



Happy 25th Birthday East Anglia Art Fund!

In 2016 the East Anglia Art Fund celebrates 25 years of supporting first-rate exhibitions and art education programmes at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery.

The East Anglia Art Fund evolved out of the *Tate in the East Project* – a proposal initiated in East Anglia in the hope of establishing in Norwich an outpost of the Tate following the then recent development of the Tate St Ives and Tate Liverpool galleries. This idea was first discussed early in 1989 at an open meeting at the Maid's Head Hotel, convened by Sir Timothy Colman, (currently President of EAAF), and attended by Tate Director, Nicholas Serota. The initiative met with an enthusiastic response across the city and the county of Norfolk, galvanising a committed group of supporters around the ambition to establish a high-quality exhibition venue. Merlin Waterson kindly agreed to head a small group to move the project forward and various empty buildings and brown field sites were considered for the location of a stand-alone Tate in Norwich.

The following year the Tate in East Anglia Foundation was formally registered as a charity. Although there was confidence in the ability to raise the necessary capital, there were serious doubts as to whether the number of visitors to such a new gallery would provide sufficient income to maintain its running costs. For these reasons the stand-alone Tate Gallery in Norwich was never built. Instead, the determination to provide exhibition space and exhibitions of national and international standard found its focus in Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery whilst a hugely successful long-term partnership with Tate was established.

During the 1990s Tate sent regular exhibitions to Norwich Castle, or lent on a large-scale to exhibitions generated from within the Castle. This partnership is still active today. In the last twenty five years the East Anglia Art Fund has supported over 60 exhibitions at the Castle including: *Stanley Spencer* 1991, *The Painted Nude* 1993, *Writing on the Wall* 1994, *Surrealism: The Untamed Eye* 1999, *Sea Sun Light: Modern Art and St Ives* 2003, *Cornelia Parker: Installations* 2005, *The Wonder of Birds* 2014 and *Homage to Manet* 2015. EAAF members are privileged to enjoy access to the Members Rooms at both Tate Britain and Tate Modern.

In 1993 EAAF was the recipient of a magnificent bequest of eighteen marvellous modern and contemporary paintings and sculptures from the collection of Jane, Lady Adeane. These works are displayed and stored at Norwich Castle, and sometimes lent to other venues.

Tate in East Anglia changed its name to the East Anglia Art Foundation in 1998, evolving by 2004 to become the East Anglia Art Fund (EAAF). Merlin Waterson was the first Chair of Trustees, followed in 1994 by Richard Jewson. These founding Trustees - Sir Timothy Colman, Richard Jewson and Merlin Waterson - continue their work for EAAF today. Liz McGuire was appointed first Development Director of the Fund in 1998, Nicola Ovenden followed as Director from 2000 and was in turn succeeded by Charlotte Crawley in 2004. The eleven years of Charlotte Crawley's

leadership saw a substantial expansion in EAAF's exhibition and education activities, plus a great rise in the Fund's membership & profile. Amanda Geitner joined EAAF as Director in 2015, working alongside

Angela Dunn, the immensely dedicated Administrator to the Fund since 2002. EAAF is governed by a Board of Trustees and guided by an Executive Committee who meet twice a year, under the wise counsel of Nichola Johnson. In 2005 EAAF Trustee Nick Lyons established a special Board of Patrons, who have provided most valuable financial support. These generous art enthusiasts enjoy a bespoke event each year in London or Norfolk.

From the start EAAF pledged to back exhibitions through raising sponsorship money from local businesses and the annual subscriptions of its members: membership began in 1998 and from modest beginnings has grown to over 500 loyal members. Our members and sponsors are invited to the Private Views for the opening of Norwich Castle art exhibitions and these lively parties have become highlights of the Norfolk social scene! For our members we also arrange a variety of talks, lunches, exhibition and studio visits with artists and curators, placing EAAF supporters at the heart of the visual arts in the Eastern region.

Since the first Tate loan show - *Stanley Spencer Paintings* in 1991, EAAF has always worked closely with Castle colleagues, in particular Dr Andrew Moore, Keeper of Art until 2011, who saw EAAF as an ally and a catalyst for raising standards. Andrew's successor, Dr Francesca Vanke, and her team in the Castle Art Department, continue this productive professional relationship.

Whilst EAAF's energies have traditionally been focussed on exhibitions at Norwich Castle, the Fund frequently gives small sums to exhibitions elsewhere across Norfolk and Suffolk, especially those featuring the work of local, living artists. EAAF has in the past helped Norwich Castle to buy a couple of important paintings, and in 1999 EAAF raised £405,000 to kick-start a substantial Heritage Lottery Fund bid which enabled a major refurbishment scheme at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery backed by Norwich City Council with added support from Norfolk County and a number of District Councils. Key to this ambitious project was the creation of two top-quality, spacious exhibition galleries, all part of the £11million grant which transformed Norwich Castle for the new millennium. In 2003 together with the Friends of the Norwich Museums and the Costume & Textile Association for Norfolk Museums, EAAF supported the renovation and refurbishment of the Benefactors' Room at the Norwich Castle. More recently, in 2012 EAAF members contributed over £18,000 to the much needed and acclaimed refurbishment of the Colman Norwich School Art Galleries at Norwich Castle.

Major benefactors to the East Anglia Art Fund have included the Norwich Town Close Estate Charity and the John Jarrold Trust. In addition, the Fund has received consistent support from a number of corporate sponsors, notably Brown & Co, Birketts, City College Norwich, Country & Eastern, Grant Thornton, Jarrolds & Sons, John Lewis, Kettle Foods, Lovewell Blake and Mills & Reeve. Archant have given significant encouragement through the work of Ian Collins and his excellent coverage of EAAF's activities and the exhibitions which have been staged with its support. Dick Williams, regional director of National Westminster and a highly-effective Trustee for

EAAF, was an important early supporter, providing sponsorship for exhibitions and working towards the funding of the Norwich Castle improvements.

EAAF's support for local artists includes a highly successful series of Open Art Shows at Norwich Castle which over the years have attracted more than 2,000 submissions. The final open shows are selected by an invited panel of artists and curators, and the commission on the sale of works from these exhibitions helps to support further exhibitions. Some solo survey exhibitions of living artists have also generated funds from picture sales for the wider exhibition programme.

Running in parallel to EAAF's endeavours for exhibition sponsorship are its key educational programmes. These range from Art Master Classes for A-Level students which have run since 2003 to the most recent initiative, ST*ART Saturday art courses for 8 to 12 year olds. All these vital educational activities take place at Norwich Castle and aim to bring young people, artists and art works together, ensuring students have access to the best in art and exhibitions right here, where they live. Our support for these opportunities extends beyond the appointment of artist tutors to the provision of transport to and from schools. And on occasions, EAAF pays for a supply teacher to make sure that the students' art teacher can be released!

The East Anglia Art Fund continues to attract major gifts. We are delighted to announce that from Autumn 2016, a generous bequest from Suffolk-based artists Fred Dubery and Joanne Brogden will provide for an enlightened programme of scholarships for students of Fine Art and Fashion Design at the Norwich University for the Arts.

Today, the East Anglia Art Fund is flourishing with a growing dedication to enriching cultural life in our region by supporting the best in exhibitions and art education. Our commitment to projects at Norwich Castle remains key to our role and represents a thriving partnership that was core to the creation of EAAF. Alongside our work to support the Castle, we seek to fund exhibitions and education opportunities elsewhere in Norfolk and Suffolk, ensuring that we play a central role in providing great art for our region.

Our birthday is marked with the launch of a new leaflet and an updated website on which you can see we are now fully (digitally) social – engaging with our members and community on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook – ensuring that we remain a key participant in the visual arts in the region and that all our members, long-term and new, can keep in touch with us in the way that suits them best.

The East Anglia Art Fund is stepping in to the future with great commitment, energy and enthusiasm. Our party at the Castle Keep on Friday 29 April will celebrate the achievements of our past and raise a glass to the exciting plans for the future!