



# Learning Highlights



**Nottingham Contemporary**



**2025**



**We use art and creativity to bring people together.**

**New creative experiences enrich learning and foster skills and wellbeing.**

**We increase access to the arts and develop inclusive approaches by working with local partners and teachers.**

**Together we celebrate creativity, community spirit and action and are part of the city.**

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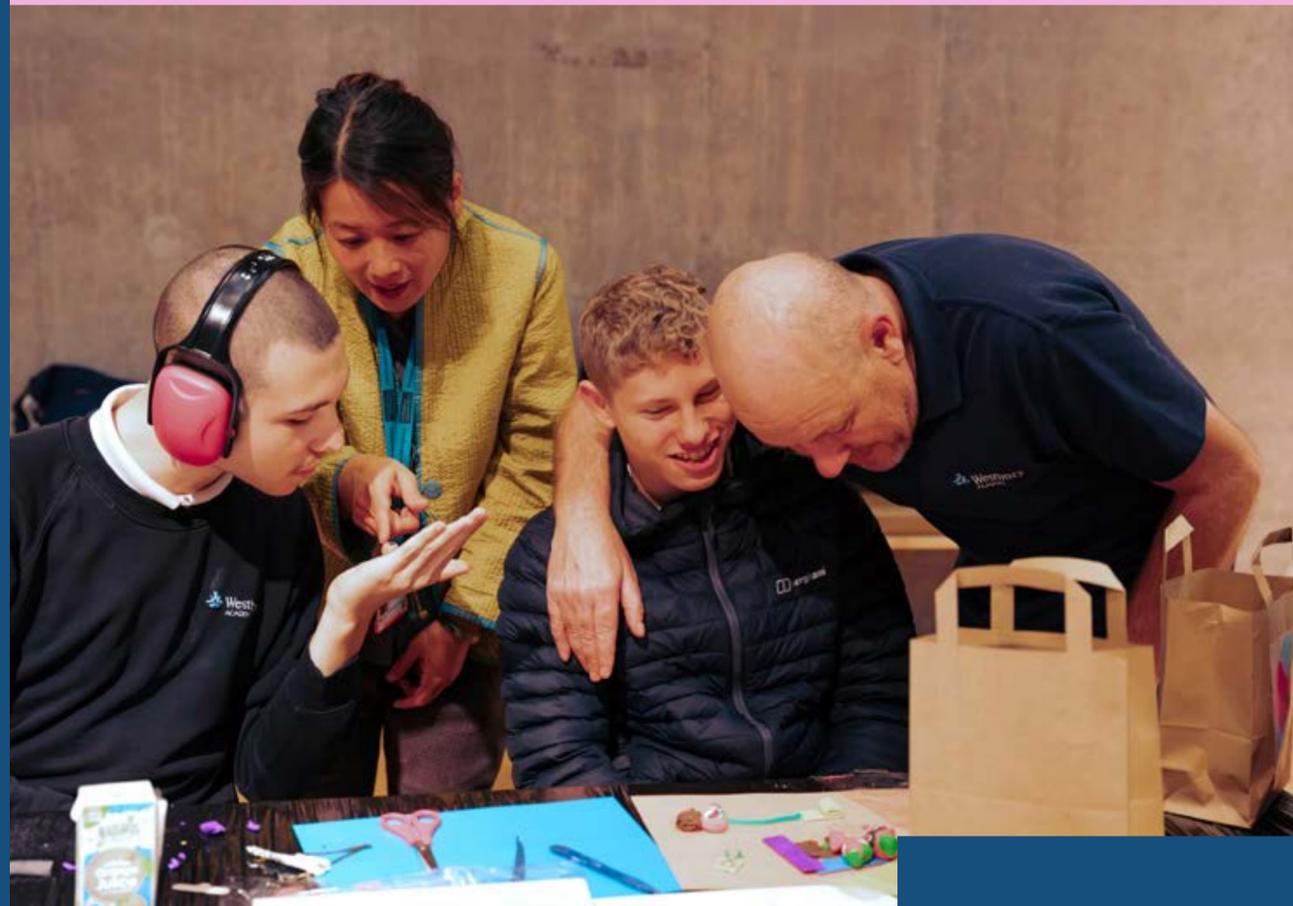
# New Ground

**With Raleigh Education Trust we developed new ways to nurture learning and creativity.**



**Over the last 2 years artists and teachers have been working together to develop inclusive, creative practice.**

**Through art making we explored young people's place in the world and fostered a sense of joy and connection.**



“It gave pupils space to understand themselves more deeply and develop new confidence in expressing who they are.”

Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Raleigh Education Trust

“Sessions were spontaneous and I was able to do my own thing. It puts you in control.”

Student, SHAPE

“The partnership allowed me to challenge my practice and develop as an educator which benefits both myself and my pupils”.

Teacher, Woodlands Academy

# Listening Alongside

**With sound artist Hannah Kemp-Welch we explored how art-making can open up new spaces for listening.**



**Audio from workshops and interviews with our artists featured in a new sound artwork. The piece explores how artists listen to students' voices through making and conversations.**

**“The artwork is the conversation. The making and the doing enable that conversation to happen.”**

Associate Artist, Nottingham Contemporary  
[extracted quote from *Listening Alongside*, Hannah Kemp-Welch, 2025]



**The sound work was exhibited at the gallery alongside our summer 2025 exhibition, *Your Ears Later Will Know to Listen*, exploring how artists have listened to and reimagined complex histories.**

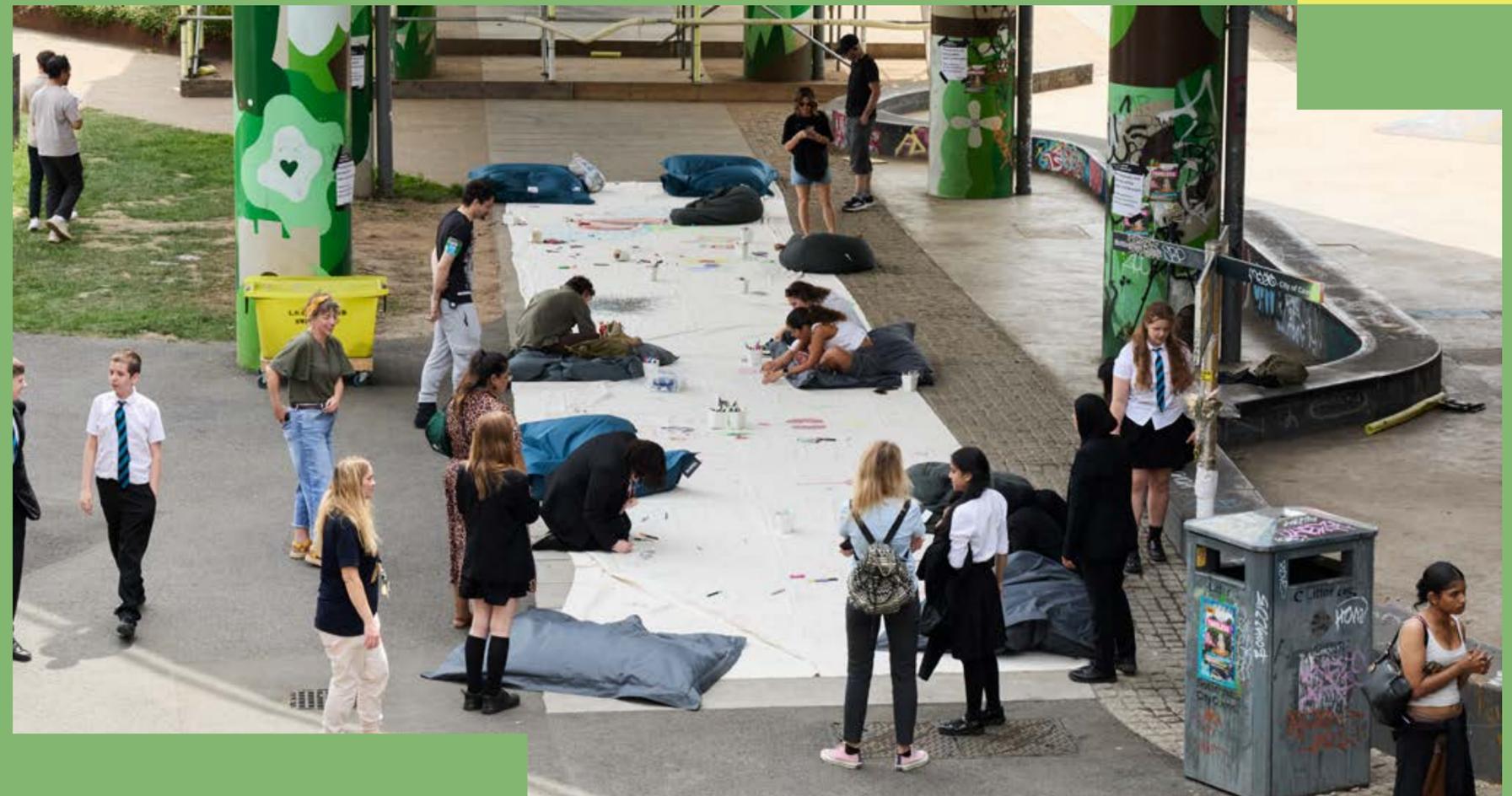
# Connecting Across the World

**With Oscar Murillo we were part of an international collaborative artwork.**



**Oscar Murillo invites people around the world to create a collaborative artwork – an ongoing project he calls social mapping.**

**Part of the São Paulo Biennial, the artwork is a celebration of collective spirit through drawing and mark-making.**



# Part of the City

**We work together to make Nottingham a more inclusive and creative place.**

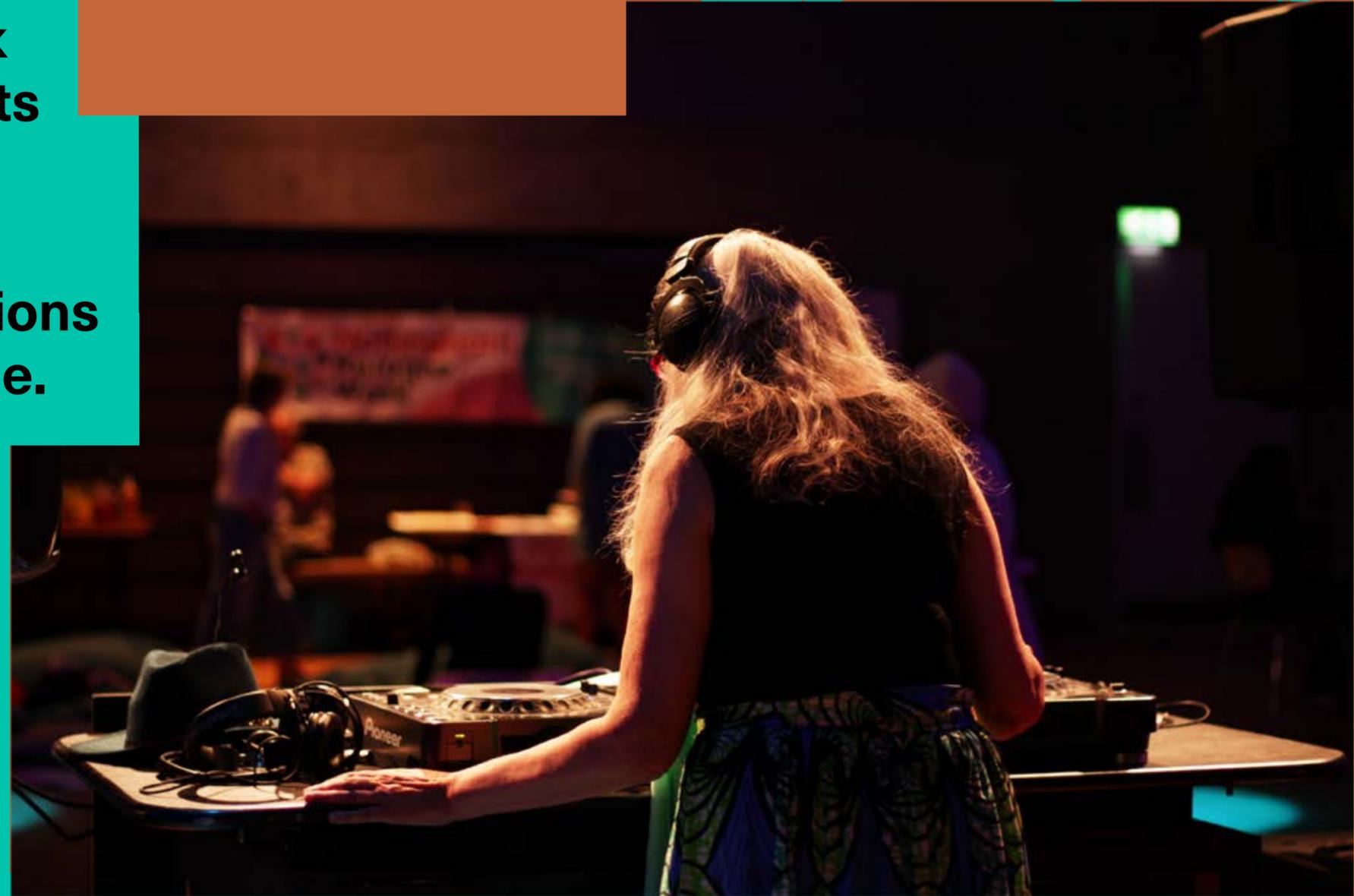


Once again we were part of Refugee Week celebrations in the city. With Refugee Roots we hosted a Bollywood dance workshop with Gualra Dlixat.

DJ Mayeva and DJ Simba brought celebrations to a close with music from across the globe.



Photo: Reem Takriti



We are proud to be part of the **Art of Belonging** pledge and steering group and to host our partners Refugee Roots.

# Festival of Resistance

A celebration of community and community action.



Photo: Tom Platinum Morley

**In October, we hosted a ‘Festival of Resistance’, a rich programme of creative workshops and community dialogue sessions to encourage people to connect and collectivise.**

**With around 40 local contributors, we celebrated the principles of, and people involved in, community organising. Together, we imagined a more inclusive city and future.**



“I felt energised to connect and collaborate.”

Participant, Festival of Resistance

“The festival was truly rich in opportunities to network and expand the reach of activists' activities.”

Participant, Festival of Resistance

“A space where you felt fully welcome, held and encouraged. As an AuDHD\* person I really appreciated the attention to detail. That felt very considerate to me.”

Participant, Festival of Resistance

# Developing Together

Teachers and artists develop and exchange practice to enrich learning.



**With each new exhibition we welcome teachers to explore our galleries and resources with artists. Through art making and conversations we learn together. This year we also hosted whole school teams for creative sessions at the gallery.**



“Sessions encouraged different ways of thinking, questioning and storytelling.”

Teacher CPD Participant

“It created space for staff to engage in collaborative, reflective discussions and challenged us to rethink some of the ways we approach professional learning.”

Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Raleigh Education Trust

# Gallery as a Classroom

**Creative workshops at the gallery support connections to art and ideas.**



**Workshops and free resources, developed with and for teachers, connect our exhibitions with classroom learning.**

**We've welcomed students of all ages from schools, colleges, SEN/D and Alternative Provision settings.**

**2,000 teachers and students took part in creative learning experiences with us.**



**“The experience inspired, refreshed and educated.”**

Course Leader, Nottingham College

**“Our students were inspired by the experience and the gallery. The artist pitched and adapted the sessions fantastically to respond to students.”**

Assistant Principal, Nottingham Academy

# Work Experience Week

**Each year we connect young people to the city's cultural offer and support pathways into the arts.**



**Students visit venues across the city meeting artists, programmers, curators and technicians to gain insights into a career in the arts.**

**13 students took part from 12 local schools, including settings for new arrivals and those with social and emotional needs.**

“Every single day we learnt new stuff which helped me to broaden my knowledge of the art field.”

Participant, Work Experience Week

“It impacted on my personal practice and ambitions. It gave me a grasp of what I want to try out in the future.”

Previous participant of Work Experience Week and 1525 Collective member



**We've delivered the programme for 4 years. Some young people who take part often go on to join our young people's programmes and then study or work in the arts. Our work featured in an arts sector publication on career pathways.**

# 1525 Collective

**A welcoming and creative community where young people gain experiences.**



**1525 are a youth arts collective. They meet at the gallery to socialise and develop creative work and projects.**

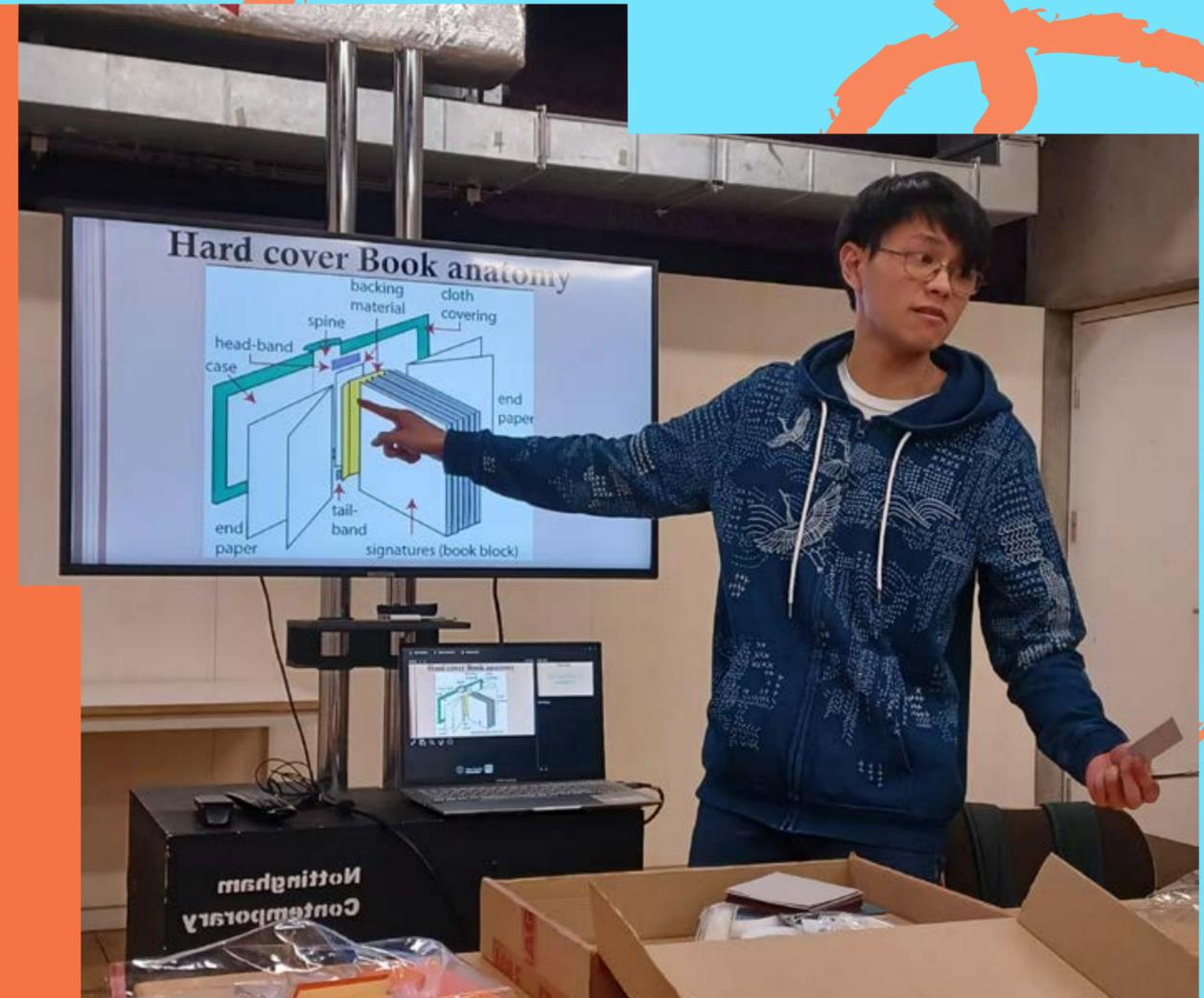
**This year, members worked with our teams to deliver gallery tours, support public events and facilitate workshops.**

**Members delivered workshops as part of our work experience week and led a collaborative banner making workshop at our Festival of Resistance.**



**“I really enjoyed putting on our own workshop and seeing how that works.”**

1525 Participant



**“1525 has given me a space for artistic expression and a platform to speak up and engage in the movements I believe in.”**

1525 Participant

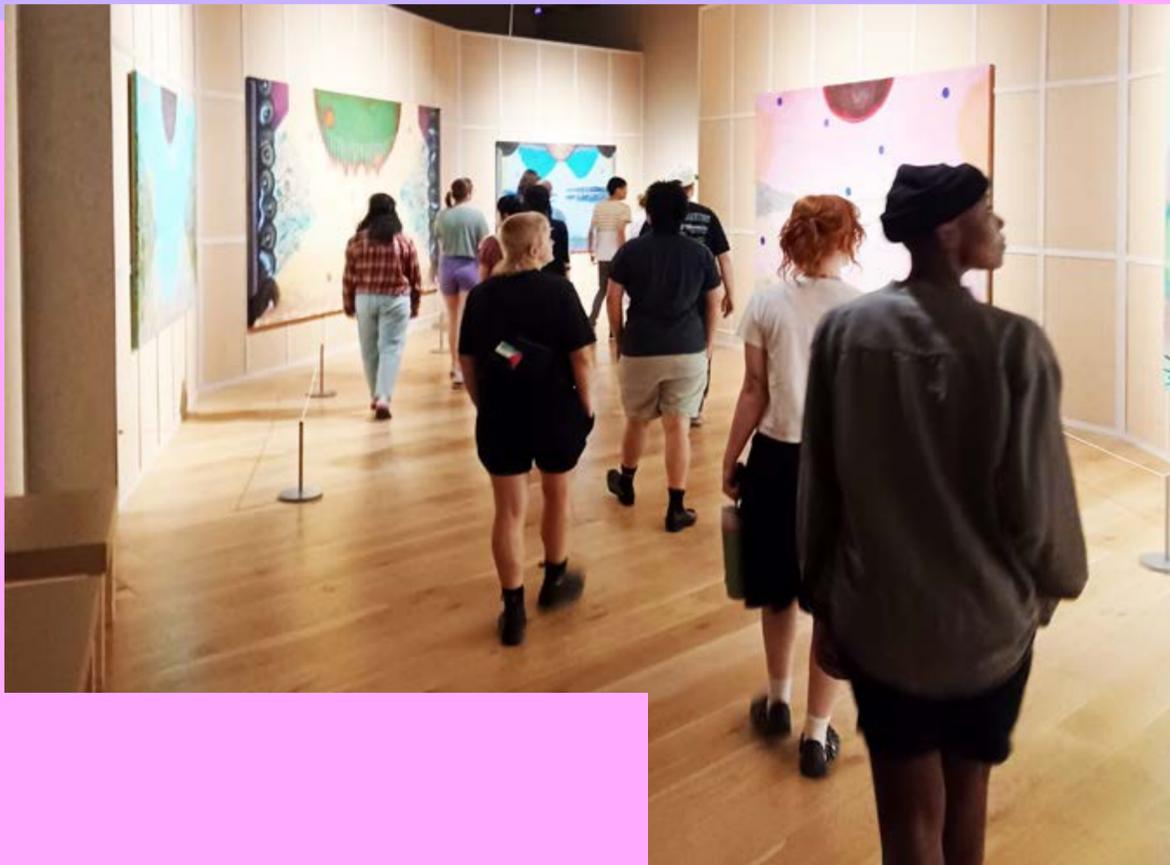
# For Young People

**Work placements and workshops develop skills and experiences**



**Masterclasses and creative workshops this year have focused on developing skills in printmaking, painting and photography.**

**Our technical skills workshops delivered by members of our team were extremely popular.**



**7 Nottingham Trent University and University of Nottingham students took part in 1 - 3 month placements working alongside our HR, exhibition, development and programming teams**

# Making Time

**Our Slow Craft Socials support young people to be and create together.**



**Our Slow Craft Socials are designed with wellbeing, inclusion and social connection in mind. They offer young people the chance to make, relax and be with others.**

**These popular drop-in creative workshops are now a regular part of our programme.**

**We were thrilled to be part of the Kids in Museums conference and national conversations around young people's health and wellbeing.**



“Sessions are therapeutic and open with lots of space to do your own thing, but also with enough encouragement.”

Slow Craft Socials, Participant

# A Warm Welcome for Families

**Our Big Room events respond to the rising cost of living and support access to the arts.**



Photo: Ismail Khokon

**During the winter we connect to local families through schools, foodbanks and community partners to offer a warm welcome and family films.**

**Families enjoy free drinks and snacks and can pick up everyday essentials. Nottingham City Transport support free bus travel and Sharewear offer a clothes bank.**

**Many of the families who take part are visiting for the first time with almost half from the local areas we most want to reach.\***



“Very friendly and hospitable people who make you feel at home with warmth and smiles.”

Family Participant

“It was my first time today. I do have to say how amazing the day was, the children enjoyed the film and everything else.”

Family Participant

# We are Wonderlings!

**Our popular Early Years programme grows with babies and toddlers.**



**Our immersive sensory play sessions for babies and toddlers support each developmental stage and encourage playful exploration of the world.**

**We have loved watching families grow. Babies who joined our very first sessions have grown into confident toddlers.**

**We welcomed 1,500 babies, toddlers and their grown-ups to play this year.**



“The set up is always amazing. We haven’t been to sessions like this anywhere else.”

Family Participant

“We have had so much fun for me as well as my baby. It’s such a great resource for new parents.”

Family Participant

# Creative Families

**School holidays are always busy with families playing, making and experimenting together.**



**Families play, make and experiment together. Activities spark imaginations and encourage families to create and have fun together.**

“We’ve been coming to these activities for years and made so many happy memories together. It’s always such fabulous experience!”

Family Participant



**We welcomed over 7,000 family participants.**

"We LOVE these sessions. My children use their imaginations and experience new creative things."

Family Participant

# The Power of Partnerships

**We host community partners and together explore how our work can grow.**



**Rainbow Parents Carers Forum, Cool Company, Notts Trans Hub and Queer Craft Club have had a home and safe space with us.**

**Gallery walkthroughs and workshops by community partners bring fresh perspectives and personal connections to our exhibitions. A massive thank you to Ubuntu, HEAL Collective and Poets Against Racism.**



**Our partnerships with Rainbow Parents Carers Forum and Raleigh Educational Trust have informed our approach and offer for SEN/D families during the school holidays.**

# Opportunities for Young Artists

Through our programmes and events we commission young, local artists.

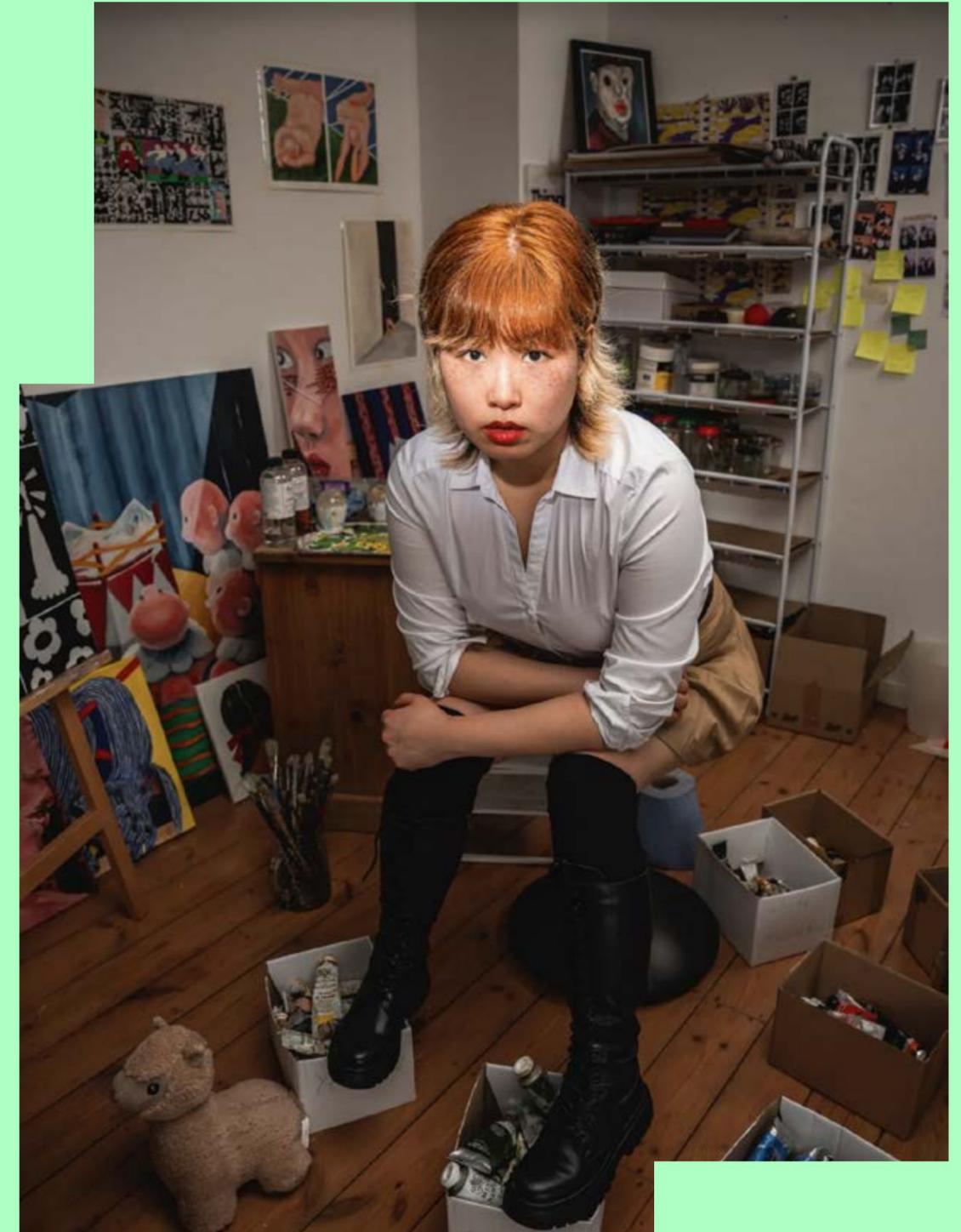


Photo: Tom Platinum Morley

**This publication has been designed by Woosun Choi, a Nottingham based painter and graphic designer, and collaborator on our young people's programme.**



## Exciting Plans for 2026



**We have ambitious plans to change one of our galleries into a home for learning.**

**This new space will enable us to host artists, community partners and schools and better respond to their needs through inclusive design. It will be an active space that resonates with our communities.**



## Coming Up

**We're excited to begin work on a new partnership with Nottingham Education Sanctuary Team, Nottingham College and HEAL Collective.**

**Between January and March our successful Big Room returns - a welcoming warm hub for families.**

**In the Spring look out for artwork by local students in Shahana Rajani's exhibition: *Lines That World a River* لکیروں سے دریا تھامنا.**

**In June we'll celebrate Refugee week with partners across the city.**

# 2025 in Numbers

**10,000**

People took part in learning activities with us in 2025.

**13 & 12**

13 students took place in our work experience week from 12 local settings.

**1,500**

Babies, toddlers and their grown-ups took part in immersive play sessions.

**2,000**

Students and teachers took part in 85 workshops at the gallery and in schools.

**1,000**

People took part in our community events and programmes.

**450**

Family participants were part of our winter Big Room film programme.

**5 & 40**

5 in-depth school partnerships and work with 40 individual schools and colleges took place.

**50**

Community partners were hosted by us and developed shared projects with us.

**7,000**

Family participants were welcomed to 100 family sessions.

# Thank You!

**A big thank you to all our amazing collaborators and to everyone who has been part of our learning programmes in 2025.**

**Thank you to our principal funder Arts Council England, and to Bloomberg Philanthropies and Ampersand Foundation.**

**Thank you to the charitable trusts and foundations who have generously supported our Learning work – Freelands Foundation and The Big Give.**

**Thank you to Nottingham City Transport and Sharewear for their generous support of our warm hub for families.**

**Thank you to our strategic partners Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham.**

**Please do get in touch if you'd like to know more or to connect.  
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