

FAQ for visitors

Towner Eastbourne is pleased to announce a major capital redevelopment ahead of our centenary year in 2023.

The gallery is refurbishing and remodelling the ground floor to improve the visitor experience and build visitor engagement.

What changes can I expect during my visit this winter?

In the short term, from 25 October 2021, Towner Cinema will be closed until works are completed in early Spring 2022.

Our shop will relocate to the second floor beside the cafe, with our usual full range of gifts, stationery and cards available. A perfect opportunity to shop and then relax with a coffee, especially in the run up to Christmas.

Towner's exhibition programme this Autumn continues as work progresses and is free and accessible to all.

Unfortunately, we will be unable to accommodate large school/group visits or venue hire activities during this period.

We will resume our regular Art Store tours from November (every second Sunday) and will consider private art store requests on a case by case basis.

Who are we working with to deliver this project and why are we doing it?

Working with the expertise and guidance of architects Manalo & White, Towner will create a new and open space for socialising and relaxation, browsing and shopping, with engagement and artist activities taking place for everyone.

The project will also increase Towner's ability to raise commercial income to support the charity's financial sustainability.

What changes are to come?

Our new foyer will be bright and accessible with more space for visitors to socialise, shop or take a moment to rest. Our shop will move into a dedicated, bespoke space with natural daylight to create an enhanced retail experience and our ground floor café will be opened up to become part of an extended social space leading to the cinema. Our main cafe will remain upstairs, so there will be more places to meet, drink, eat and relax across the building. This ambitious project will also increase our ability to raise commercial income to support the charity's financial sustainability.

The two large and welcoming studios spaces at the back of the ground floor will be refurbished into dynamic, well equipped spaces to be home to our Learning and Engagement programme of activities for families and community groups.

The studios will also be used for artist and maker residencies, workshops and will also be available for venue hire for corporate, community and private events, helping to raise income for the gallery.

Will Towner be accessible during these works?

Yes. We will work with the contractor to ensure Towner remains accessible throughout the works, including access to the lift. There will be some noisy works during the build period, but we will do our very best to minimise disturbance to our visitors.

Will the exhibitions continue this season?

Visit to see the first institutional exhibition in over a decade by British artist Margaret Mellis (1914-2009), one of the first and last survivors of the group of modernist artists that came together in St Ives, Cornwall, in the 1940s. The exhibition tells the story of Mellis' progression from art student at Edinburgh College of Art, honing her practice under the tutelage of Scottish Colourist Samuel Peploe and in a period of early experiment with collage combined. It also looks at her contemplative, yet playful driftwood constructions that dominated the final twenty years of her life and work, now often seen as the 'culmination' of her practice.

Towner concurrently presents a series of new works by Melissa Gordon. The presentation, *Liquid Gestures*, will be the largest institutional exhibition of work by the artist to date. Formed of a series of new paintings and installation works, it invites us to reconsider the influence of women artists whose work has been eclipsed in art historical prose. Gordon is a British and American artist based in Brussels whose practice, as a painter, writer, and organiser, is concerned with the body, gesture, and painting through the lens of feminism. *Liquid Gestures* will feature new large-scale paintings that further her examination of modern art histories, ideas of authorship, and the appropriation of certain 'gestures'.

Continuing this season are two collaborations with Mariana Castillo Deball. Deball has delved deep into the Towner Collection to discover works that have rarely been displayed and will present these alongside familiar and much-loved depictions of the Sussex landscape. She has also created a public artwork that plays out across the streets of Eastbourne, into Towner Eastbourne's gallery building, and out to the South Downs.

