

TOWNER

Annual Review

2024/25



The year in numbers

More than **1,500** people attended our public programme of talks, workshops and masterclasses



In our cinema, we held **393** screenings of **81** titles with **19,766** people enjoying a film at Towner Cinema throughout the year



There were **1.1 million** page views on our website



We welcomed **171,757** visitors to Towner

Almost **20,000** people attended our summer exhibition, Emma Stibbon *Melting Ice | Rising Tides*

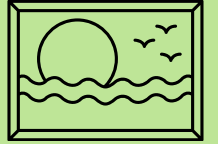


We hosted **67** *Yoga in the Gallery* sessions, which sold **638** tickets



We opened **8** new exhibitions

We acquired **1092** new pieces of artwork for our collection, **7** of which were purchased and the rest were gifted.



We generated press coverage that received over **5 million** views

Over **2,600** people of all ages participated in our Families Programme, including **946** under-5s and their adults who attended **34** Wriggle Room sessions at Towner and Willingdon Trees Community Centre.



We saw our social media accounts grow by **6%** as we welcomed over **3.3k** new followers across our platforms

Turner Prize Ends

We welcomed more than 260,000 visitors to the *Turner Prize* exhibition and the Eastbourne Alive programme, which featured over 385 events, exhibitions, performances, and workshops. April also saw the final Turner Prize artist talk, with Barbara Walker discussing her work and the ideas behind her artistic practice.



Sussex Art Shuttle Returns

The popular Sussex Art Shuttle returned, linking Towner Eastbourne with Charleston in Firle, Charleston in Lewes, and Seven Sisters Country Park, making it easier than ever for visitors to explore the region's vibrant cultural landscape

May 2024

Emma Stibbon
Melting Ice | Rising Tides

The first of two new exhibitions to open this month, Emma Stibbon's first large-scale show at a major UK institution, offered a stark reminder that the seemingly distant melting of polar ice sheets is closely connected to environmental changes here in the UK.



Maria Amidu
in the perpetual back and forth

Presented as part of iniva's Future Collect Commission partnership, Maria Amidu's exhibition centred on *26,778,780 minutes* – a paper and text-based installation and accompanying sound piece, featuring over 1,000 sheets of laser-etched handmade abaca fibre paper. The artwork has now joined our Collection thanks to support from Art Fund.

**Florence Peake:
FACTUAL ACTUAL performances**

Complementing their exhibition at Towner, *FACTUAL ACTUAL* presented seven large-scale paintings suspended over a gloss dance floor. Six dancers used a rig and pulley system to hoist, lower, fold, and drag the works during live performances at the Welcome Building.



Climate Eco Cafe Launched

Partnering with Seaford and Lewes Climate Eco Cafés, we launched a series of drop-in spaces for people to come together and share how the climate emergency and related biodiversity crisis are affecting them.

Yoga in the Gallery

These 60-minute flow sessions offer participants a unique opportunity to experience our exhibitions from a new perspective, combining movement and reflection with the art in the gallery space.



The Elephant in the Room

This temporary installation in a vacant shop on Terminus Road in Eastbourne showcased work by ten members of the *Arts in Mind* group, featuring painting, collage, sculpture, animation, and installation.



Launch of Riviera

Artist Navine G. Dossos worked with residents of Eastbourne's Devonshire Ward to create *Riviera*: a community-designed textile pattern made from stencils relating to the neighbourhood.

Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Led by artist Sam Ayre, Towner hosted ten creative sessions during the six-week school summer break – including four for young people with Special Educational Needs – welcoming over 180 participants to take over our studio spaces and explore the theme *A World We Can Live In*.

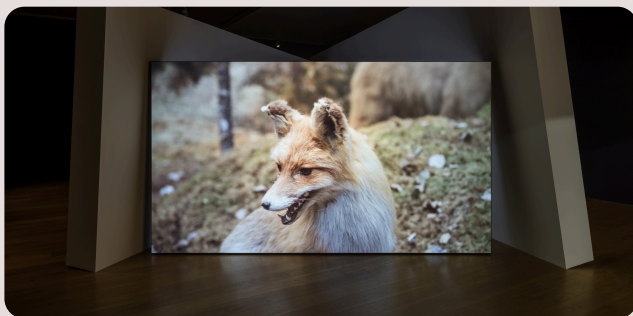


Lots of Great Things

Towner's youth collective, *Banana Sharks*, designed and led *Lots of Great Things*, an open studio event that saw the group take over the ground floor studios and present an installation inside our huge lift.

Two New Exhibitions Launch

Gerard Byrne's *Jielemeguvvie guvvie sjisjnjeli* – *Film inside an image* was shown at Towner for the first time since its acquisition through Art Fund's Moving Image Fund.



Robert Tavener: *Shape Pattern Colour – The Art of Printmaking* brought together a selection of lithographs, linocuts, and illustrations from the collections of Emma Mason Gallery and Towner.



Towner Jewellery Fair

Our new programme of maker fairs began with the Towner Jewellery Fair. Alongside November's Christmas Fair and our popular Ceramics Fair in March, these events welcomed over 100 independent makers and nearly 7,000 visitors.

New Acquisitions

October was an exciting month for acquisitions to our Collection as we added Alicja Kwade's *Continuum* (2023) which was acquired with Art Fund support, with a contribution from The Wolfson Foundation. Eric Ravilious' *design for the Morley College Mural* (1928-1930) was also added to the Collection through HM Government's Cultural Gifts Scheme.



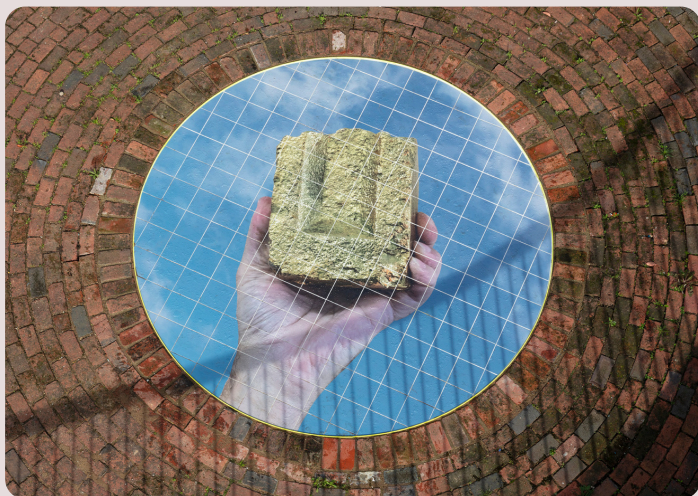
Drawing the Unspeakable - Curated by David Dimbleby & Liza Dimbleby

Drawing the Unspeakable explored the universal language of drawing – a medium that renowned broadcaster David Dimbleby and his daughter, the artist and writer Liza Dimbleby have long recognised as a powerful tool for expressing the inexpressible.



2024 *Jarman Awards*

Towner Cinema screened the six shortlisted films for the 2024 *Jarman Awards*, alongside a special Q&A with shortlisted artist Maeve Brennan and Devonshire Collective Programme Fellow Sam Kaufman.



Launch of The Findings public artwork

Five artworks created by artist Verity-Jane Keefe were installed in Shinewater and Langney. Using the Bronze Age history of the area as a starting point, Verity-Jane worked with 60 local school children, Shinewater and Langney residents, and a local Eastbourne foundry to create the artworks from objects extracted during archaeological digs and at Eastbourne’s recycling centre.

New Chair and President Announced

Towner announced Stephen Welton CBE, Chair of the British Business Bank, as its new Chair, and welcomed former Green MP Caroline Lucas to the Board of Trustees. Following ten years as Chair, David Dimbleby became the gallery’s President.



Nigel Hall RA Here and Now, There and Then

This exhibition presented sculptures, prints, and drawings by internationally renowned artist Nigel Hall (b. 1943). To coincide with the show, his five-metre-high magenta steel sculpture *Gravity/Levity* (2015) was installed on the Devonshire Quarter Plaza outside Towner.



Towner Christmas Appeal

Thanks to Towner supporters, we raised £36,000 in our Christmas Appeal in match-funded donations, helping sustain our free programme of community events and activities, including *Wriggle Room* sessions for under-5s, family workshops during school holidays, and learning opportunities for schools.



Cinema Highlight: Conclave

Towner Cinema ended the year on a high note with *Conclave*, Edward Berger's award-winning thriller. With eighteen screenings in December alone, the film attracted 2,370 attendees.



Solar Panel Switch On

With the generous support of the Rick Mather David Scrase Foundation, we started harnessing solar power through new photovoltaic panels and batteries installed on our roof.

This important step reflects our ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability, helping to reduce our carbon footprint and energy consumption.

Joe Hill Appointed Chair of Culture East Sussex

Towner Director Joe Hill was appointed Chair of Culture East Sussex, which brings together cultural organisations, public bodies, and individuals to advocate for and strengthen the region's cultural landscape.



Family Day: Folklore

Our latest family takeover day invited participants of all ages to explore historic and contemporary Sussex folktales through creative activities led by artists Ruby Champion and Yanaëlle Ritter.



BSL Tour of Drawing the Unspeakable

Artist Alison France led a British Sign Language tour of *Drawing the Unspeakable*, guiding visitors through the exhibition and using her experience and perspective as an artist to make connections and suggestions.

March 2025



Question Time: Flipped at The Birley Centre

More than 100 people watched David Dimbleby step away from his usual role as host to join his daughter, Liza, and artist Naiza Khan as a panellist in this special edition of Question Time, held to accompany *Drawing the Unspeakable*.

Points of View

This exhibition showcased newly acquired and previously unseen works by Alicja Kwade and Anne Hardy, alongside *Hope Gap* by Emma Stibbon (which was purchased with support from the Andrew Forrest Memorial Fund and Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund) and pieces by Marine Hugonnier, and Nathan Coley.



Live Conservation with Sophie Reddington

Visitors were given a behind-the-scenes insight into the conservation process as independent conservator Sophie Reddington worked on Ivon Hitchens' *Day's Rest, Day's Work* (1960) ahead of its display in *Sussex Modernism*.



National Lottery Heritage Fund Development Grant

We were delighted to have received a development grant of £550k from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop the plans for a Visitor & Heritage Centre at Black Robin Farm. This project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund, with thanks to National Lottery players.

Thank you

TOWNER

*Images - Rob Harris, Victor Frankowski, Phoebe Wingrove,
Lucy Dawkins, Emily Medd, Feilden Fowles, Cameron Brown*