



FRIENDS OF THE MERCER ART GALLERY

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER
2025

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

February

In **A day of art and ideas**, Max Waterhouse of Goldmark Gallery talked about the **Look, Look Again!** exhibition he curated from works collected by David Morgan Rees, and artist Christopher P Wood spoke about his spooky, Grimm-inspired work in conversation with poet and Grimm enthusiast Ian Duhig.

May

For **Anna Whitehouse in conversation**, we had a full house in the Studio area of the gallery, where a newly fitted kitchen made it easier to greet Friends and visitors with tea and coffee. In this Saturday morning session, local ceramicist Anna told us about one of the public art projects she orchestrated – the tide of blue ceramic poppies in the Himalayan Garden and Sculpture Park at Grewelthorpe near Ripon – and about her own work, in particular two series of 100-day projects (starting and completing a new piece of work each day for 100 days). These marathons of making resulted in serried ranks of whimsical, textured ceramic bottles and beetles, which Anna thought would be her own 'weird little experiments' but which (to her surprise) have been selling well.



Anna Whitehouse

Later that day we had the pleasure of an Anna Whitehouse ceramics workshop. Six people gathered in the Studio area and, supervised by Anna, used tools including old biro's and worn-out toothbrushes to scratch and press marks into small discs of clay which were later fired in Anna's kiln. The results look good framed as wall pieces. Anna's verdict on the Studio: 'A perfect space for workshops: good light, easy to move around, and it has a sink'. The Studio is one of several spaces available for hire, see details overleaf.

June

Our **Summer party** was this year held at The Limes in Weeton. The Limes runs art classes and workshops in a rural setting, so we were able to enjoy our gathering looking out across a meadow towards a group of young bullocks and rolling fields beyond. Part of a neighbouring field had been mowed to accommodate car parking, and we were impressed by the sight of our deputy chair Perveen effortlessly scaling a fence in her beautiful floor-length dress, to tie some bunting.



May Catt

Many thanks to May Catt (Senior Manager, Cultural Venues at North Yorkshire Council) for bartending at the drinks table outside the venue. Good thing she had long sleeves on, because although it was bright, it was chilly.

Indoors, the venue was hung with paintings by Yorkshire artists including Lesley Birch (gestural semi-abstracts) and the colour-blind painter Richard Snowden, whose shrieking pink landscapes caught the eye. Food was by Finding Thyme of Marton-cum-Grafton and drinks came from the Weeton Wine Club.



The Limes in Weeton

FRIENDS OF MERCER GALLERY

This venue was new to most Friends at the party and was considered a great addition to the local arts scene. Our thanks to The Limes owners Sarah and Johnny Pearson.

Raffle prizes came from local businesses including Ridding Park, Ake & Humphris (a wine shop now also running a tempting little bar area at their premises on Leeds Road), the Pickled Sprout, and Hotel du Vin - big thanks to them for adding to the fun of the party and helping to raise funds. Also much thanks to our committee member Emily for persuading these generous businesses to donate prizes.

If you'd like to donate something for a future raffle – or perhaps you know of a business willing to donate something (product, voucher or experience) - contact mercergallerytrust@gmail.com.

Towards the end of the month, at the Willow Beck gallery in Harrogate, we were shown around the energetic and colourful John Hoyland exhibition **Voyages: a Yorkshire Collection** by Sam Cornish, curator of the Hoyland estate. Our thanks to Sam and to Lee Taylor who runs the gallery.



GRANT DECISIONS

On behalf of the Friends we've been pleased to put money towards the gallery's purchase of materials designed to help children and adults make the most of their Mercer visits. Items range from 'sensory bags' (bags of playful stuff to handle) to audio devices that bring exhibits to life without having to read the small print.

We've also supported the commission of a piece of music specific to the current Liz West exhibition **Happy**, in which hundreds of vibrantly coloured reflective discs have covered the floor of the main gallery space. See the gallery's Visitors' Book for some fantastic comments about the experience of this exhibition as a whole.

Thank you Friends. Your membership subscriptions, your event attendance, your buying of raffle tickets and your legacy donations all go towards making the Mercer an ever more rewarding place.



COMING UP...

Many events are at planning stage, look out for updates by email and on Instagram @friendsofthemerccerartgallery.

AGM

Our AGM will be at 7pm on Tuesday 30 September at the Mercer. We look forward to seeing you there.

Adam Schoon: talk and valuation event

Antiques and fine art valuer Adam Schoon (you may know him from Antiques Roadshow) will give a short talk before offering his expert opinion on the value of selected items brought along by Friends and guests. Adam's special areas of interest are Chinese, Himalayan and Japanese works of art. We'll confirm the date and venue soon.

Art on Film

We are looking at dates in October, November and December for the showing (in collaboration with Harrogate Film Society) of three films featuring women artists. Details to follow.

Christmas Party

The party is scheduled for Thursday 4th December.

Visit to the Turner Prize exhibition, Bradford

The 2025 Turner Prize exhibition will be open from late September 2025 to late February 2026 at the Cartwright Hall Art Gallery in Bradford. Details will be confirmed.

A curated tour of Egypt

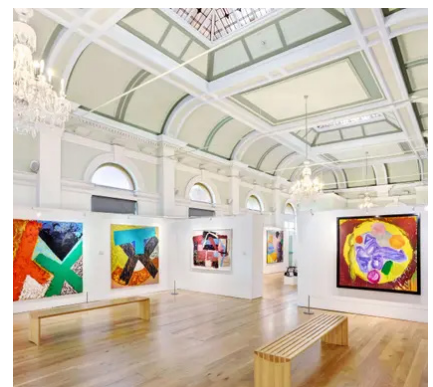
Looking ahead to early 2027, we are putting together a fantastic itinerary for a proposed 15-day trip to Egypt. It is likely to include Cairo, Aswan, Luxor, the Valley of the Kings, Athribis, Amarna, West Giza and Sakkara. Price will include flights, accommodation, transport, entrance tickets, breakfasts, lunches and the services of a guide and tour manager. The provisional start date is 10 January 2027. Watch this space!

LEGACY DONATIONS

We were honoured and grateful last year to receive a substantial donation from Margaret Bousfield, who included the Mercer Friends along with other charities in her will. The committee and the Mercer gallery team will plan together how best to use this bequest.

VENUE HIRE

The Mercer Gallery (room capacity 110) can be hired from £150 per hour, and the Studio Space (capacity 20) from £40 per hour. The nearby Pump Room Museum in Harrogate can be hired from £120 per hour. Contact: museums.har@northyorks.gov.uk



COMMITTEE NEWS

An Instagram account for the Friends

Friends committee member Paula is doing great work building up a Mercer Friends community on Instagram. From a standing start earlier this year, we have a lively following growing by the day. See our Instagram account @friendsofthemerccergallery for photos and news.

Culture strategy update

Danielle Daglan, Head of Culture and Archives at North Yorkshire Council, came to our March committee meeting and gave an overview of the Council's culture strategy, which focuses on creativity as a catalyst for inclusivity and economic growth.

New committee member

Sarah Mate, a marketing consultant who has worked for the Mercer Gallery in the recent past, is joining the committee. We look forward to drawing on her knowledge and expertise in our efforts to get the Mercer Friends better known and understood.

Want to join the committee?

We're always interested in hearing from people who would consider offering their services to the committee. Contact mercergallerytrust@gmail.com.



Sarah Mate

JOIN THE MERCER FRIENDS and help support Harrogate's free public art gallery

The beautiful Mercer Art Gallery is a jewel in the crown of Harrogate and its surrounding district, maintaining an outstanding art collection and offering free exhibitions and events to locals, visitors, children and young people.

The Friends of the Mercer Art Gallery is a charity run by volunteers, with a membership of several hundred people. For over thirty years the Friends have supported the Mercer, so far contributing more than £350,000 towards gallery improvements, exhibitions and acquisitions.

While the Mercer's main funding comes from North Yorkshire Council, the additional funds raised by our volunteers have helped the gallery to develop. We have a vital role in the life of the gallery while learning new things and having fun.

Join us

We're always looking for new people to join us and share a love of art. If you become a Friend, you can look forward to:

- Private views of gallery exhibitions, with the Mercer's own curator
- Talks by artists, curators and art world specialists
- 'Meet the artist' opportunities at events
- Parties in summer and winter – a chance to connect with Friends
- Tours and exclusive visits to art-filled houses
- A newsletter twice a year
- Contributing to the development of the gallery.

How to join the Friends

Scan the QR code to join online, or pick up a leaflet at the gallery.



Membership prices

Individual membership £15 per year
Joint membership £30 per year
Life membership £250
Corporate membership £50



**FRIENDS
OF THE
MERCER ART GALLERY**

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