

RWA

Highlights of 2022/23

World-class art in
exceptional spaces
for everyone



Over 170 years of trailblazing

With unparalleled opportunities for women artists throughout our history; a leading abolitionist as founding President, and several lifetimes spent supporting disadvantaged artists, the RWA has always had equality at its heart.

Our landmark building has been dramatically updated from simply beautiful to a truly welcoming, inclusive space for our whole community, not a select few.

We've really listened to the people we want to reach, and now offer outstanding accessibility, including a huge new lift and a fully-equipped Changing Places toilet facility.

We've improved the space for our visitors and our art, while massively reducing our environmental impact. We've opened new doorways, expanded our cafe and landscaped our forecourt to welcome visitors from the first glimpse of our building.

Our transformation hasn't just been physical; our accessible Tours include British Sign Language, Described, Dementia-friendly and Baby Tours, plus a co-created programme for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities.

We couldn't have done this without your support, and with less than 1% of our costs covered from public subsidy, we still need your help. Only with your generous support can we continue to showcase exceptional talent; bring great art to Bristol, and provide life-enhancing creative workshops to under-served communities across our city.

As an independent Charity, every £1 donated or raised is vital



Exceptional spaces

to inspire and uplift

Our Light & Inspiration capital project is delivering exactly the impact we hoped. Visitor numbers have tripled to over 150,000 in the year since reopening, including many who've never felt able to visit an Art Gallery before and now feel they belong.

The stars of our extraordinary building are our 19th century galleries, with beautifully constructed interiors, filled with natural light. Over the past year these stunning spaces have housed works from many of the 'greats' of British Art, from Kauffman, Turner, Constable and Reynolds, through Frink, Nash, Procter and Sutherland, to Sonia Boyce, Antony Gormley, Grayson Perry, Richard Long, Yinke Shonibare, and so many more.

We have exhibited well over 500 artists' work in the past 12 months, providing all kinds of artists – whether well-known names or first-time exhibitors – an opportunity to display their work in a professional gallery setting. This includes commissioning work by both established and emerging talents, and giving those newly exploring their creativity the chance to be shown alongside their artistic heroes.

“One of the most beautiful places in which to look at art in this country”

Sir Nicolas Serota, Chair
Arts Council England



For everyone

Our free-to-enter Family Activity space has creative activities for all children, including those with additional needs. It includes giant interactive artworks, drawing materials, dressing up costumes, a puppet theatre, comfy seating and a reading corner.

Out of hours, we host Happy Mondays sessions for young people with autism or profound and multiple learning disabilities, both through SEN+D schools and for families in school holidays.

“We’ve been to so many places that say they are for SEN+D Children. This is actually the best I’ve been to, you’re really open minded. He can just be himself.”

Happy Mondays family

In 2022, we ran a Work Experience week for ten young people with





additional needs. All achieved a Bronze Arts Award, which for some may be their only qualification.

We have built a strong partnership with Bristol Community Links (BCL) for adults with multiple, complex needs, supporting their creativity and exhibiting their work at the RWA.

“Sincere thanks for everything you are doing to raise the status and visibility of disabled people, it is trailblazing.”
BCL Manager

Our Youngwood Room provides quiet space, and enables people living with dementia and their carers to end a gallery tour with vital socialising over tea and cake.

“What a triumph that people living with dementia are now welcome where they once saw a barrier – really beautiful to hear the difference the session made for them”
Bristol Group Coordinator,
Alzheimer’s Society



New doors to art

taking the transformative power of art across the city

We believe everyone should have the opportunity to enhance their wellbeing through creativity. Making this happen includes co-creating creative activities with some of Bristol's most under-served communities, and delivering it on their doorstep.

During 2022/23, this included:

Scribble and Sketch free intergenerational drop-in workshops took place every month at Easton, Redcliffe, Hartcliffe and Southmead. 49 workshops were run – with a total of 680 participants.

"I can't believe you've come down here. Nobody comes here."
Community Partner



Partnership with Bristol Refugee Artists Collective (BRAC), presenting an exhibition of their work at the RWA; offering free submission to our Annual Open, and facilitating ongoing free formal art training for some.

"You make me happy for this project. And, I remember for everything for painting, because always I'm at home"
BRAC Participant.

Artist-led workshops with new families to design and paint a mural at the Horizons Mother and Baby Unit at Southmead Hospital.

"Thank you again for the amazing murals and for your continuing offer of support to our Mums and babies."
Nurse, Southmead Hospital



Thank you to those who have supported us and those who will

The RWA is here for everyone. We are a place to feel welcomed and inspired, and to enjoy great art from the past and present.



This is made possible by our Patrons, Friends, artists, sponsors and funders and volunteers who so generously support us.

As an independent charity, we rely on earned and donated income for our survival, so that we can continue to be a place that welcomes, inspires and enriches the lives of all people from all communities and all backgrounds through Art and Creativity.

YOUR support - whether through buying art, making a regular or a one-off donation, joining as a Friend or Patron, signing up for art classes or bidding for one of the stunning works in our annual Secret Postcard Auction - will make all the difference.

You can find out more about how to make a donation and what your money will pay for by visiting the Support Us page on the RWA website rwa.org.uk or by contacting Kate Foster (kate.foster@rwa.org.uk).

Thank you!



Ongoing work with Roma young people, who attended a pewter-casting workshop in September, which totally absorbed them.

"I've worked with them for 3 years and I've never seen them stay that focused. 1+1/2 hours is unheard of for them to be engaged. Thank you so much, it was so good to see."

Youth Worker