

# Refurbishment of Southampton City Art Gallery FAQ

## 1. Will I still be able to see the collection?

Yes, you will still be able to access elements of the collection in several ways.

### In person

Whilst the Gallery is closed, a selection of sculptures from the city's collection will be displayed in one of the wings of the Gallery, which will be available for viewing from Saturday 5 April by booked groups and schools, and through pre-booked self-guided visits for our general visitors. Information on how to book these sessions will be added to our website. For school visits please call us on 023 8083 2810 or send an email to [gallery.education@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:gallery.education@southampton.gov.uk).

We will also be offering a limited number of behind-the-scenes tours of the art store. Please keep an eye on our website, Culture Vulture newsletter and social media for when these become available.

### Virtually

Over 1,000 artworks from the city's collection can already be seen and explored on [Art UK](#) and, over the course of the closure period, we aim to double this. Thanks to funding awarded by Arts Council England, through its [Unlocking Collections](#) campaign within National Lottery Project Grants, we will be working towards digitising a large proportion of works on paper from the collection. Due to their light-sensitive nature, they cannot be frequently displayed, and there is currently no public catalogue or detailed listing. The project will digitise around 1,000 of these artworks, making them available to view online.

A number of [online exhibitions](#) can already be found on our website, and these will be added to over the course of the year.

### School Visits

We will still be able to facilitate school visits during this period, as well as offering an "Outreach" programme. For more information, please call us on 023 8083 2810 or send an email to [gallery.education@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:gallery.education@southampton.gov.uk).

## 2. Why is the Gallery closing?

The Gallery will be temporarily closing to allow for the third and final phase of essential repairs to be carried out, as part of the ongoing planned refurbishment of the roof.

This final phase will be focused on internal works, centred around the Main Hall, including restoration of the vaulted ceiling, fitting of new glazing, installation of a new shutter and improvements to the efficiency of the building.

Due to the scale and location of these works, it will not be possible to open as usual. However, a selection of sculptures from the city's collection will be displayed in one of the wings of the

Gallery, which will be available for viewing by booked groups and schools, and through pre-booked tours for our general visitors.

These essential works, supported by the Museum Estate and Development fund, will allow us to keep the city's nationally Designated art collection safe and accessible.

### **3. When will the Gallery be closing?**

The last day you will be able to visit the Gallery, and see our current exhibition, [\*Renaissance to the Present Day: Highlights from Southampton's Collection\*](#), will be **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2025**.

### **4. How long will the Gallery be closed for?**

It is anticipated that the Gallery will remain closed for 12 months, reopening in early 2026.

### **5. How is the refurbishment being funded?**

The project is being funded by Southampton City Council, supported by a £2.23m investment from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Museum Estate and Development (MEND) Fund, which is administered by Arts Council England.

### **6. Will the Gallery look different when it reopens?**

The refurbishment is focussed on the roof and fabric of the building, with the addition of new climate controls, so most improvements will not be visible to visitors. Therefore, when we welcome you back in 2026, you may not see a huge amount of change. However, as part of this project, the vaulted ceiling in the Main Hall of the Gallery is being repaired, after historic water damage. This will include the reinstatement of the iconic stripes of the artwork 'With the Arcades' installed by Daniel Buren in 1994 which are a celebrated feature of the Main Hall.

### **7. What will happen to the art collection while the Gallery is closed?**

While the Gallery is closed, a selection of sculptures from the city's collection will be displayed in one of the wings of the Gallery, which will be available for viewing by booked groups and schools, and through pre-booked tours for our general visitors.

The collection will also continue to be loaned to other Museums and Galleries across the UK and internationally including; John Martin's *Sadak in Search of the Waters of Oblivion* which will be part of an exhibition at Gothenburg Museum of Art, Sweden, and Lisa Milroy's *Togetherness* which will be traveling with a number of other works from the collection to an exhibition in partnership with Winchester School of Art. Edward Burra's *The Café* will be on display at Tate Britain, London later this year.

Our team will also be working behind the scenes to digitise a large proportion of works on paper from the collection thanks to funding awarded by Arts Council England, through its [Unlocking Collections](#) campaign within National Lottery Project Grants.

The remainder of the collection will be safely stored until the Gallery reopens in 2026.

## **8. What will happen to the staff while the Gallery is closed?**

All teams work across Southampton City Art Gallery, SeaCity Museum and Tudor House and Gardens and will continue to do so during closure - welcoming you during your visit, leading workshops and tours, caring for the collections and helping with any enquiries you may have.

Our team will also be working behind the scenes to digitise a large proportion of works on paper from the collection thanks to funding awarded by Arts Council England, through its [Unlocking Collections](#) campaign within National Lottery Project Grants.

## **9. What is the best way to stay up to date with information regarding the refurbishment and plans for re-opening?**

You can stay up to date with news related to the refurbishment and plans for re-opening in a few ways:

- On our [website](#)
- On [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#)
- Sign up to [Culture Vulture](#) e-alerts

If you have any further enquires, contact us via email [Art.Gallery@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:Art.Gallery@southampton.gov.uk) or call us on 023 8083 4536.

## **10. Will the refurbishment impact the Central Library?**

Central Library will remain open as usual, although there may be some noise or disruption at times in local areas.