

# the Whitworth

## Press release

Thursday 9 November

### The Whitworth is awarded Gallery of Sanctuary status

- First art gallery in the Northwest of England to receive Gallery of Sanctuary status.
- Each year the Whitworth hosts more than 500 events and activities as part of its exhibitions and civic engagement programme.
- The gallery is free to attend and welcomes more than 250,000 visitors through its doors on an annual basis.



The Whitworth is the first gallery in the North-West of England proudly joins the hundreds of local councils, schools, universities, libraries, and cultural institutes who have Sanctuary status, pledging to create a culture of solidarity, inclusivity, and welcome people from a forced displacement background.

Their [Sanctuary Awards](#) recognise and celebrate the organisations who go above and beyond to welcome people seeking sanctuary.

City of Sanctuary UK began in Sheffield in 2005, where they work with individuals, groups and organisations in every area and in every sector to encourage inclusivity, solidarity and compassion.

Liz Hibberd, Strategic and Partnership Lead of Manchester City of Sanctuary, said: "We've been thrilled to see the journey that the Whitworth has gone on over the past few years. They have worked tirelessly to become more and more inclusive and understanding of the needs and barriers experienced Sanctuary Seekers, and to do what they can to remove them.

"We're pleased to see so many of the Sanctuary Seekers we work with being welcomed into the space and becoming engaged and involved in the projects and events that are held in the space. It's clear to see that the Whitworth embodies the City of Sanctuary values and ethos of welcome, compassion and solidarity. Congratulations for all you've done and all you've committed to do!"

The Whitworth works in partnership with community organisations in Manchester to bring about a rich programme of exhibitions and activities for our youngest to oldest visitors to the gallery.

Afrocats is one of our regular partners who have a seasonal programme of accessible, multicultural dance, singing and craft activities available for all the family.

Magdalen Barlett, CEO and founder of Afrocats said: "In times of austerity, we need families to have access to welcoming and enriching spaces. As the cost-of-living crisis continues, the people we work with have even less opportunities to get out of their homes and experience the world. I am delighted that this partnership with the Whitworth has enabled us to raise the aspirations of the people we work with and provide opportunities for them that all too often feel out of reach".

The Whitworth's award winning Civic Engagement and Education programmes include free workshops and activities for everyone. From outdoor health and wellbeing, as part of the Natural Cultural Health Service, families activities and age friendly programmes to promoting art and education with a local schools and colleges, volunteering opportunities and more.

Fiona Cariss, Volunteering and Civic Engagement Manager at the Whitworth said: "Since before the pandemic the Whitworth has been working to create opportunities and open our doors for sanctuary seekers across the city. The Gallery of Sanctuary status is really important to us as it highlights the work, we are doing to remove barriers and thinking about the people who have been forced to leave their home, trying to reconstruct their life and what they would need to feel at home here."

Each year the Whitworth hosts over 500 activities and events relating to its exhibition and civic engagement programme and welcomes over 250,000 visitors to the gallery annually.

Fiona added: "Our work will continue to support in raising awareness, providing volunteer placements, and training for staff and learning through our partnerships to work with our collections, exhibitions, programming, and building. Collaborating with local charities and organisations such as Manchester City of Sanctuary, Afrocats, Community Arts North West, Community Arts NK and artists through our Traces of Displacement exhibition; we aim to create a place of care, consideration and community and open up our gallery and park for everyone".

Find out more about the Whitworth gallery highlights for Gallery of Sanctuary  
<https://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/about/aboutthewhitworth/galleryofsanctuary/>

Find out more about the City of Sanctuary programme: <https://cityofsanctuary.org/>

### Notes to editor

For further PRESS information, images and interview requests please contact,  
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### About the Whitworth

The Whitworth is proudly part of The University of Manchester, operating as a convening space between the University and the people of the city. It was founded in 1889 as The Whitworth Institute and Park in memory of the industrialist Sir Joseph Whitworth for "the perpetual gratification of the people of Manchester" and continues this mission today in new contexts. The gallery is home to the collection of over 60,000 works of art, textiles, and wallpaper and is driven by a mission to work with communities to use art for positive social change, and actively address what matters most in people's lives. This vision has been developed as part of an international dialogue about how to evolve and adapt museums to a constantly changing world.

[www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth)

### Gallery opening times:

Tuesday to Sunday 10am-5pm, Thursday late opening until 9pm.