

The Whitworth's PLAYTIME programme scoops top prize and is named 'Best Family Arts Activity' in national awards



The Whitworth is celebrated in the Fantastic for Families 2024 awards, for their outstanding contribution to family-friendly arts and culture in 2023-24.

The award-win recognises the free summer programme at the Whitworth, which is open to families and children of all ages. PLAYTIME a series of fun, free and art-inspired activities that encourages children to get creative, with workshops, activities and events taking place across the gallery, park and gardens each August.

PLAYTIME is supported by Pentagon Play, the UK's number one school playground equipment specialist. For five years Pentagon Play have supported the Whitworth's innovative summer family programme by donating play equipment.

Fantastic Families Awards gives national recognition to teams across the country and celebrate outstanding opportunities created for families and older audiences to access creative opportunities and enhance wellbeing through arts and cultural activities.

Award-winners were selected out of over 150 applications, initially shortlisted to 26 organisations from across the United Kingdom. Each of the shortlisted projects were recognised and celebrated by the Family Arts Campaign through sharing their [Stories of Family Arts](#) engagement, ahead of the winners being announced.

PLAYTIME at the Whitworth first began in 2018 and so far has generated over 45,000 family visitors. The programme is organised by Lucy Turner, Families Producer and Fiona Carris, Volunteers and Engagement Manager at the gallery and is facilitated by Creative Practitioner Loren Hardy, alongside dedicated volunteers.

Lucy Turner said: "We know play is increasingly at risk, with children spending less and less time playing outdoors and more time on screens. The idea of PLAYTIME is to provide free access to high quality art and play opportunities throughout the summer holidays. The summer holidays can be an expensive time for families, and with the cost of living continually rising, we want to open up our free spaces and activities to be welcoming and inclusive to families with children of all ages."

The Best Family Arts Activity Award celebrates creative events and activities developed especially for families. The judges for this category were Sarah Mears, Programme Manager at Libraries Connected and Zoe Dennington, Head of Learning and Participation at the Crafts Council.

"It was really inspiring to see the range of activities in this category. We were particularly impressed by how the shortlisted organisations had involved families in the planning and development of activities and the real care and empathy they had shown in creating inclusive and accessible high-quality family arts." - Sarah Mears, Programme Manager at Libraries Connected

Fantastic For Families Awards are given by Family Arts Campaign, which is the largest national, cross-art form initiative to increase access to arts and culture for families of all ages. The Family Arts Campaign is funded by Arts Council England and is a National Portfolio Organisation within the national Let's Create strategy.

Visit <https://www.familyarts.co.uk/2024-winners/> to find out more and see the full list of Fantastic For Families Awards winners.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

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.

About Fantastic for Families

We help people across the UK discover trusted arts and cultural providers in their local area that are committed to providing Family Friendly and/or Age-Friendly events, activities or initiatives.

We want families to have confidence and trust in their local arts and cultural offerings, and to know that they will receive a warm family welcome.

You'll find art, craft, theatre, dance, music providers and a lot more in our Fantastic for Families Directory. We only list organisations that have either committed to the Family Arts Standards, Age-Friendly Standards, or both. These accredited badges are a sign of quality and reassurance of an excellent welcome for families and older people.

www.fantasticforfamilies.com

Family Arts Campaign is an Arts Council England Investment Principles Support Organisation and the largest, fully cross art form and collaborative initiative to support cultural engagement amongst families.

The Family Arts Campaign's core mission is to ensure that every child and family in the country has access to a range of high-quality creative and cultural opportunities, regardless of their social background or where they live. The Family Arts Campaign supports the cultural sector to understand and support the diverse needs of families from all backgrounds, particularly those who may not think arts and culture is "for them".

We support art galleries, museums, theatre companies, artists, heritage sites, music makers, circuses, festivals, libraries, and everything in between.

Over 1000 cultural organisations hold the Family Arts Standards accreditation, with over 500 also committing to the Age-Friendly Standards, which provide guidance on improving access for older people.

www.familyarts.co.uk