

the Whitworth

PRESS RELEASE

Date: 3 June 2024

A creative, cultural celebration: Afrocats x Whitworth is back!

- Afrocats x Whitworth community engagement partnership renewed for the third year.
- 5,000 new gallery visitors since the project first launched in 2022.
- Valuable work to engage the local community with free arts and creative workshops.



After a 6-month hiatus, the award-winning partnership between Afrocats and the Whitworth returns with funding from Arts Council England.

The collaboration saw 5,000 new gallery visitors over the project's first two years. The new funding will take the partnership to the next level, making the gallery an inclusive space for not only new arrivals to the city but also emerging artists from the global majority, providing an opportunity to develop their experience and facilitation skills in Manchester's most loved gallery.

It is widely recognised that the arts and culture sector must do more around inclusion and diversity with [Arts Council England's Diversity report](#) highlighting that only 13% of the workforce have a global majority background.

The Afrocats x Whitworth partnership aims to change this.

The funding from Arts Council England will see early career artists from global majority backgrounds honing their skills alongside Afrocats' roster of diverse artists at gallery events throughout the year. Learnings from the project will be shared with other arts organisations to improve diversity across the sector.

The project kicks off in the May half-term when families will be invited to shimmy and shake their way through the gallery with family activities that are free and open to all. Visitors will try cultural dance and arts and crafts workshops that respond to the John Lyons exhibition, which is on at the Whitworth until 25 August 2024.

Magdalen, CEO of Afrocats said:

"I am delighted that Afrocats secured Arts Council England funding to continue our impactful work in collaboration with Whitworth. It will allow us to keep offering this exciting programme. But the benefits go much further.

"This project fosters impressive growth for our organisations and the facilitators we train. By working in an intergenerational setting with diverse backgrounds, these facilitators gain valuable skills to propel their careers.

"Thank you, Arts Council England, for your vital support in allowing this much-needed work to continue with communities that need access to cultural spaces."

Fiona Cariss, Volunteering and Civic Engagement Manager said:

"We are delighted to welcome Afrocats back into our gallery spaces and thanks to Arts Council England we can continue to offer our award-winning activities during school holidays for the next year.

"We have continued our work together and are proud to have achieved an award with Fantastic for Families in Audience Impact and Innovation, and our partnership has led towards the Whitworth becoming the North West's first Gallery of Sanctuary, awarded by charity City of Sanctuary.

"We are really proud of what we have built together and we hope to continue to provide a safe and creative space for all, whilst sharing and learning from our experiences."

NOTES TO EDITORS

For all press information, images and interview requests please contact: Ali Gunn, Communications and Marketing at Afrocats info@afrocats.org.uk or Melissa McFarlane, Communications Manager, the Whitworth melissa.mcfarlane@whitworth.ac.uk

About Afrocats

[Afrocats](#) is an award-winning charity that supports people facing social exclusion in Greater Manchester. Afrocats works with women and young people to build agency, aspirations, and opportunities to improve overall life chances through creative engagement.

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. Founded in 1889 for “the perpetual gratification of the people of Manchester” it continues this mission today in new contexts. The gallery, its park and gardens are home to the collection of over 60,000 works of art, textiles, sculptures and wallpapers and provides a platform for artists from around the world. The Whitworth is driven by a vision to actively seek and manifest connections between art, creativity, and their role in developing a more resilient and caring society through its exhibitions and award-winning civic engagement programme.

Gallery opening times: Tuesday to Sunday 10am-5pm, Thursday late opening until 9pm

www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth

Image credit

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Listings information

the Whitworth, The University of Manchester

Free entry

Find out more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BeWXC3kMDVo>