

THE WALLACE  
COLLECTION  
**MAKING CULTURE  
MATTER**

2025-2028

# MAKING CULTURE MATTER

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### WE BELIEVE THAT CULTURE MATTERS

The Wallace Collection is a national museum housing unsurpassed masterpieces of painting, sculpture, furniture, arms and armour, and porcelain. Once a private collection built over the 18th and 19th centuries by the Marquesses of Hertford and Sir Richard Wallace, it was gifted to the British Nation in 1897 by Lady Wallace. This was an astonishing bequest, and one of the greatest gifts of artworks ever to be transferred into public ownership.

Today we look after the collection through research and conservation, and preserve it for future generations. Our aim is to share it with as broad an audience as possible: to enlighten, to spark the imagination, and to enable people of all ages to develop a greater understanding and enjoyment of art.

Cover  
Schoolchildren exploring our  
Arms and Armour galleries

Right  
Frans Hals, *The Laughing Cavalier*,  
1624



## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the publication of Making Culture Matter 2022-2025, we have maintained our commitment to this legacy by preserving and showcasing our worldclass collection, expanding our public engagement and inclusive practice, developing a more sustainable infrastructure, and investing in our people.

### PRESERVING AND SHOWCASING OUR WORLDCLASS COLLECTION

We have established an ambitious and outward-looking exhibition programme, securing exceptional loans and fostering global collaborations. Highlights include:

- Celebrating the world of canine portraiture through the exhibition *Portraits of Dogs: From Gainsborough to Hockney* (29 March to 15 October 2023), which was a huge success with the public and media alike.
- Bringing together extraordinary objects in *Ranjit Singh: Sikh, Warrior, King* (10 April to 20 October 2024) to explore the life of the great Sikh leader Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) and the rich history of the Sikh Kingdom.
- Collaborating with contemporary artist Flora Yukhnovich, who engaged with our collection to create thought-provoking new works in the display *Flora Yukhnovich and François Boucher: The Language of the Rococo* (5 June to 3 November 2024).
- Sharing our artworks through prominent loans, such as *The Laughing Cavalier* by Frans Hals, which travelled for the first time in over 150 years to the Netherlands; and the chest of drawers made for Louis XV by Gaudreaus and Caffiéri, which returned to Versailles after nearly 300 years.
- Completing two major research projects to be published in 2025: a comprehensive catalogue of our Ottoman, Middle Eastern, and Asian arms and armour, featuring new research and high-quality photography; and a monograph on our extraordinary collection of Venetian view paintings including works by Canaletto and Guardi, which also led to the attribution of a key work to a young Bernardo Bellotto.

Left  
Jewelled Dagger, Mughal Court Workshop  
and possibly belonging to Shah Jahan,  
about 1615 (detail)

## EXPANDING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Our ongoing commitment to accessibility and meaningful audience engagement has led to:

- The development of a systematic programme of visitor research, culminating in a new Audience Development Strategy designed to attract and sustain a broader spectrum of visitors over the next decade.
- The implementation of a multi-year Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan to promote and prioritise EDI across the museum's objectives and outputs, including major developments in interpretation and display.
- A substantial increase in onsite visitor numbers to over 500,000 in 2024-25, as well as a significant expansion in digital engagement outside of London, with 48% of our online audience based across the UK and 25% from overseas.
- The development of a sector-leading SEND Schools programme to ensure all young people and their families can experience and engage with our collection.



Right  
Participants in a SEND School session



## SUSTAINABILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Recognising the challenges posed by our historic building, we have:

- Conducted a comprehensive accessibility review, identifying barriers that limit access for some visitors.
- Undertaken a feasibility study for a Masterplan to modernise our building and mechanical infrastructure, collection display, and visitor facilities, moving towards the appointment of an architect.
- Launched several infrastructure projects that help us to balance growing numbers of visitors with the need for stable environmental conditions to preserve our artworks.

Left  
Visitors in our Great Gallery

## INVESTING IN PEOPLE

We believe that our staff are integral to our success, and have:

- Established a secondment programme across departments, fostering internal talent and providing career development opportunities.
- Strengthened partnerships with donors, funding bodies, and academic institutions to support new staff roles, research and public programming.

**WE HAVE ACHIEVED A LOT BUT THERE IS STILL MORE TO DO**



Right  
Staff member cleaning a bronze sculpture

### OUR STRATEGIC AIMS FOR 2025-28

Since 1900 the Wallace Collection has upheld the principle of access for all. As we enter our 125th year as a national museum, the next phase of our development must be driven by excellence in research and display, financial and environmental sustainability, and ensuring that we continue to inspire and engage visitors in an ever-changing world.

Over the next three years, we will deliver a series of ambitious aims that enable us to research and preserve the collection, deepen our visitor engagement, develop ever-more ambitious exhibitions, build a strong financial foundation, and implement a transformative Masterplan.



Right  
Louis XV's chest of drawers on temporary display at  
Versailles (photography by Thomas Garnier,  
© Château de Versailles and The Wallace Collection)



**MAINTAIN, RESEARCH AND PRESERVE  
THE COLLECTION**

Continuing the development of in-depth collection knowledge and specialist care, we will:

- Publish a new catalogue on our ceramics and earthenware, incorporating fresh research, conservation insights and new photography.
- Advance the conservation of our 19th-century French paintings, ensuring their long-term preservation and technical analysis.
- Share groundbreaking curatorial and conservation research by reimagining gallery interpretation and display.
- Continue cataloguing and begin digitising our archive and historical image library, connecting with global audiences and researchers.
- Strengthen research collaborations with external institutions to expand the understanding of our collection and its place in global artistic and historical narratives.

## BROADEN AND DEEPEN VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

Placing our visitors at the heart of everything we do, we will:

- Expand visitor research and outreach to complement DCMS's national framework and ensure wider representation across the UK.
- Implement and expand our Audience Development Strategy to create sustainable audience growth, ensuring that all visitors feel welcome and have a positive experience with us.
- Strengthen digital engagement through a new Collection Management System (CMS) and Digital Asset Management System (DAMS), ensuring seamless online access to the collection.
- Continue evolving our digital engagement programmes to complement our onsite experience, reinforcing the intrinsic value of art in shaping identity, quality of life, and wellbeing.
- Enhance our public programming to create deeper engagement with schools, lifelong learners, and underrepresented audiences.



Right  
Participants taking part in Silver Sunday activities



## DEVELOP AMBITIOUS EXHIBITIONS

Building on the success of our recent exhibitions, our future programme will:

- Celebrate, promote, and expand research on our core strengths in arms and armour, French 18th-century art and Old Masters, as well as focussing on overlooked aspects of the collection and its history.
- Provide historical and cultural context for our diverse collection, ensuring inclusivity in interpretation that appeals to new and diverse audiences beyond our core visitor demographic.
- Use exhibitions to generate revenue through ticket sales, catalogue purchases, and secondary spend in the restaurant and shop, as well as helping to increase membership.
- Develop long-term partnerships with international museums and institutions to showcase our collection in new contexts, and to foster academic collaboration.

## BUILD A STRONG FINANCIAL FOUNDATION

To underpin our operational and developmental aims, we will:

- Expand revenue streams from the restaurant, café, retail, venue hire, and public programmes.
- Closely monitor costs to ensure our overheads remain sustainable while achieving best value for money.
- Invest in digital infrastructure and operational improvements, such as cloud-based IT solutions and capital planning, to enhance efficiency.
- Strengthen our relationship with DCMS to ensure ongoing support and strategic alignment.
- Enhance donor stewardship to retain and cultivate existing supporters while expanding cultivation of new funding sources.
- Continue to grow our Endowment, ensuring financial resilience in times of economic instability and to support future expansion.
- Plan and begin the quiet phase of an ambitious fundraising campaign to deliver our Masterplan development, securing lead funding to support transformational infrastructure improvements and wider programme.
- Develop a long-term financial strategy to ensure the Wallace Collection remains agile and resilient in an evolving economic landscape.

## KEEPING TIME CLOCKS BY BOULLE

Time, the sequence of events from past to future, is a concept that has captivated us since the dawn of humanity. Its elusive nature has proved endlessly fascinating to physicists and philosophers. From the passing seasons to sand running through an hourglass, we have found ingenious ways to chart our inescapable passage through existence.

During the Middle Ages, scientists discovered how to keep time with mechanical clocks. They were often positioned high on churches, regulating the daily rhythms of life and prayer, and later collected as objects of intellectual curiosity. In 1656, the pursuit of precision led to a breakthrough with the invention of the pendulum. These sweeping weights ensured accuracy but called for larger cases, meaning clocks became practical tools, as well as a means of adorning the homes of the wealthy. André-Charles Boulle's time had come.

As Louis XIV's cabinetmaker, with a prestigious workshop in the Louvre beyond the creative strictures of Parisian guilds, Boulle created some of the world's greatest clocks for the French court. These glittering confections of gilt bronze and marquetry, combined with cosmic symbols and intricate movements, are the epitome of Baroque style and substance. However, they were not the work of Boulle alone, but many hands from across 18th-century Paris. Some were friends, some relatives, while others were rivals, but all drew on a rich artistic and scientific culture to drive innovation.

Bringing together five Boulle masterpieces from the Wallace Collection for the first time, this display is a unique opportunity to marvel at the art and science of timekeeping.

The clocks in the display are running and will chime at irregular intervals.



## IMPLEMENT A TRANSFORMATIVE MASTERPLAN

Taking the next steps in the multi-stage redevelopment of our museum to improve visitor experience, the display of the collection and income generating opportunities, we will:

- Redesign gallery spaces with a focus on presenting our world-renowned arms and armour collection, 19th-century French paintings, and Medieval and Renaissance works in a contemporary, engaging format.
- Prioritise sustainability by integrating state-of-the-art energy-efficient systems to protect artworks and reduce the museum's carbon footprint.
- Improve accessibility by upgrading visitor facilities, increasing lift capacity, and providing modernised amenities to create an inclusive environment for all visitors.
- Undertake a major refurbishment of climate control and lighting systems to ensure our artworks are maintained in the best conditions possible, balancing preservation with sustainability.
- Develop spaces dedicated to learning and public programming to enhance our role as a centre of discourse and cultural exchange.

Right  
Equestrian armour, possibly Ulrich Rämbs,  
about 1485

