

The logo for ArtCore, featuring the word "ArtCore" in a white, stylized, handwritten-style font. The background of the entire page is a photograph of an art gallery with a wall of vertical wooden poles and white objects, overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter and decorative yellow lines.

ArtCore

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

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# About Artcore

Artcore is a charity and contemporary arts space based in Derby, UK, serving as a vital platform for artistic exploration, social dialogue, and collaboration. Founded in 1995 in India and relocated to Derby in 2009, Artcore emphasises inclusion, accessibility, and cross-cultural exchange, connecting artists, audiences, and communities locally, nationally, and internationally.

Co-founded by artists Ruchita Shaikh and Zahir Shaikh, Artcore was envisioned as a space where creativity meets community, a place where ideas can flourish and people can connect through shared experiences. Through an active programme of exhibitions, residencies, education, and community initiatives, it nurtures talent, encourages creative risk-taking, and champions diversity and participation.

Operating from two venues, the Artcore Cultural Hub on Albert Street and the Artcore Community Hub on Charnwood Street, Artcore supports artistic growth and social cohesion through projects that address relevant global and local issues. Its work continues to empower individuals and communities, fostering understanding and belonging through creativity, collaboration, and conversation. Artcore remains committed to the transformative power of art to inspire change and build bridges across cultures and generations.



# Overview

The years 2024–25 have marked a significant period of growth and renewed purpose for Artcore. I take great pride in the role Artcore plays in bringing people together through creativity, dialogue, and shared experiences. This year has reaffirmed my belief in the transformative power of art to spark curiosity, nurture well-being, and inspire new ways of thinking and being.

A defining highlight has been the remarkable range of dynamic and thought-provoking projects that have taken shape across our programmes. Disruptive Impressions; our local printmaking residency and exhibition, has championed bold creative experimentation and celebrated the incredible talent within our region. Our international residencies and partnerships, including Equilibrium and The Silence of Growing Things, have deepened global cultural exchange and opened new pathways for collaboration, reflection, and artistic growth.

We are also immensely proud to be hosting the MA Degree Show, providing a platform for emerging artists to share their ideas, innovations, and ambitions with the wider public. Alongside this, projects such as Career Compass and Number Narratives have strengthened

our commitment to supporting learning, skills development, and creative exploration for people at all stages of their artistic journeys.

As we look to the future, I remain committed to ensuring that Artcore continues to thrive as a space for creativity, inclusion, and connection, where bold artistic vision and community engagement come together to build stronger, more compassionate and imaginative communities.



ANDY BALL  
Chair Person

# The Artcore Year

Artcore has grown into a powerhouse of cultural activity across Derby and the wider region, driving creativity and shaping the city's artistic identity. My focus has been to raise Artcore's profile locally, nationally and internationally—building new partnerships, strengthening our cultural footprint and navigating the challenges faced by arts organisations today.

We expanded our relationship with Osnabrück, Derby's twin city, forming lasting links with the local authority, galleries and artists, and delivering the third year of the Building Bridges international programme. Government-funded initiatives like Maths Multiplier allowed us to use art as a creative tool to engage Derby's communities for a third successful year.

As we celebrate 30 years since Artcore's founding in Vadodara, India, and 15 years in Derby, we continue to honour our roots as an artist-led space while shaping the city's cultural landscape. Despite financial pressures, we delivered a strong year of exhibitions, workshops, residencies and festivals that supported creativity and wellbeing across diverse communities.

Highlights include Deaf Mosaic and Untold Stories, which amplified underrepresented voices, along with international residencies in Germany and India. Local programmes such as

the Festival of Togetherness and Art of Healing continued to strengthen community cohesion and mental wellbeing.

In 2025–26, Artcore will diversify its income to support its charitable mission. With the opening of the Market Hall and ongoing city-centre developments, Derby is set for greater cultural vibrancy. A series of celebratory projects will culminate in a December finale marking Artcore's 30th anniversary.

Artcore remains committed to being an inclusive, artist-led hub—building connections, empowering communities and championing creativity as a catalyst for positive change.



RUCHITA SHAIKH  
CEO

# Artistic Programme

Artcore's artistic programme for 2024–25 reaffirmed its belief in the power of art as a space for exploration, exchange, and connection. The year unfolded through residencies and exhibitions spanning continents, disciplines, and ideas, each contributing to a shared dialogue about our relationship with place, identity, and the changing world around us. Through these programmes, Artcore continued to provide artists with opportunities to experiment and engage with audiences innovatively.

## Exhibitions

At Artcore, exhibitions serve as the meeting point of our artistic and community engagement programmes, translating ideas developed through residencies and workshops into public experiences. Each exhibition becomes a space for reflection and dialogue, where local, national, and international artists share work that responds to contemporary social, cultural, and environmental themes. Throughout 2024–25, our exhibition programme aimed to deepen

public understanding of art as a tool for conversation and connection, encouraging audiences to engage not only with finished artworks but with the processes, questions, and collaborations behind them. By linking creative practice with lived experience, Artcore's exhibitions continued to strengthen our role as a platform for exchange, experimentation, and collective discovery within Derby's growing cultural landscape.

## Talks & Seminars

Artcore's public programme of talks and screenings extended its role as a space for reflection and dialogue. These events brought artists, audiences, and partners together to share ideas, deepen understanding, and celebrate creativity as a collective experience. Through conversations, professional development sessions, and film screenings, Artcore encouraged open exchange between artists at different stages of their careers and communities connected by shared stories. The year's highlights included Artists in Conversation sessions linked to key exhibitions, the Career Compass seminars for emerging creatives, and a special film screening during Refugee Week that combined art, empathy, and advocacy.

## Residencies (Local & International)

At Artcore, residencies are conceived as spaces of experimentation, reflection, and exchange- laboratories of ideas where artists can pause, question, and reimagine their practice. Each residency offers time, space, and support for creative risk-taking, encouraging artists to engage deeply with communities and respond to pressing social, cultural, and environmental themes. Selected through open calls and developed in collaboration with partners locally and internationally, these programmes foster dialogue across geographies and disciplines. The residencies in 2024–25 continued to extend Artcore’s reach and impact, offering artists the opportunity to explore new materials, methods, and contexts while connecting with diverse audiences. Beyond producing new works, these residencies catalysed relationships, ideas, and exchanges that continue to evolve, reaffirming Artcore’s belief in the power of residencies as sites of inquiry, transformation, and collective growth.



# Building Bridges

## An International Residency & Exhibition

**Participating Artists: Dr Chris Wright & Ashley Morris**

**Partner: Atelier m82, Osnabrück**

**Host: Margit Rusert**

**Supported by: Kunstraum Hase29 (Elisabeth Lumme)**

Artcore's partnership with Osnabrück, Derby's twin city, entered its third year in 2024, further strengthening cross-cultural ties through the Building Bridges residency. Beginning in Derby on 10 May, artists Dr Chris Wright and Ashley Morris developed initial concepts before travelling to Osnabrück in early June. There, they engaged with the local creative community and presented their works-in-progress during an Open Studio Day. The residency culminated in the exhibition "See Hear" at Artcore Gallery, Derby, from July 13 to August 31, 2024, showcasing completed works that celebrated the shared heritage and creative exchange between the

two cities.

Ashley Morris is a neurodivergent writer and director from the Midlands, whose work explores themes of class, poverty, and family. His films, supported by the BFI and Channel 4, have received national and international recognition, including a BAFTA Cymru win.

Dr. Chris Wright is an interdisciplinary artist and researcher working at the intersection of fine art and philosophy. Her practice spans sound, film, installation, and drawing, often exploring borders, protest, and transitional spaces across global contexts.





# Disruptive Impressions: A Local Printmaking Residency & Exhibition

## Participating Artists:

**Bernie Rutter (Derbyshire), Taiba Akhtar (Birmingham)**

**Partner: The Small Print Company**

In partnership with The Smallprint Company, Artcore organised a printmaking residency titled Disruptive Impressions. The artists, Bernie Rutter from Derbyshire and Taiba Akhtar from Birmingham, were selected through an open call. Mentored by Chris Barker of The Smallprint Company, both artists benefited from his expertise and creative input, which also shaped the residency's concluding exhibition.

Disruptive Impressions explored the urgent themes of conflict and disruption in today's world. It examined how global issues challenge our sense of security and unity, leaving individuals feeling lost, emotionally disconnected, and consumed by fear and uncertainty. These upheavals disrupt the social

fabric, fracture communities, and tear apart families.

Throughout the residency, the artists engaged with profound questions: Are we moving towards a wider global conflict? What roles can individuals and societies play in fostering peace and understanding? How do such disruptions influence our identities, our art, and our collective consciousness?

The residency culminated in an exhibition, which ran from November 29, 2024, to January 18, 2025. Through their works, the artists invited audiences to confront these complex realities, highlighting the transformative role of art in making sense of a fractured world.





# Equilibrium: Art and Everyday Life

## An International Residency & Exhibition

**Participating Artists: Anthony Shephard (UK), Eva Joy Lawrence (UK), Aditi Anerao (India), and Deparna Saha (India)**

**Curated by: Shilpa Rangnekar**

**Partner: Sandarbh, Partapur, India**

Marking Artcore's 30th anniversary, Equilibrium: Art and Everyday Life was the organisation's first international residency of 2025. Artists were selected through two separate open calls – one in the UK and one in India – to ensure a balanced exchange, resulting in the selection of Anthony Shephard and Eva Joy from the UK and Aditi Anerao and Deparna Saha from India.

The four-week residency took place in Partapur, a small peri-urban town in southern Rajasthan, where Sandarbh has been running residencies for over 20 years, engaging artists in site-specific practices rooted in local life. Situated in the Vagad region, Partapur is home to diverse communities, rich indigenous culture, and a strong tradition of collective living. The residency began with several meetings with women members of local self-help groups (SHGs), where artists and community

members collaborated to envision the projects to be developed. This process of shared dialogue and collaboration became the foundation for the works created, combining material innovation with lived experience. Alongside their work in the village, the artists were also introduced to the broader cultural context of Rajasthan through a day trip to Udaipur, where they visited fellow artist Akash Choyal's family and met with other members of the city's artistic community.

The residency concluded with an Open Day in Partapur, attended by over 1,000 people, including women SHG members, students, farmers, and townspeople, creating a vibrant platform for exchange and dialogue. Following this, the exhibition travelled to Takhman Art Centre, Udaipur, extending the conversations begun in Partapur to a broader audience.







History is like a garden. And as with any garden that you may spend time in, however long you walk its paths and explore its corners, you will never know it to its completeness. Its spaces, its edges, both contain mystery, hidden arrangements and tangled burls. The past too is a thicket where land seems to meet sky in an unending web of growth and decay, retreat, and unfolding.

Depending on who you are, or where you stand, there will always be routes, awareness and imbalances that are lost to you. You may walk the garden together, but our care will be separate, light will shine on different vistas, and we'll see shadows from a different angle to you.

But in order to imagine and nurture our future, it is necessary to try and collectively scry this garden of our past. To stare, and interrogate what we find.

I find a true link from the original site of the East India company in Calcutta to this small plot of earth, that for centuries prospects of thousands of miles of the Indian subcontinent were held to wait a day, a night, a weekend, a season. But I was greeted by a plant, an Indian date palm, its fronds and green against the barren landscape. It was significant, that years after the end of this company's colonial power, it is an Indian plant that has taken root in this land, a doorknocker, a postcard of a place that has been lost.

What we plant in our gardens is a part of our future. It is a part of our history. It is a part of our present. It is a part of our future. It is a part of our history. It is a part of our present. It is a part of our future.

THE  
PLACE  
OF  
THE  
INDIAN  
DATE  
PALM

# The Silence of Growing Things

## An International Residency & Exhibition

**Participating Artists: Freya Gabie, Arjuna Keshvani-Ham**  
**Partner: 1 Shanti Road**

Hosted at 1 Shanti Road by art historian and curator Suresh Jayaram, *The Silence of Growing Things* offered UK artists Freya Gabie and Arjuna Keshvani-Ham the chance to immerse themselves in Bengaluru's "City of Gardens" legacy. Inspired by the botanical contributions of Gustav Hermann Krumbiegel, the residency combined research, dialogue, and experimentation to explore ecology, heritage, and memory. Encounters with local artists and women's groups deepened their engagement, while studio time nurtured reflection on the interplay between art and environment. The residency concluded with new work shaped by cross-cultural exchange and a heightened appreciation of

Bengaluru's unique botanical and cultural fabric.

Freya Gabie studied sculpture at Chelsea College of Art and the Royal College of Art. Her site-responsive work often emerges from collaborations with diverse communities and has been commissioned widely, including projects along the US/Mexico border, South West Africa, and Stoke-on-Trent. Arjuna Keshvani-Ham is a multidisciplinary artist, writer and filmmaker. A graduate of Oxford and the Royal College of Art, her practice spans painting, film and text, often exploring displacement, colonial legacies, and material culture. Her work reflects on fragility, trauma, and histories of disorder.



# Deaf Mosaic Exhibition

## Participating Artist: Stephen Iliffe

Deaf Mosaic was a pioneering photography exhibition that celebrated the achievements of the Deaf community. This exhibition provided Artcore with an opportunity to showcase the creativity, perseverance, and strong sense of community that define Deaf culture, affirming that limitations do not shape it, but rather resilience and expression. Led by East Midlands photographer Stephen Iliffe, who is also Deaf, the exhibition showcased intimate portraits and stories of Deaf individuals from diverse backgrounds, demonstrating that with the proper support, Deaf people can achieve anything. Through a series of powerful images, Iliffe captured the strength, pride, and diversity of Britain's Deaf community. His work highlighted personal journeys, everyday resilience, and the importance of access and

visibility in shaping both individual and collective identities. The exhibition emphasised the role of creativity as a way of empowering, connecting, and enabling self-representation. Stephen Iliffe earned a degree in photography from Leicester's De Montfort University. His work had previously been exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery, OXO Gallery, the Kings Cross Outdoor Art Project, City Lit, and De Montfort University. It had also been featured on BBC TV and Sky TV News. Additionally, he has won four national and international photography awards and worked with Deaf communities in Barbados and Uzbekistan. Deaf Mosaic provided a vital reminder that Deaf culture is not defined by limitations but by creativity, perseverance, and a strong sense of community.





# Alignments

## MA Arts (Fine Art & Photography) Degree Show

Alignments showcased the creativity and vision of graduating students from the University of Derby's MA Arts (Fine Art & Photography) programme. Presented at Artcore Gallery, the exhibition celebrated emerging voices exploring contemporary issues through diverse media, including painting, installation, and lens-based practice.

The exhibition continued Artcore's ongoing partnership with the University of Derby and its support for early-career artists. It introduced fresh perspectives to the gallery, linking academic research with the public and encouraging the next generation of creative practitioners.



# Echoes of Nature Exhibition

## Participating Artist: Atul Mahajan (India)

Echoes of Nature showcased the work of Atul Mahajan (India), whose practice explores the intersections of art, ecology, and human experience. Through sculpture and drawing, he reflected on ecological sustainability and the delicate balance of natural systems, often using natural and recycled materials to emphasise environmental responsibility. The exhibition invited active engagement, with Mahajan's paper sculptures and drawings encouraging viewers to participate through observation

and contemplation. Supported by the Gujarat State Lalit Kala Akademi, the project highlighted humanity's interconnectedness with the natural world.

Atul Mahajan holds an MFA in Creative Sculpture from The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (2006). He is a recipient of the Bodhi Art Award (2006) and the Inlaks Indian Art Award (2007). His works have been widely exhibited in India and abroad, and are represented in private and corporate collections.



# Untold Stories Exhibition

The Untold Stories exhibition showcased works by local migrant artists Chike Uzoka, Armstrong Agoreyo, and Nazdar Ahmad, reflecting the rich cultural fabric of Derby. The project, delivered with the support of the Baring Foundation, the Derby Bosnia and Herzegovina Centre, and the Sahara Centre, engaged closely with recent immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and members of Derby's Bosnian and South Asian communities. We were also excited to welcome Caravan Arts London, led by Sarah Phillips, who brought their interactive Caravan installation to Derby city as part of the exhibition. Workshops were held at

Artcore, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Centre, and the Sahara Centre, where participants explored painting, collage, weaving, sewing, and spoken word as creative means to share experiences and build connections. Over the course of the project, 11 artists engaged more than 500 participants, fostering community cohesion, building confidence, and enhancing well-being through the arts. The exhibition was made possible through the generous support and partnership of the Baring Foundation, the Derby Bosnia and Herzegovina Centre, and the Sahara Centre.





# Talks & Seminars

In 2024–25, Artcore's programme of talks and screenings continued to foster critical reflection, professional dialogue, and cross-cultural understanding. These events provided opportunities for artists, audiences, and partners to exchange ideas and explore creativity as a shared language. The Artists in Conversation event with Dr. Chris Wright and Ashley Morris, held alongside the See Hear exhibition, reflected on international collaboration and artistic process.

During Refugee Week, the screening of *Quo Vadis, Aida?*, supported by the BFI and the Baring Foundation, invited reflection on displacement and resilience. Additional seminars under Career Compass, reflective sessions through Healing Through Creation, and discussions during Peace and Togetherness Week further extended Artcore's role as a platform for learning, empathy, and creative dialogue across disciplines and communities.





# Community Engagement

At Artcore, community engagement remains central to our mission of connecting people through creativity. In 2024–25, we continued to deliver a vibrant programme of projects that nurtured belonging, inclusion, and wellbeing across Derby's diverse communities. Our approach combines artmaking, dialogue, and collaboration, enabling participants to explore identity, share stories, and build confidence. By working with schools, charities, and grassroots groups, we create accessible opportunities for learning and self-expression. From long-term partnerships to new initiatives, each project this year reaffirmed the transformative power of creativity to bring people together and strengthen social cohesion. Throughout the year, our programmes engaged hundreds of participants- children, families, young people, and adults, fostering creativity, connection, and collective resilience.

## Community Cohesion

This year, Artcore continued to bridge cultural and generational divides through projects that celebrate shared heritage and community voice. Untold Stories, supported by the Baring Foundation, concluded after two years of workshops with refugees, asylum seekers, and members of Derby's Bosnian and South Asian communities. Delivered in partnership with the Bosnia Herzegovina Centre, the Sahahra Centre, and Caravan Arts, the project culminated in an evocative exhibition and Iftar event that celebrated more than 500 participants' personal narratives through film, sound, and visual art. Other highlights included the Derby Market Hall Mural Project, where residents co-designed mosaic and drawing installations that transformed public hoardings into a vibrant symbol of community pride, and the Derby Kids' Camp partnership, where children created artwork capturing joy, friendship, and belonging. These projects collectively strengthened Artcore's role as a connector across cultures and communities.

## Health & Wellbeing

Promoting well-being through creativity remained a key focus of our community programme. The Art of Healing workshops invited adults and young people to express themselves through seasonal crafts and identity-based projects. Led by various artists including Martin Hyde, Kathryn Borg, and Dani Bello, these sessions used collage, recycled materials, and storytelling to boost confidence and self-esteem. Our Children First Anti-Bullying Sculpture Project offered another creative space for healing and advocacy, engaging young participants in designing a collective

sculpture of plaster hand casts symbolising unity and respect. The finished work toured local schools, sparking dialogue on kindness and inclusion; enabling Artcore to continue to demonstrate how creativity can nurture emotional well-being, encourage empathy, and create safe, supportive spaces for all.

## Education & Learning

Artcore's education and learning initiatives focused on empowering young people and emerging artists through skill-building and creative exploration. The Champions 4 Change programme, supported by BBC Children in Need, engaged youth aged 8–15 in hands-on workshops exploring environmental themes and social responsibility. The project gained regional attention when it was featured on BBC East Midlands Today. Our Career Compass programme provided weekly practical workshops and professional development seminars led by artists Clare Morgan and Kathryn Borg, equipping participants with essential business and networking skills to sustain creative careers. Complementing this, Your Space My Space workshops with artist Neil Rowley explored local heritage through collaborative artmaking, inspiring participants to connect with Derby's cultural landscape. Together, these initiatives embodied Artcore's commitment to creativity as a lifelong learning tool, encouraging curiosity, skill, and confidence at every age.



# Derby Market Hall - Mural

This year, Artcore facilitated a significant public art project in anticipation of the reopening of **Market Hall Derby**.

We engaged with local communities and local artists to co-create designs for an upcoming mural. Public workshops were held in Osnabruck Square, where participants were invited to sketch

ideas and create mosaic designs directly onto the hoardings.

These inspiring community-led designs were then developed into a stunning print, which has been installed on the square, transforming the space and building excitement for the Market Hall's future.





# Art of Healing (Community)

Art of Healing continued to offer a welcoming space where creativity supports emotional well-being and social connection. The programme brought together residents, artists, and facilitators to explore mental health through collective artmaking. Sessions ranged from photography and collage to zine-making and gel printing, encouraging participants to express personal stories about identity, resilience, and empowerment. The group engaged with themes linked to International Women's Day and

the broader idea of healing through creative dialogue. Delivered weekly at the Artcore Community Hub, Art of Healing strengthened relationships within the community while nurturing confidence and self-expression. Led by a team of artists including Ismail Khokon, Neil Rowley, Martin Hyde, and Jon Legge, the project highlighted how accessible, hands-on creativity can improve wellbeing, reduce isolation, and build shared understanding across diverse groups.





# Career Compass

Career Compass offered a creative route for individuals seeking to develop confidence and transferable skills for future employment. Through a year-long series of workshops and seminars, participants explored how art can nurture personal growth, self-expression, and professional readiness. Sessions included goal-setting and vision-board making, self-reflection through portraiture, and practical skill-building in design, production, and marketing. The seminar series covered topics such as teaching, business fundamentals, time management, and branding, offering valuable insights

into self-employment and creative enterprise. Participants also gained hands-on experience through the Christmas Craft Fair, producing and selling their own work. The project concluded with a celebration on 7 April that recognised participants' achievements and coincided with Eid festivities. Facilitators contributing to the programme included Kathryn Borg, Lisa Baggott, Clare Morgan, Julia Webster, Jane Dearden, Neil Rowley, Chris Lewis-Jones, Fi Marks, and Dani Bello. Career Compass highlighted how creativity can inspire confidence and open pathways to opportunity.





# Number Narratives

Number Narratives combined creativity and numeracy to make mathematics more accessible, enjoyable, and relevant for adult learners. Designed to build confidence with numbers through hands-on artmaking, the programme blended visual arts with concepts from science, technology, engineering, and math. Participants explored geometry, pattern, and measurement through creative exercises that encouraged problem-solving, collaboration, and experimentation. Under the guidance of Jane Dearden, sessions transformed abstract numerical ideas into tangible, visually engaging artworks, helping

participants discover new ways of understanding math in everyday life. The workshops also supported learners working toward formal numeracy qualifications, offering a relaxed and supportive space for discussion and shared learning. By connecting logic and creativity, Number Narratives demonstrated how artistic exploration can strengthen both confidence and comprehension, empowering adults to approach mathematics as a practical and expressive skill while building community through collective discovery.





# Untold Stories

Untold Stories brought together Derby's diverse communities through weekly creative workshops that encouraged self-expression, storytelling, and connection. Welcoming refugees, asylum seekers, and residents, the programme provided a safe and inclusive environment where participants explored identity and belonging through painting, weaving, collage, and sculpture. Led by a team of artists including Neil Rowley, Dani Bello, Chris Lewis-Jones, Nicki Dennett, Chike, Kathryn Borg, Jon Legge, Ismail Khokon, Armstrong, and Naz, the sessions inspired dialogue and confidence through creative making. Highlights included zine-making, monoprinting, sculptural collage,

photography, and mindful origami workshops that celebrated personal narratives and cultural heritage.

Delivered in partnership with the Bosnia & Herzegovina Centre and the Sahahra Centre, and supported by the Baring Foundation, the project culminated in a major exhibition at Artcore Gallery on 21 March 2025. The show featured emotive artworks, films, and sound recordings capturing participants' journeys of resilience and hope.

Untold Stories stood as a celebration of identity and community, demonstrating how art can foster empathy and a sense of belonging across cultures.





# Art of Healing (Health)

Under Artcore's Health & Wellbeing strand, Art of Healing continued to provide a nurturing creative space for individuals to connect, reflect, and strengthen mental wellbeing through art. The programme offered regular workshops where participants explored a range of artistic processes designed to support mindfulness, focus, and self-expression. Some of the sessions led by Jane Dearden introduced participants to still life and observational drawing, ink-and-wash techniques inspired by Degas, and explorations of colour theory through the colour wheel. These sessions deepened understanding of

visual composition and encouraged appreciation of nature. Complementing these were creative blocks led by Martin Hyde, focusing on jewellery making and decoupage, and by Kathryn Borg, who guided participants through clay sculpting to enhance sensory engagement and tactile learning. Workshops with Neil Rowley continued this journey through collage and paint pouring. Art of Healing demonstrates how accessible, process-based creativity can build confidence, reduce isolation, and foster holistic wellbeing within the community





# Healing Through Creation

This year, our Healing Through Creation project has brought comfort, creativity, and connection to individuals across Derby and Derbyshire living with or recovering from cancer. Funded by the Jennifer Anne Thorpe Memorial Trust, the project offered free art material packs and taster sessions at local support groups, creating nurturing spaces for expression and reflection. Artist Kathryn Borg (Highley Crafted) led beautiful origami and concertina book workshops at the Macmillan

Information and Support Centre, Chesterfield, encouraging participants to explore emotions through mindful making. Artist Fi Marks joined the initiative with a collage workshop for the Chesterfield Prostate Cancer Support Group, using art as a tool for relaxation and self-discovery. We also delivered a "Gratitude & Growth – Collaborative Blossom Tree" activity for NHS cancer specialist nurses, a heartfelt gesture of thanks to those supporting others' healing journeys.





# Art of Healing (Children & Young People)

This year, Art of Healing (AOH) under Artcore's Education programme introduced children to creative learning through art as a means to build confidence, coordination, and collaboration. The workshops encouraged young participants to explore imagination and self-expression while developing fine motor and social skills. Led by artists Ruth Lewis-Jones, Maria Terry, Nicki Dennett, Ismail Khokon and Jane Earp, the sessions offered a variety of engaging activities. Children created stained-glass windows using

card and tissue paper, 3D animal fridge magnets, and mixed-media trees inspired by Wassily Kandinsky. They also explored Pop Art through colourful food-themed graphics inspired by Andy Warhol. Each session fostered curiosity and joy in making, promoting teamwork and creative thinking. Art of Healing – Education highlighted how artistic practice can enrich early learning, nurture imagination, and create an inclusive environment where children learn through play, colour, and collaboration.





# Champions for Change

Champions for Change ran free visual arts workshops this year for children and young people aged 8–15, funded by BBC Children in Need. The programme combined environmental learning with practical making, encouraging participants to think about conservation and their role in protecting nature. Sessions addressed themes such as deforestation, recycling, sustainability and the idea of 'heroes and villains' in the natural world. Activities included creating tile gardens, nature mobiles from found objects, mixed-media print

and sculpture, and colourful graphic work. Participants produced Planet Pledge artworks and contributed to the 'Where Will We Bee?' installation of bee sculptures made from recycled and natural materials. A seasonal project, Carbon Conscious Christmas, resulted in a life-sized junk-sculpture tree displayed at Artcore's Christmas Party. The programme welcomed a visit from BBC East Midlands and BBC Radio Derby, showcasing young people's work.









GAME RULES for  
Tiddly Winks  
America

POINTS

Point 1	10
Point 2	20
Point 3	30
Point 4	40
Point 5	50
Point 6	60
Point 7	70
Point 8	80
Point 9	90
Point 10	100

Limit each player to 10 points.

Use the following table to record your scores.

Player 1	Score
Player 2	Score
Player 3	Score
Player 4	Score

# Your Space My Space

Your Space My Space; A CANVAS project invited 10-15 year old to reimagine their environment through a programme of place-based creative workshops. Delivered at the Sahahra Centre on Arboretum Park, the project foregrounded the park's heritage as Britain's first public park and a model for New York's Central Park, using this history as a stimulus for art and enquiry. Under the guidance of our artists; participants explored drawing, model-making, photography, creative writing and small-scale sculpture to investigate how public spaces shape experience. Sessions introduced local

traditions such as Well Dressing and examined artistic approaches, most notably the figurative rhythm of L. S. Lowry, to help children translate memory and observation into visual forms. The group progressed from observational drawing to designing and producing mini sculptures and models that imagined the "perfect park." By combining heritage learning with hands-on making, Your Space My Space fostered environmental awareness, civic pride and creative confidence among young people in the community.





# Holi Celebration

The festival of colours came alive at Artcore's Holi Celebration held at the Artcore Shop and Café. The event featured a captivating performance by visual artist Chanchal Banga, whose work explored memory, ritual, and sensory experience. Using movement, sound, and materials such as turmeric and mud, his performance recalled the spirit of play and devotion central to Holi traditions. The accompanying Sufi-inspired Bollywood music created a meditative atmosphere that resonated with the audience. Holi at Artcore invited participants to experience the joy and symbolism of renewal, embodying the festival's message of unity, colour, and the triumph of light over darkness.



# Eid Celebration

Marking a time of joy and unity, Artcore's Eid Celebration welcomed community members, participants, and families to the Artcore Community Hub. The gathering coincided with the Career Compass project, reinforcing values of togetherness, generosity, and mutual respect. Guests shared a festive meal, exchanged stories, and reflected on the cultural richness of Eid through

conversation and creative exchange. The event highlighted the importance of cultural understanding and inclusivity, strengthening connections among Derby's diverse communities. Eid at Artcore celebrated shared values of gratitude, compassion, and hope, creating a space for friendship and collective celebration.



# Diwali Celebration

Artcore celebrated Diwali alongside Derby's communities, with over 200 attendees joining our open event. The evening began with a community rangoli activity, storytelling sessions, and lantern jar-making. This was followed by a beautiful lighting ceremony where everyone lit the lamps together. In one corner, people enjoyed henna, while the rhythmic beats of the dhol filled the air. Later, we were treated to live dance performances, and the highlight was when everyone joined in for a crowd-wide dance that had everyone moving. It was truly an unforgettable evening, and we're grateful to everyone who came and made it so special!





The Community Hub is located in the heart of the communities we serve and where most of our community arts engagement takes place.

**COMMITMENT TO POSITIVE CHANGE**

Artcore aims to impact people of all ages, abilities and cultural or ethnic backgrounds through creative activities.

**STRENGTH IN COMMUNITY THROUGH ART**

Known for effectively engaging diverse communities through art workshops led by professional artists.

A space for people to make new friendships, improve interpersonal skills and build confidence.

**INCLUSIVE SPACE**

Community hub located on Charnwood Street, central to Derby's diverse communities.

Over a decade of service to the local community, fostering inclusivity and creative engagement.

To book workshops please call: 01332 384 561 or visit <https://artcoreuk.com/workshop-booking>.

Artcore Gallery, Shop, Cafe and Studios form a multicultural hub central to contemporary art activities in Derby.

**ACCESSIBLE VENUE**

Hosts diverse activities including:

- Art exhibitions
- Small film screenings
- Talks, Seminars
- Dance performances
- Meetings

**CAFE**

Serves hot and cold drinks, including:

- Hot drinks
- Hot meals
- Coffee

**SHOP**

Sells a range of art supplies, including:

- Art supplies
- Books
- Posters

# Craft Fair

Our Artisan Festive Fair was organised at Artcore Cultural Hub on 29th and 30th November. It brought together a wonderful lineup of artists offering everything from personalised products to handmade ceramic ware, caricatures, stationery, paintings, prints, illustrated books, and so much more!

A huge THANK YOU to all the artists who participated, showcasing their creativity and passion, and to everyone who came along to support this festive celebration of artistry and craftsmanship.





# Halloween Workshop

Seasonal events added a playful dimension to the year's programming. The Halloween Community Workshop transformed the gallery into a space of imagination and experimentation, where families, children, and residents came together to create masks, puppets, and sculptural props inspired by

folklore and storytelling. Artists guided participants in using recycled materials and traditional craft techniques, turning an evening of festivity into a celebration of creativity and sustainability. Even the Artcore team joined in the festive spirit, dressing up in Halloween costumes and decorating the Hub.



# Christmas Celebration & Switch Off

Artcore ended the year on a high note with its Christmas Celebration and Switch Off at the Cultural Hub in Osnabrück Square. The event welcomed participants, partners, and community members for an evening of festive cheer featuring live performances by Phoebe Shaw, Nick Gregory, and Paul Johnstone. Guests enjoyed mulled wine, spiced juice, and a hearty meal before taking part in games, bingo, and raffles with handmade gifts by Derby artists. Children danced to Christmas tunes, filling the Hub with laughter and warmth. The Switch Off symbolised reflection and gratitude, bringing the community together in the true spirit of Christmas.



# Festival of Togetherness

The Festival of Togetherness once again stood at the heart of Artcore's community celebrations, transforming Osnabrück Square into a vibrant hub of colour, sound, and participation. This year's festival brought together local artists, performers, and community groups to celebrate Derby's cultural

diversity through music, movement, and collaborative artmaking. Interactive workshops, live performances, and food stalls reflected Artcore's ethos of inclusivity. The festival not only invited audiences to witness art in action but to become active participants in shaping the city's creative story.



# Osnabrück Partnership

Artcore's partnership with Osnabrück, Derby's twin city, entered its third year in 2024, further strengthening cultural and creative exchange through residencies, exhibitions, and community engagement. The collaboration continues to celebrate shared values of peace, dialogue, and togetherness.

As part of the Building Bridges Residency, artists Chris Wright and Ashley Holmes developed the exhibition See Hear at Artcore Gallery, exploring sound, film, and installation to reflect on connection, communication, and the spaces between. Alongside the exhibition, artist talks and participatory workshops invited the community to engage with the artists' creative processes, fostering dialogue across both cities.

Earlier in the year, 24 Osnabrück residents visited Artcore for a cultural afternoon featuring a decoupage activity with Martin Hyde. At the same

time, youth representatives from both Derby and Osnabrück participated in the Peace and Togetherness workshops led by Nicki Dennett.

In September, Artcore hosted Together for Peace as part of Derby Peace Week, featuring video screenings, speeches, and creative workshops, including contributions from Jason Dierker, Derby's Ambassador in Osnabrück.

Looking ahead, the partnership continues to evolve with residencies and public art collaborations planned for Osnabrück 2025, deepening this long-standing creative exchange between the twin cities.





Community Group visit from Osnabrück , Germany

# Partnership



Youth visit from Osnabrück , Germany

# Statistics

**18**

DELIVERY  
ARTISTS

**425**

WORKSHOPS

**3568**

PARTICIPANTS

**19**

WORK  
EXPERIENCE

**16**

VOLUNTEERS

**57**

ARTISTS  
SUPPORTED

**81303**

WEBSITE  
VISITORS

**928**

LINKED-IN  
SUBSCRIBERS

**15524**

YOUTUBE  
VIEWS

**5644**

FACEBOOK  
FOLLOWERS

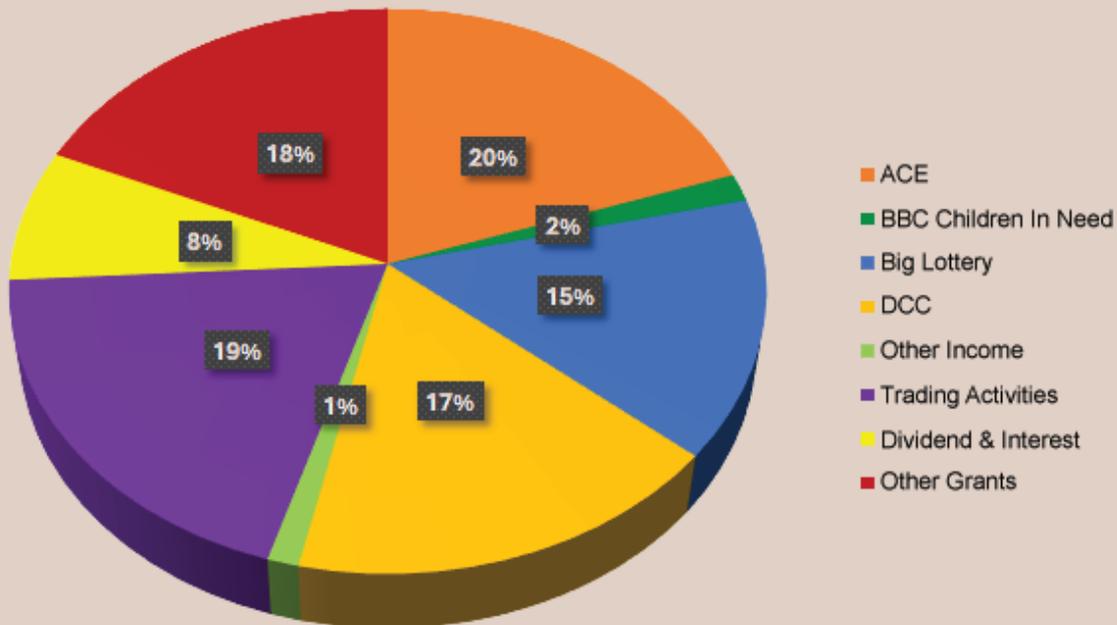
**5410**

INSTAGRAM  
FOLLOWERS

**2674**

TWITTER  
FOLLOWERS

# Financial Summary



In 2024/25, Artcore strengthened its financial position while managing rising operational costs. Continued support from Arts Council England, the National Lottery Community Fund, BBC Children in Need, and the Postcode Community Trust enhanced sustainability. Income from studios, the gallery, shop, café, and events supported growth, while volunteer contributions valued at £28,700 demonstrated strong community commitment. Artcore’s financial position remains healthy, enabling the organisation to sustain high-quality arts and community programmes across Derby and beyond.



## Income Analysis

# Future Plans

As Artcore looks to the future, our focus remains on expanding creative opportunities, strengthening international partnerships, and deepening community engagement through art.

Building on the success of our first ceramic residency and exhibition, Conversations in Clay, we are delighted to announce the forthcoming opening of Artcore's new Ceramics Studio, developed with the support of Derby City Council. Fully equipped and designed to inspire experimentation, the studio will offer classes, memberships, and open-access facilities; providing a welcoming space for artists and enthusiasts to explore the expressive potential of clay.

In addition, we are excited to announce the opening of Tikka Tales, a new Artcore food outlet located in the newly refurbished Derby Market Hall. Blending creativity and culture, Tikka Tales will

serve as a vibrant hub for community connection; celebrating flavours, stories, and shared experiences that reflect Artcore's values of inclusivity and cultural exchange.

Alongside these developments, we aim to build on the momentum of our successful exchange programmes with Osnabrück, Germany, and India by initiating new collaborations with partner organisations in other countries. These cross-cultural projects will continue to nurture dialogue, innovation, and inclusivity within our growing artistic community.

In the coming year, Artcore will further strengthen its role as a platform for creativity and connection; championing diverse voices and ensuring that art and culture remain central to building a more compassionate and imaginative society.



# Testimonials

I had samosas, they were delicious & a great value snack or lunch. Excellent coffee at a good price too. They've also got some lovely gift items, I bought a pretty pair of handmade earrings as a gift for a friend.

There are various art packs at reasonable prices that would make perfect presents for children or adults wanting to try different art techniques.

I've been attending art classes since 2014 & still taking some amazing classes led by professional artists. I started my art journey at this place and made some amazing friends. Thank you Artcore.

A really nice relaxing place to visit. Disability friendly with lifts to the upstairs gallery and a disabled WC.

Cabinets with local artists work, plenty to choose from and very affordable price range.

The staff are amazing and the food they cook is top class, always get service with a smile and I always feel to be made welcome.

When A first arrived, they kept their coat, hat, and hood up, showing no reaction. But as the session progressed, A slowly peeled away those layers and even played the guitar while we all sang. At the end, A performed again for parents and staff. The pride in their achievement was clear-it was an incredibly moving moment.

Artcore is a fabulous organisation – providing cost-effective studio space. Putting on FREE workshops and seminars, helping people new to Derby to make friends. Artists can offer their services to help 'give something back' running workshops and helping with events. Artcore's creative spaces are on Charnwood Street and the super Café/Gallery right in the middle of town on Osnabrück Square, where there's always something happening. Both are great places to just come and be yourself.

Local Artist

# Funders & Supporters



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**Derby City Council**



**BBC  
CHILDREN  
IN NEED**



**Derby Adult Learning Service**  
Learning Opportunities for Adults and Young People



**The Baring  
Foundation**

Project funded by:  
*Jennifer Anne Thorpe Trust*



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## **ARTCORE GALLERY**

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## **ARTCORE COMMUNITY HUB**

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