

Press Release

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Images: downloadable [here](#)

Community-curated exhibitions shine a light on well-being and local experiences of Covid-19 as part of Arts Council Collection's National Partners Programme



From left: (1) Abigail Reynolds, *Universal Now: St Michaels Mount 1928 | 1949, 2020*. Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London © the artist. Image courtesy of the artist; (2) Barbara Walker, *Boundary II*, 2000. Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London © the artist. Gift of the artist 2014; (3) Matthew Dalziel and Louise Scullion, *Television Cloth*, 1997. Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London © the artists.

- New exhibitions curated by NHS key workers and young people across the UK focus on health and well-being, LGBTQIA+ representation in the arts and life during lockdown
- Selected from over 8000 works in the Arts Council Collection, loans by artists including David Hockney, Maggi Hambling and Francis Bacon will be displayed alongside new artistic commissions and community-created artworks
- Announced today, these exhibitions form part of Arts Council Collection's National Partners Programme - an ambitious collaboration with Firstsite in Essex, Sunderland Culture in Tyne and Wear, and Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange in Cornwall
- Now in its second round, the National Partners Programme was launched in 2016 to create deeper relationships with audiences outside of London and across the country, through a network of galleries and museums

Embracing the positive effects of art, **Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange** in Cornwall will explore the potential of the **Arts Council Collection** to offer health and well-being benefits to local people in a new Social Prescribing Programme, part of the organisation's tenure as one of three National Partners in the Arts Council Collection's **National Partners Programme**.

Drawing on recent findings that participatory art has the potential to reduce drop-in GP consultations and hospital admission rates by 37% and 27% respectively*, an exhibition opening at **Newlyn Art Gallery** this autumn will see a core group of 10 participants, referred

to the project by link workers in local GP practices, collaborate with artists and select from over 8000 works in the Arts Council Collection.

James Green, Director, Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange, says: *“It’s well understood that participation in cultural activities can make people happier and more content. Here at Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange, we are now building evidence that shows these tangible health benefits. Our involvement in the Arts Council Collection’s National Partners Programme has given us the resource and support to explore these benefits, hopefully paving a way for galleries and public collections to take a little pressure off the NHS as it continues to battle the consequences of the pandemic.”*

The exhibition, which will reflect participants’ personal responses to the events of the past year, forms part of a wider series of exhibitions and projects announced today by the Arts Council Collection and its three National Partners – **Firstsite** in Essex, **Sunderland Culture** in Tyne and Wear, and **Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange** in Cornwall.

The National Partners Programme was launched in 2016 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Arts Council Collection with the aim of creating deeper relationships with audiences outside of London and across the country, through a network of galleries and museums. Now in its second round, 2019-22’s National Partners **Firstsite**, **Sunderland Culture** and **Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange** will present a final series of exhibitions and collaborations which, co-curated by NHS key workers, local communities and social prescribing groups, look back at the past year to explore the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Displaying works from the Arts Council Collection alongside new art commissions and community-sourced creations, these exhibitions will explore themes from isolation and illness to family and self-care.

Also at the forefront of upcoming programming will be a series of exhibitions curated by young people. These exhibitions, displayed consecutively between June 2021 and March 2022, are the result of an ambitious project aimed at bringing together 11-25-year-olds from across the country, connecting them with each other and the Arts Council Collection. From capturing young people’s experiences during the three UK lockdowns to asking important questions around representation and diversity within the arts, this initiative seeks to give a new generation the chance to interpret works from the Arts Council Collection in fresh ways that offer new perspectives.

Deborah Smith, Director, Arts Council Collection, says: *“Working collaboratively has been key in the success of our National Partners Programme. All three partners have worked with individuals, organisations and community groups in their local area, and have welcomed new voices to curate and produce exhibitions and projects that ensure galleries and museums reflect the richness of our communities. During our 75th anniversary year, Arts Council Collection is delighted to continue working with our partners to share the nation’s arts collection.”*

Previous projects from this cohort’s National Partners have ranged from **Firstsite’s** [*My Name is not Refugee*](#), an exhibition of artworks chosen by a group of refugees and asylum seekers living in Colchester, to [*Go On Being So*](#) at **Newlyn Art Gallery**, a schools curated

collection exhibition, and [Palace of Culture](#), a virtual display of Arts Council Collection loans and online workshops. Exploring the potential of digital technology to diversify engagement with art, **Sunderland Culture** developed a brand-new app [Art Crush](#) which lets audiences discover works from the Arts Council Collection through a Tinder-inspired activity of swiping left and right. Realised with grants funded by the National Lottery and awarded by Arts Council England, collaboration has been at the heart of each of these initiatives, helping to fulfil Arts Council England's ambition to create deeper relationships with audiences across the country.

National Partners Programme Exhibition Listings

Sunderland Culture:

Antony Gormley's *Field for the British Isles* (Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art), 24 July – 25 Sept 2021

For nine weeks, Sunderland's Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art (NGCA) will display Antony Gormley's sculpture *Field for the British Isles* from the Arts Council Collection. This installation was chosen by Sunderland Culture's Art Champions, a group of nine local people with no formal arts training but a passion and interest to discover more about modern and contemporary art, following a visit to the Arts Council Collection's stores. Inspired by the artwork's strong community focus - on completing the artwork in 1993, Gormley specified it had to be installed with help from volunteers coordinated by the host venue to instill a sense of ownership in the project - Sunderland's Art Champions requested to bring the installation to the city. It will be the first time Gormley has exhibited in Sunderland.

Where We Are Now (Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens) 21 Aug – 14 Nov 2021

Developed in collaboration with a range of community groups, *Where We Are Now* explores the experiences of the last year through artwork, community response and photographs taken by Sunderland residents. The exhibition will display works from the Arts Council Collection by artists such as David Hockney, Elizabeth Frink, Marc Quinn, Grace Schwindt and Hardeep Pandhal. Selected and interpreted by local participants, the loans will be exhibited alongside community-sourced photographs from Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens' 'Collecting Covid-19' project and artworks produced during, and in response to, the pandemic. Together, these works will invite visitors to consider themes including isolation, community, family, nature, systems of care, self-care, illness and loss.

Celebrate Different (Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens) 10 Jan – 13 March 2022

Forming part of a series of exhibitions curated by young people in collaboration with the Arts Council Collection's three National Partners, *Celebrate Different* is a display by Sunderland Culture's Young Ambassadors collective. Prompted by inequalities heightened and highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic, the participants, aged 13-25, have been exploring ideas around representation and diversity, asking the questions – who isn't represented in Sunderland Museum's stories? Can art change the world for the better? Who has the power to decide what art is?

Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange:

Social Prescribing Programme Exhibition (Newlyn Art Gallery) 23 Oct 2021 - 8 Jan 2022

Embracing the positive effects of art, Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange will explore the potential of the Arts Council Collection to offer health and well-being benefits to local people in a new Social Prescribing Programme. An exhibition opening at Newlyn Art Gallery this autumn will see a core group of 10 participants, referred to the project by link workers in local GP practices, select from over 8000 works in the Arts Council Collection. Featuring works by artists including Simon Starling, Chila Burman, Eduard Paolozzi, Emma Talbot and Abigail Reynolds, this selection will reflect participants' personal responses to the events of the past year and their hopes and dreams for the future. Over the coming weeks the group will also be working with artists, many of whom are represented in the Arts Council Collection, to learn new creative skills and make work for the exhibition, to be presented alongside the loans from the Collection.

SEEN (The Exchange) 23 Oct 2021 – 8 Jan 2022

Forming part of a series of exhibitions curated by young people in collaboration with the Arts Council Collection's three National Partners, *SEEN* is co-curated by The SEEN Collective made up of young LGBTQIA+ people from Cornwall aged 11-19. The SEEN collective was formed over lockdown in partnership with LGBT+ charity The Intercom Trust. Through workshops about contemporary art, these young people and older LGBTQIA+ youth workers have selected works from the Arts Council Collection, exploring the importance of representation within arts and culture and the many sides of what it means to be seen. Loans from the Collection include works by Francis Bacon, Evan Ifekoya, Wolfgang Tillmans, Flo Brooks, P. Staff and Maggi Hambling.

Firstsite:

Art for Life 17 May – 5 Sept 2021

Featuring specially-selected loans from the Arts Council Collection, *Art for Life* is the result of a number of workshops between artists and people in frontline roles in the healthcare sector. Co-curated by NHS key workers from across Essex, the exhibition will examine personal experiences of the pandemic and the subsequent effects on their lives, providing a creative record of this significant moment in our collective history. Arts Council Collection works, by artists including Barbara Walker, Alejandra Carles-Torla and Hamish Fulton, are displayed alongside new artistic commissions from contemporary artists such as Alec Finlay, EVEWRIGHT and Roland Carline. Together, they reflect life under lockdown and the experiences which connected us all – from the importance of family and missing human touch, to the significance of nature and longing for a haircut.

House Share 26 June – 5 Sept 2021

Launching a series of exhibitions curated by young people in collaboration with the Arts Council Collection's three National Partners, *House Share* is an exhibition produced by young curators from the gallery's Young Art Kommunity (YAK). Alongside loans from the Arts Council Collection by artists including Jenny Holzer, Andy Holden, Hayley Tompkins and David Batchelor, a highlight of the exhibition is a digital sampler that will play sounds taken from the homes of young people working across each partner organisation. Documenting

daily comings and goings, the hubbub of family conversation and moments of quiet, this collaborative artwork captures the group's experiences during the three UK lockdowns and their changing relationship to home during this time.

Holiday Fun exhibition January 2022 (*final dates and title to be announced later this year*)

In January 2022, Firstsite will open its final National Partners Programme exhibition with an exhibition co-curated by families involved in its Holiday Fun programme. Firstsite has been running the Holiday Fun programme in school holidays since summer 2017 to provide a fun day out to families facing financial challenges and social isolation.

ENDS

For further press information about the Arts Council Collection and National Partners Programme:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

*The recent All-Party Parliamentary Group for Arts, Health & Wellbeing: Arts on Prescription Gloucestershire showed that programmes across four cultural organisations in the county resulted in a 37% drop-in GP consultation rates and a 27% reduction in hospital admissions. A social return on investment of between £4 and £11 has been calculated for every £1 invested in arts on prescription.

Twitter: [@A_C_Collection](https://twitter.com/A_C_Collection)

Instagram: [@artscouncilcollection](https://www.instagram.com/artscouncilcollection)

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About [Arts Council Collection](https://www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk)

1946 – 2021: Celebrating 75 Years of Arts Council Collection

Arts Council Collection is the most widely circulated national loan collection of modern and contemporary British art spanning paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, performance and moving image. With over 8,000 works and more than 1,000 loans made to over 100 venues a year, the Collection has been connecting art with people for 75 years. It supports and promotes British artists by acquiring art at an early stage of their careers and is seen by millions of people in public spaces from galleries and museums to hospitals, libraries and universities. Representing one of the most important collections of British modern and contemporary art in the world it includes work from a diverse range of artists from Barbara Hepworth, Tracey Emin, Anish Kapoor and Henry Moore to Mona Hatoum, Anthea Hamilton, Lubaina Himid, and Grayson Perry. Arts Council Collection was founded in 1946 and is managed by the Southbank Centre, London and includes Longside Gallery located at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk

About the [National Partners Programme](#)

The National Partners Programme was launched in 2016 to mark the 70th anniversary of the Arts Council Collection by creating a network of regional galleries and museums to present and curate

exhibitions drawn from the Arts Council Collection. The first four National Partner museums and galleries were: Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne; the Birmingham Museums Trust; the Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool; and the Collection's existing partner, Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

The second round of National Partners for 2019-22 are Firstsite in Essex; Sunderland Culture in Tyne and Wear and The Newlyn Art Gallery and The Exchange in Cornwall.

Funded by the National Lottery, the programme aims to build a deeper relationship with regional audiences by building a UK-wide network across regional partners, connecting local visitors to their national collection.

Firstsite

About [Firstsite](#)

Firstsite is a public contemporary art gallery in Colchester, making and showing exceptional art and culture that celebrates the diverse and radical people of East Anglia in order to empower all communities to be creative together and lead healthier and happier lives. In 2021, Firstsite is celebrating the 10th anniversary of its spectacular crescent-shaped building, designed by award-winning Uruguayan architect Rafael Viñoly, with a year of celebration projects and commissions – which kicked off with [The Great Big Art Exhibition](#). Over the last ten years Firstsite has gained a strong, critical reputation, presenting ambitious work to be enjoyed by all in a fun and inclusive environment. Firstsite is a partner of Plus Tate, which uses Tate's resources to contribute to a network of art organisations across the country, and to increase public access. Firstsite's exhibitions are free and open to anyone. Follow us on Twitter & Facebook [@firstsite](#) and Instagram [@firstsitecolchester](#)

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NEWLYN ART GALLERY & THE EXCHANGE

About [Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange](#)

For almost 125 years, Newlyn Art Gallery has been bringing the best in contemporary art to audiences in the south west. In 2007 the gallery was redeveloped and we opened a second venue, The Exchange in Penzance. Increasingly in recent years, our programmes have reached beyond our galleries into other settings, including care homes, schools and other public spaces, from beaches to places of worship, in order to realise our commitment to reach the broadest and largest audiences we can.

Newlyn Art Gallery was founded in 1895 by John Passmore Edwards the philanthropist and social reformer. He was committed to improving people's lives and felt that art had an important role to play. This vision has inspired us to think more ambitiously about our work with communities and how we might involve them more actively in shaping and leading our work. We are particularly interested in

how the gallery might embrace its civic role and become relevant and important to more people, for example challenging and supporting schools to embrace a broader curriculum that positions creativity at its heart. All the data shows that in spite of art organisations' best intentions, those shaping the exhibitions and learning programmes galleries present fail to reflect the diversity of the UK population. We'd like to change that. We plan to deliver a programme curated by people never before given this opportunity, offering them a platform to share their perspectives in new ways, and making the Arts Council Collection, the 'people's collection'

Follow Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange @newlynexchange on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)



About [Sunderland Culture](#)

Sunderland Culture was set up in 2016 to bring together the cultural programmes of Sunderland City Council, University of Sunderland and Music, Arts and Culture (MAC) Trust into a single, independent, resilient delivery model and realise the ambition of a city brimming with creative potential. Sunderland Culture works in National Glass Centre and Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens, Arts Centre Washington, The Fire Station and delivers programmes of cultural engagement and events across the whole city. It works across the city to ensure the power of great art, culture and creativity is harnessed for the benefit of Sunderland, its residents and visitors. Sunderland Culture's mission is to improve life for everyone in Sunderland through culture.

In spring 2017 Sunderland Culture was successful in its bid to be one of 16 pilot areas for the Great Place scheme, jointly funded over three years by Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund with funding made possible by National Lottery players, to put arts, culture and heritage at the heart of communities. On April 1, 2018, Sunderland Culture joined Arts Council England's National Portfolio.

Follow Sunderland Culture @SunderlandCulture on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) and @SundCulture on [Twitter](#).



About [Arts Council England](#)

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in [Let's Create](#) that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

www.artscouncil.org.uk

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million **Emergency Response Package**, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies administering the Government's unprecedented £1.96 billion **Culture Recovery Funds**. Find out more at www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19.

