

Bethlem
Gallery



ANNUAL REVIEW
2024-25

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Chair's Foreword

It is a pleasure and privilege to write on behalf of the board, team and artists at Bethlem Gallery and to introduce our annual review. This review showcases the work of so many incredible artists and partners over 2024-5. We launched our theory of change, co-produced an evaluation plan with artists, and have tested it across the year. The resulting evaluation confirms complex and impressive impact and long-term value.

This year, we have tested out new ways of working, turning our gallery into a performance space for our exhibition Live Lounge. We have delivered a public programme including a music festival, Pride Lounge, Daniel Regan's series of events exploring the theme of belonging, live studios in our gallery space, new commissions in hospital spaces, and our annual art fair. We hosted writer in residence Tom Newlands, we produced a new podcast and also launched our public collection of artwork.

We could not do this work of course without the artists, partners, volunteers, trustee board and colleagues we work with, and their dedication, commitment and support. They make the gallery what it is.

The gallery is hugely grateful to Maudsley Charity for the core funding that enables the long-term impactful work that we do; to Arts Council England, National Heritage Lottery Fund, Wellcome Trust, Peter Sowerby Foundation, Art with Impact, and BFI Doc Society Fund for funding elements of our work this year; to our close partner the Bethlem Museum of the Mind, to South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust for incredible collaborations and in-kind support, and to King's College London as well as the networks of fantastic fellow arts and health organisations we work with.

We are looking forward to our onward programme, with exciting things afoot including a collaboration with New York's Fountain House Gallery, and continuing our mission to make art an everyday practice and mental health an everyday conversation.

**Dr Neil Springham,
Chair of Bethlem Gallery**

About Bethlem Gallery

Bethlem Gallery is a visual arts organisation in south-east London. We programme creative activities, projects and commissions to participate in, look at, talk and think about. Based at Bethlem Royal Hospital and working across London and the UK, we support the professional development and socially engaged practice of our artists, many of whom have experienced mental health services. We bridge communities, aiming to make art an everyday practice and mental health an everyday conversation. We are a registered charity, no. 1205035.

Our Vision and Mission

This year we have spent time with artists, visitors, staff, trustees and other advisors working to develop a Theory of Change, which we will publish next year.

OUR VISION:

An equitable society where art and mental health are a valued part of every day.

OUR MISSION:

Working with artists to lead change in health and society.

Detail from artwork by Mr X, shown as part of Pathways: Unescorted 12 at Bethlem Gallery, 2024



Our Theory of Change

This Theory of Change outlines our work. It is both a strategic guide and a living tool - evolving as we continue to learn, reflect, and adapt.

What we do:

- Support artist development and socially engaged practice, particularly with artists who have lived experience of mental health services.
- Maintain a welcoming public space and programme that aims to increase understanding about mental health, advocate for the role of art and artists, and provide a platform for often marginalised artists.
- Deliver co-produced arts commissions and projects.
- Develop and manage our art collection.
- Sell artwork on behalf of the artists we work with, and raise their profiles.

We do this by:

- Co-producing a public programme of exhibitions, events, and workshops.
- Supporting our studio space, collaborations, projects and our artist collective.
- Delivering an annual art fair, pop ups and managing online and onsite sales.
- Working with artists on projects outside of our exhibition programme, such as making films or being part of research teams.

How we do it:

- With care-centred, co-designed, and inclusive practices.
- Sharing with and learning from artists, researchers and culture and health sector colleagues.
- By upholding our values: **Advocacy**, **Equity**, and **Ambition**.

Detail from 'Spatial Awareness' (2020) by Courtney, shown as part of the exhibition 'Our Eyes Will Dance', Bethlem Gallery, 2024



Our approach:

- We are artist-led: artists are at the heart of what we do.
- We aim to create a safe, supportive space where art practice is central.
- We aim to break down barriers and flatten hierarchies.
- We walk an ambiguous grey line, often supporting people with complex needs whilst not being, or pretending to be, a clinical service. We aim to look, feel and act like a mainstream art gallery – a safe space to have difficult conversations; for publics to mix; a non-clinical space in a clinical setting.
- We have boundaries and support systems in place and work hard to make our public space feel like any other gallery.
- We work long-term and therefore have a long-term presence and support in people's lives.
- We try to open up different opportunities to artists and share our resources as equitably as possible.
- We support conversations about art and mental health, equity and wider societal issues, as well as other subjects our artists want to engage with as openly as possible.



Paintings by Eddie, on display in the studio as part of the launch of the Bethlem Gallery Art Collection, supported by the Peter Sowerby Foundation, 2025. Photo Ben McDade



Who we work with:

- Artists, many of whom are current/former service users.
- South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and other NHS staff, volunteers and carers.
- Academics.
- Culture sector colleagues.
- Publics (local, national, international).

What we aim to achieve:

- Art is recognised and used as a tool for expression, connection, and social change.
- Equitable access to mental health care and creative opportunities.
- People live well with mental ill health.
- Mental health is no longer a basis for stigma or exclusion.
- The gallery enhances hospital environments and contributes to positive patient outcomes.



Artist in Residence: Mr X 'Illuminating the Soul' at Bethlem Gallery, 2025



The Big Draw workshop with Liz Atkin, 2024

The Socio-Economic and Cultural Landscape: Our Context

The gallery's work is always intersectional: our community includes people with a range of identities, facing multiple types of marginalisation or discrimination. This is the core of our work as our Theory of Change shows. We strive to support artists to make positive change in society, and live well with mental ill health.

We are based in South London, on the border between the boroughs of Bromley and Croydon. Our community consists mainly of former or current mental health service users from the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, the largest Mental Health Trust in the UK. The Trust services Croydon – London's most populous borough – and Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark. The following key statistics give insights into the socio-economic and demographic makeup of our communities, and are based on ONS (Office for National Statistics), South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust equality data and research by independent charities such as MIND and Trust for London.

- Research from the Trust for London¹ shows health deprivation affecting 'large parts of some South London boroughs such as Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham'. Deprivation means the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor mental and physical health in a neighbourhood.
- ONS data from the most recent census shows that the highest level of anxiety amongst all London borough residents was in Croydon, followed by Southwark.
- Croydon and Lewisham have some of the lowest numbers of galleries and museums per 100,000 residents in London².



Installation shot, Bethlem Live Lounge, Bethlem Gallery, 2024

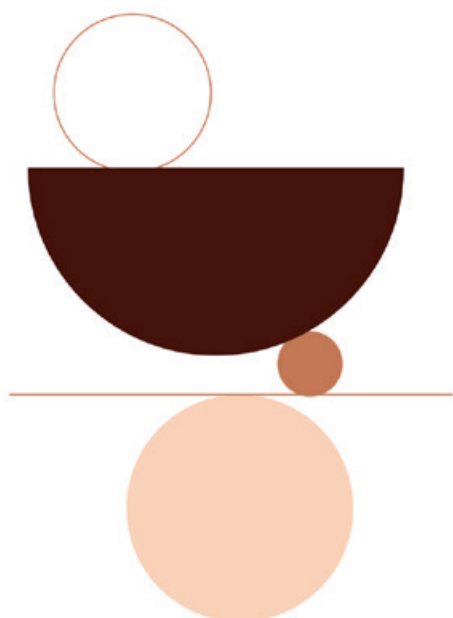
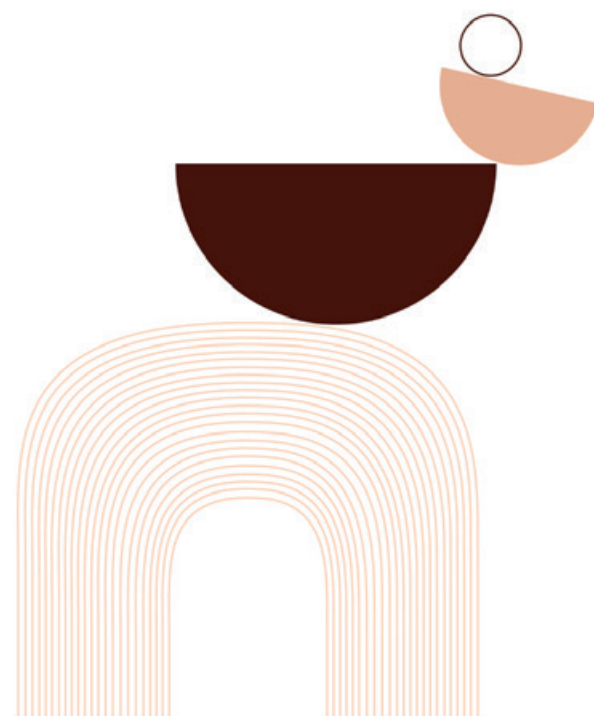
¹ Trust for London (2025). 'Health deprivation and disability across London neighbourhoods'. At: <https://trustforlondon.org.uk/data/health-deprivation-and-disability-across-london-neighbourhoods/>. Accessed 26 June 2025.

² Office for National Statistics (2021). 2021 Census. At: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>. Accessed 26 June 2025.

- LGBTQIA+ communities disproportionately experience poor mental health. People in England who identify as LGBTQIA+ are between 2–3 times more likely than heterosexual people to report having a mental health condition³.
- We know that there are links between race and mental health. MIND states:

‘Evidence suggests that people from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities are at higher risk of developing a mental health problem in adulthood. But they’re less likely to receive support for their mental health’.

- Twice as many Black or Black British adults have symptoms relating to post-traumatic stress disorder compared with their White British counterparts.
- More Asian and British Asian adults screened positive for PTSD compared to their White counterparts.
- In line with the above, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust’s most recent equality report⁴ reports ‘a higher proportion of Black service users in inpatient services compared to borough populations.’



Responding to this, the gallery has worked specifically on anti racism and anti discrimination in our practice and programme. We work to be as inclusive as we can be, ensuring a diversity of identities are prioritised at any one time. As a team we had a series of facilitated discussions in order to develop an anti racism action plan. This year we concluded work with the Trust, artist Sarah Carpenter and focus groups, to communicate Seni’s Law and rights around the use of restraint in mental health settings sensitively. We began a collaboration with the National Autism Unit, centring inclusion and creativity with neurodiverse inpatients.

As a team, we needed to improve our data collection, which is particularly sensitive as an independent gallery based on hospital grounds: our relationship with our communities thrives because of the non clinical environment. This year we commissioned research agency tialt (There is an alternative) to help us with implementing ways to measure impact given our specific context. Their findings are embedded in this annual review.

³ Mind (n.d.). ‘Facts and figures about racism and mental health’. At: <https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/our-strategy/becoming-a-truly-anti-racist-organisation/facts-and-figures-about-racism-and-mental-health/>. Accessed 26 June 2025.

⁴ South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (forthcoming). ‘Meeting the public sector equality duty at South London and Maudsley Foundation Trust’.

Bethlem Gallery in Numbers

We held **805 studio sessions** – these include artist-led sessions such as the Bethlem Artists Collective, writing, art, 3D-making and photography groups. We also hosted **77 artist and staff-facilitated workshops** on different art techniques, music, dance and creative writing.

We worked closely with over **60 artists**, mentoring and supporting them both one-to-one and in group settings. We supported our wider network of over **150 artists**.

We curated **11 new exhibitions**, welcoming just under **9,000 visitors** onsite and **50,000 visitors** to our off-site exhibitions at the ORTUS centre.

We hosted **200+ events** with a total of **3400+ participants**.

David Beales, 'Suburban Landscape', Bethlem Art Fair 2024



An Overview of the Year

Bethlem Gallery 'Firsts'

The year saw several firsts at Bethlem Gallery: the launch of our art collection supported by the Peter Sowerby Foundation, featuring over 100 artworks available for loan. We produced our first podcast series and released Bethlem's first vinyl LP, both accompanying the Bethlem Gallery Live Lounge exhibition programme. We experimented with our first Live Studio hosting three artist residencies in the gallery space. We also tried out a new research model in order to support programme development, commissioning artist Daniel Regan to deliver a public programme that grew his networks and shaped his thinking, practice and research on the theme of his forthcoming exhibition (be)longing (2026).



Melancholy & Madness - a limited-edition 12" vinyl LP by Bethlem Live Lounge

Bethlem Gallery Exhibitions



Philae Settlements I by Sue Morgan

PLANET209 REVISITED: PAST & PRESENT RELICS OF VISUAL EXPERIMENTS

Sue Morgan

31 January – 27 April 2024

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/planet209>

A solo exhibition by artist Sue Morgan exploring imagined and real worlds through exquisitely intricate drawings and sculpture.

BETHLEM LIVE LOUNGE

8 May – 13 July 2024

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/live-lounge>

The Artist Taxi Driver worked with a community of Bethlem Artists to turn our gallery into a performance space, inviting visitors to listen to or take part in daily music sessions.



Installation shot of 'Our eyes will dance: Courtney', Bethlem Gallery, 2024

OUR EYES WILL DANCE: COURTNEY

25 July – 8 October 2024

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition-our-eyes-will-dance>

Celebrating the work of the late Courtney, this exhibition showcased the range of his colourful drawings, clever film, and playful sculptural works exploring identity.

Untitled by Courtney





PATHWAYS: UNESCORTED #12

16 October – 16 November 2024

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/pathways-unescorted-12>

This annual group show presented work by 22 artists connected to the criminal justice system.



Installation views of Pathways, Unescorted #12 at Bethlem Gallery, 2024



BETHLEM ART FAIR 2024

27 November 2024 – 11 January 2025

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition-art-fair-2024>

Every year the gallery accepts around 250 entries for our annual affordable art fair, open to anyone with connections to South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust.



MR X: ILLUMINATING THE SOUL

Live studio

22-25 January 2025

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/artist-in-residence-mr-x>

Performance artist Mr X built a spaceship in the gallery and held events inviting visitors to contribute to his structure.

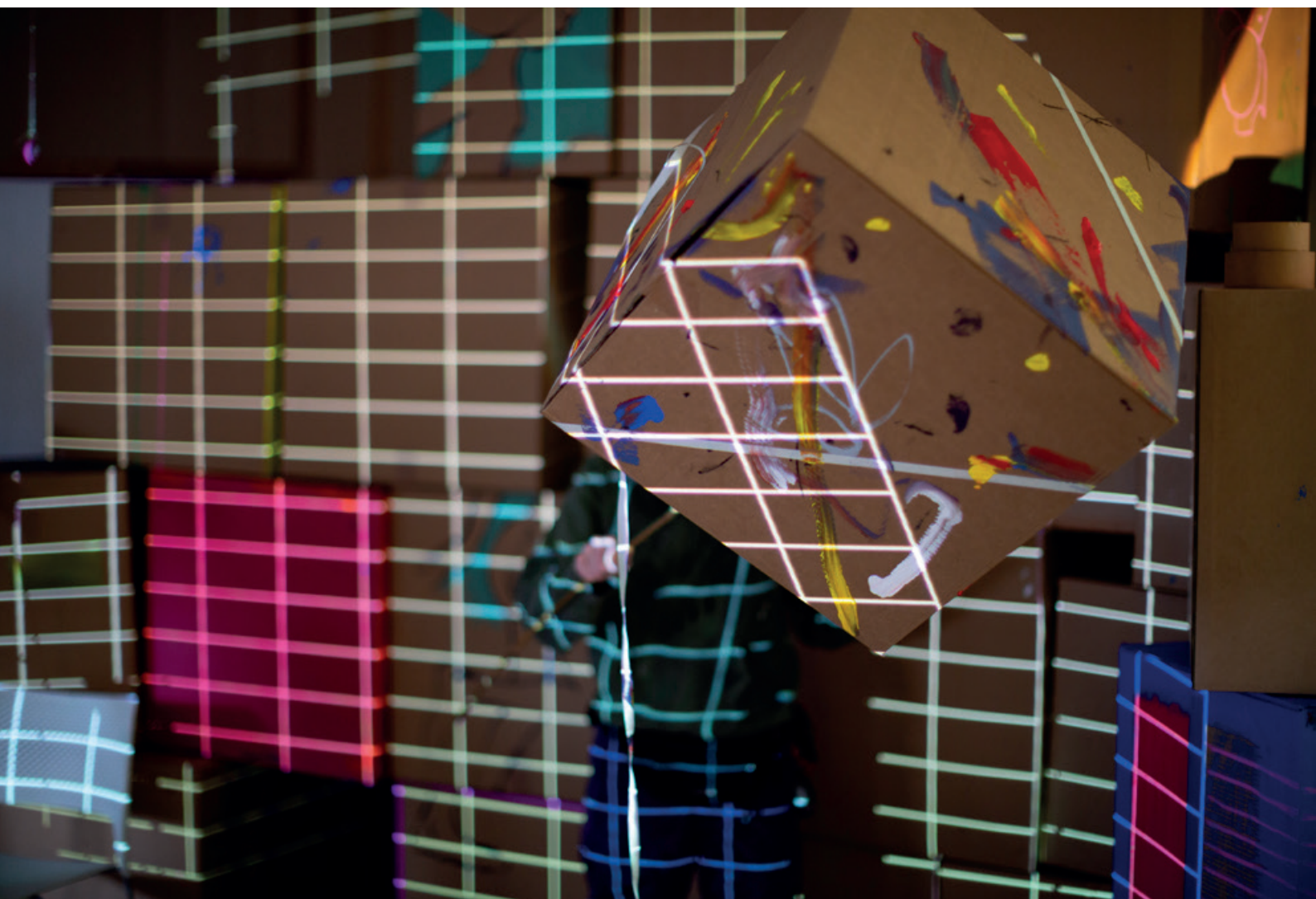
NEW BUILD: LIVE STUDIO

Partnership with Project Art Works

28 January – 7 February 2025

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition-new-build>

Filling the space with materials, cardboard walls, music and projections, New Build saw the gallery hosting daily workshops for different neurodivergent people and groups as part of a wider project to develop an art strategy and artwork for the National Autism Unit.



'New Build' exhibition in partnership with Project Art Works, Bethlem Gallery, 2025

JULES CUNNINGHAM: LIVE STUDIO

12-15 February 2025

[https://bethlemgallery.com/
whats-on/artist-in-residence-jules-
cunningham](https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/artist-in-residence-jules-cunningham)

For their live studio, Julie Cunningham & Co turned the gallery into a soft and inviting space for dance and playfulness, delivered movement and drawing sessions and developed their own choreography with an audience.



Artist in Residence: Jules Cunningham and collaborators at Bethlem Gallery, 2025

COLLECTION LAUNCH: THE BETHLEM GALLERY ART COLLECTION

26 February – 26 June 2025

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition-the-bethlem-gallery-art-collection>

Generously supported by the Peter Sowerby Foundation, Bethlem Gallery celebrated the 2-year project to develop a collection by showcasing a selection of newly acquired works.



Collection Launch: The Bethlem Gallery Art Collection generously supported by the Peter Sowerby Foundation at Bethlem Gallery, 2025. Photo Ben McDade



Offsite at Maudsley Charity's Venue ORTUS



JanArdenArtist: Cognitive Distortions at the ORTUS, 2024

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS: JANARDENARTIST

13 February – 18 June 2024

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition-cognitive-distortions>

JanArdenArtist wowed visitors to the ORTUS with his technically brilliant drawings and poetry on leather jackets and paper.



RONNIE: POCKETS OF BEAUTY

20 June – 20 November 2024

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whatson/exhibition-pockets-of-beauty>

Artist Ronnie is an established photographer. This solo show focused on photographs of plants, many of which were taken on the site of the Bethlem Royal Hospital.



Photographs, both untitled, by Ronnie



THE ULTRA VIOLETS: THREE WOMEN ARTISTS

27 November 2024 – 1 September 2025

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition-the-ultra-violets>

United by their daily practice of making art and their joy in using bright colours in their work, artists Fatma Durmush, Kim and Angelique are platformed for this group exhibition of women artists.

Offsite at Maudsley Hospital's Long Gallery

WEDNESDAY: MIDWEEK WORKS FROM THE BETHLEM STUDIO

20 March – 27 September 2024

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/wednesday>

Every Wednesday in Bethlem Gallery's studio, a group of artists come together to draw. This group exhibition demonstrates the skill and humour in a wide range of works produced.

Installation shot of 'Plot AA: Inside the Walled Garden' by Sue Morgan, Long Gallery, Maudsley Hospital, 2024-25



PLOT AA: INSIDE THE WALLED GARDEN

An experiment mapping a small plot left to rewild

Sue Morgan

7 October 2024 – 30 April 2025

<https://bethlemgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition-plot-aa-inside-the-walled-garden>

This exhibition gave a glimpse of the drawings and diary entries from artist Sue Morgan as she works on her research project 'Plot AA' with the gallery team and Horticultural Therapists in the Walled Garden at Bethlem Royal Hospital.

Commissions and Projects

Art commissions: South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust Art Strategy

We lead on the art strategy for South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. We worked with service users, staff, carers and artists to support artist residencies and commission artworks for wards and units across South London. We co-produced this by running art groups across the Trust, both organisation-wide and for specific projects.

We have continued to work on major art commissions for two new hospital buildings due to open in 2025-26: the Pears Maudsley Centre for Children and Young People, and New Douglas Bennett House. New partners include Mountsfield Recovery House, a community-based crisis-support initiative for people experiencing acute and severe mental health crises, and Greenvale Specialist Care Unit that provides specialist care for people living with dementia and their carers.

This year we also embarked on an Arts Council-funded creative research and engagement programme which explores accessibility, creativity and inclusion within neurodiverse spaces, and informs the Arts Strategy for the National Autism Unit Building at Bethlem Royal Hospital. The first phase this year included a partnership with Project Art Works, residencies in the unit and a live studio at Bethlem Gallery, 'New Build'.

'The residents are now proudly saying to people that this is done by and for the people, with service users and in collaboration with the people who have been here before. How wonderful it is – it has transformed the house.'

Ward Manager, Mountsfield Recovery House

'There's a lot of value in residents feeling part of the art strategy project - lots of them talked about having a really positive relationship with Mountsfield, and how it felt like a different kind of service compared to others they'd experienced. So I think they had this really beautiful sense of loyalty to the space. The idea that they would get to make a prominent mark or a permanent impact - not only on the physical space but also on the experience of future residents - they really liked that. I didn't have to work at that, it already existed.'

Artist in Residence – Mountsfield Recovery House

'It was a really interesting project for me - the kind of transient nature of the residents in the house, and planning a project that could both build and develop for people who were able to come back, but also be able to be dropped into by people who were new each week... In some ways that was quite interesting as a way of working. It allowed you to be quite responsive to the individuals who did come back, and the work could be shaped by their interests.'

Artist in Residence – Mountsfield Recovery House

'I really hope it sets a welcoming tone to the building. I hope it brings life to the space. This can be really positive for young people like me, maybe it will trigger our minds in a positive way.'

Service User on the Young Peoples Art Group, Pears Maudsley Children and Young People's Centre (due to open in 2025)



'All I know Is' (Mountsfield House) coproduced with Becky Warnock for Bethlem Gallery

Research Project: Family Footsteps

We continue to work with a team at Kings College London and artist Amber Roper, and this year ran a series of creative research workshops as part of the ongoing project 'Family Footsteps' that aims to respond to key questions parents have about family mental health. The creative workshops proved important in facilitating conversations, connections, developing trust and learning.

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/family-footsteps>

'Even though we hadn't met each other before, they made things feel welcoming. The artist was really good, and making something as we were chatting helped... It made it feel real and the fact that the experience is real for everyone in that room got us talking, and we're not holding back: it was like a little community'.

Workshop participant, 2024

Film

The gallery was funded by a grant from Art with Impact to work with producer Lucy Owen and film director Leanne Dimant to produce a short film about Sue Morgan, 'Where is my thought now?', that launched at film festivals in June 2024.

<https://www.voiceswithimpact.com/filmfestival>

Voting rights

In 2024 – the year dubbed the biggest election year in history – we worked with artist Dolly Sen on a project raising awareness about voting rights and the support that people need in order to exercise that right. Accompanied by a giant sculptural ear, free biscuits and 'The World's Biggest Tiny Placard Protest' Dolly and the Bethlem Gallery team set out to raise awareness, share knowledge and resources that supported people to register to vote.

<https://bethlemgallery.com/projects/voting-rights>



The Bethlem Gallery Art Collection

The gallery's collection, generously supported by the Peter Sowerby Foundation, launched this year with a selection of works on display in the gallery and studio spaces, and an online catalogue accessible via our website. The collection has been developed by our Collection Advisory Board over 2023-24, who have met ten times and covered themes such as ethics, acquisitions criteria and collections management.

(Be)longing Conference, 25 March 2025

Curated by Daniel Regan, our current research artist in residence, this conference explored themes of belonging and longing through artistic practice and experiences. It followed a season of discussions and workshops on the same theme, drawing in a wide range of artists and speakers.

'Thank you for providing a safe, honest and creative space for myself and everyone who attended. It was fantastic and I felt very supported by the Bethlem Gallery team... It's really made me think a lot about my own work that I've made previously and how I might want to make work now/in the future, as well as engaging with areas I've been fearful of approaching.'

Conference participant

(be)longing Conference, March 2025. Photo by Michael Mendones



Live Lounge Festival, 8 June 2024

The Artist Taxi Driver: 'In 2024, May – July, I curated Bethlem Live Lounge, an immersive exhibition transforming the gallery into a platform, a stage for people to come and be together, collaborate, make music, spoken word. It was an open space for experimental music. The premise of it was that it was an art exhibition with nothing in it – a relaxing space for people to collaborate, chat. The sofas were important.'

Over 50 visitors, artists, patients and staff performed during the exhibition, which created a community of artists who have gone on to perform music and poetry at events across the local area. We held the Live Lounge festival which brought together art and live music with over 150 visitors. As The Artist Taxi Driver reflected: 'Some people performed who had never performed before. They said it was life changing.'



Live Lounge Festival at Bethlem Gallery, 2024. Photos Peter Ball

Artist Development

This year our artist collective took off, with 15 artists meeting weekly for peer support with their projects and practice. A performance collective of artists evolved from our Live Lounge programme, showcasing their work as a collective both at Bethlem Gallery and other local venues. We held specialist development sessions requested by artists, for example in using the risograph machine, and in earning a living, led by ArtQuest and the NHS Trust's benefits advisor.

Tom Newlands, our writer in residence in partnership with Creative Future, became part of our community, working with our artists who have a writing practice.

He reflected:

'I feel proud to have been welcomed into such an inspiring and inclusive space, and to have had an opportunity to read the work of some incredible writers there. I was not surprised by the talent of the members at the Bethlem writers' group, but I was taken aback by their collective spirit, and excited by their commitment to attending regularly and pushing themselves as they explored their own creative visions. The gallery at Bethlem has an open door and a revolving cast of artists and writers from all backgrounds, and at all levels of experience, creating a self-sustaining atmosphere of experimentation and creativity. I learned by the end of day one that there was incredible imaginative power at work here in these few small rooms!'⁵

Analysis of the impact of artist development at Bethlem Gallery is included in our impact section below.

⁵Tom Newlands (2024). Reflections on residency, featured on the Creative Future website. At: <https://www.creativefuture.org.uk/news/experimentation-creativity-and-collective-spirit-london-writer-in-residence-tom-newlands-reflections/>. Accessed 27 June 2025.

Digital Highlights

In February 2024 we launched the digital catalogue for our new art collection, hosted on our website via the collections management system, eHive. This displays over 40 Bethlem artists' works from the collection, including images and artwork details, and is searchable. In the first two months after it was published (February-March 2025), the page had almost 1,200 views..

The website continues to platform our artists, with more than 95 artist profiles now featured, and artist blogs and events updated regularly. During the art fair we displayed a work by every artist who submitted work on the exhibition page in an online gallery, as well as showing a lot of the work across social media through our popular advent calendar campaign.

Across social media, Instagram continues to be our most engaged platform and has reached 125% more people than last year. The best performing posts were the Open Call for the (Be)longing Micro-commissions, a collaborative post with artist Daniel Regan, and the Open Call for an Artist to work on the Mountsfield Recovery House commission. This suggests audiences are keen to work with us, and opportunities for artists are shared widely. This is also seen via our Facebook account where the best performing post of the year was a job advert for our Curator and Operations Manager positions.

We have continued to use our TikTok account to reach a different, younger audience and have created content for social media including three videos with artist Beth Hopkins who talked about drawing in relation to Courtney's work during his retrospective exhibition.

Bethlem
Gallery

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Explore the Collection

Generously funded by the The Peter Sowerby Foundation.

Search



Pat Mear, Boys Toys



Barrington, Jerk Bar

Screengrab of Bethlem Gallery's collection search page



Live Lounge - photo by Peter Ball

Bethlem Live Lounge (8 May – 13 July 2024), curated by The Artist Taxi Driver, generated huge amounts of online content and interaction as performances were live-streamed across Instagram and Tiktok. We also produced a 7-part podcast series featuring interviews with Bethlem artists and musicians. Available on all good podcast platforms, it has so far been downloaded 307 times and continues to generate listens.

This year the gallery left X (Twitter) and Bloomberg Connects. Joining like-minded peer organisations, leaving X sends a message to our community that we prioritise the safety, inclusivity and integrity of our digital spaces. We made the decision to leave Bloomberg Connects following concerns expressed to us by partner organisations and artists.

	2023-2024	2024-25	% change
Website users	30,004	42,012	+40%
Instagram accounts reached	40,460	90,922	+125%
Facebook accounts reached	34,892	39,076	+12%
TikTok accounts reached	16,272	19,903	+22%
Newsletter open rate	56.9%	57.4%	+0.9%

Press

BBC Radio London, Disability Arts Online, South London News, The Big Issue (online), thevinyldistrict.com, Public Art (South Korean Contemporary Art Magazine), WhatsOnStage, Inside Croydon.

Our Impact

This section incorporates evaluation by consultants tialt (There is an alternative) who worked with us and a group of our artists to coproduce an evaluation framework in 2024-25.

Artists

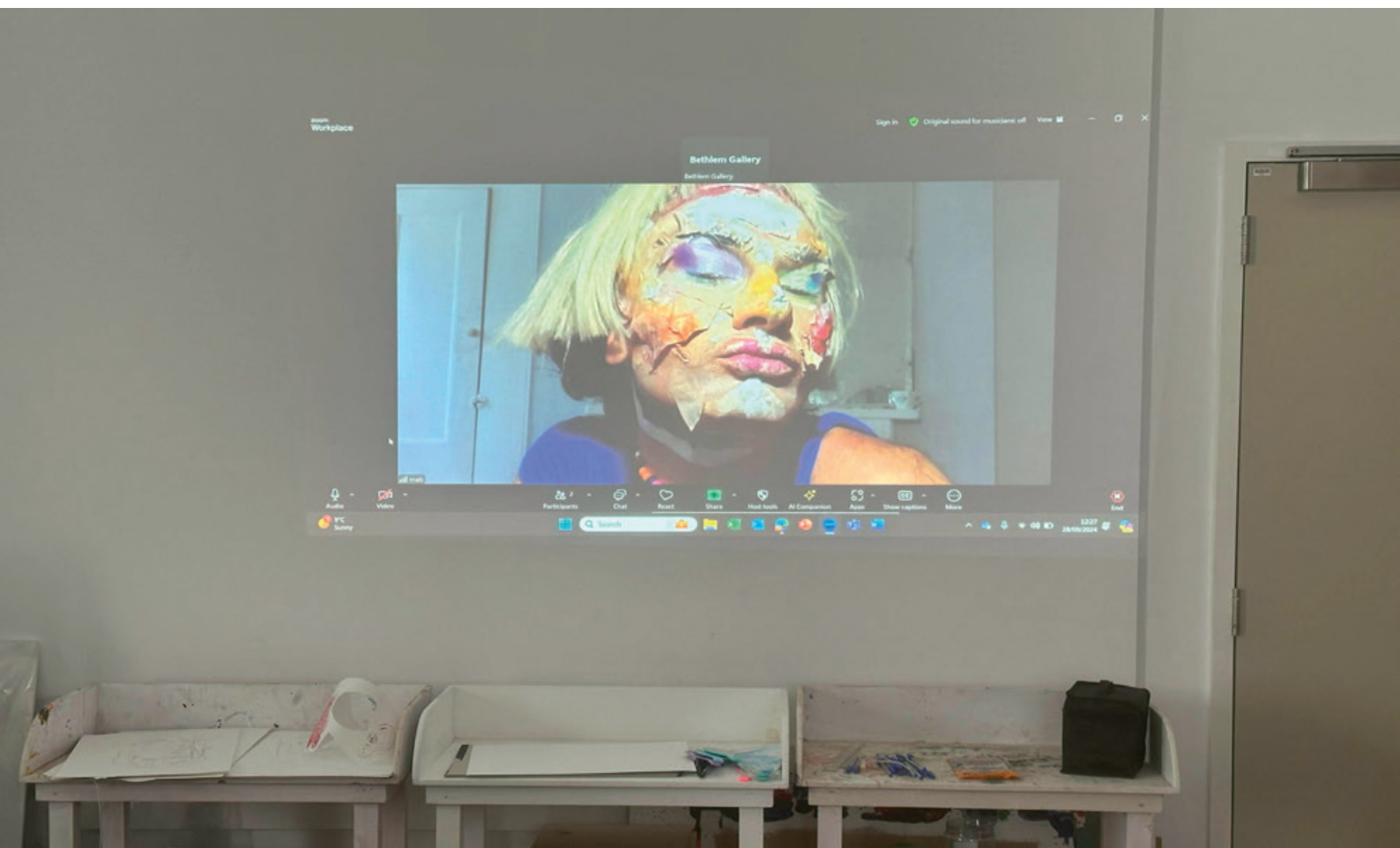
The artist-focused outcomes outlined in this section reflect Bethlem Gallery's commitment to supporting artistic practice that is rooted in lived experience, agency, and care. Over the past year, artists have shared how their engagement with the gallery has catalysed not only creative development, but also peer connection, confidence, wider opportunity and supporting their mental health recovery. From first-time performers to seasoned practitioners, the gallery provides a platform that values experimentation and growth.

Artists shared that their creative practices have grown significantly through the encouragement, support, and validation they received. Opportunities to present work through exhibitions and performances not only strengthened artistic and technical skills but also supported personal development and artistic identity. These outcomes highlight the gallery's crucial role in nurturing artistic voices and professional growth, both within the hospital context and in wider cultural spaces.

'I felt more able to try things I haven't done before in a supportive environment, I don't feel like I could have done this in a mainstream space.'

'I have given more thought to my work and the effect that being creative has on me and my well-being.'

Photograph taken during a drawing workshop with Julie Verhoeven and Mab George Sanders, Bethlem Gallery, 2024



Peer support is a strong emerging theme, with artists describing how connecting with others who share similar lived experiences has helped strengthen their sense of belonging and resilience. The gallery enables relational and creative peer networks, offering both emotional and professional validation as well as feeling secure in their mental health and artistic identity.

‘There’s this central togetherness, everyone’s just on the same wavelength.’

‘You don’t do something extraordinary alone, it happens through collaboration.’

‘Having the network and support of other artists with lived experience of mental health has helped validate my own experiences of mental ill health and my worth despite and within that.’



Teri Berkengoff, 'I'm Getting Better', 2024

Artists described taking their practice beyond the gallery context, from performing at external venues to initiating their own creative projects within the community. These experiences expressed in this emergent data suggests that the gallery not only supports internal development but also encourages outward-looking engagement and ambition.

‘We’re doing a show in January, and that came directly from doing the Live Lounge.’

‘I’ve got a [connected] big two-year project coming up now, mapping people’s thoughts to music.’

Bethlem Gallery has demonstrated a strong commitment to modelling equitable practice by placing the needs, voices, and working rhythms of marginalised artists at the centre of its programme. The gallery resists exclusionary practices by allowing artists to define the conditions in which they work best, and by actively challenging assumptions about who gets to be seen and recognised as an artist.



Mr X performing as part of his residency at Bethlem Gallery in January 2025

‘This place sees you as an artist first... not through the lens of mental health.’

‘It’s an important part of lots of people’s recovery... a supportive staff... not always the case elsewhere.’

‘The gallery is a platform... inviting people to naturally grow, create, perform.’

‘It’s quite life changing actually, to have an organisation that supports and understands that. I feel really understood and valued.’

Staff also reflected on the impact of these inclusive practices on public perceptions:

‘You can see a sort of an assumption of somebody who is in a mental hospital will not have the skills, ability to make good art... then they encounter ‘proper art here’... that kind of shifts expectations.’

These reflections illustrate how Bethlem Gallery’s approach is both transformative and strategic, changing not only who participates in the arts, but how the sector defines artistic value, legitimacy, and success.

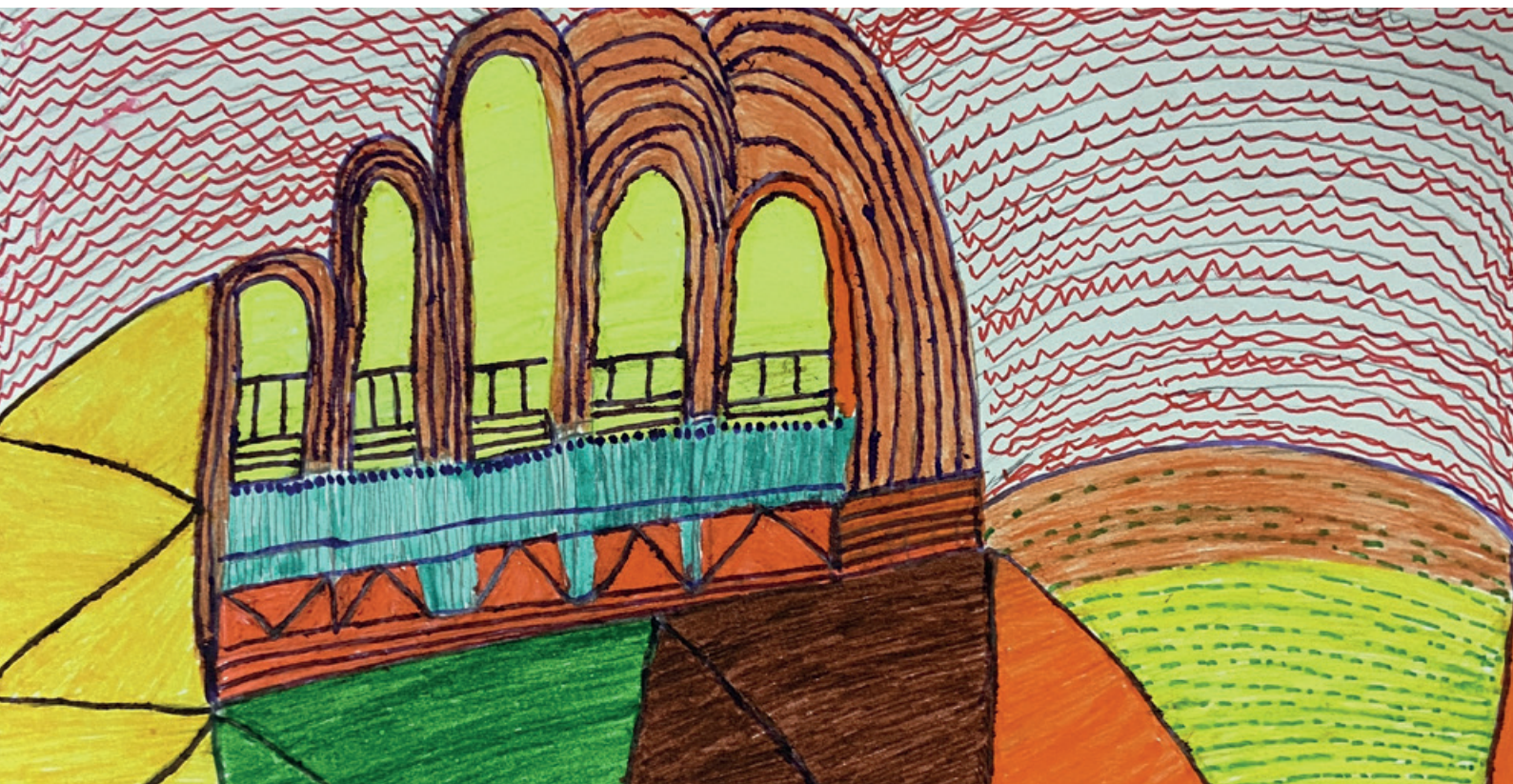
Bethlem Gallery continues to play a vital role in enabling access to creative participation and supporting recovery. By reducing stigma and removing structural and social barriers, the gallery fosters an environment where more people feel confident to engage in artmaking, many for the first time. Whether through informal drop-ins, collaborative workshops, or commissioned opportunities, participants feel welcomed and validated.

'I ended up in the drug and alcohol unit last year... then about September I stopped using and started coming back here a lot more. And yeah, it really helped, that show, but also the whole kind of workshop environment and what they have here, which is really special.'

'I didn't used to do that much art before, here is where I discovered my love for it.'

'There was open mic every Saturday, I was asked to read my poems...' 'I felt supported by everyone.'

Loveth Onyegbunwa, 'My Future Mansion', Bethlem Art Fair 2024



Displaying and selling work, particularly via the gallery's annual art fair, has a huge impact on emerging artists. A member of NHS staff spoke about the impact for a service user who won a prize:

'It's incredible the joy and confidence it has given him to win that. Another of our group sold two of her paintings last year and she gained enormously as well. Your hard work in getting it all together pays off in ways you probably don't see. Thank you from all of us.'

Bethlem Gallery – Partners and Publics

Bethlem Gallery's impact extends beyond individual artists to the broader publics and partners who engage with its work. This section explores how the gallery fosters understanding. Whether through sparking new conversations about mental health, offering inclusive and welcoming experiences for visitors, or shaping perceptions of art's value in society, Bethlem Gallery has a role as a cultural connector and platform for social change. The outcomes below show how audiences and partners are not only recipients of the work, but active participants in co-creating meaning, reducing stigma, and promoting everyday creativity.

The gallery seems to successfully spark conversations around mental health and lived experience through art. Visitors mentioned it as a space for 'opening up discussions,' 'thoughtful,' 'provoking,' and 'connecting with experiences of others.'

Descriptions like 'educational,' 'eye-opening,' and 'supportive' suggest the gallery succeeds in positioning art as more than just visual - it's a conversation starter and reflective tool. Some visitors commented on how the experience expanded their understanding of mental health and creativity, reinforcing the idea of art as a tool for developing practice and ideas:

'Hearing stories from artists helped me reflect on my own experiences.'

'A really lovely experience to see work done by hospital occupants. It is a wonderful opportunity to reach to them through their work.'

Visitors consistently recognised the gallery as a non-judgmental, welcoming space that fosters inclusion. Phrases like 'safe space,' 'enlightening,' 'inclusive atmosphere,' and 'no stigma here' highlight the gallery's success in creating an environment where mental health is approached with openness and respect.

The feedback clearly reflects a dismantling of stigma through platforming diverse lived experiences, making visitors feel welcome, and showcasing mental health through creative and humanising lenses.

A few responses explicitly mentioned the role of art in supporting community and agency. Visitors see the gallery as a place where art is not passive, but a way of exploring identity, voice, and healing - a means of change. Responses suggest the gallery encourages a practice of everyday creativity that extends beyond the exhibition space.

'Art can be such a positive for change.'

These are excerpts from a longer evaluation report for 2024-25 that will be available on the Bethlem Gallery website. We hope that longer term evaluation using our new framework iteratively will build up a more detailed picture of our impact.

Who We Are

Structure, Governance and Management

Bethlem Gallery is a charitable company limited by guarantee and an independent charity. The small and dedicated team of staff are overseen by a board of Directors and various advisory boards.

For our full financial statements please see our annual report on Companies House and the Charity Commission websites.

Board of Directors

Board members who served during the year are:

Ashokkumar Mistry – Artist

Jessie Hunt – Marketing Consultant

Kate Morris (Treasurer) - Finance Director, Morden College

Dr Neil Springham (Chair) – Executive Director of
Therapies, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

Shamita Sharmacharja – Curator, Wellcome Collection

Sonia Solicari – Director, Museum of the Home

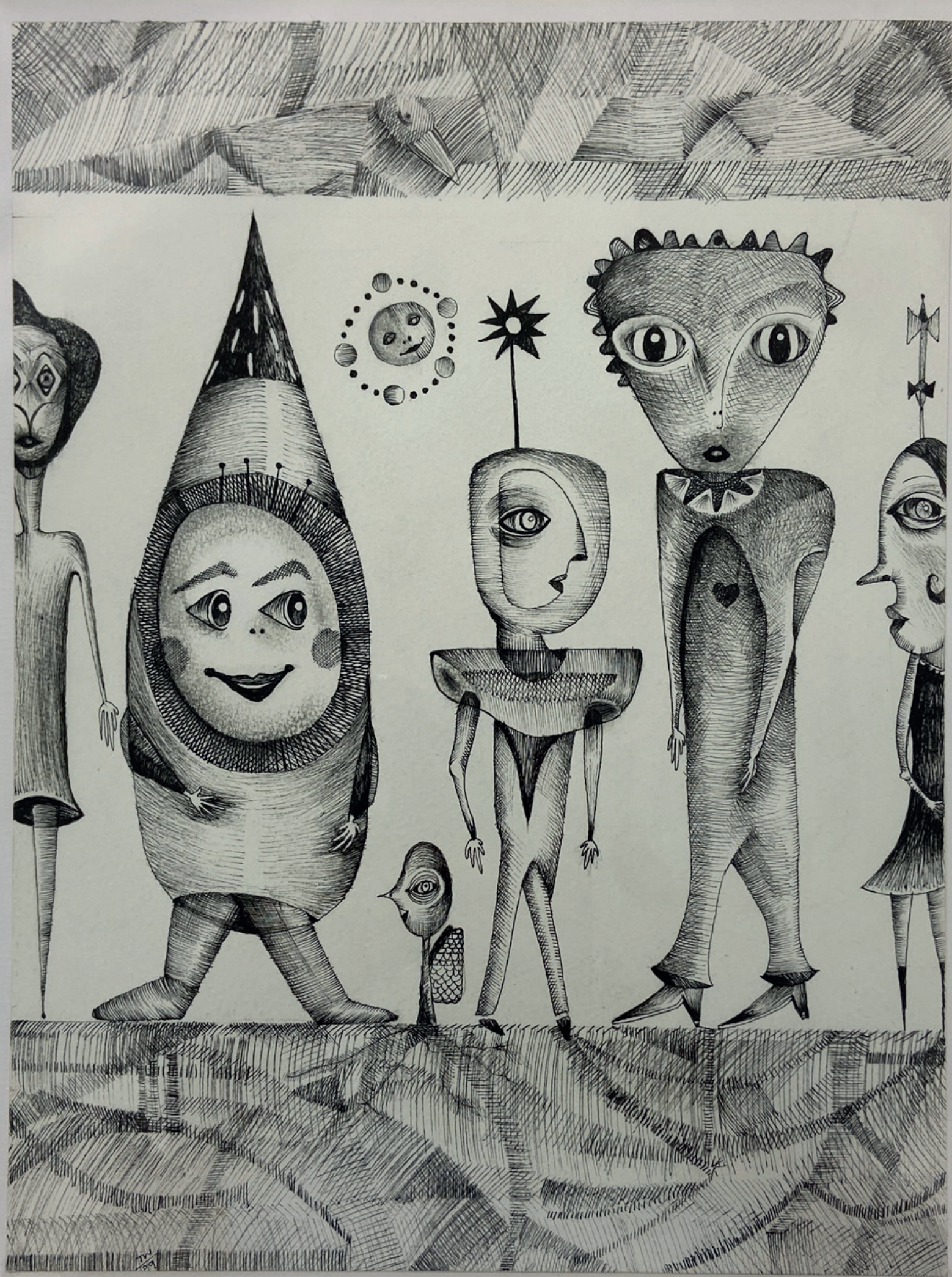
Advisors

The gallery works with advisors and art groups to advise on specific projects and elements of work, such as the young people's art group who are leading on art commissions for the new Pears Maudsley Centre for Children and Young People, the Collections Advisory Board who lead on the development of Bethlem Gallery's collection, the Art Group that leads on art strategy for South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and our evaluation group that has co-designed our evaluation framework.

Staff and Volunteers

As well as an experienced and skilful staff team, we have 19 dedicated volunteers. They are all DBS checked and supported by South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust's volunteer service.

<https://bethlemgallery.com/about/who-we-are>



'Spacey' by Terence Wilde, shown in the Bethlem Art Fair, 2024

Collaborators

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, Bethlem Museum of the Mind, Creative Future, Julie Cunningham & Co, Project Artworks, Wellcome Trust, King's College London, Outside In, Science Gallery, Beckenham Business Association, Bromley Council, Croydon Council, Centre for Society and Mental Health at King's College London, Outside In, Project Art Works, Turf Projects, The A Collective, Beckmead Primary School, Stanley Arts, Contemporary Visual Art Network (CVAN), Fountain House Gallery.

We are grateful to our supporters:





Mr X Residency at Bethlem Gallery, 2025

Bethlem
Gallery