

The
Fitzwilliam
Museum
CAMBRIDGE

Annual Review 22/23



UNIVERSITY OF
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Introduction

The Fitzwilliam Museum is a centre for the examination of what it is to be human; a place to better understand ourselves and each other.

Our tools, our material, our primary means of reaching audiences, are works of art and, more broadly, visual and material culture – the complex and sometimes contradictory stories we discover in objects and images. Our collection has developed over more than two centuries and continues to evolve. Crucial for our work is that we now see ourselves as a creative and convening hub, both for the communities who visit and, increasingly, participate, and for a global network of artists, academics and other researchers. By analysing objects and works of art, our histories can provide a better grasp of our present, and to help us think more imaginatively and knowledgeably about our future. We are helping redefine what a museum is for and making ourselves a vital institution within the University of Cambridge.

Now we need to maintain and enrich this mission for another two centuries and more.

Over the past five years we have begun a fundamental transformation of the Fitzwilliam. We are thinking differently about who has the opportunity to interpret the art and artefacts we care for, how we shape ourselves into a unified institution that is more open, more questioning, more welcome, more unexpected. This effort also needs to make the Museum a financially sustainable asset to all our communities. I believe we've shown that these goals are achievable, and that this process is helping the Museum fully to realise its huge potential, not least within the University of Cambridge with its extraordinary resource of expertise and curious minds. We are hugely grateful to all those who have supported us – financially, practically and intellectually – in this period.

'We are helping
redefine what
a museum
is for.'

Luke Syson,
Director and Marlay Curator



Four years ago, in early 2020, staff and Syndics of the Fitzwilliam worked together to write our first-ever mission document. We said that we wanted the Museum to:

Touch peoples' lives by engaging powerfully, thoughtfully and pleasurably with as wide a public as possible;

Produce and promote innovative, relevant and interdisciplinary research of the highest quality around our collection.

We wanted to make the Fitzwilliam into a place of wonder and inspiration, rigour and surprise. And we wanted to encourage and take part in dialogues around works of art and material culture, increasing knowledge but also valuing experience and expertise of myriad kinds, and to ensure a plurality of approaches and outcomes. We wanted to make our exploration of a collection that we add to, preserve, research and document truly collaborative.

Much has happened since then. The pandemic, and the challenges we and many organisations face since the murder of George Floyd in 2020 and the global movement that it sparked, changed our emphasis and delayed some elements of our plan while accelerating others. The Museum has seen many colleagues leave and arrive and our funding model has changed more than we ever expected – in part because of our first participation in the national Research Excellence Framework (REF) for Universities, and in part because our funding suffered a stark cut by Arts Council England at what felt like a critical juncture. Despite some of these setbacks and thanks to incredibly hard and dedicated work from the staff of the Fitzwilliam and support of different kinds from the wider University, I believe that we are already achieving much of what we set out to do, and that other ambitions outlined within our mission are within grasp. The 2022-2023 reporting year is a clear demonstration of the laudable progress the Museum has made. Our exhibitions have surpassed expectations for their critical and popular appeal. Our research and related programming have withstood major funding setbacks to move towards truly pioneering models of collaborative work made possible by

new University, research council and philanthropic investment. We are now leading a new programme of funded PhDs for collections in the East of England. We have begun the work to revitalise our spaces, and to make the welcome we give our visitors even warmer.

Our research programme, our new acquisitions strategy and the exhibitions that showcased them increasingly tackled topics for today, ensuring that ignored and underrepresented voices could be heard and looking at parts of the world and histories that we have hitherto neglected. We took further steps towards becoming fully participatory, turning the Museum into a meeting place for minds, where academics, artists and audiences come together to generate new ideas and ways of seeing, and experiencing, the world. And our work towards our revised Masterplan, renovating our historic building, improving our collections documentation and identifying and pursuing sustainable funding streams all imagine the Museum undertaking its

mission, fulfilling its vision, ever more successfully for decades to come.

There's no pretending that this has not been challenging at times. This year included a 50% cut in funding by Arts Council England to the University of Cambridge Museums National Portfolio Organisation. Yet even this has spurred our transformation as we look to grow our family of philanthropic supporters and funding partners, increase our own financial sustainability and find better ways of working.

It is also worth emphasising that there is still a lot to do. But I believe that we can have more faith than ever in the capacity of the Fitzwilliam Museum to meet our challenges and to develop new ways of thinking, so that the collections and indeed the overarching purpose of this great institution, within the University of Cambridge, continue to be meaningful, powerful and relevant – now more than ever.



Highlights

This year featured **strong and engaging exhibitions** that appealed to audiences and critics alike, with 152,884 visitors attending our exhibitions (part of more than 380,000 visitors to the Museum in total). These exhibitions included *Defaced! Money, Conflict, Protest*, looking at the ways in which currency has been marked and inscribed to express political and social ideas unwelcome to the authorities, and *Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean*, which helped us think through our own island culture by exploring the identities of and interconnections between ancient Cypriots, Sardinians and Cretans. Arguably most important of all are all the different kinds of work that have gone into preparations for our Autumn 2023 exhibition *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance*, which examines our own origin history and the University's collections to reflect on a history of enslavement and its legacies. This project has been the starting point for our broader Empowering Culture Programme, a transformational project aimed at assessing and strengthening our work in equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across all aspects of the Museum and its work. But we are also proud of the ways we have presented more traditional or neglected areas of the collection. *Refugee Silver: Huguenots in Britain*, for example, celebrated the technically deft and stylistically innovative work of Huguenot silversmiths arriving in Britain in the eighteenth century and showed the fundamental contribution of these refugees on British material culture.

Defaced! Money, Conflict, Protest was popular beyond all expectations, thanks to the communicative potential of coins and banknotes and the appeal of great exhibition design. The marked and altered numismatic material specially collected for the Museum thanks to an Art Fund New Collecting Award was seen with larger objects of violence and protest – from cannon to the rubble thrown in street battles – as well as many works by contemporary artists. This combination of old and new, the artistic and non-artistic, helps us define a method that builds on projects from the past and makes us highly distinctive in the museum sector. From the French and American revolutions; through Peterloo, the Suffragette movement and the Troubles; to the seismic events of the past few years, and from Rowlandson to Banksy, this exhibition told stories of a kind never before attempted at the Fitzwilliam, and was rewarded with a large and enthusiastic audience.

Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean, looked at four millennia of island identity, art, architecture and immaterial heritage in the islands of Crete, Cyprus and Sardinia. Highly praised by journalists and critics, this project made important advances in our work to combine research, displays and new media, and once again to bring together a vast community of collaborators - from artists and filmmakers to researchers across the Mediterranean and islanders themselves. We commissioned what became an award-winning film, *Being an Islander*, and a month-long VR experience that

Port of Sifnos Island, Image taken during the filming of the award-winning documentary *Being an Islander*.
Photo: Dr Dimitrios Bouras, 2023

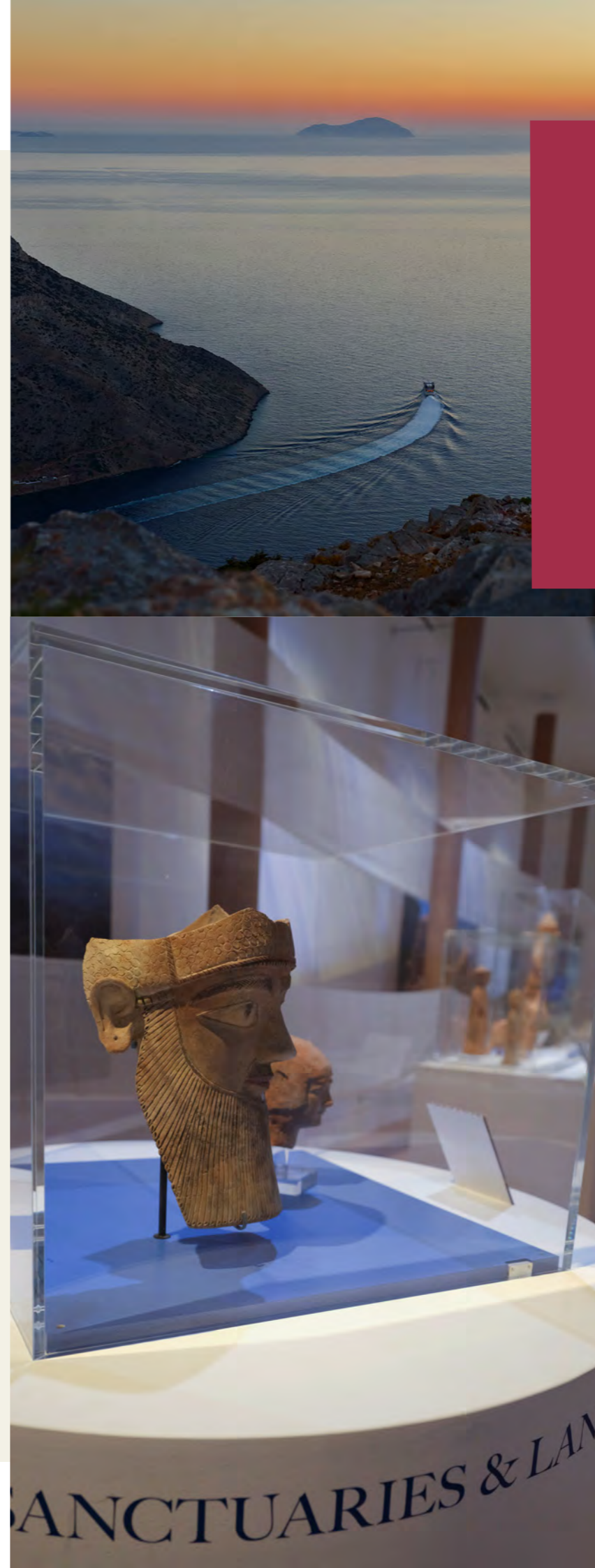
‘This has been a truly landmark year for the Fitzwilliam’s collections development.’

Dr Neal Spencer,
Deputy Director, Collections and Research

helped visitors envisage life in a neolithic village in Cyprus. Funding was provided by the AHRC, the AG Leventis Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, with additional contributions to the wider research project from the Pouroulis Foundation, the High Commission of Cyprus in the UK and other supporters.

Our displays such as *Refugee Silver: Huguenots in Britain* and *Bearing Witness: Trauma and Violence on Paper* also told complicated, sometimes difficult stories by combining and reinterpreting objects and artworks. The silver utensils included in *Refugee Silver* were by highly skilled craftsmen who came from the first group ever to be defined as ‘refugees’ – those who had fled religious persecution in France. *Bearing Witness* used prints and drawing, including new acquisitions at the Fitzwilliam and items borrowed from the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology to look at the way artists witness, record and evoke violence and trauma.

This has been a truly landmark year in the development of the collection, as we embarked on the creation of a genealogy of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Black British art, acquiring contemporary



works of art that propose new ways of revisiting and re-viewing our historic collections. Thanks in part to our work for the forthcoming exhibition *Black Atlantic*, the Museum has acquired a number of important works from the Caribbean Artists Movement, as well as works that tell the story of the abolition movement at home and abroad. New acquisitions by women artists from across the past century, not least many artists active today, further diversify the range of perspectives our collection can convey.

How many other institutions could juxtapose the optical experiments of Georges Seurat and Bridget Riley? Or connect a newly made and newly purchased painting by rising artist Jake Grewal with pictures by Degas, Nash, Giacometti and Keith Vaughan; or the first painting - an abstract portrait - by Sylvia Snowden to enter a British collection, with Vanessa Bell and Prunella Clough?

The Fitzwilliam's **programming** and **research** are rapidly becoming more expansive in their outlook, breaching traditional academic silos, engaging new audiences and turning, in a more focused way than previously, to participatory methods to shape research questions and interpretation. That has meant changing our strategic thinking. This year we put our newly adopted Research & Impact Strategy into action. One of its principal goals is to bring together practice-based and object-focused expertise to find new directions for our research, involving our communities in research that matters to them. That means eliminating the distinction between traditional curatorial research and our public-

facing programming. Our Walking with Constable project included more than one hundred participants who explored with us the Suffolk landscapes of Constable's highly emotive prints, while the method of making these pieces was examined by conservators and scientists. It means blending academic and artistic research, as during the residency of Iranian artist Dr Abbas Akbari, working with our Persian ceramic collections and with University researchers as a Visiting Research Fellow. A new collaboration with Guangzhou University is exploring how Chinese export art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reflects the interaction of different visual and technological traditions. And it means working more committedly with different communities, seeking views and critique from student and community representatives in Cambridge and Cambridgeshire for the forthcoming *Black Atlantic* exhibition, with Egyptian communities worldwide for our Egyptian Coffins project or creating the first display co-curated with a specially convened panel in the city for the upcoming *Tensions of Belonging* display. None of this would have been possible without the generous support of our funders, the Museums Association and Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund for *Black Atlantic*, and Research England and the University for *Tensions* and our work on our Egyptian coffins project.

The Fitzwilliam and Hamilton Kerr Institute (HKI) have also initiated a project around its superb collection of botanical drawings and flower still lifes, from the Fairhaven Bequest, with a focus on the collection of the seventeenth-century Dutch collector

Agnes Block and the painter Rachel Ruysch. The project is interdisciplinary and international, collaborating with the Center for Netherlandish Art and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. And it makes full use of our state-of-the-art imaging equipment to build a joint virtual platform presenting results from scientific analyses and imaging and the intersecting narrative this interdisciplinary approach yields.

In our first successful submission to the national Research Excellence Framework (REF), in collaboration with the History of Art Department and Kettle's Yard, the panel rated 92% of the unit's outputs – and 100% of its research environment and impact – as being world-leading or internationally excellent, evidencing the strength of our research and impact culture.

Playing a leading role in the new University Strategic Research Initiative, Collections-Connections-Communities, the Fitzwilliam Museum was awarded a new AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Programme that will provide fifteen fully-funded PhD studentships to explore the collections held by Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery, Norfolk Museum Service, Colchester + Ipswich Museums and the University of Cambridge creating a pipeline for new talent in a region of deep inequality. The creation of these agile networks to catalyse research and partnerships is enabling the Fitzwilliam Museum to provide frameworks for UK researchers to draw on our collections and expertise for transdisciplinary collaborations. Through the Collaborative Doctoral Programme, as well as expanded documentation, study room, collections management and display teams, we are ensuring that we continue to support sustainable and equitable access to collections for research and teaching, nationally and internationally.

This year the Museum also worked on a new **Masterplan vision**, not yet made fully public but containing exciting prospects for our near-term and long-term futures. The new vision lays out the transformations we hope to realise over the next decade that will reimagine and co-create spaces that will serve all aspects of our mission – whether as widely accessed research centre or civic resources – and, indeed, draw them physically together. This plan proposes the renovation of the Fitzwilliam's historic architecture, and the creation of new galleries to improve our cramped displays and potentially our shared occupation of other University spaces. We are excited to have arrived at a plan that marries our institutional philosophies, our community relationships, and our role within the University to envisage a Fitzwilliam that is much more open and much more innovative, while celebrating all the things that already make us special.

Financial sustainability has become an even more important aspect of our ongoing transformation. We have begun working towards a more self-sustaining financial model, and these changes (as will be seen throughout this report) are absolutely crucial, even if they're not as grandly visible as our exhibitions or collections. All of our public-facing work – the exhibitions, the participatory programming, the changes to make research more collaborative and inspiring to the public – is about serving our audiences, ensuring that our efforts are as distinctive as possible within the museum world and making the Museum really attractive to supporters, donors and grant-makers.

Challenges

Without question, the 50% cut in the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation funding represented a major challenge. This startling reduction forced an immediate change to our planning for this year and next and put our fundraising onto an emergency footing. The severity of this cut is compounded by a funding environment that was already difficult at a time in which the Museum is promoting change, and yet before our new, planned income strands kick in. Perhaps the biggest challenge of all is to maintain the current high quality in our public-facing exhibitions and programming – indeed, to continue to raise the bar – so that the Fitzwilliam remains an indispensable player in the cultural arena in the shockingly economically and socially unequal East of England, as well as nationally and internationally.

Making the proper space for points of view and voices that haven't traditionally found themselves represented in Museum settings must continue and indeed evolve. As this report demonstrates, we've come a long way in recent years, and this year's projects are ones that feel landmark. Equally, however, we've still got a way to go. How we welcome and engage our

Museum audiences, whether online or in-person, must continue to change if everyone is to get the most of our many relationships, with the people who use - and indeed don't yet use - the Museum.

Likewise, our new research methods require investment of time, expertise, and, yes, funding. We have been joined this year by a team of practice-based researchers developing cross-disciplinary and community-oriented collaborations who have begun the process, but their funding – from the University's allocation of Research England Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) - is short-term and their work needs the space to prove itself. We also have considerable gaps in digital humanities and curatorial expertise, particularly around our internationally significant Old Masters paintings and drawings, and our collections from the Islamic world, South Asia and Korea.

These are mostly good challenges that we've set ourselves. We will do as much as we can to achieve them. But we recognise that, among the many helping us in our transformative journey, our donors and funders matter very much. I thank all those who are already supporting us, and look forward to the opportunity to make our case to those who may wish to do so.



‘We must continue to evolve the ways we welcome and engage our audiences.’

Luke Syson, Director and Marlay Curator



An environment for learning

Few Museum tasks are more important, or more rewarding, than opening new windows onto the world for visitors from all walks of life.



The Fitzwilliam's learning programmes, particularly those designed for our young visitors, the elderly and those with additional needs, are key to building and maintaining a love of lifelong learning and cultural adventure throughout our communities. Likewise, we must work to engage *all* audiences with our programming – especially those which might not traditionally see their lives represented in museums.

This year marked the first full year since the Covid pandemic that our programming has returned to maximum capacity, and more than 380,000 people came through our doors in response. It has been of particular importance to help audiences use this return to the Museum to open up to new ideas, to learn and to expand their horizons – as well as our own.

Learning and Public Engagement ^{1.1}

Besides the undergraduate and post-graduate educational work the Fitzwilliam does for the University of Cambridge, we have the duty and joy of providing educational programming for children throughout the school year.

With the opportunity for schools programming finally returning to full capacity, it was key that we take advantage and begin welcoming children and students back to the Museum with vigour. We were thrilled to welcome more than 8,600 visitors through our schools programmes, as well as more than 5,000 family, youth

and adult community group visitors. The hybrid-learning systems that came into place during the pandemic have continued to benefit our schools partners as well. Online sessions run by Museum staff have become part of the regular schools programme, reaching hundreds of students locally and in locations with less access to the Museum such as in Northampton and Colchester, as well as further afield such as in North West England and even Europe.

It has been equally exciting to welcome families back to the Museum at full capacity and to operate programming that appeals to our youngest visitors. Regular Early Years and Families programming such as Toddler Magic and It's Magic (for 1–3 and 2–5 year-olds), as well as the popular Gurgling in the Gallery events for children under twelve months, were matched by school-holiday events, in-studio hands-on projects and other programming for families that attracted more than 4,300 visitors. For older children, we operated

projects such as SOURCE – a week-long series of activities for young people preparing for their GCSEs.

Our research work has begun to reach a whole new audience thanks to projects such as the Science in the Artist's Studio loan box. Supported by funding from the Royal Society of Chemistry, this uses Jacopo del Sellaio's painting 'Cupid and Psyche' to show students how Renaissance artists made and mixed their own paints, based on our research scientists' work into the subject. The loan box goes to schools for one half-term, during which time KS2 and KS3 students can learn about paints and try making their own with the pigments in the kit.

Just as it's important to welcome young audiences to the Museum, we must continue to create opportunities for access to culture for visitors with additional needs. This year we were able to fully resume our in-house provision for the elderly, including those with complex health conditions, through our Age Well programme supported by the Linbury Trust. For example, we restarted Portals to the World, which brings people suffering from dementia and their carers into the Museum, as well as our Wellbeing Walks and other programming for people with conditions such as chronic pain.

Other audiences our programming targeted this year included a series of creative workshops exploring ideas around 'home' for families with experience of migration, for which we provided transportation in conjunction with a local family centre; our LGBTQ+ talk, Religious Art, Queer Possibility, which proved popular both in-person and online; and the ongoing Arts Pioneers monthly creative workshops for adolescents with additional needs.

Welcomed
8,000
school children.

Welcoming and understanding our visitors ^{1.2}

This year's popular exhibitions and new technological advances with Tessitura (our Customer Relations Management and ticketing system) presented our Visitor Experience team with opportunities for transformation in the wake of the pandemic's challenging periods.

One important aspect of this was encouraging visitors to continue to pre-book tickets. Visitors who pre-book are the ones most likely to give the demographic and contact information and feedback which we need to further understand and respond to our audiences – and they are the most likely to contribute to our tickets-plus-donation system. In the immediate return of full-capacity visits, pre-booking fell drastically: only around 20% of visitors to *Defaced!* pre-booked, despite it being an overwhelmingly popular exhibition.

Photo © Lewis Ronald

'We're bucking
the museums and
heritage sector
trend with visitor
numbers already
back to pre-
pandemic levels.'

Jennifer Grindley,
Deputy Director, Audiences and Brand

For the next major exhibition, *Islanders*, we improved visitor welcome and data collection by boosting our messaging around booking in advance as well as further training members of the Visitor Experience team in our CRM strategy. It worked: more than double the percentage of *Islanders* visitors provided further information (41–55% of visitors), while donations from the ticket-plus-donation scheme also increased.

In this year we have also developed a Visitor Experience Charter that serves as a framework to enhance and consistently provide a world-class Visitor Experience (VE) at the Museum. This Charter establishes a clear set of essential visitor interaction markers that all VE hosts should aim to achieve when interacting with Museum visitors. The goal is to remove any uncertainty and provide a clear understanding of the VE host's duties, and our expectations of their efforts, in providing welcome and guidance to our visitors.

Attracted
more than
380,000
visitors to the
Museum.



Hamilton Kerr Institute ^{1.3}

At the Hamilton Kerr Institute (HKI), a proposal to change the Diploma Course in the Conservation of Easel Painting into a Masters programme was approved by the Faculty and Schools Boards, the Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee (ASEC) and by Regent House.

However, with the uncertainty of the start of an extensive refurbishment programme within the two studios at the HKI, Whittlesford, the decision has been made to postpone the first Masters cohort until the 2024–2025 academic year. The refurbishment will hugely improve the facilities, and will implement enhanced Health and Safety regulations, and generally launch the new Masters programme on the right footing as HKI prepares to also double its current cohort of students.

HKI Conservators retouching the losses on the Portrait of Lady Margaret Beaufort, owned by St John's College, Cambridge. Photo Courtesy of HKI, by permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge.

Building new networks for knowledge

University Collaborations 2.1

Founded in 2022, Collections Connections Communities (CCC) is a strategic research initiative that uses the University's Museum collections in new ways that convene interdisciplinary collaborations, breaking down once-strict academic silos. CCC connects researchers, collections and communities to address the key challenges of our time: society and identity, health and wellbeing and environment and sustainability. This year was marked by CCC's inaugural keynote lectures and saw CCC launch its dedicated website. Among CCC's first projects was the Fitzwilliam's Making Connections Through Collections, a successful series of iterative workshops which focused on the community's perceptions of the Museum and its collections, and exploring how the Museum chooses and acquires objects and artworks. This pilot project has since received additional funding from the Research England Enhancing Research Culture fund to continue for a further six months, create

the Museum's first display to be co-curated with a group of local adults, *Tensions of Belonging*. CCC provided the framework for securing the new Collaborative Doctoral Programme, Collections & Communities in the East of England, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Fifteen fully funded studentships will allow the next generation of researchers to explore collections in Cambridge, but also with Colchester & Ipswich Museums, Norfolk Museums Service and Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery. Through a collaboration with the Faculty of Education, the Museum has developed a new short-course of postgraduate students on museum and object-based learning.

Cambridge Visual Culture (CVC) is a research network, funded by the School of Arts and Humanities, made up of colleagues from the Department of the History of Art, the Fitzwilliam Museum, Kettle's Yard, and the wider University of Cambridge research community. Its programme of activity is composed of four parts: a programme of Visiting Research Fellows, an events programme, digital (website and social media), and scoping

As part of the University of Cambridge, the Fitzwilliam has a wealth of opportunities for offering our collections, research specialties and world-class expertise to be used both by others and by our own researchers in new ways.



Connections Through Collections Group in Lower Marlay, Spring 2023
Photo © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

and reporting on Artists-in-Residence opportunities at the University of Cambridge.

Over the past year, CVC welcomed six 2022–2023 Visiting Research Fellows, including Dr Anna Reid and Iranian artist and scholar Dr Abbas Akbari, both of whom worked extensively with the Fitzwilliam, with Dr Akbari in particular being in residence at the Museum. After receiving forty applications for the 2023–2024 cohort, four new Fellows were chosen including Kimberley Foster, who will work closely with the Senior Research Associate, Museum Learning, during her residency at the Fitzwilliam. These fellows will be joined by the six 2022–2023 Visiting Research Fellows, who will return for their second residencies in 2023–2024.

CVC hosted and co-hosted a series of unique and well-attended events at the Museum, online and in hybrid in-person and online formats. This included conversations with Fitzwilliam and University faculty colleagues such as *Exposed: The Greek and Roman Body*, a conversation about contemporary artists' dialogues with classical heritage and a research workshop on *Ritual and the Ancient World*. We held seminars on topics such as the psychological study of optimal viewing environments for artwork, and on *Medieval Ceramics from Iran*, and hosted an out-of-hours tour of the Museum called *Power and the Public Collection*.



Fitzwilliam Research Environment and Participatory Research 2.2

Thanks in part to an enhanced investment from the Research England Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) and Additional Quality Related (QR), as well as a private philanthropic grant, the Fitzwilliam's research community was able to grow its staff in line with a new Research & Impact (R&I) Strategy to foreground research that inspires, involves and benefits audiences.

This included the hire of a Project Coordinator, as well as the Museum's first Participatory Research and Impact Coordinator, and new project curator roles focusing on the *Black Atlantic* exhibitions and *Islanders: Making of the Mediterranean*. The Museum's curators, scientists and conservators are now eligible for the University's academic career pathways scheme, positioning the Fitzwilliam as sector-leading in providing career development opportunities based on research achievements.

As part of fulfilling R&I's core mission, three new Practitioner Research Associate posts were created to work on early

childhood, wellbeing and community participation, alongside a collaborative PhD with University of Leicester. This will bring practise-based expertise into conversation with our object-focused specialisms (curatorial, conservation, science) to catalyse research that moves in new, impactful directions. Internally, two research communities have been established: Materials & Materiality and Participation, Practice & Co-Creation. A series of workshops connected to our Participation, Practice and Co-creation Research Community have formulated a manifesto for how we will work, equitably and creatively, with our communities as co-researchers. We were invited to take part in a national Art Fund/Nesta pilot participatory action research project with families, exploring how museums can support playful and creative interactions between parents and children, focusing on the potential for scaling high-quality early-years Museum practice with a view to tackling inequalities, in collaboration with North Cambridge Child & Family Centre. Fitzwilliam research has also evidenced the role that art and design education can play in raising aspirations, developing creativity and critical thinking, and supporting wellbeing, leading to our involvement in national-level advocacy for art and design as part of the Art Now Inquiry commissioned by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Art, Craft and Design in Education, and recently presented findings in Parliament.

In this first year of the new Research & Impact Plan, three participatory projects were delivered through Research England Enhancing Research Culture funding. *Walking with Constable*, a collaboration between the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University Library, and Cambridge Digital Humanities, has

now engaged more than one hundred participants, many from underrepresented groups. The Egyptian Coffins project has fostered new participation from Egyptian communities locally and internationally. Connections Through Collections, a collaborative project with ten Cambridge residents, developed a co-curated display, *Tensions of Belonging*, to open in the Lower Marlay Gallery in late-2023. This will represent the first display to be co-produced through a participatory project with local adults at the Museum. Looking forward, a Cambridge Humanities Research Grant to *Books and People Through Time: Exploring Viscount Fitzwilliam's Library* is piloting a comprehensive investigation of Viscount Fitzwilliam's library, providing the interpretative basis for any future public access to the library

Thanks to investment from the University's allocation of Research England Research Capital Investment Fund, alongside an uplift to the Museum's Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded Capability for Collections (AHRC CapCo) award, the CHERISH (Cambridge Heritage Science Hub) consortium, of which the Fitzwilliam and HKI are founding members, were able to purchase new equipment to facilitate research. This kit includes updating the HKI's photographic equipment, a 3D microscope an RTI and a second X-ray machine. Research facilitated through this equipment – and the earlier AHRC CapCo award – included a large interdisciplinary project with technical analysis of seventeenth-century botanical illustration, drawings and flower still life

paintings in the Fitzwilliam collection and similar analysis for the Unlocking the Miniature project supported by The Thomson Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Fitzwilliam science staff worked on a new collaborative project on smalt – a cobalt-containing, blue glass-based pigment used in painting, glass, ceramic glazes, and enamels – and contributed to separate international projects on the seventeenth-century Dutch painters Samuel van Hoogstraten and David Bailly. An AHRC-funded Collaborative Doctoral Studentship with the National Gallery and Department of History of Art will allow the recruitment of a student starting in October 2024 who will also benefit from this enhanced research environment. All of this is setting in place the foundations for funding applications to the AHRC's Research Infrastructure in Conservation and Heritage Science (RICHeS) scheme in Autumn 2023.



‘The Fitzwilliam used to be like a big elephant in the middle of Cambridge – impressive, everyone wanted to see it, but after a while, it was still just doing the same thing. It’s suddenly evolving into this fantasy animal and it’s like we don’t know what new powers it has. We don’t know what it’s evolving into, and that’s really exciting.’

Jade Pollard-Crowe, Collections Through Connections Group

Photo © David Valinsky
Photography

Looking to the world through objects

An International Perspective 3.1

This has been an important year for the Fitzwilliam's work on global art and material culture, with many of our projects from major exhibitions to ongoing research work concentrating on an international perspective.

Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean

The major exhibition *Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean*, made possible thanks to the AG Leventis Foundation, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and other supporters, provided opportunities to study the islands in question from new directions and to both create new networks within the Museum's communities and generate work that has had an impact worldwide.

The documentary film *Being an Islander* was completed in this period and began screening. The film employed methodology from the fields of sensory archaeology, social anthropology, experimental archaeology, geology, sociology and journalism, to elucidate what defines island identities in the Eastern Mediterranean, a place where the European and the Asian-African bio-geographical history and evolution intersect. *Being an Islander* used the island of Siphnos, Cyclades, Greece as a research model and was produced with the active participation of the Siphnos island community under the principles of participatory research and co-creation.

The film's debut was at a community-oriented first screening, hosted by the Mayor of Siphnos, at the cultural centre 'Μαριάνθη Σίμου', Σίφνος, Greece. It went on to win the Audience award at the twenty-fifth International Documentary Festival of Thessaloniki; it has since been used widely in teaching and enjoyed further screenings in Cambridge, London (at the Cyprus High Commission), Cyprus and more. The exhibition also saw the publication of a book, *Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean*, and a three-day major interdisciplinary conference on Island Identities, organised by the Fitzwilliam's *Islanders* team with partners from Oxford University's Ashmolean Museum and the Cyprus High Commission in London. The project team are now progressing work on a volume of academic essays, to be published in 2024.

★★★★★

'Spellbinding... calling to mind Picasso and Brancusi at every turn'

The Observer, review of *Islanders*



Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean
Photo © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

Black Atlantic

The forthcoming *Black Atlantic* exhibition in Autumn 2023 has prompted consideration of what just and equitable forms of reparation might look like, and particularly how research activity might address these questions. A collaboration between CCC and the University's Global Humanities Network brought researchers from Caribbean institutions to Cambridge to discuss equitable collaborations using the Cambridge collections, in light of the entanglement of acquisition and the histories of colonialism and enslavement.

Egyptian Coffins

The Fitzwilliam's research into its collection of ancient Egyptian coffins continues, focused on research into comparative examples and materials, with our curators and other researchers traveling wherever objects can be found, whether that's London, Cairo, Boston and more. Research into plasters, pastes and woods used in coffin-building, and CT scans of our coffins at Addenbrooke's hospital in Cambridge, have led to research papers given in Britain and America, as well as community engagement work in the UK and pop-up museum sessions in Egypt. This work was supported by the University Arts & Humanities Impact Fund and a Leverhulme Trust Emeritus Fellowship, as well as a collaborative PhD studentship with the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, funded by Horizon Europe's Marie Skłodowska-Curie award.

Islamic Arts

Our project Global Connections: Arts from the Islamic World continues in its research into the Museum's collections of Iranian ceramics and other works. In particular, the team organised and ran a public, online symposium titled Medieval Ceramics of Iran with more than 100 participants, which is now available in its entirety to view online. CVC fellow Prof. Abbas Akbari, himself an award-winning ceramicist based at the University of Kashan, spent time at the Fitzwilliam studying the Adès collection of seventy medieval Iranian ceramics from Gurgan, to identify technologies and artistic signatures of different workshops of the era. With new funding from the British Academy/Leverhulme Small Grants scheme, research into the Adès Ceramics continues, developing a non-invasive analytical protocol to identify signatures and to characterise the organisation of stonepaste production in Seljuq, Iran, and ultimately reconstruct the life and afterlife of the Adès pieces, highlighting the people and agency involved in their journey.

The Alhambra in Britain project was also awarded a grant from the Barakat Trust for further conservation of the Alhambra cast collection, including a paid placement for a conservator from a Museum in the Middle East or North Africa. An additional Barakat Trust award will allow the Museum to work with Dr Mariam Rosser-Owen from the Victoria & Albert Museum to convene experts in Islamic ceramics and manuscripts to shed new light on our collections, with the participation of students and communities.



Hindustani Airs

We recruited a highly skilled Research Associate to undertake foundational cataloguing of MS 380, the illuminated album of songs in Urdu, Persian and other languages made for the English song collector Sophia Plowden in Lucknow in the 1780s. Since the Associate's appointment, the Plowden album's lyrics (in Persian, Urdu, Hindi and other languages) have all been identified, and are now being translated. The structure of the album and illuminated pages has been established (thanks to Conservator of Manuscripts and Printed Books) and pertinent related objects identified in Cambridge and other collections.

Chinese Art: Thirteen Hongs

A research project is underway into the Fitzwilliam's collection of more than 200 objects from China's so-called 'Thirteen Hongs' – the thirteen factories along the Pearl River in Guangzhou (Canton) during the Qing Empire, which acted as the

principal site for trade between China and Europe from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Funding from Guangzhou University will help recruit a Research Associate to focus on documentation and analysis of the Museum's export paintings, alongside photography and research travel.



Setup of a Chinese bamboo desk, from an album of Chinese export paintings, watercolour on pith paper. Manufactured in Guangzhou, China in early-nineteenth century.

Constable Project

Walking with Constable has been a collaborative project between the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University Digital Library and Cambridge Digital Humanities, supported in this period through an award from the University's allocation of Research England Enhancing Research Culture funding. Building on our 2022 pilot, the team delivered a new form of participatory engagement with collections, using digital technologies to 'take' prints from the Museum back into the landscape which made them on a series of walks. We achieved a total of eight walks, involving more than one-hundred participants, who helped us explore how to document the shared experience of viewing and engaging with Constable's prints and other archive material as a form of public writing. Various kinds of expertise enriched the walks, prompting dialogue between academics, artists, local people, and previously underrepresented groups in the research process, allowing us to rethink the relationship of the work to the land. The augmented reality application code and set-up instructions for running it is openly available via GitHub, as is the code and content of the project website, this forms the basis of a toolkit that can be replicated or repurposed by ourselves and others.

Photo © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

Objects of Encounter

Led by the Faculty of History (Cambridge) and University of St Andrews, this AHRC-funded project aims to provide Museum visitors with new interpretation, learning programmes and evaluation in Galleries 6 and 7, placing mobility and material exchanges at the heart of the narrative, as part of a wider research project on diversifying the Renaissance.



Challenging and entertaining audiences

Exhibitions and Displays 4.1

Defaced! Money, Conflict, Protest

(11 October 2022 to 8 January 2023)

Defaced! was the first exhibition of its kind to examine the relationship between money, authority and protest. Using currency that had been damaged, repurposed, forged or otherwise altered, it sought out the stories behind the alterations to reveal historic and artistic experiences from the French and American Revolutions, to the First World War and the Nazi concentration camp system, to the Troubles in Northern Ireland and the Black Lives Matter movement. Objects made by nineteenth- and early-twentieth century radicals, like Thomas Spence and the Suffragettes, were shown alongside works by contemporary artists and activists including Banksy, Aida Wilde, Hilary Powell, kennardphillips, J.S.G. Boggs and more.

Besides the themes and content, which had a broad relevance and appeal, bold exhibition design by architect Alan Farlie and theatre designer Tom Piper contributed to an exhibition that burst all expectations. For this exhibition, Farlie and Piper 'defaced' the historic portico of the Fitzwilliam, wrapping its neoclassical columns in exhibition images.

An accompanying catalogue featured contributions from the exhibition curator and twelve authors, a mixture of artists, archaeologists, historians and Museum curators. An edition of the exhibition will now travel to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (November 2023 to May 2024).

'Defaced!' is very timely given the central role of money and growing unrest and instability in the world.'

Visitor feedback



Defaced!
Photo © Rob Hill

The Fitzwilliam's world-renowned programme of exhibitions is the heart of the Museum's work. This year saw a truly remarkable diversity of exhibitions highlighting the broad nature and appeal of the Museum's collections, curators and partnerships.

Exhibition title caption

Refugee Silver: Huguenots in Britain

(2 August 2022 to 30 July 2023)

This display looked at the work made by Huguenot silversmiths arriving in Britain in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries to escape persecution in France, and in particular the transformative new ideas and techniques they brought with them. (Among those ideas was, indeed, the word 'refugee' itself, originally used to specifically denote these French escapees.)

This display of silver, ceramics, sculpture and ivories, reframed objects from the Fitzwilliam's historic collections through the lens of the Huguenot migration. Many were skilled craftspeople: metalworkers, sculptors, carvers, weavers, and printers, with the necessary skills to make luxury goods and a knowledge and understanding of French fashions. The Huguenots' sophisticated techniques, dynamic forms and intricate sculptural decoration were so widely imitated that eventually their style became dominant in Britain, transforming forever the appearance of silver and other decorative arts in this country.



Refugee Silver: Huguenots in Britain
Photo © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

Medieval Britain in Colour

(18 October 2022 to 23 January 2023)

Medieval book artists - known as illuminators - were remarkable innovators. This focused display of fourteen manuscripts charted the changing use of pigments and gold by British illuminators from tenth to the fifteenth centuries, looking at themes such as Discovery and Innovation, The Story of Blue, and Working with Gold. The display was an outcome of an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded research project, *The Pigments of British Illuminators: A Scientific and Cultural Investigation*, led by the University of Durham. Included were manuscripts from the Fitzwilliam's collections such as the Macclesfield Psalter and the Peterborough Psalter, plus exceptional loans from Cambridge colleges, including the second volume of the Bury Bible from the Parker Library. The display was accompanied by an extensive public engagement programme, including a lunchtime talk, a Friends study morning and an extensive range of outreach events for academic and community audiences, including a Portals to the World (Dementia Compass) project.



Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean
Photos © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

Prints and Drawings: Changing Displays

(11 October to 30 December 2022)

This iteration of grouping works on paper from the permanent collection by renowned contemporary artists showcased a spectacular portfolio of woodcuts and two drawings by Ian McKeever, with another complete portfolio of etchings by Anish Kapoor, and four individual etchings by John Walker. The McKeever and Kapoor portfolios had never been displayed before.

Bearing Witness: Trauma and Violence on paper

(10 January to 2 April 2023)

Centred around a recent acquisition of twenty prints by contemporary artist Marcelle Hanselaar, this display pulled together prints and drawings in an exploration of the ways artists have responded to violence and injustice, both political and social. The works served different forms of witnessing: by artists with direct experience of horrors, or who grew up in the shadow of terrible events; those who were commissioned to give visual form to the words of others; and those who assimilate into their work the trauma of distant ordeals. Besides Hanselaar, the display included work by Goya, Manet, Kollwitz, Picasso, the Chapman Brothers, and Judy Watson.

Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean

(24 February 2023 to 2 June 2023)

This major exhibition, enabled by grants from the AG Leventis Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, brought together hundreds of objects from 4,000 years of civilisation in the Mediterranean, in particular from Cyprus, Crete and Sardinia, from the ancient to today. The exhibition proved popular with the critics: the *Observer's* five-star review called it 'Spellbinding', while the *Times* told visitors to 'seize this chance' in its own four-star review, with just over 38,000 heeding the advice.

The research output and more about *Islanders* is mentioned elsewhere in this report, including the film *Being an Islander*, the related book and interdisciplinary conference. The exhibition also drew praise and interest from media in Greece and Cyprus, as well as within the UK. For one month of the exhibition, our audiences were given the opportunity to experience one of the earliest settlements in ancient Mediterranean Cyprus and Europe, the Neolithic village of Khoirokitia, through the VR Experience: *A Day in a Neolithic village of Cyprus*. Visitors learned what drove people to live together in this pre-urban settlement, discovered more about their everyday habits and envisioned some of the objects from the *Islanders* exhibition in their original archaeological context. The installation was created in collaboration with the Virtual Environments Lab at the Cyprus Institute.

Mediterranean Embroideries

(18 April to 3 December 2023)

Coinciding with the *Islanders* exhibition was this display which finalised a project, supported by the Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, to conserve, photograph and digitise a group of the Fitzwilliam's significant but relatively unknown collection of embroideries from Western Anatolia, the Greek islands and North Africa.

Organised 13 exhibitions and displays.

Gallery display alterations 4.2

Major exhibitions using the galleries in different ways have meant changes to the Fitzwilliam's gallery programme over the past year.

The end of the *Hockney's Eye* exhibition reopened its spread of galleries for rehanging, with a few significant changes: the Octagon was rehung with the popular *Makers and Muses* display, contrasting the work of women artists with the way male artists saw women in the same periods. And Gallery 3 was rehung with a selection of key works from the paintings collection, marketed as Fitzwilliam Favourites. Works selected for the latter included those known to be popular with audiences, those used widely by Learning, significant external loans and other works covered by the Government Indemnity Scheme. The display was supported by a social media campaign, #FitzFavourites, which featured a variety of content and activity including an animated trailer, a public vote using emojis where we asked our followers to vote for their favourite artwork, three close-looking films and three curator highlight films, which collectively generated over 50,000 views.

Mediterranean Embroideries
Photos © The Fitzwilliam Museum,
University of Cambridge



Hybrid models for audience interaction

Website 5.1

In the 2022–2023 reporting year, the Fitzwilliam Museum's website had more than 424,000 unique users, who accessed more than 645,000 page views on the site. Content pages that achieved particularly high numbers of views included those for the *Islanders*, *Defaced!* and *Hockney's Eye* exhibitions, and the continuingly popular Learning page, The Story of Demeter and Persephone. Work is ongoing on a programme of improvements and enhancements to the website to improve user and audience experience.

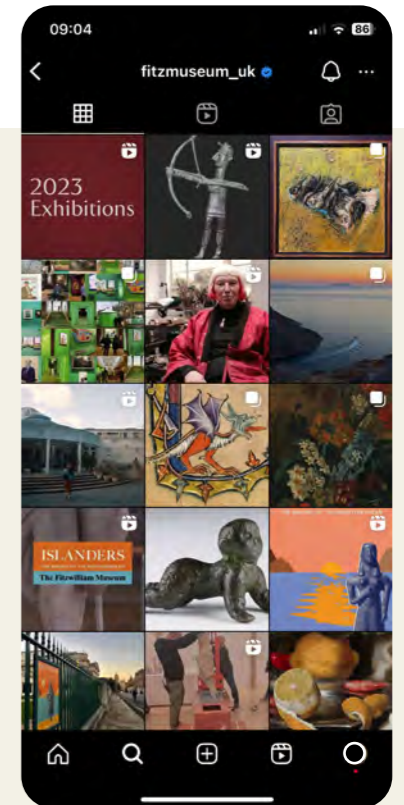
Virtual Events 5.2

The move to hybrid and online events accelerated by the pandemic has remained an important and integrated aspect of most event presenters' offer, even after the return to in-person programming, and the Fitzwilliam is no exception. We have a brand-new conference system for our Seminar Room, including a 4K-resolution screen and camera. The room is now being used on a more regular basis as a hybrid meeting space, for both internal and commercial uses. All of the Museum's lunchtime talks continue to be offered in a hybrid format: an in-person audience plus online guests, allowing us to reach out to different audiences. For example, programming around the *Bearing Witness? Violence and Trauma on Paper* display included hybrid talks with contributors Marcelle Hanselaar and Jane Joseph, making for an event with global interest, and hybrid talks related to the *Islanders: Making of the Mediterranean* exhibition drew audiences in from Greece to Singapore, Italy to Japan.



'An invaluable resource to be able to access. Our Cumbrian children could experience something that would have been previously inaccessible due to location.'

Teacher from Cumbria



Online Schools 5.3

This year saw the launch of our free online school sessions for primary schools. Through the year, we reached more than 700 Key Stage 2 school students – from schools in the local area that could not visit in person for logistical reasons or because of our fully booked on-site schedule, to those in Northampton, Cumbria and even Belgium. In each case, the sessions were taught by a Museum teacher and the learning associate for schools and teachers, with most classes using the Museum's digital assets before or after the session, increasing the impact of our broader digital offer.

Digital Content 5.4

Our online strategy has involved developing video content and social media campaigns that can reach and engage existing and new audiences with the Fitzwilliam's collections, research, exhibitions and programmes. Notable video projects in the past year included a series of films to explore new perspectives and lesser-told narratives about artists in our collection for LGBTQ+ History Month, including Gwen John, Glyn Philpot and Ethel Walker, and a film for Women's History Month commissioned in partnership with The Women's Art Collection at Murray Edwards College and the University of Cambridge concerned with work of artist Marie-Louise von Motesiczky.

To promote the *Islanders* exhibition, we published a series of three short social-media films with Mary Beard in which the internationally recognised classicist chose her favourite objects from the exhibition, and an animation commissioned and published relating to the Tamassos Sword. These films average 5,000 views each on Instagram alone, supporting our mobile-first approach to digital content.

Hosted more than 190 public events.

An important part of a big picture

Arts Council NPO 6.1

NPO application 2023–2026

Our participation in the consortium of seven museums and the Botanic Garden that represent the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) maximises the potential for impact on the community within the Fitzwilliam and all our partners. The consortium's application for funding as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) of Arts Council England (ACE) 2023–2026 was praised for its quality, yet the UCM was granted an NPO grant at £617,534 per annum – representing a 50% cut from this key funding source. This presented a huge challenge and required us to make important changes to UCM's operating model. We are, however, determined to continue to deliver the same high level of quality within UCM's programming, even if it must be reduced in quantity. Our revised strategy centres around four key themes: Creating Opportunity, Health

Played a major role in attracting **1,081,994** visitors to the UCM consortium.

and Wellbeing, Social Justice and Our Planet. These are designed to align with the strategic themes of the Collections-Connections-Communities Strategic Research Initiative, and to enable the Cambridge partner museums to contribute to an offer that reflects each institution's strengths and strategic interests. A revised and reduced UCM activity plan was submitted to ACE at the start of 2023, with a new UCM NPO advisory board taking effect and holding its first meetings in summer of this year.

NPO programme activity

This year saw the launch of the UCM consortium's public programme Power and Memory, designed to align with the publication of the University's report on the legacies of enslavement. Power and Memory asked questions such as, 'Who has the power to choose which stories we remember and tell?', and created opportunities for our audiences and communities to engage in dialogue with ongoing research into the legacies of empire and enslavement.

Power and Memory included programming based around participation, such as Power to the Programme, an open call for community groups to contribute ideas for events and activities; a Museum Remix workshop for emerging museum professionals, early-career creatives and students, which created new audio content for the galleries; Power Walks, community-focused walks between two museums focusing on objects that resonate with the theme of 'power'; and Blackness in Portraiture, a series of workshops delivered by Selena Scott from the Cambridge Black Creatives at the Fitzwilliam Museum on the theme of identity.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, UCM supported staff with training to build confidence around these topics and methodologies and helped develop schools resources and training for teachers and museum educators. This was accompanied by the creation of the Collections Campaigns Chest, a box of handling objects used as an educational and community resource inspired by Thomas Clarkson's Chest which aims to make understanding about the British Empire and its impact on us today more accessible.

A specially lit gallery at the Museum of Zoology with young visitors enjoying the displays after-hours. Photo: Members of the Youth Collective



Public engagement programme 6.2

Public programming operated with UCM included this year's Summer with the Museums (July–September), produced with 23 partners including 13 independent museums and venues (ten from the region and three within Cambridge City). There were a total of 145 in-person events and eighty-five self-led activities for families, all of which benefitted from a project-wide promotional effort. Of those who signed up to the mailing list, the majority of said they had never attended a family event at the museums before.

Twilight at the Museums, in February, boasted a strong attendance of more nearly 4,500 visitors across the UCM consortium and six independent museums and venues, including more than 650 visitors to the Fitzwilliam. Here, visitors enjoyed a newly commissioned, artist-designed self-led trail for families, which, in addition to workshops running in the galleries and the studio around the *Islanders* exhibition, offered a fun way to navigate the galleries. Evaluations showed that 71% of visitors had not attended a previous family event while 42% visited a venue for the first time.

A legacy of collecting and care

Right: *Dance at Reading Town Hall*, drawing by Paul Dash.
© Paul Dash Artist.
Photo © The Fitzwilliam
Museum, University of
Cambridge (acquisition)

Far right: *Apollo Belvedere*.
Bronze sculpture, dated 1830.
Pier Jacopo Alari Bonacolsi,
called Antico.
Photo © The Fitzwilliam
Museum, University of
Cambridge (acquisition)



Acquisitions and collections development 7.1

Our new and ambitious Collections Development Strategy set the framework for an exciting year of new additions to the collection. A particular focus was the first steps in building a genealogy of Black British art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and an important one for furthering development of our collection of work by women artists.

Works by important Caribbean Artists Movement painters provide new perspectives on British art in the 1960s and later. This includes an early painting by Paul Dash, 'Dance at Reading Town Hall', which evokes the experience of immigrant communities in mid-twentieth century Britain, and two of his more recent drawings that explore the rhythm

and visuals of carnival and masquerade. Two major paintings by Aubrey Williams, a Guyanese artist who drew upon historic Meosamerican visual traditions, entered the collection. The acquisition of hand-painted screenprints by Lubaina Himid adds work by one of the most significant British artists of the last two decades to our collection of works on paper. Acquisitions extended beyond paintings and works on paper, with four works by the Turner Prize winner Veronica Ryan developing our contemporary sculpture collections in new directions. We are delighted to be the recipient of the Contemporary Art Society's Collections Fund at Frieze for autumn 2023, which will allow us to acquire further works in this strand.

The forthcoming 2023 exhibition, *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance*, further catalysed a number of acquisitions that allow us to represent the histories of black communities and the complicated visual devices deployed in the abolitionist campaign. A blue-and-white nineteenth-century teapot with anti-slavery text; a paper archive of early- to mid-nineteenth-century printed Abolitionist material by and for women; two porcelain flat bowls celebrating the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 were all acquired, as was a circular

pottery plaque with a named portrait of 'Mrs Harriet Beecher Stowe, The Author of Uncle Tom's Cabin'.

Artwork by, and representing, women was another important part of this year's acquisitions strategy. New acquisitions by women included works by Mary Adshead, Barbara Jones, Celia Paul, Wendy Ramshaw and Leonor Fini. Sylvia Snowden's 'Brown, Yellow 11' was given by The Spirit of Giving Committee's Spirit Now London and selected at Frieze Masters 2022. We received a bequest from the estate of collectors and dealers Ian and Rita Smythe of sixty-three items of art pottery, including many late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century women artists. Our acquisitions activity also sought to better represent queer artists within the collection, with acquisitions of a print series entitled *Disgrace* by Hannah Quinlan and Rosie Hastings that explores the histories of the struggle for women's rights, and a major painting by the emerging British artist Jake Grewal.

The acquisition of Antico's 'Apollo Belvedere', also through the Acceptance-in-Lieu scheme, brings this masterpiece of Mantuan bronze sculpture which evokes the rediscovery of antiquity in Renaissance Italy, back together with the rest of the

Boscawen collection of bronzes, previously acquired by the Museum.

A few important additions to our historic works from China include a major collection of eighteenth and nineteenth century Chinese export drawings, many of botanical subjects, donated through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme, to be studied as part of the Thirteen Hongs Project in association with Guangzhou University, and a Ming dynasty cloisonné enamel water pot and cover gifted by Edwin Mok and Bing Wu. The *Defaced!* exhibition prompted several new acquisitions into the Fitzwilliam's collections, thanks in particular to an Art Fund New Collecting Award. This included a gift of a stamped Bank of England ten shilling note referencing home rule in Wales and Scotland; an artist commissioned collage, 'It's Complicated' by Wefail; and the first work by Mark Wagner in a UK public collection, 'WANT'.

A selection from the studio of printmaker Marc Balakjian (Lucian Freud, Frank Auerbach) and drawings by Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson and Ronald Searle further expanded our internationally significant collection of works on paper.

Several acquisitions have strong local resonances. Coinage found in the Cambridgeshire region includes Anglo-Saxon material (acquired through the National Treasure scheme), a fifteenth-century 'jetton' used in commercial accounting and a legacy donation of nine pieces of East Anglian domestic silver from the Timothy Colman Collection. Twenty-nine contemporary prints donated by Kip Gresham's The Print Studio extend our archive of the renowned, and local, print production studio, and a significant large-scale watercolour by Edward Burra, 'Sugar Beet, East Anglia', is both the first work by the artist in our collection and an evocative depiction of agricultural labour in the region.

Spoliation claim for Gustave Courbet, *La Ronde Enfantine* 7.2

In 2021, the Museum received a spoliation claim setting out evidence that 'La Ronde Enfantine' by Gustave Courbet was seized from a Jewish owner in Nazi-occupied Paris. This year, the Spoliation Advisory Panel, convened by the Secretary of State for Culture, issued a recommendation that the Fitzwilliam Museum return the painting, while explicitly stating that the Museum did not act improperly at any point during its acquisition in 1951 or thereafter. The Museum is working with the representatives of the family to reach an agreement on next steps.



Acquisitions left to right:

Made by Samuel Lines/Female Society for Birmingham, Bag/Textile Accessory, dated 1830. Photo © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.

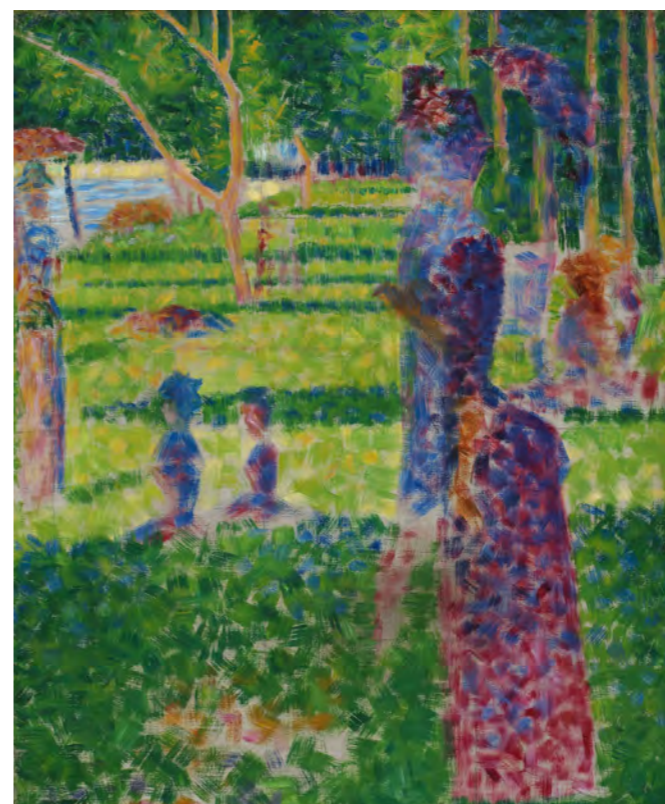
Veronica Ryan, 'Collective Moments VII'. Courtesy: Alison Jacques, London © Veronica Ryan. Photo © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.



Loans out left to right:

Glyn Warren Philpot, 'Siegfried Sassoon', Oil on canvas, 1917. Photo © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.

Georges Pierre Seurat, Study for 'A Sunday on the Island of La Grande Jatte couple walking', Oil on canvas, circa 1884-1886. Lent by the Provost and Fellows of King's College, Cambridge (Keynes Collection). Photo © Reproduced by the kind permission of the Provost and Fellows of King's College, Cambridge.



Loans 7.3

As with every year, objects from the Fitzwilliam's collections were in high demand from regional, national and international institutions. During this reporting period we reworked our fee structure for such loans, bringing our fees more in line with the benchmarks set by similar institutions, which helps to make loans a part of our financial stability efforts. In particular, the fee schedule changed for inter-collegiate loans within Cambridge, and for international loans, two tiers for which our fees were considerably lower than benchmark institutions.

More than a dozen objects from our collections formed an important part of the exhibition, *Colour: Art, Science & Power* at the University of Cambridge's own Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, including the sixteenth century 'Tobias & the Angel' cushion cover, a Seurat study for 'La Grande Jatte' and a New Kingdom Egyptian Limestone Relief depicting Nefertiti. Nine pieces including graphite studies, paintings, a sofa and even a lock of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's hair were loaned to Tate Britain's major exhibition *The Rossettis*.

Overseas loans included our Guido Reni's masterpiece 'The Man of Sorrows', which toured to Frankfurt and Madrid as part of *Guido Reni: The Beauty of the Divine*, and – at a different end of the art-history continuum – three pieces for *The Sassoon Family* at The Jewish Museum in New York City, including a 1917 portrait of Siegfried Sassoon by Glyn Warren Philpot.

Storage and documentation 7.4

The continuous and vital work of rationalising, upgrading and maintaining our collections documentation, storage and organisation has moved forward in important ways this year. With a newly enhanced Documentation Team in place, we've started work on upgrading our collections management system Axiell Collections, adding a decade's worth of improvements to the system and implementing new standards for archive documentation. Importantly, they have also begun twice-monthly Axiell surgeries – drop-in learning and support sessions for staff using the system.

Digitisation of the collections continued, with more than 32,000 object records updated in Axiell. Funding from the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art has enabled work to begin on cataloguing our unique collection of letters from John Constable to the mezzotint printmaker David Lucas. A generous donation from the Murray Trust is supporting a Research Associate in Literary & Artistic Archives, who has catalogued important literary collections from the Romantic era and researched a hitherto unknown work by the Irish poet Thomas Moore.

We've upgraded the storage facilities for our prints, bronze objects and small objects, as well as rationalised the space at our offsite storage. For four weeks a specialised Trinity College curatorial intern worked on Old Master prints, helping to improve documentation and accessibility with rationalisation of storage and location recording. This process worked through the contents of around fifty boxes, re-grouping prints alphabetically, location checking and recording, and – just as crucially – cross referencing the number with the Museum's database to highlight any prints that did not have database records.



Photo © David Valinsky Photography

Conservation activities and interventions 7.5

Conservation was an important part of preparations for this year's and forthcoming major exhibitions. Besides continuing the work that went into the *Islanders* exhibition, our conservators' skills were required for several paintings and other works from the Museum's collection for the *Black Atlantic* exhibitions. The Conservator of Prints completed the treatment of all our Durer woodcuts, and treated the Dutch Old Master prints in our 20x27 storage format. The Conservator of Drawings treated scores of drawings and watercolours from the Renaissance to today from the David Scrase bequest.

University, contract and private-client work continued apace. Our contract for 800 hours of conservation work per year to Trinity College Library was renewed. Painting treatment and restoration projects for Cambridge included work for King's, Emmanuel, Sidney Sussex, Magdalene and Trinity Colleges. Our conservators carried out work in Elton Hall and Hexham Abbey and made site visits around the University Colleges as well as to Oxburgh Hall, Sandringham House and Weston Park. More than seventy-five paintings were treated and returned to private clients this year.

The University's Resource Management Committee granted the Museum bridge funding to support the development of a Conservation Services Consortium, which

Loaned works to major
exhibitions in London,
Paris, New York City,
Madrid and more.

will provide a wide range of treatment and preventive conservation services to colleges and the University of Cambridge museums and will also serve as a new income stream for the Museum.

A few highlights of works from the collection that were conserved this year include:

Paintings for *Black Atlantic* such as 'The Adoration of the Kings' by Taddeo Zuccaro and 'The Portrait of Sir Matthew Decker' by Theodorus Netscher; 'The Hon. Richard Fitzwilliam, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam of Merrion' by Joseph Wright of Derby; 'Peasants Smoking', by Adriaen van Ostade, and 'The Schoolmaster', by Gerrit Dou; also for *Black Atlantic*, two volumes of Audubon's *Birds of America*; Peter Paul Rubens, 'Head Study of a Bearded Man'; Catharina van Hemessen, 'Portrait of a Woman'; Alexandre Cabanel, sketch for 'L'Eloquence'; and Viscount Fitzwilliam's interleaved, annotated copy of *Paradise Lost*.

Hamilton Kerr Institute conservation highlights 7.6

Of the one hundred pieces conserved and restored by HKI in this reporting period, a few stand out as exemplary of the high-impact and high-quality work done alongside the Institute's educational and training activities.

Lady Margaret Beaufort (1510)

This portrait by Meynnart Wewyck of Tudor dynasty matriarch, and grandmother of King Henry VIII, Lady Margaret Beaufort, is the earliest large-scale portrait of an English woman. As conservators at HKI were working to restore the painting, now the centrepiece of the National Portrait Gallery's Tudor Gallery, they were surprised to discover that the portrait's face had been fully repainted to make her appear more sombre. By overpainting the face, Lady Margaret had been given pursed lips and deep-set eyes that belied the portrait's true face. Our conservators restored the original face, revealing for the first time in centuries the artist's original intention. Christine Kimbriel who led the restoration said, 'Few English panel paintings from the reign of Henry VII and early reign of Henry VIII still exist and surviving large-scale portraits of women such as this are extremely rare.'

An HKI conservator retouching a join on the portrait of Margaret Beaufort, owned by St John's College, Cambridge. Photo Courtesy of HKI, by permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge.

Portrait of Richard Fitzwilliam by Joseph Wright of Derby (1764)

'Adoration of the Kings' by Taddeo Zuccari (c. 1550s)

Two very different paintings illustrate just a fraction of the conservation and restoration work necessary for an exhibition such as *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance*. In 1764 the great painter Joseph Wright of Derby was commissioned to make a portrait of Richard Fitzwilliam, founder of the Museum, then an undergraduate at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. The portrait shows a young man of already considerable wealth and influence – his inheritance coming, in no small part, from his grandfather's involvement in the Atlantic slave trade. Two hundred years before that portrait, Taddeo Zuccari painted the 'Adoration of the Kings', a work significant for depicting a Black king on equal terms with his white peers in the mid-sixteenth century. In each case, these Museum-owned paintings had to be carefully restored, peeling back layers of previous conservation efforts of a century ago, and given the sheen and thrill of their original paint.

'Surviving large-scale
portraits of women such
as this from the sixteenth
century are extremely rare.'

Professor Erma Hermens,
Director Hamilton Kerr Institute and Deputy Director,
Conservation and Heritage Science

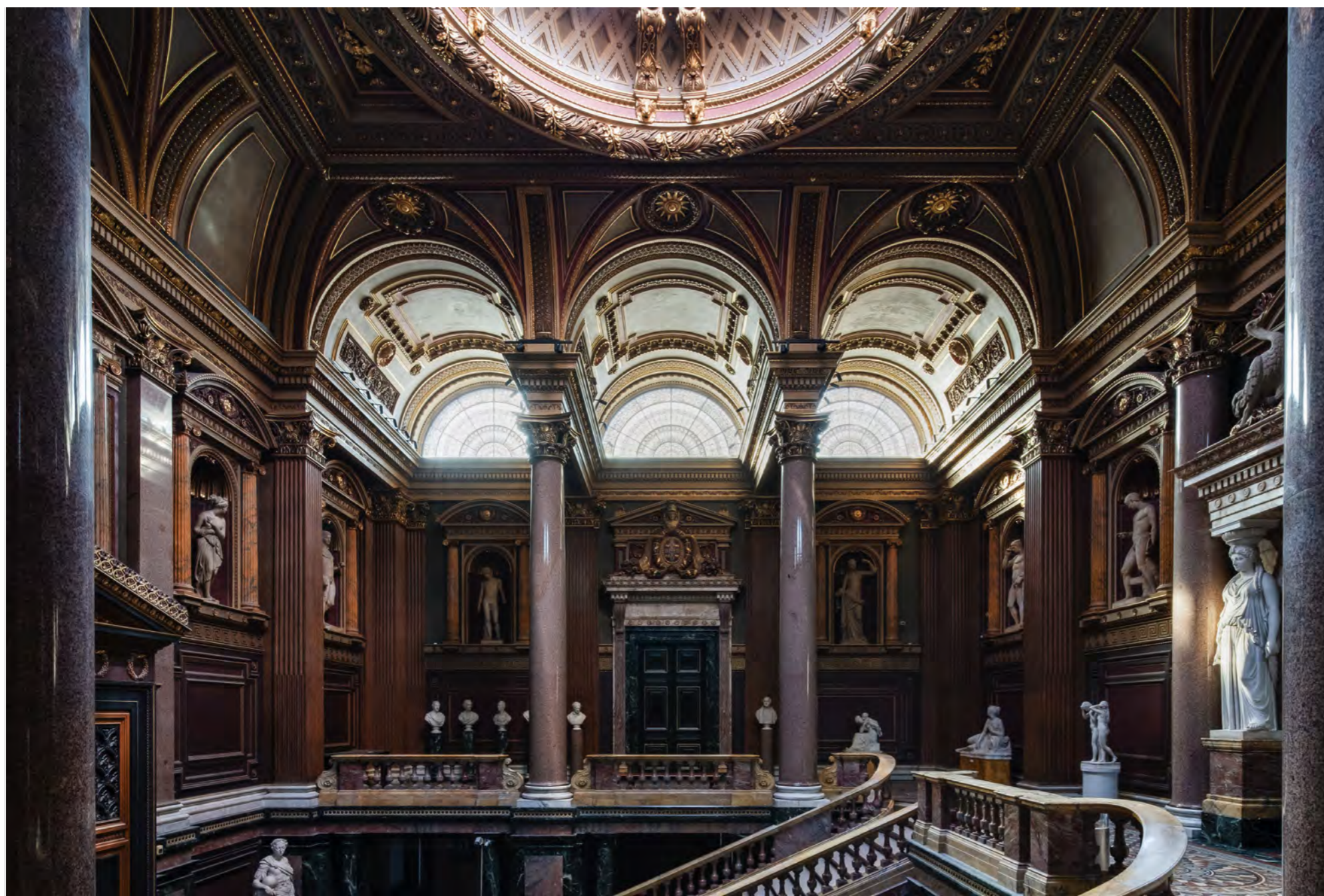
A space for welcoming the world

Masterplan 8.1

The ongoing transformations to the Fitzwilliam's programming, exhibitions, collections and research requires a further transformation: a landmark project to redevelop our space into one that is inspiring, inclusive, scholarly and sustainable.

The new Masterplan vision provides a blueprint for a transformation of the Fitzwilliam's spaces that will lead us into the institution's next 200 years with newfound purpose, presence and facilities. It will reinvigorate the Fitzwilliam's impact on Cambridge and the region, while serving our increasingly global audience. We will honour the past while looking ahead to our third century, ensuring that the unique and much-loved character of the Museum is enhanced by the coordinated design of our buildings, the routes within them and the grounds that surround it. Audiences are at the heart of this framework; we are driven by creating meaningful and memorable experiences and a legacy that will benefit generations to come.

One of the principles underpinning the new Masterplan is a dedication to shifting our work in more collaborative and participatory directions – and an important part of that is opening the Museum to the world. The vision for the Masterplan includes occupying new spaces in Cambridge as part of our work with and within the University, and opening up more of our existing spaces for visitors to experience. Another principle is to make *all* of our public spaces more welcoming to all of our audiences, which includes making the Fitzwilliam a hub for the community – a Museum without limits or barriers. And, of course, the Masterplan means making the Fitzwilliam environmentally sustainable by reducing waste, energy usage and emissions, and working towards a zero-carbon future.



Founder's Galleries 8.2

Thanks in part to the Albert Reckitt Charitable Trust, the University Estates department completed refurbishment work on both the interior and exterior of the Founder's Galleries this year, with Galleries 1–3 in use for the *Black Atlantic* exhibition; the full range of galleries will reopen in 2024 with a collection rehang. The Museum and Estates teams are now undertaking a 'lessons-learned' review on this important building project, which will positively impact our exhibitions and visitor experience for years to come.

Maintenance 8.3

Several maintenance projects were conducted over this year. Visitor-facing work was done to completely refurbish the customer lift and to refurbish the Spanish Gallery; funding from the University has also been secured, and planning permission gained, for a new pedestrian entrance from Trumpington Street into Grove Lodge garden. The preparation for major works to the roofs and interiors of studios one and two at the HKI has begun with the appointment of Bidwells as project managers, to improve insulation, maintain a comfortable workspace and improve lighting and ventilation.



Photo © David Valinsky Photography

Working with our collections, welcoming our audiences



Staff Training 9.1

This year saw a fourfold increase in our staff training budget, a decision that was met with a very positive response from staff, always grateful for support in their career development.

Three new pieces of training were added to strengthen our workplace culture: Where to Draw the Line, giving staff a better understanding of the impact of behaviour and communication on their colleagues; Challenging Conversations, helping staff gain confidence with the new Visitor Experience Charter and supporting a culture that values high-quality customer service; and a series of Anti-Racist Practice Training sessions, supporting the Empowering Culture programme and building confidence in language, concepts and practice of race equity work. These took place alongside our already busy schedule of training such as First Aid and Mental Health First Aid, and our popular Bitesize series, which offers all staff an open invitation to upskill in various areas via one-hour slots.

Staff Induction and Training Review 9.2

A new Head of Human Resources joined the Fitzwilliam Museum this year and will help set priorities and shape our Human Resources strategy going forwards.

The Fitzwilliam follows the University's mandatory online induction training for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), but recent reporting has shown a lower level of fully trained staff than is optimal. We have begun an organisational push to undertake this training immediately to ensure a foundation level of EDI training that we can further build on, and are working towards a clearer induction programme, scheduling time for each new member of staff to undertake mandatory online training.

Building a resilient institution

Transformation Programme 10.1

Since laying out our aims and objectives for 2019–24 in our mission and strategic framework, the Fitzwilliam has identified and developed new strategic projects around what we do, how and with whom.

In January 2023 the Museum formalised these strategic projects into a Transformation Programme, with a steering group to hold ourselves to account, monitor progress, identify risks and opportunities and act as first port of call for queries – but not to approve projects, which is within Senior Leadership Team's remit. The steering group meets fortnightly, chaired by the Structural Alliance Programme Manager (since the departure of the Deputy Director, Operations), with the Director and Marlay Curator, Head of Finance, Head of Human Resources, Head of Director's Office as members.

Discussion of a business plan began in late 2022, and in March 2023, the Museum appointed cultural sector consultancy AEA to support us to build a business and targeted income generation plan to drive the Museum towards long-term financial sustainability. Their phase one report (review of context, benchmarking, interviews and workshop with senior stakeholders) was delivered in June, and an interim phase two report (income generation) in July; a third report with a business and operating plan will be issued in late 2023.

Welcomed a change of leadership to our flagship donors, The Marlay Group.

Internal Communications 10.2

The new Internal Communications Coordinator developed and delivered a new internal communications strategy. New format all-staff meetings continue to be held every month on a hybrid model, with staff both in-person and online.

The Museum's email newsletter, FitzMatters, has continued to evolve, now published every two weeks and focusing on highlighting information on the Intranet, University websites and local news. We are using analytics to understand what content is the most popular and using those insights to continually improve the quality of information.



Syndicate activities ^{10.3}

The Fitzwilliam Museum Syndicate is the board that governs the Museum's activities, continuing to support, advise and scrutinise the Museum's work. In the period 2022–2023 the Syndicate worked across a range of Museum activities.

The Syndicate regularly reviewed and advised the Senior Leadership Team on the Fitzwilliam's Business Plan, which will also now include the new income generation strategy, and holds a key examining role as the Museum moves forward with plans for financial stability and transparency in preparedness for Enhanced Financial Transparency. Likewise, the Syndicate played an important part in work on the new Masterplan Vision as an aspect of the Fitzwilliam's long-range planning and in the broader context of the University and the city.

Other Syndicate responsibilities in this year included: reviewing the internal Masterplan Vision document; approving acquisitions of new works as well as loans from the Fitzwilliam to other institutions; advising on and supporting transformations on collaborative and participatory research and impact; and offering advice and consent on new plans for the long-term future of the HKI as a teaching and research institute for art conservation and heritage science.

Currently, a governance review of the Syndicate and its membership is ongoing, to consider how best to align the Syndicate's role and the Museum's needs in terms of decision-making, advice, support and advocacy.

The Fitzwilliam Museum is very grateful to its thirteen expert and dedicated Syndicate members: The Chair, Ms Catherine Arnold, OBE, Dr Carol Attack, Dr Nicolas John Bell, Professor Rosalind Polly Blakesley, Professor David Cardwell, Dr Norman Fraser, Professor Mary Laven, Professor Alyce Mahon, Mr Roger Mosey, Lady Proby, Dr David Saunders, Professor Sujit Sivasundaram and Professor Chris Young.

'Will Dawkins is a Trinity College, Cambridge alum and rowing blue; I am delighted that Will has agreed to follow Lady Proby's extraordinary example - bringing with him his experience as former Chair of the Evelyn Trust.'

Luke Syson
Fitzwilliam Museum's Director
and Marlay Curator

Increased
Marlay Group
membership
by 22%.

Marlay Group ^{10.4}

The Marlay Group is a circle of dedicated Fitzwilliam Museum supporters. Their annual subscriptions provide vital support that enables a variety of projects at the Museum that might otherwise not be able to happen; from conservation, learning outreach and community participation to the purchasing of equipment.

This reporting year saw important changes within the Group's leadership: after more than twenty years at its helm, the Marlay Group's founding chair Lady Proby stepped down from her duties in spring 2023. We cannot thank Lady Proby enough for her service to this institution. Building the Marlay Group is an important step for the Fitzwilliam's financial stability, with our research projects, community outreach and learning work, as well as the Marlay lectures and many other events, all of which are dependent on their efforts and the Marlay Research and Impact Fund.

New Chair William Dawkins takes over at an exciting time. In this reporting year, the Marlay Group grew its membership by an astonishing 22%, meaning more opportunities and more dedicated supporters for the Fitzwilliam and the Group itself.

A people-centred community

Diversity and Inclusion 11.1

With a refresh of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy, public statement and plan of action, the Fitzwilliam Museum continues vigorously to renew our commitment to becoming a fully inclusive organisation.

To do this, we are implementing actions across all our programmes of work including exhibitions, learning, visitor experience, operations, collections and research. We are invested in delivering training for all staff and trustees, as well as addressing our recruitment processes to achieve greater diversity across the organisation as a whole. Commencing in late summer 2023, a new Empowering Culture Programme will be in place to assess where we are on our EDI journey as an organisation, and where we want to get to.

Part of the larger Transformation Project work, Empowering Culture represents a formal mechanism to shape and influence policy and practice internally. With consultants Take the Space appointed to kickstart the programme, Empowering Culture moved forward this year with the Head of Learning selected to attend the Mindsets + Missions learning and grants programme, funded by UK Research and Innovation, which supports museums to engage underrepresented groups with knowledge, research and innovation. An Empowering Culture Programme Manager was recruited at the end of this reporting year.

Raised **£3.4 million** from earned income, charitable donations, external grants, sponsorships and other sources.



Photo © Lewis Ronald

But Empowering Culture is, importantly, shaped by existing staff. The EDI Staff Network brings together staff representatives from across the organisation. The UCM Change Makers Network and Action Group continues to work across the consortium, having grown the staff network, working together to promote positive and lasting change. By the end of 2023 Empowering Culture will have delivered inclusion competency assessments, defined and set goals and objectives, commenced with a programme of essential staff training, and generated mechanisms to monitor performance, track progress, and increase engagement with our EDI objectives at both organisational and individual levels. The success of the programme depends in part on the extent to which it is co-designed with all staff from right across the organisation: as the programme progresses over 2024 and beyond, it will be both collaborative and consultative, with staff-led networks playing a key part in delivering and shaping the programme.

Professional support 11.2

Additional support was put in place for colleagues when dealing with the uncertain times following the reorganisation period.

All Museum colleagues were invited to attend Personal and Professional Resilience training sessions delivered by Tiny Pause, operated by an internationally renowned author, coach and trainer specialising in mental wellbeing and performance in the workplace. The Museum also offered management essentials training to new line managers and members of Senior Management Team, and aspiring line managers.

Since the news of the Arts Council England funding outcome was received, weekly information updates were shared with all staff as part of a comprehensive care package currently being researched, with the aim of proactively supporting colleagues affected by recent changes.

New sources of sustainability

The Fitzwilliam Museum is working with purpose to open up our spaces, programmes and research to put participation, collaboration and exchange at the heart of everything we do.

This soft transformation makes our work more visible, more accessible and more impactful – whether that's in a global academic community or to the children of East Anglia. We are grateful to the University for their endorsement and support of this work through funding via Research England, RCIF, Enhancing Research Culture and Participatory Funding.

In this reporting period we learned of the devastating 50% cut in Arts Council England (ACE) funding to the University of Cambridge Museums consortium, of which the Fitzwilliam is the lead partner. Traditionally this vital funding has not only enabled the delivery of a wide range of innovative and award-winning learning

and wellbeing programmes but has also supported many roles in the Fitzwilliam's engagement teams. With the remaining funding redirected to support the work of the central team who work across all the University's museums and garden in the areas of public engagement and inclusion, the Fitzwilliam now no longer receives any dedicated funding from ACE. We urgently need to put in place alternative funding in an attempt to minimise the impact on our local communities, schoolchildren and young people.

Furthermore, another core source of the Museum's funding is also under review. The Research England call for applications for its Higher Education Museums & Galleries (HEMG) fund opened, with a deadline in

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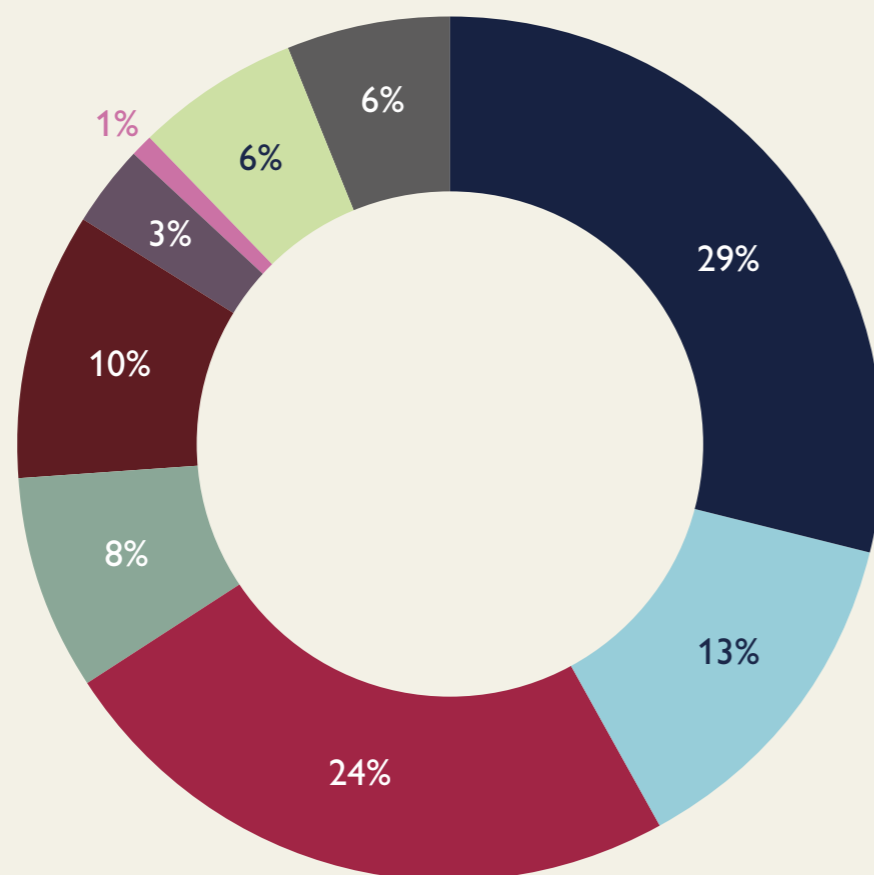
Autumn 2023. Colleagues are working across the Fitzwilliam and with other UCMs submitting applications to develop a strong, coherent approach to this vital funding source.

Under such challenging and competitive conditions, it is more important than ever that we continue to seek new and diverse

funding streams and find ways to make them sustainable.

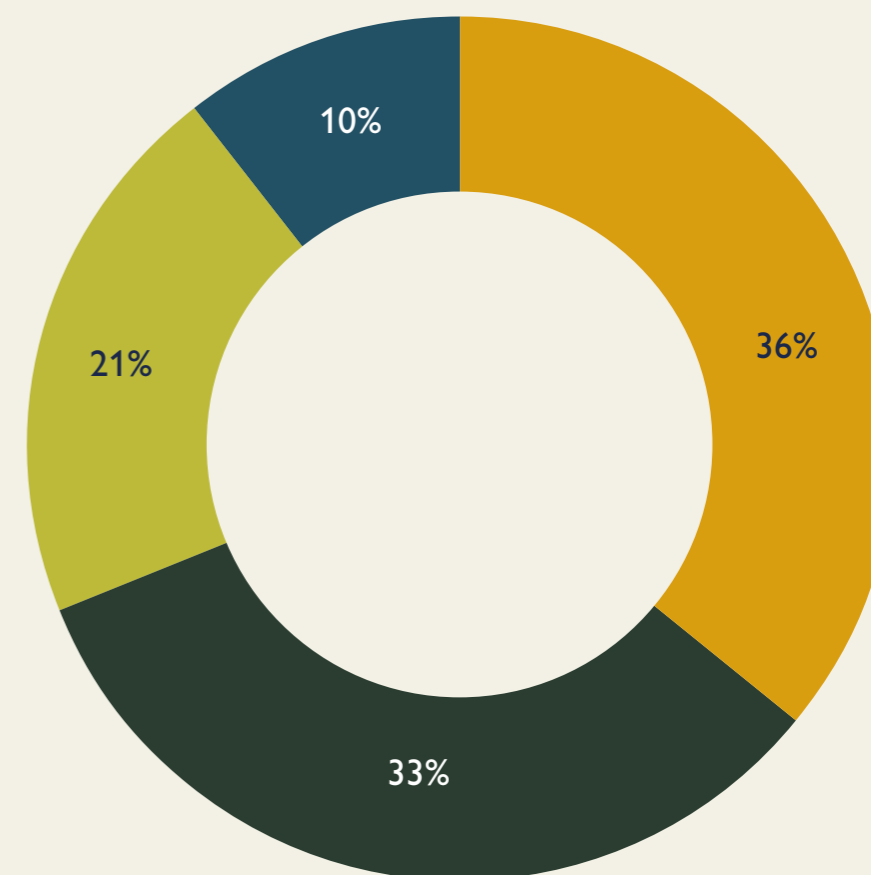
If we do more of the things we do very, very well; from innovative research projects and partnerships to award-winning exhibitions and wellbeing programmes, we will find more opportunities to seek funding to make even more happen.

2022/23 Income



- University of Cambridge £3.5m
- Research England HEMG £1.6m
- Investment income £2.9m
- Arts Council NPO funding £1.0m
- Philanthropy and sponsorship £1.2m
- Research grants £0.3m
- Membership: Friends and Marlay Group £0.2m
- Other, incl. M&G Tax Relief, HEIF and QR funding £0.7m
- Earned income £0.7m

2022/23 Expenditure



- Inspiring through learning, engagement, exhibitions and visitor experience
- Care of collections and convening and conducting world-class research projects
- Infrastructure and income generation
- Reimagining our historic community spaces and diversifying our collections

Luke Syson

Luke Syson
Director & Marlay Curator
The Fitzwilliam Museum



The Fitzwilliam Museum would like to give heartfelt thanks to all the individuals, trusts, foundations and organisations who supported us so generously in 2022-23.

We would like to recognise the significant investment in our buildings, programmes and staff made by our host institution, the University of Cambridge, and by our main funding partner UKRI Research England through their Higher Education Museums and Galleries (HEMG) Fund.

We are also grateful for the ongoing support to our core activities of the Marlay Group and the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum.

We gratefully acknowledge contributions of £1,000 and above (not including works of art) from the following, as well as those who wish to remain anonymous:

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Cambridgeshire County Council
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