

## **Hastings and St Leonards Museum Association AGM, 3 December 2023**

### **Museum 2023 Report**

It has been a steep learning curve in the year since Damian left the museum, I want to thank you all for your continued support and patience while I find my feet in my new role. I have appreciated your support, friendship, enthusiasm, and advice and look forward to continuing our journey together.

A lot has happened this year the highlight being awarded National Portfolio Organisation status by the Arts Council, but here is a summary:

Visitor Numbers to date: 15,942.24

Target: 11,000.00

Income to date: 43,357.84

We have had approximately 14 weddings this year as well as other hires and events. We finally installed our coffee machine which is already paying for itself.

### **Exhibitions**

**Hastings Open** closed 15 January 2023. We received over 400 entries totalling some 1100 art works. 84 works made the final show. Submission to the *Hastings Open 2022* exhibition generated £4,500 in entry fees. The exhibition featured paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, films, sculptures and illustrations by UK-based artists- many of them living and working locally. We would like to thank the judges, Angela Childs, Ellen Prebble, Euan Roberts, Fiona Denning, Kenton Lowe, Laetitia Yhap and Patricia Finnegan for their help and support. The next Hastings Open is tentatively programmed for autumn 2024.

**Donations: The Went Tree Trust** opened on 31 January. The exhibition showcases some of the significant and lesser-known objects and collections donated to the museum by the Went Tree Trust. Alderman Tree was Mayor of Hastings four times between 1891 and 1904. When he died in 1927 at the age of 82 he left a trust fund to buy objects for the museum collection. The significant collections include the Tressell collection, Burton collection, Baird collection, Badham collection, Taylor collection and the Windycroft collection. We also include our JMW Turner painting. The exhibition has been well received and it has given visitors the chance to see some of our local history that has either never been on display or very rarely. This was publicly opened by the mayor on 24<sup>th</sup> February, and the story was covered by the Hastings Observer.

. Two loaned-in touring exhibitions were held over the summer which were Brick by Brick and Mythomania.

**Brick by Brick** featured work by international artists, designers and photographers who use LEGO® bricks as their medium. This family friendly exhibition offered a range of opportunities for visitors to get creative with construction bricks and includes a LEGO® wall. This exhibition as well as the mini figure trail attracted 500 people per day during the Easter Holidays.

**Mythomania**, featured works by Canadian artist Ian Kirkpatrick who uses graphic design software to produce intricate 2D and 3D artworks out of materials including stainless steel, vinyl, corrugated cardboard, Perspex and Dibond. The surfaces of his pieces are filled with complex iconographies drawn from past and present, remixed into commentaries about pressing social themes such as war, climate change and migration.

### **Stored out of Sight**

**16 September – 30 December** Stored Out of Sight is an exhibition focused on revealing hidden disability history from the collection. The exhibition has been co-produced by seven people who are D/deaf, Disabled or Neurodivergent. These group members have researched and discussed objects from the collection throughout the year, and their work has culminated in the exhibition that highlights disabled people, although often not thought of, have always been part of history. The exhibition also highlights disability activism in the 90s and the importance of fairer representation today. Without this movement, Disability would still be seen in the medical model, and change would not have been as fast-moving or as impactful as it has.

Coming up in 2024

### **The Ellen Prebble Exhibition**

*The Ellen Prebble Exhibition* is the first solo exhibition of work by Hastings-based artist, Ellen Prebble. The unique collection of works illuminates this emerging artist's passion for the natural world and new perspectives on the Museum's own natural history collections. Curated in partnership with Project Art Works, a supported studio based in Hastings.

### **Playing the Race Card**

This exhibition is a highly anticipated follow up to the original *Playing the Race Card* exhibition at Greenhalf Studio in 2022. This open-call exhibition will be accompanied by a vibrant programme of talks, performances and workshops across Hastings, celebrating Black culture, resilience, resistance and happiness. Artists are currently being invited to respond to the theme of 'Black Joy'. Submissions close on 29 September; works will be curated externally with support from Home Live Art and the Hastings Museum & Art Gallery team.

## **Hastings Open 2024**

### **Walkway past, current and next.**

*Photographs of a Victorian Voyage*, curated by Sarah French, closed 29 January 2023. Sarah gave two tours as part of the exhibition programming.

11 Feb – 12 March is Old Town & Beyond, featuring oils and watercolours by local artist and art teacher Mike Funnell.

18 March – Thom Kofoed ‘Why I long to be a Sex Symbol’

18 June – Photographs by Nour Al Din Al Azou – Portraits of the Dove Café

22 September – 29 October - Oneiropraxis

7 November – 7 January Fossil Finder in us all

In addition to the temporary displays and installations mentioned above there have also been a number of others around the museum. These include the *Hastings Week display – female chess players*, Pier 150, ‘Object’, Issam Kourbaj’s *Imploded, burnt, turned to ash*, Crowley’s Curse, Jack in the Green 40.

Coming up in 2024 – Hastings Music Festival, John Logie Baird anniversary, RNLI anniversary, Gansey installation, Artists in Residence, Sussex Bonfires.

### **Events programme.**

Hastings Week talks

Highlights tours

Family Trails

Starlings Music Group

Make and takes

Planetarium

Lego Labs

Relics Roadshow

Room 101

Dinosaurs in our storeroom

Yoga at the museum

Christmas Fair

Homework Club

Museum Book exchange

Queer History Trail launch

Ghost Hunting  
Jack in the Green talk  
Giant building workshop  
May Pole dancing and talk  
Dead Zoo  
Sanctuary Festival  
Christmas Fair  
Film showing for Black History Month  
Trans Pride  
Sound Baths  
Story Telling Festival  
Embroidery drop in

To name but a few!

Plaines Gallery reopened in July. Gallery now fully interpreted, more objects out on display, The space is now working as a gallery again rather than a space left from a repacking project, previously objects in there had no labels and we now represent more First Nations rather than just the Plains tribes.

### **Schools and learning**

In July we sadly said goodbye to Foteini who we can all agree put in a huge amount of work in developing a solid schools offer. In September we welcomed Asten who has already made a huge impact and is developing the learning offer further.

### **Volunteering**

Our volunteers have completed over 10000 hours of volunteering. We continue to be grateful to our volunteers for all their help. Tasks have included Local Studies Room, auditing of fine art boxes and ceramics, postcards and photographs, gallery invigilation, exhibition installation, helping with disposals to name but a few.

### **Building**

Security improvements to various doors - Quote only

Fit bars to exterior of higher-level windows to Brassey Lobby / Durbar Hall - Quote

Repair of powered high-level window

Brassey Lobby external rendering repair

Repair/replace two exterior security lights

Security shutters for gift shop & lower walkway - quote only  
Durbar Hall locks - quote only  
Weeds cleared from the main flat roof of the museum and chimneys  
Gas safety inspection and boiler service, including safety valve check.  
Lower walkway interior downpipe repair  
Local Studies lighting replacement with LED  
Kitchen floor vinyl replacement  
New key safe mounted to wall in office  
Loose rubber strips on stairs replaced  
Lower walkway rain downpipe leak repair  
Painting of putty on ground floor windows following replacement with laminated glass  
Removal of corroded and dangerous lanterns from front entrance  
Repair to lead flashing on west side of gallery roof  
Thorough weeding /vegetation removal of roof of Durbar Hall  
Repair to office door closer

Southern Lightning system upgrade works  
Security bars added to upper windows of Durbar Hall  
Digilock added to ground floor kitchen door  
Main front staircase stair tread strips replaced  
Grounds maintenance – thorough vegetation clearance  
Vegetation cleared from Durbar and flat roofs  
Replacement or reinforcement of Store, Education Office, Roof and Ceramics Balcony doors  
Extension of disabled access ramp at front of museum kerbside  
Remedial electrical works to bring current install up to standard based on Electrical Installation Condition report

There are also ongoing issues with water ingress via the roof of the Durbar Hall. A contractor has been engaged by Mike Courtnage, HBC Principal Building Surveyor, who is advising and overseeing the work on this issue.

#### **Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund**

The project came to an end at the end of September, the team worked with community

groups including D/deaf and Disabled, Home Education, LGBTQIA+, People seeking sanctuary.

Some of the amazing outputs include the Queer History trail around the museum, the Stored out of Sight exhibition, Portraits of the Dove Café exhibition and a new archaeology workshop for Home Education.

**NPO** allows us to continue the work with these communities as well as expanding our reach into deprived areas and addressing the climate crisis as well as a huge amount of work around Collections Access and the Governance of our museum to include community members. Money has been allocated and the projects are underway, we look forward to some incredible outputs including amazing exhibitions and programming from our groups.

## Acquisitions

[HASM:2022.47](#) – Jackie and the Queens photographs and placard from Jack in the Green

[HASM:2022.48](#) – Digital photographs of the Gay Bogies

HASM:2023.3                      May Queen Crown from 90<sup>th</sup> May Queen Crowning

HASM.2023.2                      Local folk musician Barry Dransfield folk art doll and portrait

HASM.2023.2.1

## Loans

Laetitia Yhap, *The Boat*, Oil on board, 1987 (HASM:1991.62) For an exhibition: *Sussex Landscape: Chalk, Wood and Water* at Pallant House Gallery, 8-9 North Pallant, Chichester, PO19 1TJ. 12 November 2022 – 23 April 2023.

Request from National Gallery Thérèse Lessore, *The Dare-Devils*, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 71.1 cm. *Discover Degas and Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando*, to be held at the National Gallery, London from 6 June – 1 September 2024

Sainsbury Centre Norwich Museum – Native North American Art exhibition to be open in Spring 2024 with the Cherokee/Choctaw artist Jeffrey Gibson.

Barbara Bodichon – Tate Britain 2024 – Women Artists