



## Museum & Art Swindon celebrates its first birthday

'Amazing', 'cool', 'epic', 'awesome' and, perhaps best of all, 'a treat for the soul'.

Just a handful of the colourful descriptions from the thousands of people who have visited Museum & Art Swindon over the past 12 months.

Today (9 July) the museum celebrates its first birthday following its move to the Civic Offices from Apsley House in Bath Road, Old Town, and a quick flick through the museum's visitor book shows it has definitely hit the mark for art and culture enthusiasts alike.

"I love the paintings," nine-year-old Isabelle wrote. "It's really interesting. I'm having fun."

Meanwhile, Annie wrote: "I enjoyed crafting, dressing up and seeing the croc."

Another visitor added: "Amazing, epic, awesome, wonderful. I would come again. I shall tell people about this place. Wonderful paintings!"

And there have been plenty of thank you messages from those who have enjoyed the various exhibitions over the last year.

"A wonderful collection," said one happy art fan. "Fab mix of pots and paintings, many of which we wish we could take home! A real treat for the soul – thanks so much."

Other comments include: "I have fallen in love with this place. Amazing!" and "Cool museum – wish there were more dinosaurs!"

In its location in Euclid Street, Museum & Art Swindon has an expanded exhibition space (up to 40 per cent more than before), new accessibility features, areas for museum staff to undertake research for the Council's collection and dedicated space for school visits.

Since opening on 9 July 2024, the free museum has:

- seen thousands of guests through its doors
- displayed 26 exhibitions
- received a new Stegosaur fossil
- hosted schools in dedicated events
- put on 131 events with museum staff
- reintroduced the Swindon Gharial to residents

Andrew Cross, Chair of Friends of Museum and Art Swindon, said: “So we reach the end of the first year of Museum and Art Swindon in its new location in Euclid Street, all made possible by Swindon Borough Council’s significant effort to repurpose the council offices.

“Throughout the year the spaces have been filled with vibrant and inspiring exhibitions. The first year finishes on a high with the ‘A Very British Art Revolution’ and the ‘Seriously....’ exhibitions, both drawing from the Swindon collection and ‘Meet the Romans’, a wonderful exhibition showcasing Roman history in our own region.

“The Friends are pleased to give continuing support to Museum and Art Swindon to exhibit the collections and to promote art and local history through the outreach programmes. We wish Museum and Art Swindon our best hopes and wishes for its future development.”

Councillor Marina Strinkovsky, Swindon Borough Council’s Cabinet Member for Placemaking and Planning, said: “Museum & Art Swindon is such a wonderful thing for all of us, residents and visitors to Swindon.

“For the first time we have historical galleries that tell the story of our town from its primordial origins, which is amazing in its own right – but then the new galleries also give us the opportunity to show off our incredible collection of contemporary British art (the best in the country in my opinion).

“The first year of operation is just the start. The team have been working hard to produce new exhibitions and events to make sure we make the most of this brilliant building and everything in it.

“If you haven’t already visited, first of all why not? Second, now’s the perfect time – the gharial is back, a whole tranche of new exhibitions is in preparation, and lots of summer activities are being planned.”

Anyone who wants to find out more about Museum & Art Swindon can visit the website for further information: [www.museumartswindon.com](http://www.museumartswindon.com)

ENDS

**Notes to Editors:**

**Picture 1 (left to right):** Anna Czarnecka, Visitor Experience Assistant with Frances Yeo, Swindon Museums Manager, next to the ‘Swindon Croc’

**Picture 2:** John Wood, Collections & Exhibitions Manager, delivering a talk on careers in museums and galleries to Year 10 and Year 12 students from Dorcan Academy, New College, Cirencester College, Royal Wootton Bassett Academy and Ridgeway School

**Picture 3:** Elaine Arthurs, Collections and Exhibitions Officer, preparing for the museum’s new exhibition ‘Recording Conflict’ which will feature pictures from artist Leslie Cole

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