

Tonic Arts Exhibitions, 2024

NHS Lothian Charity's Tonic Arts Programme curates temporary exhibitions at 8 gallery spaces across 6 NHS Lothian hospital sites; 1 at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, 2 at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, 1 at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People/Department of Clinical Neurosciences, 2 at the Western General Hospital, 1 at Astley Ainslie Hospital and 1 at St John's Hospital. NHS Lothian's hospitals are visited by hundreds of thousands of people each year and with the programme providing free and accessible exhibitions, it is one the most visited art exhibition spaces in Scotland offering emotional, cognitive and wellbeing benefits to patients and their families, staff, volunteers and visitors to NHS Lothian hospitals.

The programme showcases a diverse range of artworks which are changed approximately every 4-6 months to introduce new visual experiences and keep the environment dynamic, which is especially important for long stay or regularly visiting patients and their families as well as staff using the hospitals. Exhibitions are clearly signposted throughout the hospitals and Interpretation panels installed to give descriptions of the artworks.

The Tonic Arts Team carefully curates art displays to create environments that enhance patient and visitor experience and promote improved clinical outcomes and wellbeing by comforting, calming, and providing appropriate stimulation and respite from clinical spaces.

With the help of Impact Support Volunteers, NHS Lothian Charity gathered feedback from patients and their families, staff, volunteers and visitors to the hospital at 7 of the galleries on 5 sites throughout 2024. 112 pieces of art were on show during the evaluation, details of those exhibitions included are on the right of the page.



The art occupied the brain space that was wanting to be stressed and anxious at a very difficult time."

-Patient,
Western General Hospital

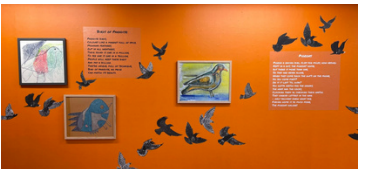
Musings at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People
Showcases risograph printed artworks that delve into landscapes created from dreams and distant memories.



By Leaves We Live at Astley Ainslie Hospital
Photography, text and essays celebrating the importance of trees, and the qualities of urban green space.



Murmurations at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital
Showcases poems by Simon Porter and mixed media artworks created by patients in Artlink workshops.



Your Place For Greenspace at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital
A series of hand-drawn illustrative artworks celebrating the history of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital site.



Portraits of a LGBTI+ Generation at Western General Hospital
The portraits showcase the diverse and remarkable lives of Scottish LGBTI+ elders through multimedia format.



Kintsugi People at the Western General Hospital
Portraits of people who have visible scars from either accidents or surgery.



What Does Art Look like at the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh
A selection of art pieces curated from the Tonic Arts Collection.



Benefits of improving the hospital environment

Why art in hospitals matters

Art in hospitals has shown to reduce anxiety and pain and shorten hospital stays: A review found increasing evidence that visual art – particularly nature imagery – can lead to shorter hospital stays, greater pain tolerance, and decreased anxiety.* In a 2011 review of evidence, art in hospitals was shown to improve perceptions of environment; promoting feelings of calm, safety, and identity. **

For staff, artwork in hospital leads to better wellbeing and workplace environment: A UK study found that 96% of clinicians and 91% of nurses believed visual arts contributed to a positive working environment – and potentially improved staff retention.***



A family viewing the art works

Staff, patients and visitors were asked to what extent they thought the artworks improved the hospital environment out of 5. (1=No improvement at all to 5 =Extremely improves it)

On AVERAGE they rated:

4

Calmer place for patients to be, doesn't make area feel clinical. Before it was bare walls."

-Staff member, Astley Ainslie Hospital

Do feel it looks less clinical and less like a hospital. I have pictures on my walls at home."

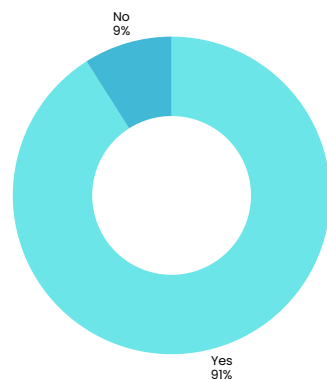
-Patient, Western General Hospital

*Arts in Health **Pub Med Central ***Paintings in Hospitals



Staff involved in installation of artworks

We asked – Have you noticed the artwork?



I get excited when I see new art put up. Would like to study art as it makes me happy."

-Staff member, Western General Hospital

Do stop and have a look occasionally especially if art work is changed."

-Staff member, Royal Edinburgh Hospital

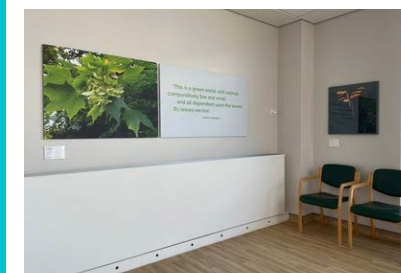
Why Tonic Arts change the exhibitions

The Tonic Arts Team changes the exhibitions in the galleries approx. every 4-6 months. This is to combat monotony as static displays can become visually tiring and lose their impact over time. By providing a new stimuli, changing artwork can offer a fresh perspective and spark conversations, which can be especially helpful for patients who may be feeling stressed or anxious.

The team rotates some of the exhibitions across different sites at different times meaning the artworks have the opportunity to be viewed by a wider audience. Additionally, the galleries provide a location for other arts programming, including performances, talks and interactive tours.



By Leaves we Live, RIE in 2022



By Leaves we Live, AAH in 2024

Benefits to patients and their families, staff, volunteers and visitors

How art makes an impact in healthcare settings

From waiting rooms to wards, surroundings have an impact on the way we think and feel. There is growing evidence to support the widely held belief that art can influence the health and wellbeing of patients and staff in healthcare settings. Art can transform stark clinical environments into compassionate care spaces filled with inspiration.* Feedback gathered in the evaluation shows how the artwork displayed in the exhibitions had an impact on the wellbeing of patients and their families, staff volunteers and visitors.

*Paintings in Hospitals key studies



By Leaves We Live Exhibition, AAH



Murmarations Exhibition , REH



Tonic Art Exhibition signage, WGH

Improves ability to relax

 **Feel it makes place more welcoming and homely, made me feel relaxed in a modern clean environment."**
-Family member,
Royal Hospital for Children and Young People

Lessens worry with distraction

 **I think they are nice, better than blank walls. Thought provoking which is needed when in hospital a lot...like me!"**
-Patient,
Western General Hospital

Improves mental health

 **Gives me hope - feel optimistic and feel good that the place values creativity. Makes corridors more interesting."**
-Patient,
Royal Edinburgh Hospital

 **I think it makes me feel hopeful when coming to work - especially in the winter - makes its feel much brighter - less drab. Improves my mood before work."**
-Staff member,
Royal Edinburgh Hospital

 **Gives you something to look at, the woodland picture is the colour of nature and healing. I find the greens very calming."**
-Volunteer,
Astley Ainslie Hospital

 **I was in here every day for a while and the picture took my mind off problems."**
-Patient,
Royal Hospital Children and Young People

 **I like them - bright and colourful - makes me feel happier and brighter when I am worried being here."**
-Patient,
Royal Infirmary Edinburgh

 **We take them for granted. If they weren't here we would miss them. Very positive impact on my mental health."**
-Staff member,
Royal Edinburgh Hospital

Benefits of tailoring exhibitions to hospital sites

How Tonic Arts chooses what art to exhibit

The programme uses a participatory approach when developing exhibitions to ensure that patient and staff voices are heard and represented in the exhibitions, building confidence and self-esteem as well as providing valuable and relatable insights. This approach ensures the artwork is person-centered, directly incorporating the preferences of the people viewing the art.

These 3 exhibitions were chosen to reflect places or people, the feedback shows patients and their families and staff gained knowledge and insight from viewing the art on these specific sites.

Your place for Green Space, Royal Edinburgh Hospital – Increased feeling of belonging.



I come in here to meet very vulnerable people not having a great time. Important for patients to feel they are part of community.”
–Staff Member

I love looking at them – gives an insight into how hard it would have been for staff and patients.”
–Staff Member

Kintsugi People, Western General Hospital – Increased understanding of a medical condition.



Kintsugi shows the beauty of people’s imperfections – relates to mindset of Physios – I am a Physiotherapist. “
–Staff Member

I love the Kintsugi portraits – makes me think about the patient’s journey and what they feel now about their scars.”
–Staff Member

I especially love the Kintsugi people. I have had a few operations myself and this shows about values and how it affects people.”
–Patient

I think this exhibition is of benefit as it gives me an insight into what people go through.”
–Staff Member

Portraits of LGBTI+ Generation, Western General Hospital – Increased visibility of diversity.



Photographer capturing image of portrait participants

Love that they bring up inclusivity into hospitals especially as it’s Gay Pride month.”
–Family member

Think its very good especially for patients who may have had surgery – good to see what they think. Showing impartiality and inclusiveness to LGBTQI+ community too.”
–Staff Member

Learn more about art in NHS Lothian hospitals?

Go to [NHS Lothian Charity: Tonic Arts website](https://www.nhs.uk/lothian-charity/tonic-arts/) to find out what art are currently being exhibited across the Tonic Arts Exhibitions, past exhibitions and other art projects across NHS Lothian sites.

Compiled by Rebecca Caulfield, Evaluation Manager, NHS Lothian Charity