

Press Release
1 November 2024

William Morris Gallery announces 75th anniversary programme for 2025



In 2025, William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow will celebrate the 75th anniversary since its opening. To mark this milestone, the Gallery will present two major exhibitions *Morris Mania* and *Women in Print: 150 Years of Liberty Textile Designs*; the first rehang of its permanent collection displays in over ten years; and a series of talks and events in institutions held around the UK.

Opening in April 2025, *Morris Mania* will be a major exhibition illustrating the extraordinary versatility and enduring prevalence of Morris's work in popular British culture. In the lead-up to the exhibition, the Gallery is launching a [national appeal](#) inviting the public to donate and lend their own Morris-patterned objects to go on display. Donated objects from the public's homes will join a diverse selection of works from the William Morris Gallery collection and other national institutions, including a 'Rose' patterned seat from the 1980s British Nuclear Submarine Fleet, Willow pattern Nike trainers, and couture fashion inspired by Morris's designs. Presented together within an eclectic installation, the exhibition will reflect on Morris's cultural significance as well as asking questions around methods of production and environmental sustainability. A newly commissioned film by Natalie Cubides-Brady will be presented for the first time within the exhibition, splicing together clips of Morris's patterns in TV and cinema, from *Gogglebox* and *University Challenge*, to *My Fair Lady* and *Paddington*, to uncover the genealogy of Morris's designs on screen.

In October 2025, William Morris Gallery will present *Women in Print: 150 Years of Liberty Textile Designs*. Curated in collaboration with Liberty to celebrate the design house's 150th anniversary, this major exhibition honours the exceptional contributions of women textile designers over the past 150 years, as seen through the history of Liberty fabrics. Beginning with May Morris and the role of women designers in the Arts and Crafts movement, the exhibition traces the evolving influence of women in textiles, showcasing works by iconic designers such

as Jessie M. King, Lucienne Day, and Althea McNish, whose designs have played a crucial role in shaping Liberty's renowned prints and continue to inspire new fashionable creations.

For the first time since its 2012 major capital project, William Morris Gallery will stage a rehang of its permanent collections, with the first phase of this project taking place throughout the anniversary year. The new rehang will revitalise the Gallery, creating more welcoming and accessible spaces while renewing each of the permanent displays. New themes will be introduced, such as the role of women artists and designers in the Arts and Crafts Movement, the influence of Islamic Art on the designs of William Morris, and how his legacy continues to influence today's world. The rehang will begin in early 2025, starting with the Gallery's ground floor spaces, alongside essential works to the building to improve its environmental performance. These vital improvements, funded by Waltham Forest Council and Art Council England's Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND), will include enhancements to insulation, heating and ventilation systems.

To celebrate 75 years of William Morris Gallery, a series of talks and events will take place over the course of 2025. The first event will be staged at the V&A on Friday 7 February. Introduced by the V&A's Director Tristram Hunt, the talk will see Rowan Bain and Qaisra Khan, curators of *William Morris and Art from the Islamic World*, in conversation with the V&A's Curator of Nineteenth-Century Furniture, Max Donnelly. Additional events will be announced in the new year.

To help lead it through its anniversary year, the William Morris Gallery Trust – a new charity set up in 2024 to act as a source of advice and support for the Gallery - is looking for new trustees who can bring knowledge, skills and energy to help the Gallery continue to grow and thrive. Trustees play a pivotal role in shaping the future of William Morris Gallery by offering strategic insight and advice on collections, exhibitions, programmes, commercial and fundraising activities whilst also advocating for the Gallery. Deadlines close on 9 December 2024, [application details here](#).

'We're extremely proud to announce the Gallery's programme for next year, a hugely significant year that marks our 75th anniversary. As well as two landmark exhibitions and a major rehang of the permanent collection, we continue to widen the reach of Morris's ideas, principles and play an active role in our local community.'

- Hadrian Garrard, Director, William Morris Gallery

"Waltham Forest Council takes great pride in the legacy of William Morris Gallery and its ongoing role as a cultural and artistic cornerstone for our communities. We're excited to mark the Gallery's 75th anniversary with this inspiring programme planned for 2025."

- Cllr Rosalind Dore, Cabinet Portfolio Lead for Libraries, Culture and Sports and Leisure, Waltham Forest Council

For press information and images please contact:

Kitty Malton
kitty@sam-talbot.com
+447514 803 577

NOTES TO EDITORS

EXHIBITION INFORMATION

William Morris & Art from The Islamic World

9 November 2024 - 9 March 2025

Morris Mania

12 April - 22 September 2025. [Read more](#) about the appeal for donations.

Women in Print: A Century of Textile Design

18 October 2025 - 21 June 2026. In collaboration with Liberty.

Gallery opening hours are Tuesday to Sunday, 10am – 5pm; Admission free (suggested £5 donation).

Images

Left: Nike Trainers, Willow design. © William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest
Right: William Morris Gallery. Photo: Daniele Audino

About William Morris Gallery

Owned and run by Waltham Forest Council, the William Morris Gallery is the only public gallery devoted to William Morris: designer, craftsman and radical socialist. Housed in the Grade II* listed building that was Morris's family home from 1848 to 1856, it displays the world's largest collection of his work. In recent years the Gallery has developed an ambitious programme of contemporary and historical exhibitions by artists including Jeremy Deller, Yinka Shonibare CBE, Althea McNish and May Morris. Other special exhibitions have explored 20th-century political posters, African textiles and the Japanese folk craft movement.

William Morris Gallery
Forest Road London
E17 4PP
www.wmgallery.org.uk



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