

The Collection @TheAlex



THE
ALEXANDER
CENTRE,
FAVERSHAM

The Collection 2026

www.thealex.org.uk

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The Alexander Collection 2026 will be the ninth exhibition since the launch of the Collection in 2015 when local artists were invited to show their work at The Alexander Centre (The Alex)

The generosity of the artists who loan their paintings so that our regular community, as well as those who come from further afield, can enjoy an exhibition of varied and inspiring artwork when using the Alex for events, meetings, special occasions or simply visiting, is invaluable.

Once again, we have been extremely grateful to David Lilford, from the Lilford Gallery in Canterbury, who suggested two of the artists to be shown this year as part of The Collection. He, together with 2024 Collection artist, Amelia Coward, and designer, Neil Brown, joined us as a helpful committee, and gave invaluable advice on artists we might approach, ideas for how we might improve awareness of The Collection and once we had approached the artists, which of their works we might show in the exhibition.

We are also grateful to Andy Howe, Head of Art, at Simon Langton Boys School in Canterbury for his help and enthusiasm, and letting us choose art created by this year's A level students. The majority of these works will join The Collection in September after the students have received their A level results.

Bringing together this year's Alexander Collection has been made possible by the enthusiasm of our three national and international artists, Zel Hunt (Mayor's Parlour), Jonathan Stewardson (Jubilee Room) and Lisa Hawkins (Sidney Room).

We are very grateful to Neil Brown who designed this brochure and the information panels in each room. These panels give more details about the individual paintings, as well as who to contact if you are interested in a particular work or knowing more about the artists. A big thank you as always to the Alex team, and particularly Ben Cave who expertly hangs the works.

Thank you so much Zel, Lisa and Jonathan for generously lending us your wonderful artwork, and a big thank you to Zel for allowing Graham and I to spend a wonderful couple of hours wandering round her house picking our favourites (of which there were many more than you can see in the exhibition).

We are very grateful to all our artists and hope you will enjoy their work as much as we enjoyed curating this exhibition.

Graham Setterfield, Chair

Pim Baxter OBE, Patron The Alexander Collection

Alison Fellows, General Manager

Zel Hunt

Zel is an abstract painter. She was born & raised in South London within a short bus ride to the Thames and Tate Britain. Zel studied Art & Textiles at St Martins & Central School of Art in the early 1980s and later developed an interest in Art Therapy, obtaining an MA in Art Psychotherapy at Goldsmiths College, London.

Zel had a long and rewarding career as Lead Art Therapist in CAMHS, Kent, and now works full-time as an artist.

Zel's abstract landscapes are created in layering paint then scratching or scraping back through the surface to reveal earlier markings, akin to the process of excavation.

She often adds Letraset to create asemic writing, hinting at various languages spoken throughout time and the natural markings which are visible on the chalkface of the White Cliffs of Dover.



Keeper of Stories, acrylic on canvas

Jonathan Stewardson

Born in London in 1963, Jonathan Stewardson was raised predominantly in Canvey Island, Essex, as well as travelling the world with his father. Jonathan started painting and drawing from an early age, and missed the end of his schooling so that he could pursue a career as an artist. During his early 20s, however, he worked as a builder until he was discovered by the Lilford Gallery and could then rely on the income from his art.

His paintings concentrate on atmosphere and emotion. The people that are, rarely, depicted are separate from the picturesque scene around them. He creates works that are introspective oases; quiet studies of life from both the city scene and his home. His London works, in particular, offer a contradiction from the busy, bustling urban life and show an emptier, stiller, yet more personal perspective of the chaos around them. Jonathan catches those silent glimpses of time and holds them fixed in the canvas. The viewer is then able to connect more personally to the work, adding another dimension to the artist's vision.

Jonathan rapidly became one of the Lilford Gallery's top-selling artists, with both national and international clients. He is also synonymous with their shows at the London Art Fairs.

Jonathan spent a number of years living in Deal, Kent.



Once Were Lovers, Saltdean, oil on canvas

Lisa Hawkins

Lisa was born in Ilford, Essex and moved to Margate in 2002 where she gained a first-class degree and an MA in Fine Art at Canterbury Christ Church University. Her main subject is landscape as a vehicle to explore visually how it feels to “be” in the world. This interest in the interplay between the interior life and the external landscape led her to complete a second master’s degree in Myth Cosmology and the Sacred, an experience that fostered a deep and continuing interest in psychology and mythology.

She works from life, memory and imagination – welding the spirit of place with an exploration of the human condition and seeks to have a universal, not just a particular, voice. Developing a relationship with a place is central to Lisa’s practice, as the memories of each subsequent visit to that place changes her perceptions – the weather, her own moods, current affairs, together with personal and collective associations. This forms a kind of ‘alchemy’ which is played out both in the studio and in the landscape.

Drawing daily is a pivotal practice in her art. She works in oil paint and her often large-scale works are semi-abstract with an emphasis on colour harmony. Artistic influences include Ivon Hitchens, Richard Diebenkorn, Spencer Gore, Matisse and Vuillard.

This series of paintings of locations in East Kent, are re-worked in the studio and can also be read as a series of self-portraits. Walking and reflecting on a particular landscape becomes a vehicle to explore in colour and texture a particular time and psychological state or mood in her life. That time will never come again, and the inspiration for these particular paintings will never come again.

Lisa currently lives in Ramsgate, and her developing understanding and love for the East Kent landscape is a central source of inspiration in her work.

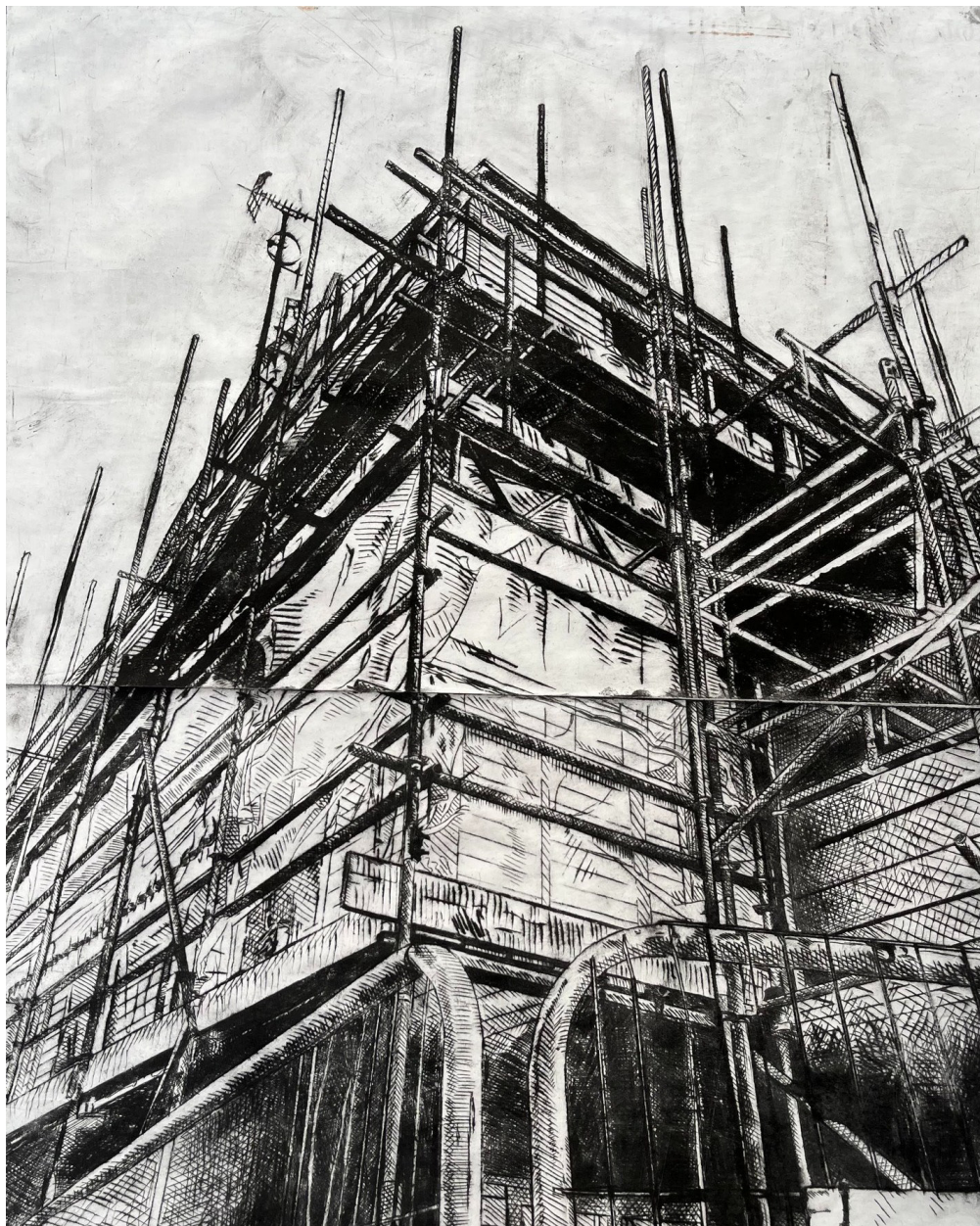
www.lisahawkinsfineart.wordpress.com



Between the trees, churchyard Ash, oil on canvas

Simon Langton Boys School

Each year we invite a local school to be part of The Collection. This year we will show some of the work of A level students from Simon Langton Boys School in Canterbury. There is an architectural theme to the artwork that we have chosen.



Fin Carter, scaffolding, etching

The Alexander Centre

The Alexander Centre Community Interest Company, a not-for-profit and independent company, was set up in 2010 to take on the running of The Alexander Centre, as a Community Centre and Events Hub for the benefit of the town. Affectionately known as 'The Alex' it has grown over the years to become the vibrant arts destination, events venue and business centre that it is now.

The Alex offers a wide range of programmed events and activities, as well as a venue to hire for the community's milestone events, such as weddings, wakes and birthday parties. Its facilities include a fully licensed bar and lounge area, a large function hall, several heritage meeting rooms and a pretty private garden. The first floor offers serviced offices for small local businesses.

The Alexander Collection is an important part of The Alex's offer, as it uses the heritage rooms to show off the work of talented modern British artists. Providing a showcase for these artists, exposing their work to all the many users of the building, as well as enhancing these beautiful spaces.

2026 has not had the best of starts for us, as a major fire on New Year's Eve gutted our main hall. Fortunately, no one was hurt and the building is, of course, fully insured, but the rebuilding and refurbishment will take the hall out of action for the year. However, The Alex continues to flourish, with events and activities taking place in the heritage building as well as being 'on the road' with events in other local venues. We look forward to coming back with the use of all our spaces, including the main hall, in 2027.



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bookings@thealex.org.uk

01795 591691

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