

Report to Chipperfield Advisory Committee for activity over 2021–22

July 2022



The Renaissance Room, installation view, February 2022

1. Summary

In the early part of 2021, the Gallery remained closed as part of the pandemic lockdown measures and re-opened in May with *Creating a National Collection* (28 May – 4 Sept 2021) - the result of a major partnership with the National Gallery (NG) stemming from the Art Fund/NG Curatorial Traineeship scheme (secured in 2019). This saw collaboration in many areas and the pairing of 9 loans from the NG collection alongside paintings from Southampton's collection. The exhibition provided the focal point for the formal launch for Southampton's bid to become UK City of Culture in 2025, in which the Art Gallery was a major feature both in terms of programme and planned legacy.

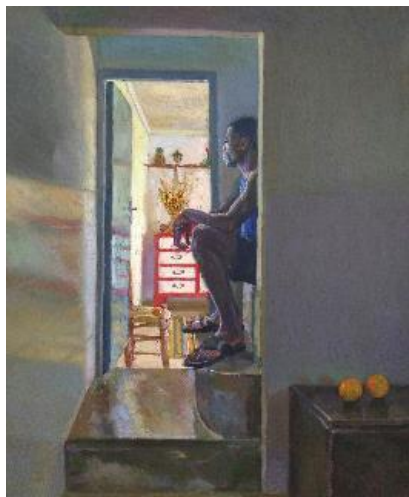
With the Gallery back open to the public the exhibition programme has continued with a number of other collaborations, including co-curated exhibitions with both Universities and a series of exhibitions responding to the climate crisis working alongside the Council's Green City team. Meanwhile, the collection continues to grow with a number of significant gifts received in the last year. The loans programme has returned to pre-pandemic levels, with numerous paintings travelling nationally and internationally.

The team has been bolstered by the appointment of an Assistant Curator and Assistant Conservator focused on growing the ArtLease scheme to support income generation and improve access. In addition to this, the service has been working closely with a retail consultant to improve the retail offer and develop new products, with a particular focus on the Art Gallery.

Looking forward, major repair work on the Art Gallery roof will commence this summer and run until 2024. The Gallery recently been offered a significant gift from the Dannatt Trust specifically for conservation of modern British art in the collection which builds on previous significant investment and is greatly appreciated.

2. New Acquisitions

From January 2021, the Gallery accepted a number of significant gifts to the collection, which are listed below. Notably, the gift of works by John Hitchens (see image at base of page) and his grandfather, Alfred, makes Southampton the first public art collection to hold works by three generations of the Hitchens family (with the Gallery already holding a number of paintings by his father, Ivon).



- Nahem Shoa, *Gbenga sitting on the stairs*, 2002, oil on canvas; gifted by the artist (above, left)
- Three works on paper by Nerys Johnson; gifted by the Trustees of the Nerys Johnson Estate
- Three works on paper by Barbara Rae; bequeathed in April 2021 by Bernard Heine with Art Fund support
- Christopher Le Brun, *D40*, 2020, oil on paper; gifted by the artist on the occasion of his 70th birthday
- Louise Courtnell, *A Mirror's Secret, Self-Portrait*, 1998, Oil on canvas; gifted by the artist (above, right)
- John Hitchens, *Land Quest*, 2017, acrylic on canvas (below); gifted by the artist, together with a landscape by his grandfather, Alfred



3. Loans Out Programme

The Gallery has maintained a busy loans programme both nationally and internationally, lending 42 works of art to 25 venues since January 2020. Currently there are works out on loan to Tate Britain, Towner Art Gallery, The Box, Plymouth and the RWA (Royal West of England Academy) in Bristol.

Highlights from the loans programme include:

- *Two Poodles* by Pierre Bonnard to Cleveland Museum (27 June – 19 September 2021) and Portland Art Museum, Oregon (24 October 2021 – 23 January 2022) for *Private Lives: Home and Family in the Art of the Nabi (Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard, Maurice Denis, Félix Vallotton)*
- *Bananas* by Lucian Freud to Victoria Art Gallery, Bath (10 July – 19 September 2021) and Falmouth Art Gallery (25 September – 27 November 2021) for *Freud, Minton and Ryan – Unholy Trinity*
- *Avenue of Chestnut Trees* by Alfred Sisley to Kunstmuseum, Basel (4 September – 23 January 2022), and the Ashmolean Museum (17 February – 12 June 2022) for *Camille Pissarro: The Studio of Modernism*
- *The Artist's Sister in the Garb of a Nun* by Sofonisba Anguissola to Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art (30 September 2021 – 9 January 2022) and Detroit Institute of Arts (6 February – 29 May 2022) for *By Her Hand: Artemisia Gentileschi and Women Artists in Italy, 1500–1800*
- *Red Movement* by Bridget Riley to The Lightbox, Woking (18 December 2021 – 10 April 2022) for *Bridget Riley: Pleasure of Sight*
- *Jean and Still Life in Front of a Window* by John Bratby and *Relief Construction* by Anthony Hill to The Barbican Centre (3 March – 26 June 2022) for *Postwar Modern: New Art in Britain, 1945–65*

At a regional level, multiple works were loaned to three exhibitions:

- St Barbe Museum & Art Gallery, Lymington (11 September 2021 – 8 January 2022) for *Haunted Landscapes – The Art of the Eerie*
- Russell Cotes Museum and Art Gallery, Bournemouth (1 October 2021 – 6 March 2022), for *A Mirror of the Times: 100 years of British Art through Bournemouth Arts Club*
- John Hansard Gallery (27 November 2021 – 26 February 2022) for *Derek Jarman, Modern Nature*

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ArtLease scheme

With the appointment of two new Assistant posts (curatorial and conservation), we have renewed focus on the ArtLease Scheme and will be sending paintings to a new venue later in the year. Another potential venue is in the pipeline, both through the existing relationship we have with Audley Retirement Homes. This is in addition to the 9 venues already part of the Scheme, with 104 paintings on display.



Portrait of Arthur Jeffress by Graham Sutherland (centre), with *Napoleon* by François Gérard (left) and Richard Deacon, *Mirror Mirror* (right). Main Hall, June 2022.

4. Conservation

The busy schedule of ongoing activity preparing paintings for display and loan, and associated condition reporting has been greatly alleviated by the appointment of an Assistant Conservator as part of ArtLease. In addition to this, there have been a number of conservation projects over this period which have been completed or are ongoing:

Frame Conservation

- The frame for *Claude Monet's The Church at Vétheuil* which had been sent for conservation in October 2020 was displayed in its conserved state for the first time in the *Creating A National Collection* exhibition (28 May – 4 Sept 2021) alongside another Monet from the National Gallery, *The Petit Bras of the Seine at Argenteuil*.



Both Monet's on display in Creating a National Collection

- The conservation of the frame for John Singer Sargent's *The Late Major E.C. Harrison as a Boy* is almost complete. It will be delivered back to the Gallery later this summer, before going out on loan to National Gallery of Art, Washington DC (2 October 2022 – 2 January 2023), for the exhibition *Sargent in Spain*, which travels on to the Legion of Honor, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (11 February – 14 May 2023).
- Following conversations with artist David Redfern, we are collaborating with him to produce a new frame for his 1977 painting *Work*, which is currently housed in an acrylic box. This will greatly enhance the appearance of the work.

Research

- In May 2021, Ian Tyers carried out dendrochronology on Jacob Jordaens's *The Holy Family* for *Royal Museums of Fine Arts in Brussels* as part of an international art history project carrying out research on Jordaens and Van Dyck's oil on panels.

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Fundraising

- The Dannatt Trust approached the Gallery to make a gift specifically for conservation of modern British art in the collection. The funding will be held in trust by FOSMAG.
- Our Conservator Rebecca Moisan secured £250 from *Arts Society Hampshire & Isle of Wight* and £250 from *Central Arts Society* for the conservation of the frame of Mark Gertler's *Rabbi and Grandchild*.

Sculpture storage improvements

- The storage improvements funded by the Gabo Trust are now virtually complete, with the sculptures fitted in their new crates and relocated in the store.

Ongoing collaboration with National Gallery

- Assistant Conservator Ben Hall will be undertaking a summer placement with the National Gallery's conservation department. He will be working under supervision on two paintings from our collection: *An Extensive Landscape* by Philips Koninck (below) and *A Mountain Landscape* by Salvator Rosa. This will help to grow our conservation expertise and builds on the long-standing partnership with the National Gallery.



An Extensive Landscape by Philips Koninck

5. Exhibitions: 2021–22

Despite the vagaries of the pandemic, the work on exhibitions did not abate. Having adapted and developed online exhibitions for the first time during the pandemic, our first in-person exhibition was the culmination of the two-year partnership with the Art Fund and the National Gallery's Curatorial Traineeship programme. The exhibition, opening in May 2021, was timed to be part of the official launch of Southampton's bid to become UK City of Culture in 2025. Director of the National Gallery, Dr Gabrieli Finaldi was a key speaker alongside political leaders, the Bid Director and Head of Culture & Tourism. All exhibitions have been accompanied by a comprehensive learning and events programme for families, adults and school age children including experimenting with online provision.



Installation view of *Creating a National Collection*

Creating a National Collection: The Partnership between Southampton City Art Gallery and the National Gallery

28 May – 4 Sept 2021

A major collaboration exploring the unique relationship between Southampton City Art Gallery and the National Gallery, which advised Southampton on acquisitions into the collection until 1975. At the heart of the exhibition were key pairings of work from the two collections across the history of Western Art, including paintings by Monet, Gainsborough and Cesare de Sesto. The exhibition was accompanied by a 176-page publication and was co-curated by Curatorial Trainee, Jemma Craig, alongside De Susanna Avery-Quash, Senior Research Curator (History of Collecting) as part of the National Gallery's curatorial trainee programme.



Installation view of *Manifesting the Unseen*

Manifesting the Unseen

28 May – 9 October 2021

An exhibition in partnership with Solent Showcase and Manifesting The Unseen, a London-based artist's collective of Muslim women sharing an interest in the unifying principals of Islamic art. As part of the pandemic-impacted Southampton Mayflower 400 programme, their intention was to invite the viewer to see the unseen, challenging the perceptions of Islam and Muslim women.

A Complete Portrait of Arthur Jeffress

24 September 2021 – 22 January 2022

Curated by Gill Hedley, an exhibition about the life and collection of Jeffress, to coincide with a major biography written by Hedley. Jeffress bequeathed a significant part of his collection to Southampton after his tragic death by suicide in 1961. The exhibition included 3 loans from Tate bequeathed to them by Jeffress, reuniting them for the first time with the paintings bequeathed to Southampton.

New Acquisitions 2011-21: Narrative, Figure and Place

24 September 2021 – 29 January 2022

2021 marked 110 years since Southampton City Art Gallery's visionary founding bequest from Councillor Robert Chipperfield. This exhibition followed on from *Creating a National Collection* which focussed on the gallery's establishment in the twentieth century as a holder of one of the finest regional art collections in the UK. The exhibition brought together a selection of 60 works acquired by Southampton City Art Gallery since 2011, featuring painting, photography, drawing, print, sculpture, video, new media and textiles.

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Lessons Learned

23 October 2021 – 15 January 2022

Students, Alumni, Honorary Doctors, Fellows and friends of the Southampton School of Art, Design and Fashion, Solent University were invited to select pieces from the collection that had inspired or influenced them. Course teams from the School chose their selections as teaching aids to inform and support delivery of the curriculum to the Undergraduate and Postgraduate students.

Royals to Ratcatchers: 200 years of Power in British Portraiture

From 22 January – 28 May 2022

Curated by undergraduate History students from the University of Southampton, the exhibition explored the hierarchies underpinning self-presentation throughout two centuries of art history – from Joshua Reynolds' gentry to Josef Herman's miners. The project was integrated into a History module with students working on all aspects of the exhibition development and curation.



Installation view of *There Rolls the Deep*

Julian Perry, There Rolls the Deep

18 February – 4 June 2022

A series of new paintings by Julian Perry that explored coastal erosion as emblematic of a world in crisis, containing over 30 recent works by Perry as well as studies and found objects from eroding shores. The exhibition included works from the collection that inspired Perry by artists such as J.M.W. Turner, Albrecht Dürer, Gustave Courbet and William Nicholson. The new work was created as a result of Arts Council England funding, which also covered a learning programme that involved coastal visits for local schools.

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Earth Art: The Common Ground

28 January – 14 May 2022

Bringing together a selection of the Gallery's important collection of work including sculpture, drawing and photography by key artists of the Land Art movement, including Richard Long, Andy Goldsworthy and Tony Cragg.



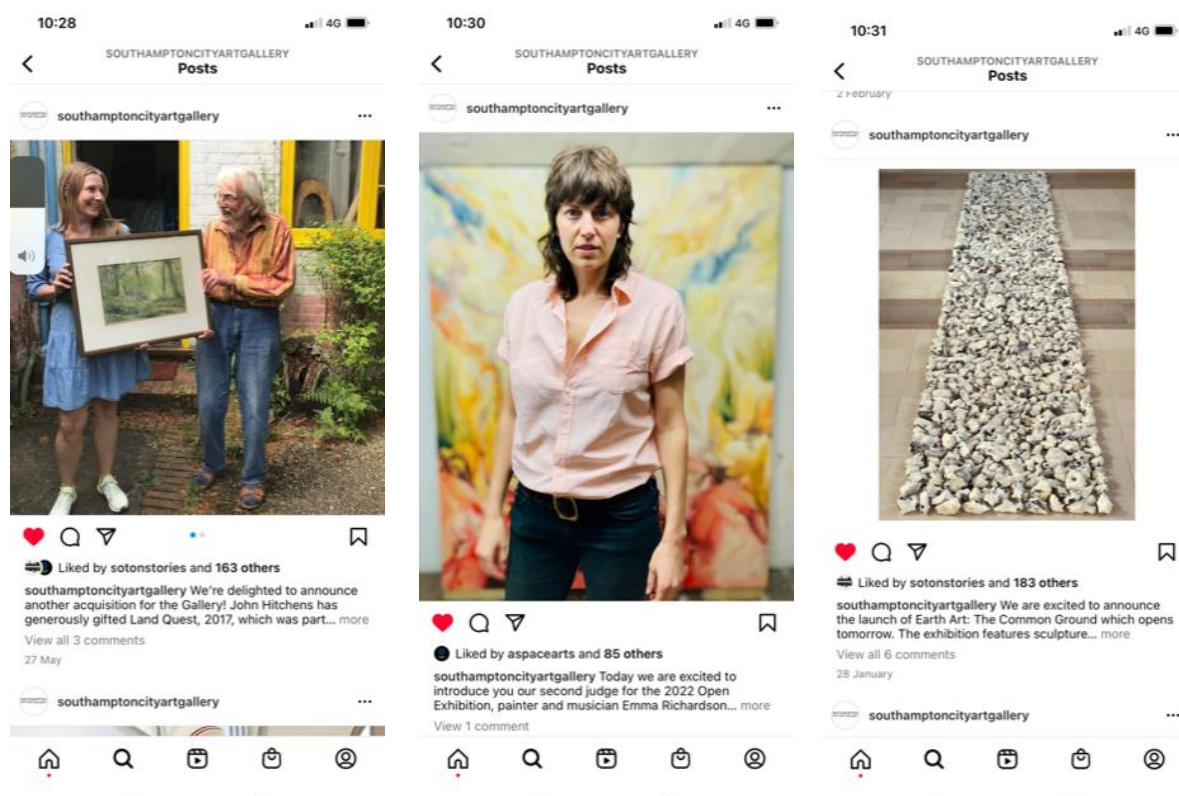
Installation view of *Earth Art: The Common Ground*

6. Digital Presence

Although the frequency of the Gallery’s social media activity has seen a reduction after the Covid lockdown enabled the team to make it a major focus of our engagement activity, the number of followers to the Gallery’s accounts continues to rise:

	No of followers in Jan 2021	Current number of followers	% increase
Facebook https://en-gb.facebook.com/SouthamptonCityArtGallery/	5,983	6,725	12.4%
Twitter @ArtGallerySoton	3,680	4,175	13.4%
Instagram southamptoncityartgallery	2,961	3,780	27.7%

The channels continue to be used for a combination of promoting learning activity, new exhibitions and events such as the Open exhibition. Posts about new acquisitions are especially popular.



As part of the collaboration with the National Gallery, the Gallery has taken forward a number of digital initiatives which include a virtual tour of the Gallery with the Curators, Jemma Craig and Susanna Avery-Quash, working with local filmmaker City Eye. The film is available on the Gallery website, but can be viewed here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYJ0mOs2r8c&t=4s

The team also created a series of blogs that explored different aspects of the National Gallery partnership and went behind the scenes for the creation of the exhibition, all available at the following link: www.southamptoncityartgallery.com/whats-on/creating-a-national-collection-the-partnership-between-southampton-city-art-gallery-and-the-national-gallery/

Scroll through the 'Creating a National Collection' blog here...



#1 - Introducing Jemma

Click the link to meet Jemma, the current Curatorial Trainee for the National Gallery and Southampton City Art Gallery.

For the past 18 months Jemma has been busy researching the history of the City Art Gallery and delving through the archives at both institutes, exploring their longstanding relationship.

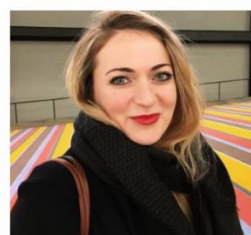
In the first of a series of blog posts Jemma talks about how her traineeship is going so far.



#2 - Researching the Relationship

Click the link to meet Susanna Avery-Quash, the Senior Research Curator in the History of Collecting at the National Gallery and who has been mentoring Jemma over the last 18 months.

In the latest blog post, Susanna discusses the process behind investigating the intertwined histories of both galleries and shares some of the many interesting aspects of the historical partnership that have been uncovered through their trips to the archives.



#3 Thomas Gainsborough, a Pair of Portraits

Welcome to week three of the *Creating a National Collection* blog. My name's Corinna and I'm a Curatorial Trainee at the National Gallery, partnered with Museums Sheffield. I'll be taking a closer look at two portraits in the exhibition by one of England's finest eighteenth-century portraitists, Thomas Gainsborough.

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7. Development Programme

Building on the Council's financial commitment, a two-phase roof refurbishment is planned for the Gallery over 2022–24. Regular meetings are held with Property Services to monitor the project and agree the scope and specification of the works. Phase 1 (beginning June 2022) focuses on the copper roof replacement, whilst phase 2 (beginning Spring 2023) centres on the air handling units, sky lights and other refurbishment.

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The Art Gallery is still central to the *Completing the Cultural Quarter* vision as identified in the newly adopted Cultural Strategy and is also a key part in the Destination Management Plan. Given the disappointment of the result of Southampton's UK City of Culture bid, Cultural Services alongside the Culture Trust (as the successor vehicle for the bid) are reviewing the approach in order to progress this work albeit at a different scale and pace.