM

“

I would recommend joining the Friends both to help support and develop the artistic community in Aberdeen and to learn more about the gallery and museums and how they interact with the city's wider cultural scene.

”

New member of the Friends of AAGM

GETTING TO KNOW YOU... ALL ABOUT YOU!

Building relationships with current visitors and understanding more about potential visitors is vital to planning engaging and relevant exhibitions, events and experiences.

This year we have developed **audience insights** by:

- Programming events for the **Friends of AAGM** including Friends Fridays, **exclusive preview sessions** for special exhibitions, new collection displays and acquisitions.
- Collaborated with **Zandra Rhodes'** social media team on content for her **sell-out talk** and book signing in Aberdeen Art Gallery.
- Contracting **The Audience Agency** to support AAGM in identifying, understanding and growing audiences. Their approach – informed by **over 1,000 visitor surveys** – has been shared with the team over a series of workshops and will result in a robust, **inclusive and resilient strategy for engaging** with existing and new audiences over the next 3 to 5 years.
- Held our first **social media giveaway**, offering two *Artist Textiles: Picasso to Warhol* tickets via a competition on Instagram.

We use **social media** platforms to **share information and stories**, reach out to audiences and find out about the inventive ways people are engaging with our collections and venues.

This year we have:

- Introduced influencer previews strategies for special exhibitions *Artist Textiles* and *Monsters of the Deep*.



WELCOMING SPACES OPEN TO ALL



“ This is actually my favourite place, I’m coming in more now. ”

S3 pupil, Lochside Academy, visit supported by
The William Syson Foundation Travel Fund Initiative

“ I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for the unforgettable time our students (ages 8,9,10 and 13) had in your gallery. They absolutely loved the visit and everyone left with great enthusiasm and admiration for the experience. ”


Ukrainian Sunday School organiser

Musical Memories;

 **24**
events


682
attendees

Artroom Events;

 **51**
Artroom
Events


571
Artroom
attendees

Our Aberdeen;

 **24**
events

67
attendees

**The William Syson Foundation
Travel Fund Initiative;**

 **35**
class trips

593
pupils

“ I was feeling so lonely and had no one to talk to before this. ”
Artroom participant

“ You should get this (Artroom sessions) prescribed by the NHS – It’s definitely better than any pills I’ve ever had. ”
Artroom participant

WELCOMING SPACES OPEN TO ALL

We are committed to ensuring **all our venues are welcoming, inclusive, safe, and fun and free to enter** for everyone.

To support this we:

- Held tours and workshops at Aberdeen Art Gallery as part of the **Refugee Scotland Festival 2024**. Performances by **Ukrainian musicians** in the Cowdray Hall attracted **160 attendees**.

**REFUGEE
FESTIVAL
SCOTLAND**



- Provide our venues as a locations that can be used by the **ACC Communities Resettlement team**. Every Friday people taking part in **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)** meet for courses and board game sessions at the **Maritime Museum**.
- Host Aberdeen City Council's **PEEP Learning Together** programme at the Art Gallery, supporting parents and carers to **access learning and strengthen attachment** relationships with their children.
- Partner with the **Grampian Hospitals Art Trust (GHAT)** to offer **Artroom** every Saturday at the Art Gallery, **supporting adults** seeking a creative space to try new things, make **social connections** and explore their art making. All sessions are supported by professional artists and people are referred via clinical settings or come to the event via AAGM and city-wide **wellbeing programme** marketing.



Sensory exploration of the *Balmoral Phenomenon* exhibition

- Receive funding from **The William Syson Foundation Travel Fund Initiative** to support **schools visits** to Aberdeen Art Gallery. The aim is to share and explore the city's collection of art with schools who have **never visited** the Art Gallery before, pupils with additional support needs and those **with complex health conditions**.

THE
WILLIAM SYSON
FOUNDATION



Did you know?

28% of pupils whose visits were supported by The William Syson Foundation Travel Fund Initiative said it was their first visit to ANY gallery



Artroom outcomes

92% of participants experienced a positive change

88% of participants demonstrated the confidence to try something new

100% of participants wellbeing improved as a result of attendance

“ Visually-impaired visitor with her guide dog wanted to sing the praises of the accessibility of the venue – the large print labels, magnifiers and the staff attitudes and training. ”

Visitor comment, November 2024

“ It was wonderful to be able to take our learners on a trip, as the complexity of need within the class makes this difficult to accomplish, and the cost of transport for trips makes them unaffordable for some families. ”

Teacher, Glashieburn Primary Enhanced Provision, visit supported by The William Syson Foundation Travel Fund Initiative

“ A woman approached me in Gallery to say she had never before experienced the variety of different ways the pupils could interact with the art and the joy it brought them. ”

Learning Officer, Aberdeen Archives Gallery & Museums

“ We currently have 10 families attending the group. When social work/health refer families to us, they often ask about availability at the Art Gallery group because it is a central location. I know many of the families explore the Art Gallery before and after the PEEP sessions. ”

PEEP co-ordinator

CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS





AAGM volunteers come together for inaugural Volunteer Get Together



179
registered
volunteers



45
active volunteers



60
new
volunteers



5416.6
hours contributed
by volunteers

“

A huge thank you to all the volunteers we have worked with this year – without them the move out of Old Aberdeen House would not have been possible.

”

Kim Smith, AAGM Archivist

“ The task was daunting, but we have created a library we are delighted to share with visitors. We hope the public will love and appreciate the library as much as we do. ”

McBey Library volunteer

“ The training in preparation was outstanding and the staff are very encouraging and supportive. A lovely way to spend a day meeting new people in a really exciting and stimulating venue. ”

Robert, Treasure Hub Open Day volunteer

“ Volunteering for the Aberdeen-Built Ships Project gives the opportunity of following up on an interest in shipping with research which, through the website, may be read by enthusiasts and genealogists across the world. ”

Finlay, Aberdeen-built ships volunteer

“ Volunteering has been a rewarding and fascinating experience for me. I always feel fully part of the friendly and enthusiastic Treasure Hub Open Day team working to make the day a success. ”

Caralyn, Treasure Hub Open Day volunteer

CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a **valued and essential** part of our workforce. The delivery of many of our projects relies on the **time and skills** they donate.

This year:

- The **Archive volunteers** supported our Archive team throughout the move from Old Aberdeen House. They contributed **1575.5** hours to this work, alongside bags of optimism and perseverance!



- The **Musical Memories volunteers** were invited to Afternoon Tea with **Lord Provost David Cameron** and the Lady Provost in recognition of the impact of the Art Gallery based **dementia-friendly sing-along-sessions** founded by Anne Cargill, Jean Dodds and Muriel Knox.



- The **McBey Library volunteers** have worked tirelessly to re-open the McBey Library. This invaluable repository of reference material on Aberdeen's art collections has been closed to the public since November 2019. In preparation for opening the library **4 new volunteers** were recruited to the team.



- The **Hub Open Day volunteers** undertook training to deliver the ever-popular free behind the scenes Treasure Hub taster tours. Until this year volunteers had only ever supported curators to deliver tours, our aspiration is for all **volunteers grow in confidence** and take the leading role.

- To coincide with the Festival of the Sea and the Tall Ships Races, volunteers from the **Aberdeen-built ships** recorded a selection of stories about vessels built in Aberdeen. Visitors can listen to these stories on the free **Bloomberg Connects** digital guide to the Museum.



We celebrated all our volunteers on 25 February at the inaugural **Volunteer Get Together** and launched the quarterly **Volunteer Bulletin** to introduce our volunteers, share stories from volunteer projects and highlight major milestones and events.

THE CITY'S ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Fine dining in the Harbour Gallery,
Aberdeen Maritime Museum



£4,150

income from collection
loans and hire



£4,870

income from image sales



£1,897

income from talks and tours



£2,393

income from travel trade



£902

income from filming
and photography



£22,366

income from café



£241,435

income from retail



£137,600

corporate hire net income



£42,740

income from
Wildlife Photographer
of the Year



£35,331

income from
Artist Textiles exhibition



81,446
café visitors



191
venues hires



29,505
retail transactions



Did you know:

- A mouth-watering **4,250 scones** were scoffed in the Gallery's two cafés this year – have you tried one yet?
- Doric themed products, including pin badges, tea-towels and the handy guide *Doric for Beginners*, were this year's bestseller...**get yer's afore they're awa!**



THE CITY'S ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

We **develop commercial opportunities** to help to secure a more **sustainable future** for the city's archives, museums, and gallery service. Our activities also contribute towards **the wider city economy** helping to make Aberdeen a **vibrant and exciting place to live, work and visit**.

This year's highlights include:

- Launching the **Tall Ships Makers Programme**, funded by the UK Government, to select five Aberdeen-based makers to develop original works inspired by the Tall Ships Races. **Three new product ranges** are available to purchase in our venues.
- Introducing a curated selection of ethically sourced, **sustainable products** reflecting official Tall Ships branding and celebrating **Aberdeen's rich diversity**, geography, culture and language to retail outlets in our venues.
- Hosting **Tea Green** pop-up design markets in July and November. The two events showcased **92 independent creative businesses**. Curators attended the event and purchased *Arc Necklace* by Tracy Wilson for the AAGM collections.
- Supporting the special exhibitions programme with a **tempting** array of themed product lines in the Art Gallery's **Shop at the Top**.



Zandra Rhodes' new book *Iconic* for sale during Artist Textiles



Arc Necklace, Tracy Wilson © Tracy Wilson



Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition merchandise

Support for the creative community

- **Acquiring** work by Lachlan Smith, Tomasz Wrobel and Anna Geerdes, all artists with **strong North East connections**, shown in the *Gordon Contemporaries* exhibition, Aberdeen Art Gallery April to November 2024.



Border Post, Anna Geerdes

- **Commissioning** artists Mary Bourne, Joshua Ekekwe and Bruce Swanson as part of the Friends of AAGM supported **5th round of Micro-commissions**. To qualify for a commission artists must live or work in AB postcodes.



Traders, Bruce Swanson

- Commissioning *Fit D'Ya Know About the Bon Accord* by **Council Baby**. The artwork was funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and premiered as part of Aberdeen's **Spectra Festival 2025**.

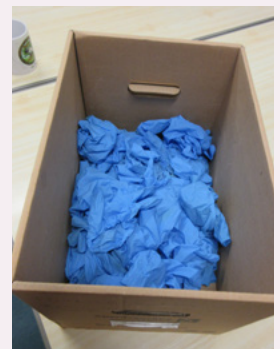


Support for a sustainable future

This year our venues were recognised with **Green Tourism Award** certification. **Gold** status for the Gallery and silver for the Maritime Museum, Provost Skene's House and Treasure Hub recognised the many changes AAGM has made towards more **sustainable and future focussed** ways of working.

This year's improvements include:

- recycling the blue nitrile gloves worn to handle collection objects
- using LED lighting, low -flush toilets and water-saving taps
- stocking recycled and plastic-free products in our shops
- removing single use plastics from the Art Gallery café
- using re-useable packaging and biodegradable tape to keep objects safe when they are moved



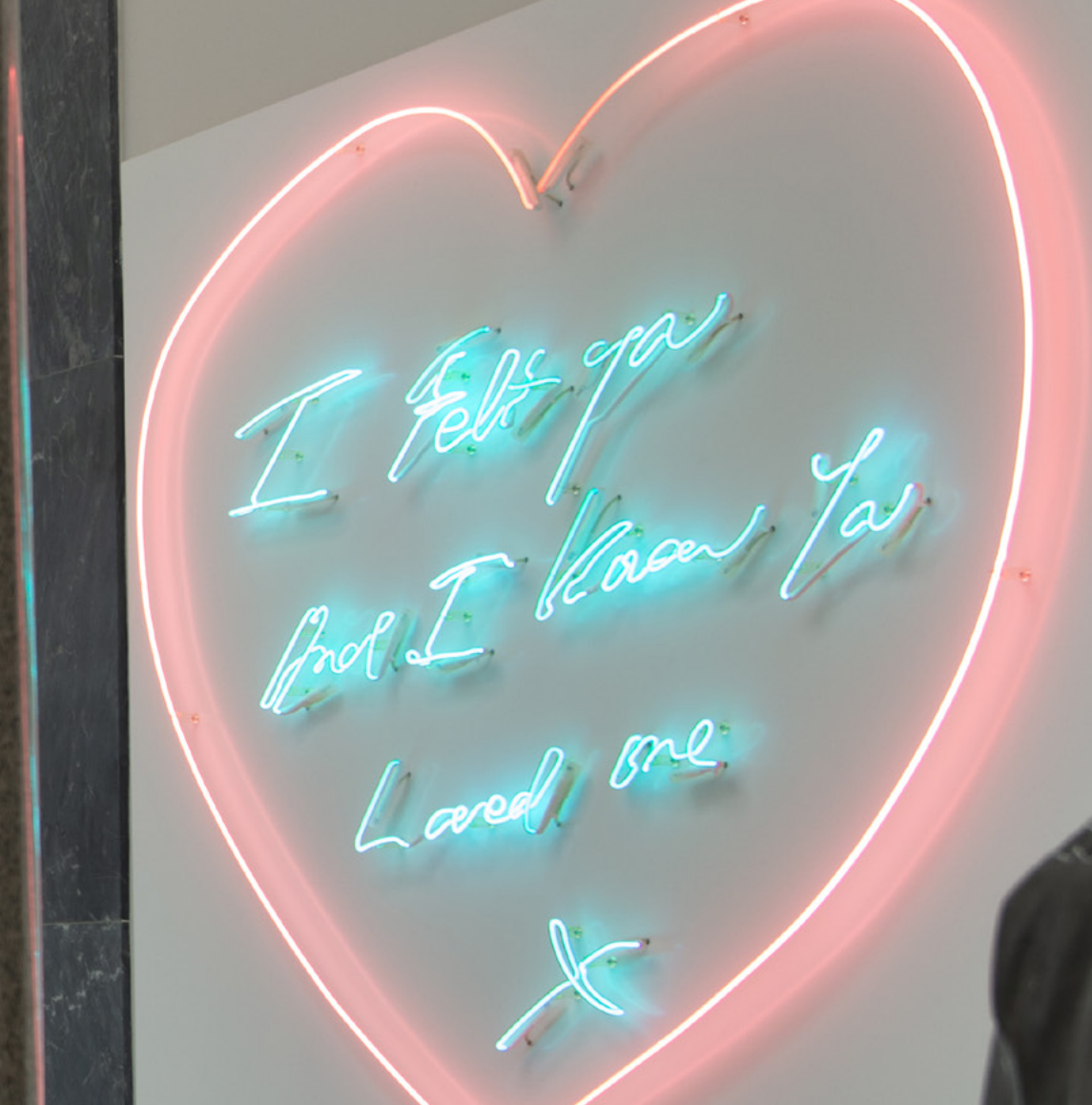
Venue hire

This year we booked 191 hires across our venues – **an increase of over 17%** on the same period last year. We are proud to offer unique and versatile packages to **local, national and international clientele**.



AND MORE....





Art Gallery

★★★★★

So impressed! Fabulous for families and adults alike. Beautiful building, so interesting. Loved it!

July 2024

★★★★★

Such a wonderful, open, interesting and thought-provoking art gallery. Beautiful mix of paintings, jewellery, textiles and ceramics. Staff are friendly and engaging and the gallery is accessible and so interesting. Not enough hours in the day!

March 2025

★★★★★

The pride of the city. It's just excellent.

March 2025

★★★★★

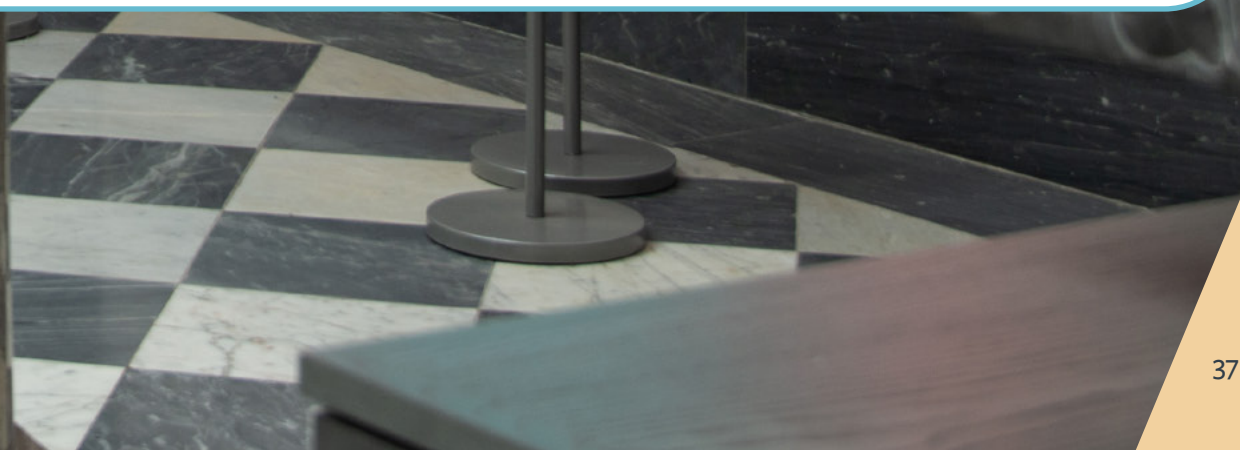
I had to go a second time because it was so unbelievably awesome.

September 2024

★★★★★

A wonderful gallery, beautifully curated - not to be missed.... And friendly staff, too.

February 2025



His Excellency visits

In February Inigo Lambertini, **Italian Ambassador** to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland enjoyed a highlights tour of the Art Gallery.

April Fools!

This year for April Fools, we announced on social media our intention to '**shave**' visitor favourite *I Love You Still* by Jordan Baseman, affectionately known as the '**hairy stick**'. Baseman was in on the joke and our followers loved it.



35 years of hurt finally ends

As Dons fans took to the streets in May to celebrate Aberdeen Football Club's triumphant win of the **Scottish cup** for the first time in 35 years, the cup itself was enjoying a visit to the Town House, home of **Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Archives**.



Open for business

On Saturday 24 May after **2 years hard work** by a dedicated team of volunteers sorting, weeding and categorising over 250 boxes of books the **McBey Library** in Aberdeen Art Gallery re-opened its doors to the public.



Time flies

November marked the **5-year anniversary** of the re-opening of the Art Gallery following the major redevelopment. Visitor numbers continue to go from strength to strength, with total **visitor figures growing** by over 11% in the last 3 years.

Popular Penelope

With an incredible **2,804,403** views *Penelope and the Suitors* by John William Waterhouse was our top of the pops most consistently viewed AAGM Wikimedia file.





Aberdeen Maritime Museum

★★★★★

Great museum and free entry. Definitely a must for all shipping fans!

July 2024

★★★★★

I haven't been here since I was a kid. Excellent displays presented very well in a fantastic building.

April 2025

★★★★★

Very exciting, full of interesting pictures, facts, objects. A great way to have a better understanding of sea life, past and present, of Aberdeen, fishermen and famous ships.

December 2024

★★★★★

The Aberdeen Maritime Museum is a true treasure of Scottish maritime history... essential experience for history and maritime enthusiasts!

March 2025

★★★★★

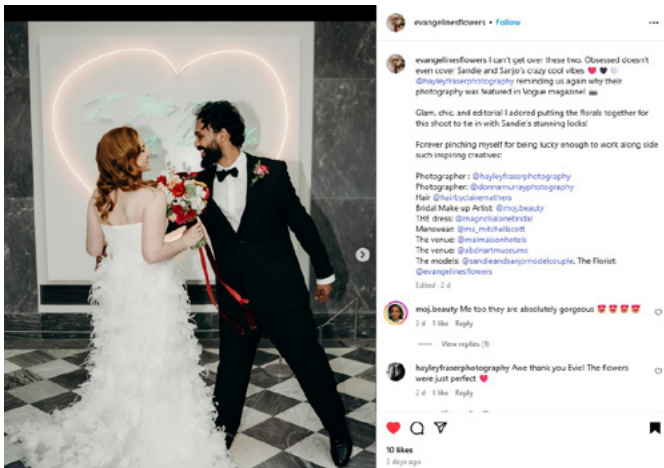
An excellent place...Well laid out, lots of interactive content. Staff were very helpful and friendly. And of course it's free entry.

September 2024



Love is all around us

This year the popularity of Aberdeen Art Gallery as a venue for fabulous **wedding** photos has rocketed. Newly-married couples are flocking to Tracy Emin's neon love-heart *For You*, for an iconic image of their special day.



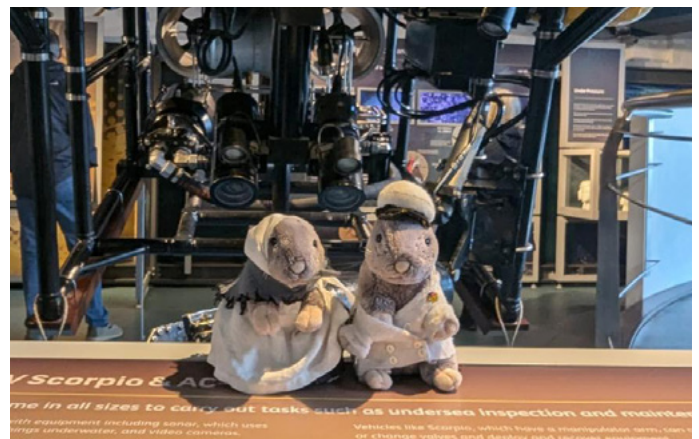
Fancy that!

Dressing up is de rigueur – whether for Halloween or marking the opening of special exhibitions, our staff, visitors and followers can be relied upon to impress.



Rat fans!

The **Scottish Maritime Museum** resident rats are usually to be found hiding out in Irvine. This year the pack decided to explore further afield, including Aberdeen Maritime Museum...as adorable as they are, we're hoping they left **no maritime mischief** behind...



Famous faces

On a well-earned break during their nationwide tour, **Scouting for Girls** visited the Art Gallery and shared their love for Bridget Riley's painting *To a Summers Day*, on display in Gallery 17. Also spotted in the Gallery this year were iconic Aberdeen singer **Annie Lennox**, comedian **Jenny Eclair** and actor **Richard E Grant**.





Provost Skene's House

★★★★★

One of the most interactive and fun museums I have ever been to.

June 2024

★★★★★

Absolutely beautiful. I would definitely recommend everyone visits for the "painted gallery" alone.

July 2024

★★★★★

Great wee museum!

March 2025

★★★★★

I had a wonderful time. A brilliantly interactive and thought-provoking place. Who could have known one city inspired so much brilliance.

December 2024

★★★★★

The staff are so friendly & amazing I can't recommend this place enough. Karen you may have changed my life.

August 2024



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