

Exhibition Report October 2026

As always the run up to the exhibition was a roller coaster ride of 'will we have enough entrants?!' to 'Oh my goodness, where are we going to put them all!'. Our members did us proud once again with 99 hanging works, 14 3D works and a shop bulging with beautiful things. We had an excellent hanging crew captained once again by Dennis Harper. We have so much to do in a short space of time and never was 'many hands make light work' more truly said. My sincere thanks go out to all those who gave their time to help. We were comfortably ready for the arrival of our judge, Martyn Harris who spent a difficult hour agonising over his choices. The first visitors were sneaking in by midday, an hour before the official opening and the first painting sold shortly afterwards.

I am grateful the weather was merciful after some worrying forecasts that fortunately did not come to pass. A cheeky cold wind on the Friday caused the market to close early and people to scurry home. However, Saturday and Sunday made up for that. Footfall was excellent, with 1244 visitors recorded and some 1100 votes cast for the Peoples Choice award. Kerry Telford's portrait of Cliff caused a stir in the market community, most of whom came in for a look. Sales were also good with 15 exhibition works sold and brisk business from the shop. Claire Turner's beautiful hand painted silk scarves were particularly popular. In total we took £2225 over the 5 days. At the time of writing, we have also gained five new members.

In a change to previous years, our award ceremony was held on Saturday afternoon with our guest the lovely Kate Gomez from Lichfield Lore presenting the awards. It was wonderful to see so many people filling the gallery. My thanks to Tony B for looking after the refreshments and to all who came to support our winners. Best in show was won by Daniela Sommer-Owsianny with her striking painting 'At the Cross Roads'. All the award winning works are to be posted on our website shortly so please do take a look if you didn't make it to the exhibition.

Nikki Burns' cheeky donkey won over visitors hearts and took the People's Choice award. 'Hay There' was ultimately sold to a lovely couple who are taking it home to Berlin! Honourable mention goes to Neil Rogers who wowed the visitors with his portraits and fatally split his own vote. However, it is notable that votes were very much spread across all the artworks, demonstrating once again that people connect with art for all sorts of different and personal reasons.

After our short five days, our stalwart volunteers took down the exhibition at lightening speed. Liz Thomas, whom I couldn't manage without, kept track of the chaos of art collection and once again we must thank Angela Nicholls and Alex for the use of his van to return all our equipment to storage. Finally I must thank my long suffering husband who taxi drove, helped shift equipment and provided me with food.

The next exhibition will be at the Guildhall once again from the 14th - 18th May 2027.

Sasha Lauer
Exhibition Organiser