METROPOLITAN
ARTS CENTRE

IMPACT REPORT 2025/26

A year of creativity, connection and public value in Belfast.



With thanks to our funders:

PRINCIPAL FUNDER

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

arts council of Northern Ireland

Belfast City Council

themaclive.com

A year of reach, participation and opportunity



249,209
building visits, up **23.9%** year on year

23,704
uses of the free Playroom

148
freelance artists and educators engaged

50
volunteers contributing **1,459** hours

80+
artists given in-kind development space

113
staff

27%
of our staff, trustees and volunteers identify as disabled

ART, LEARNING AND COMMUNITY

51,050
ticketed attendees across **451** performances

29,459
visitors to our free galleries across **7** major exhibitions

180
creative learning workshops and events

2,109
creative learning participants

Belfast's open cultural home.
Free galleries, two theatres, everyday civic space, artist development and creative activity across the city.

Confidence. Connection. Belonging.

98%
reported increased confidence after creative learning workshops

97%
felt more socially connected after taking part

REAL STORIES, MADE WITH COMMUNITIES

Still we weave

Working with Extern, 15 young people drew on their lived experiences of trauma, violence and mental health to co-write and perform a powerful theatre production, bringing their voices and stories to the stage.

Testimony of being human

Working with The Rainbow Project, refugees shared personal experiences of discrimination and displacement through poetry and prose, reclaiming their voices in a published collection launched on World Human Rights Day.





"Do not underestimate what it means to get a working-class child from West Belfast into the MAC and feel they belong."

New Visions education project

For children, families and schools



23,704
free Playroom uses in 2025/26

1,354
pupils supported to attend the Christmas show through Passport to the MAC transport subsidies

375
students through **15** Schools in Residence visits

NEW VISIONS

Across six partner schools, Artist Teachers developed new approaches to art education. Schools in Residence introduced students to creative learning in the galleries.



CHILDREN'S ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Rachel Fitzpatrick creates free workshops and imaginative activities for children and families, alongside resources to enjoy in our free Playroom throughout the year.

Artists, volunteering and pathways to employment

148
freelance artists and educators

80+
artists given in-kind space

50
volunteers

1,459
volunteer hours

PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT

The MAC creates routes into employment for people facing barriers to work, including people with learning disabilities, mental health conditions, refugees and young people. Through tailored placements, volunteering, mentoring and paid opportunities, participants build confidence, develop practical skills and take meaningful steps towards employment.



Aoife came through our 16-18 pilot

> "I felt more and more confident in myself and eventually transitioned to being a casual worker."
> Former volunteer, referred by Action Mental Health



Rooted in Belfast. Open to everyone.

89%
of surveyed attenders felt welcome and included

90%
said the MAC was important to the local community

WHERE BOOKERS COME FROM

34%
Belfast

52%
Rest of Northern Ireland

5%
Outside Northern Ireland

REACHING AREAS FACING DEPRIVATION

27%
live in some of Belfast's most deprived areas.*

15%
live in some of Northern Ireland's most deprived areas.*

Making culture part of everyday life.
Through live performance, exhibitions, family events and free creative spaces, the MAC creates opportunities for people to connect, discover culture and participate in the creative life of the city.

*Based on deprivation deciles 1–3 (the 30% most deprived areas), using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017.

Small changes. Big impact.

40kW
solar PV installation completed in 2025/26

~27t
estimated annual CO2 savings from solar

~£33k
estimated annual energy-cost savings

62% of surveyed attenders agreed the MAC demonstrates a clear commitment to environmental responsibility.

SILVER

Green Tourism award achieved in 2025



LOWER-IMPACT OPERATIONS

Energy monitoring, efficiency measures, new heat pumps and building management systems support more responsible energy use. Recycling with RiverRidge and participation in Belfast's reusable cup scheme are part of the approach to reducing waste and resource use.

CLIMATE IN THE GALLERIES

The Climate in Action programme explored our relationships with nature and environmental responsibility. Exhibitions by Aisling O'Beirn, Marie Hanlon and Rhona Clarke, William McKeown and Niamh Seana Meehan offered new perspectives on the climate crisis.

THE MAC CONTRIBUTES TO THE CITY

Culture at the heart of Belfast's economy

£2.43m

Gross Value Added (GVA). A measure of the economic value the MAC generates, reflecting its contribution to the wider economy.

38%

of surveyed attenders went somewhere locally for food or drink

64%

had food or drink at the MAC during their visit

32%

year-on-year growth in corporate venue hire

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE IMPACT

The MAC's impact is made possible by the people who bring the building to life. Their creativity, expertise and commitment underpin our artistic programme, community work and contribution to Belfast.



INVESTING IN CREATIVE TALENT

The MAC supports creative livelihoods through commissions, paid artistic work, residencies, professional development and free space for artists to develop new work.

CONTRIBUTING TO CITY LIFE

Through live performances, exhibitions, festivals, conferences and private events, the MAC attracts visitors to Belfast, supporting local businesses and the wider visitor economy.

To find out more contact:
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