



CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS / ENRICHING LIVES THROUGH THE ARTS

In 2018 The Arts Society celebrates a milestone in the organisation's history; its golden anniversary. The Society will mark its fiftieth year with a series of events that embrace one overriding theme; enriching lives through the arts.

This ethos dates back to the very beginning of the organisation, when in the 1960s, a group of forward thinking young women, eager to be educated about the arts, set up the first Society. The Arts Society approaches its fiftieth year with the same spirit of these early pioneers, with the ambition of opening up enjoyment of the arts to all.

The Arts Society is perhaps most recognised for its little black book of nearly 400 outstanding accredited lecturers who speak on whole host of topics relating to the arts. Over the last 50 years, however, the activities of the local Societies have grown to encompass grant giving, volunteering in historic houses, museums, galleries, archives and gardens, making comprehensive records of the country's churches and organising arts projects for the youngest, oldest and most vulnerable in their communities – making significant impact at a local level.

This much beloved organisation, now with a membership of over 90,000 across 385 local Societies in the UK and overseas, has become part of the very fabric of the UK, playing a major role in keeping our arts and heritage alive for future generations.

Loyd Grossman, President of The Arts Society, comments:

“The Arts Society is both extraordinary and indispensable – not only for its work in arts and heritage education and conservation – but also for the sense of happiness and well-being it has brought to so many over the past fifty years.

Over five decades, its members have quietly contributed their time (through volunteering) and funds (through grant giving), to ensure the upkeep and safeguarding of our country's most treasured arts and heritage – for which we owe them a huge amount of appreciation.”

During 2018, the organisation, which until May 2017 was known as the National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS), will acknowledge and celebrate its first fifty years as NADFAS, whilst looking ahead to the next chapter as The Arts Society.

- The anniversary year kicks off with a major exhibition *Rhythm & Reaction; The Age of Jazz in Britain* at Two Temple Place, a magnificent Neo-Gothic mansion on London's Victoria Embankment, from 27 January – 22 April 2017. Produced in partnership with The Bulldog Trust, the exhibition marks 100 years since jazz reached Britain and brings together painting, prints, cartoons, textiles and ceramics, moving film, instruments and the all-important jazz sound to explicitly examine the influence of jazz on British art, design and wider society.

Other activities and initiatives will include;

- A major new international Arts Award, which will be announced in May.
- A series of lectures in Newcastle-Gateshead to coincide with the Great Exhibition of the North in the summer.
- A Symposium on the theme of Intergenerational Arts at the Wellcome Collection on 29 November 2018.
- A new grants scheme that will be launched in the autumn, which will award an extra £50,000 during the jubilee year.
- A highlight of the anniversary year will be the celebration of the arts at Westminster Abbey on 16 May 2018. The commemorative service will be attended by 2000 guests, comprised of members of the public, members of The Arts Society and leading figures from the arts world. It will be an opportunity for the Society to thank members and volunteers who are at the heart of the organisation. “*It will be a day we say ‘this is who we are and why the arts matter more than ever’*,” says Chief Executive, Florian Schweizer.
- Over the course of the jubilee year, the Society's Chief Executive has committed to complete fifty ten-kilometre runs, which will highlight the Society's activities taking place at grass roots level and raise money for its charitable projects. His itinerary will cover locations around the UK and abroad to reflect the diverse communities and landscapes local Societies operate in, as well as the artistic and heritage connections in these areas. Along the way he will take in important sites such as Shakespeare's Birthplace, the Angel of the North, the potteries in Stoke-on-Trent, The Scallop in Aldeburgh, Conwy Castle, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and The Rock of Gibraltar. The first run will take place on 25 January 2018 from Chalfont St Peter to Chenies Manor House.
- Local Societies will also be holding their own celebratory events; in the spring many will take part in *ArtsFest* – a rare opportunity for the Society's members to show off

their artistic talents, and over the weekend of 22-23 September 2018, Societies will partner with museums, galleries and heritage sites across the UK and abroad to offer unique events for members of the public. These events will highlight the treasures in their collections, as well as The Arts Society's volunteers and the wonderful work they do.

Further details about events taking place throughout the anniversary year can be found at www.theartsociety.org

For details about *Rhythm & Reaction; The Age of Jazz in Britain* at Two Temple Place please visit www.twotempleplace.org

Tickets for the Westminster Abbey event will soon be available to book from www.westminster-abbey.org

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EDITORS' NOTES:

The Arts Society is a leading arts education charity with a global network of 385 local Societies, which bring people together through a shared curiosity for the arts. Our events provide welcoming places – locally, nationally and globally – for everyone to hear expert lecturers share their specialist knowledge about the arts.

With 90,000+ members who contribute to and preserve our artistic heritage through volunteering and grants, The Arts Society works to create a better, healthier and more connected society. www.theartsociety.org

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