



Holburne Highlights 2025

A summary of achievements made
possible by your support



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Director's Foreword

2025 was a momentous milestone in the Holburne's history as we unveiled new galleries, opening up more of the building to the public and improving the Museum's facilities. Thanks to the generosity of the Schroder Family, our collection is enriched with world class treasures for at least the next twenty years.

I cannot emphasise enough how this redevelopment was only made possible with the loyal support of our Director's Circle and Patrons, so may I take this opportunity to thank you all for such tremendous generosity and patience over the past year as our 'business as usual' became somewhat less usual. Without your annual commitment, we would simply not be able to do everything we do.

As ever, I am enormously proud of our community engagement work which continues to flourish as Pathways celebrates its 10th year. You can read more about the impact these groups are having further in this report, and see first-hand the work produced by some of the participants in the exhibition *The Shape of Care* at the Museum this spring.

With a new Head of Development in place, we are introducing a range of improvements in how we look after our members. First and foremost, we're thrilled to share a rich events programme for 2026, including afternoon tea with Dame Zandra Rhodes, and an overnight visit to the chalk downs which influenced artists such as Ravilious who will be on show in the autumn.

Thank you, once again, for your support. I hope to see you at one of our events very soon!



Chris Stephens, Director



New Galleries

The Schroder Gallery features over 100 pieces of silver, showcasing some of the greatest masterpieces of the silversmith's art. Many of you will have already marvelled at The Schwarzenberg Nef and The Aldobrandini Tazza (one of a set of twelve once described as 'one of the most spectacular groups of 16th century silver'). Designed by Eric Parry Architects with Real Studios, the space takes inspiration from great 'kuntskammers' of the past, displaying an unrivalled collection of Renaissance objects to the public in its entirety for the first time.

The Seventeenth Century Gallery on the first floor (used most recently as an office) boasts a rich display of works by artists such as Lucas Cranach the Elder and Hans Holbein the Elder. It features a single non-Dutch work: *Pastoral Landscape with Shepherds Playing Music by a River*, which was painted around 1637 by the renowned master of the ideal landscape, Claude Gellée - or Claude Lorrain, the grandfather of the pastoral landscape.

New collection cabinetry beside The Schroder Gallery draws out the hidden gems from our diverse collection, from Dutch tiles and Japanese Netsuke to Romano British coins and Middle-Eastern glassware. A free-to-access space, this striking display encourages visitors to engage more intimately with William Holburne's objects prior to paying admission.



“It’s of a quality to rival the V&A”



Exhibition Highlights:

Spring 2025

Iconic: Portraiture from Francis Bacon to Andy Warhol (24 Jan–5 May)

This exhibition brought together rarely-seen works to explore the ways artists can use photography as a source and as subject matter, reflecting on the potency of the media and the construction of celebrity. Featuring works by major names such as Francis Bacon, Peter Blake, Pauline Boty, Richard Hamilton, Gerhard Richter and Andy Warhol, the exhibition focused on the period in the mid 20th century, particularly the 1960s.



Joshua Donkor: I have More Souls than One (18 Jan–5 May)

Ghanaian-British painter Joshua grew up in Bath and attended Beechen Cliff School. Born in 1997, he is the youngest artist ever to exhibit at the Holburne. Joshua uses portraiture as a vehicle to subvert monolithic portrayals of Black identity and utilises a range of painting and printing techniques to embed the histories of his sitters into each work, combining their image with layered references to a selection of personal belongings.



Diedrick Brackens: Woven Stories (24 Jan–26 May)

Four works by Brackens were displayed in our Ballroom, set at dusk, twilight, and deep night. He describes the silhouetted figures as ciphers, or “needles through which I slip the threads of biography and myth, and pass through a mesh of history and context.” His visions of African-American life and identity invited viewers to set aside straightforward interpretation and uncover meaning.



Exhibition Highlights:

Summer 2025

Impressions in Watercolour: Turner and his Contemporaries (23 May–14 Sep)

Curated by Ian Warrell, this display, borrowed from a private collection, showcased Turner at his most experimental. It also placed him among notable contemporaries, including Thomas Girtin and John Sell Cotman, highlighting the exciting developments in watercolour of the era in which they worked. New directions, materials and techniques built an impetus that validated watercolour as an expressive and serious medium.



Nicolas Party: Copper & Dust (12 May–31 Aug)

Nicolas brought an intimate group of oil-on-copper works to the Wirth Gallery, comprising landscapes, still lifes and portraits. His technique takes its cue from 17th-century painters such as Rembrandt, with copper providing a smooth surface for intricate detail. Born in Switzerland in 1980, Party's work is influenced by his early experience as a graffiti artist, his training in graphics and 3D animation, and a deep love of 18th-century pastels.

Mural by Nicolas Party (12 May–19 Oct)

Nicolas created a stunning mural in the Picture Gallery, inspired by a work from our collection: *A Brawl between Peasants* by Dutch painter Benjamin Gerritsz. Cuyp (1612–1652). It was executed in the soft, dusty medium of pastel, in stark contrast to the violence of the brawl. His 2025 work, *Portrait*, hung over the scene, with the sitter looking directly at the viewer - referencing the many 18th-century portraits in our Picture Gallery.

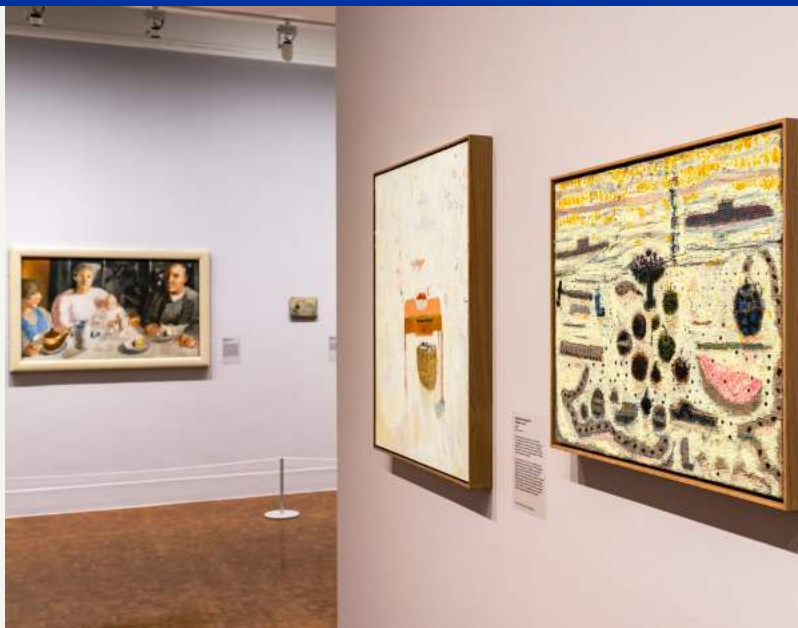


Exhibition Highlights:

Autumn 2025

Dreams of the everyday: paintings by Winifred Nicholson and Andrew Cranston **(3 Oct 2025–11 Jan 2026)**

This exhibition arrived in October, having opened at The Pier in Orkney in June. It brought together the paintings of Winifred Nicholson (1893–1981) and Andrew Cranston (b. 1969), curated by the designer and collector Jonathan Anderson, in collaboration with Andrew Cranston and the gallerist Richard Ingleby. Many of the paintings shared a delight in ordinary, often domestic, realities.



***Illustrating Austen* (11 Sep 2025–11 Jan 2026)**

In the 250th anniversary year of Jane Austen's birth, this exhibition was a chance for audiences to see the artwork behind their favourite Austen novels. Centring around Austen's stories and the characters she created, *Illustrating Austen* demonstrated the ways in which our favourite characters were brought to life on the page, how different artists depicted them in a range of styles, and the evolution of these iconic figures through the years, reflecting changing times and audiences.



Sculpting the Earth: Ceramics by Natalie Bevan, Psiche Hughes & Ann Stokes **(19 Sep 2025–4 Jan 2026)**

The ballroom was graced by the ceramic works of three little-known women artists of the 20th century, in an exhibition that highlighted an alternative ceramic tradition and challenged established hierarchies of art and craft. Together, these artists demonstrated an intuitive approach to modelling, producing humorous and insightful reflections of the worlds they saw or imagined.



Event Highlights

Schroder Gallery Opening Night (5 Sep)

We were delighted to welcome some of our dearest friends, colleagues and supporters to celebrate our spectacular new galleries. It was a night to remember, filled with excited chatter and clinking glasses. In a touching moment, Director Chris Stephens and outgoing Chairman, Edward Bayntun-Coward thanked the Schroder family for their remarkable loan, while Neil MacGregor regaled us with the story of the collection's formation over numerous generations.



Frieze Masters (17 Oct)

Now an annual tradition, Chris treated us to a guided tour of Frieze Masters to offer early insights into the Holburne's future exhibitions amongst the buzz of the fairs. Glenn Brown's installation for Gagosian gave the group a tantalising preview of his upcoming exhibition at the Museum in May 2026, whilst Paul Hughes of Paul Hughes Fine Arts told incredible stories of his Pre-Columbian artworks, shown in dialogue with contemporary pieces by Jorge Riveros and Vera Chaves.



Sir John Soane's Museum & Cosmic House (6 Nov)

This trip saw us visit the London homes of two celebrated architects. At Sir John Soane's Museum, preserved as it was in 1837, Director Will Gompertz led a private tour of Soane's quarters, architectural models and remarkable picture rooms with moving walls. After lunch, we visited Cosmic House in Holland Park, the former home of Charles Jencks, whose richly symbolic interiors made it a landmark of Post-Modern architecture and debate.



875+

Total
beneficiaries
engaged

23

weeks average
attendance among
participants

20%

Increase in
wellbeing reported
by participants

4

Public exhibitions
of participants'
works

12

creative health
practitioners trained
and supported

8

volunteer museum
mentors trained

Pathways to Wellbeing

Our dedicated community engagement programme

With your generous support, our Pathways to Wellbeing programme now enters its landmark 10th year, continuing to serve adults and young people in our local communities with lived experiences of social isolation, mental health issues and poor mental health.

Over the past 12 months, we have delivered a suite of creative interventions in partnership with the American Museum & Gardens, Bath Preservation Trust and Bath Abbey, hosting groups and enabling participants to experience and engage with a range of cultural and heritage spaces.

Through regular supported creative groups, one-off activities and mentoring opportunities, the project aims to:

- Improve mental health and wellbeing for people in the greater Bath area
- Increase access to, and enjoyment of, the arts and heritage
- Create and maintain stronger arts and health partnerships
- Share knowledge of museum-based creative health

"The Holburne Museum has been part of my journey in healing. Coming to the groups helped me find my joy again and my art. I've changed so much and it started by having purpose and just belonging to a group and knowing that I'm part of something."

- Pathways to Wellbeing Participant

We are thrilled to announce that we have successfully secured Museums Association funding through the Julia Rausing Trust, allowing us to build on our nationally recognised programme from January 2026-2028.

This new funding will enable us to advocate for our Pathways work to broader audiences, deliver training and support to other cultural organisations through a regional Creative Health Network, and develop a structured framework for the creative health methodologies and expertise we have developed.

Looking Ahead

Patron & Director's Circle Events in 2026

6 March

Director's Circle Spring Dinner*

17 March

Don McCullin Drinks Reception at the Forum, Bath*

27 March

Tea with Zandra Rhodes and tour of Fashion & Textiles Museum

Date TBC

Private tour of Don McCullin '90' at Hauser&Wirth Somerset

29-30 April

Patrons further afield - Overnight trip to Chalk Downs

21 May

Holburne Private View: Beyond Impressionism & Glenn Brown

5 June

London Gallery Weekend tour with Chris Stephens

11 June

Summer drinks party, Belcombe Court

1 October

Holburne Private View: Chalk Downs & Richard Slee

15 October TBC

Frieze Masters visit

November TBC

Leighton House

**Events marked with an asterisk are exclusive to members of the Holburne Director's Circle*



Looking Ahead

Summer Season Exhibitions

Beyond Impressionism: Printmakers from Manet to Picasso

22 May - 13 September

Exploring the resurgence of printmaking from the mid-19th century onwards, this exhibition will feature prints by key artists of the Post-Impressionist movement including Édouard Manet, Pierre Bonnard, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Pablo Picasso.

Glenn Brown in Bath: Arrows of Desire

22 May - 6 September

Interspersed between historic works in our collection, Brown's interventions will introduce the uncanny, the excessive, and the unsettling into spaces usually associated with refinement and order.

Autumn Season Exhibitions

The Art of the Chalk Downs: Ravillious, Nash and others

2 October 2026 - 10 January 2027

Chalk Landscapes will feature works by Ravillious, Paul Nash and William Nicholson who were inspired archaeological discoveries at sites including Avebury and Maiden Castle.

Richard Slee: Sunlit Uplands and Withdrawing Rooms

25 September 2026 - January 2027

The exhibition brings together two bodies of Slee's work: Sunlit Uplands and Withdrawing Rooms, spread through a number of galleries at the Museum.

Coming in 2027...

William De Morgan and his Fantastical Creatures

24 January - 10 May 2027



Thank You

Your Legacy & The 1882 Circle

The Holburne was founded over 100 years ago through a legacy gift from a single family who believed that art changes lives. Today, it is thanks to you, our close family of supporters, that the Holburne continues to survive as an independent museum with a wonderful art collection for all.

As a charity, legacies of all sizes continue to play a vital role in securing our future as one of the UK's best-loved independent museums. When making or updating your Will, we hope you might consider leaving a gift to the Holburne. This could be a percentage of your estate or a specific sum, and every legacy makes a meaningful difference to our work.

The 1882 circle is our dedicated legacy membership for those who wish to leave us a gift in your will. To find out more or to discuss your choices please do get in touch with Sophie and Arthur at development@holburne.org.

Thank you.



Follow us on social media and keep up to date on all things Holburne:

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