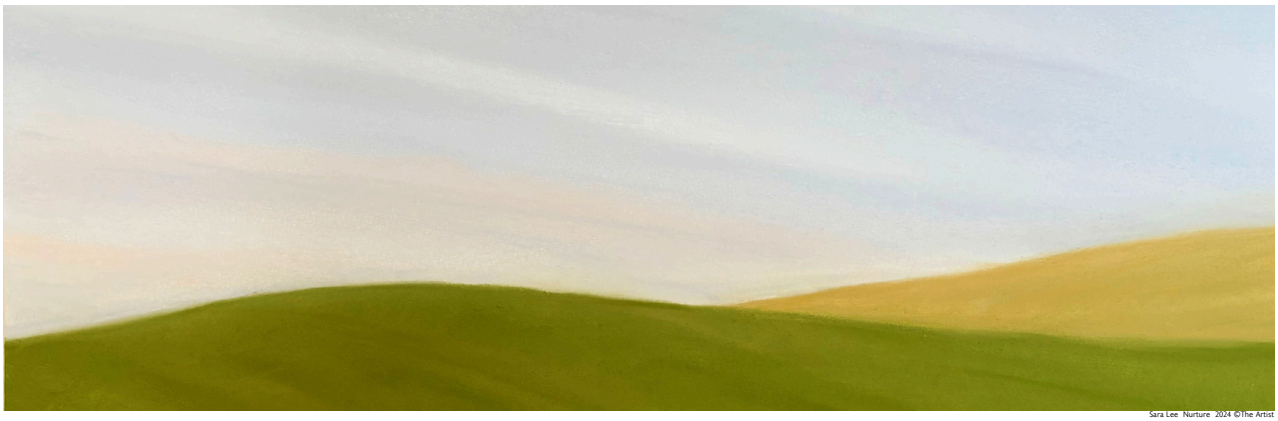
Petersfield MUSEUM and ART GALLERY

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South Downs Open 2026
10 October 2026 - 13 March 2027 | Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery



Sara Lee Nurture 2024 ©The Artist

Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery Announces the Return of the South Downs Open for 2026

Petersfield, Hampshire – Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery is excited to announce the launch of the second **South Downs Open**, following the highly praised success of its inaugural exhibition in 2024. Submissions for the 2026 South Downs Open will be open from **Friday 6 February** until **Friday 28 August 2026.** Selected artworks will be exhibited from **Saturday 10 October 2026**.

The South Downs, with their sweeping chalk ridges, ancient woodlands, flourishing market towns and striking coastline, have inspired artists and writers for centuries. Spanning Hampshire to Sussex, the landscape continues to serve as a powerful muse for creative communities across the region.

A Celebration of Regional Creativity

As a independent regional museum, Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery celebrates the enduring artistic richness of the region and provides a platform for emerging and established artists. Our vision is to provide a cultural space were history, nature and creativity are explored and championed.

"The South Downs Open is an opportunity to celebrate the rich creativity that thrives across the region. We invite artists to share their connection to the South Downs, whether through the landscape itself, its history, daily life in the region, or memories of time spent here."

CURATOR, LOUISE WELLER

Call for Entries

Open to all, from **mini makers to established artists**, the South Downs Open invites anyone aged 5 and above to submit up to two artworks in any medium, including painting, printmaking, photography, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, and digital art.

- **Adult submissions (18+):** £10 per artwork (non-refundable)
- **Young artists (5–17):** Free submission (booking required)

A judging panel will select approximately 75 artworks for the final exhibition.

Meet the Panel:

- **Sara Lee, winner of the SDO 2024**
- **Andrew Plaistowe, contestant on The Great Pottery Throw Down (2026)**
- **Louise Weller, Head of Collections and Exhibitions**

Awards

- **South Downs Open 2026 Winner (18+)**

A solo exhibition at Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery in 2028.

- **Young Artist Awards (5–17)**

Two winners will each receive an art materials voucher from Jackson's Art Supplies.

- **People's Choice Award**

The popular public vote returns, with visitors choosing their favourite displayed artwork. The winning artist will receive a £250 cash prize.

How to Submit

To find out how to submit your work visit
www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/call-artists-south-downs-open-2026

Praise for South Downs Open 2024

South Downs Open 2024 exhibited nearly 150 artworks by over 120 artists. The exhibition celebrated the beauty of the South Downs with paintings, drawings, prints, photography, sculpture, textiles and ceramics that drew inspiration from across the South Downs region, from Old Winchester Hill in Hampshire to Beachy Head, in East Sussex.

"I feel very fortunate to have taken part in the inaugural South Downs Open at Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery. It was a privilege to have my work hung amongst so many other artists' images, with such a broad range of approaches and techniques - all of us inspired by this beautiful region. Winning the prize gave me the wonderful opportunity to make new drawings for my first solo museum show, held in the excellent Flora Twort Gallery in 2026"

SARA LEE, WINNER OF THE SOUTH DOWNS OPEN 2024

"Thank you Petersfield Museum for such a lovely exhibition. It's so nice to discover all the other artists inspired by the same place!"

VISITOR TO SOUTH DOWNS OPEN, 2024



Visitors at South Downs Open 2024

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery is an accredited, independent museum and registered charity. A rare example of a restored Victorian Justice Heritage site, its permanent collections include Archaeology and Social History relating to Petersfield and the surrounding area, the Flora Twort Art Collection, Photography and Fashion (including the Bedales Historic Dress Collection). There is a dedicated temporary fine art and contemporary craft exhibition programme, as well as an inclusive public programme. It is also home to the Tim Wilton-Steer Collection of works by and about the poet Edward Thomas, housed in The Edward Thomas Centre. For more information visit www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk / Facebook 'petersfieldmuseum' / Instagram @petersfieldmuseum / TikTok @petersfieldmuseum / Threads @petersfieldmuseum

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES

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Installation images: South Downs Open 2024 at Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery