

Leeds: Artistic Inside and Out

A Marketing Report on Leeds Art Gallery



1. John Atkinson Grimshaw, 1880, Reflections on the Thames, Painting

Marketing of the Arts; BA (Hons) Fashion Marketing

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Introduction

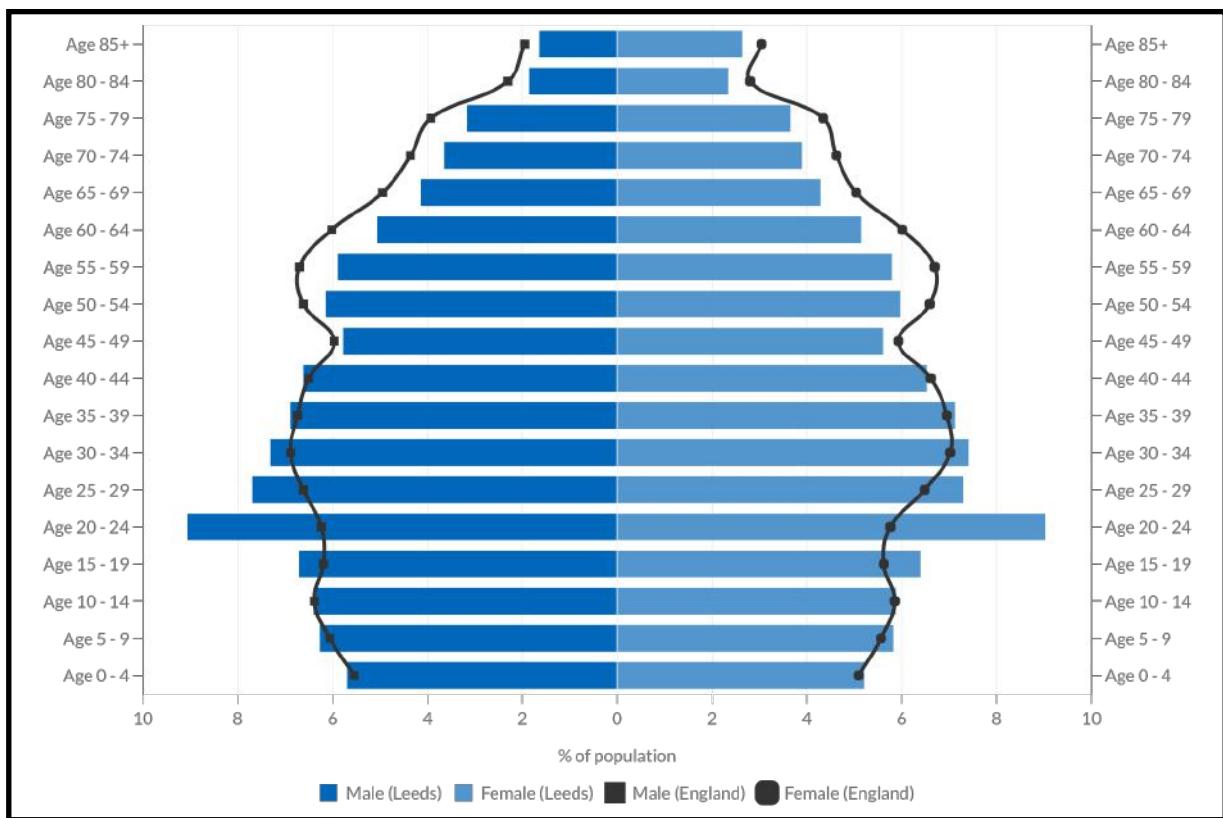
Located in the heart of the city, Leeds Art Gallery is one of eight heritage organisations managed by Leeds Museums and Galleries (LM&G, 2025). At home on the bustling Headrow, the regional gallery boasts a collection of Yorkshire's finest artists, an assortment of Victorian works and uprising in contemporary culture. Aiming to immerse and involve, this institution emphasises the elements of artistry: be they diversity (Rentschler, 2004), socio-cultural heritage (LCP, 2017) or the conservation of craft. The gallery's recent achievement of an eco-efficient website (LM&G, 2025) speaks to their ethos. While cultivating educational experiences, a steward of the arts must place value in a strategic marketing plan that attracts the consumer through promotion (Kerrigan et al., 2004). Scholars note the paradoxical nature of capitalising on creativity (Hesmondhalgh, 2008; Larsen and Lawson 2010), and thus, the direction of marketing must be critical (Meamber, 2014).

Uniquely, this building homes a decadent cafe, sculpture gallery and multiple libraries. A refuge from the urban environment, the institution is frequented by seniors, tourists, students and families. Museums are seeing a rise in growth post-pandemic (UK Government, 2024). Whilst statistics of engagement (LM&G, 2025) and Facebook updates have attracted parents, the existing strategy does not entice young adults, of whom the environment is also suited for. Recommendations for new audiences are partnered with retention plans.

Bridging the commercial with the creative, Mottner (2011) identifies the relevance of the 7 P's within gallery marketing. This mix of service marketing includes product, price, promotion, place, people, physical evidence and process (Booms and Bitner, 1981). To assess communications, an internal audit will deliver a comprehensive account of engagement. The report presents a PEEST analysis of the external factors to determine the intervention required for concerns of the environment. This process is derived from French (2011), who endorses the evaluation of SWOT to enhance marketing recommendations. It is critiqued that a generalisation of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats can be subject to bias regarding personal feelings (Saari, 2022). Although, art, or those artistic institutions, are integrally reliant on the manifestation of emotion, through the expectation of provocation (Kerrigan et al., 2004).

Analysis

Impressively, 91% of adults engaged with the arts last year and 46% physically engaged with a museum or gallery (UK Government, 2024). A local analysis addresses a 64% increase in domestic tourism, but a regional deficit of participation (UK Government, 2024). Whilst the online communications, complement the objectives to raise awareness and increase brand identity (Hede, 2011). Enhancing engagement, the report aspires to attract a younger demographic also, given the age distribution of the city.



2. Leeds Observatory, 2023, Percentage of population by 5-year age groups

Accompanied by the values of mutual organisations, such as the Leeds Cultural Programme, Leeds Art Gallery strive to: build a collective that reflects the city's multiculturalism; act responsibly and sustainably; pioneer the development of skills and educational access; converge with international audiences; curate memorable experiences; and continue to acclimate knowledge of heritage (LM&G, 2025).

Product

The gallery experience derives both tangible and intangible attributes. In particularly successful figures, the annual statistics show a 32% revenue increase across catering and other sectors (LM&G, 2025), accompanied by a recent 5% social media following increase in the Q4 24/25 report. Productive gift-shop and catering sales prove that the strategy targets the key demographics; sustainable and local craft for augmented female audiences (UK Government, 2023; 2024) and adjacent with goals of uplifting the wider community (LM&G, 2025). The strength of visual merchandising elevates the quality of these commodities (Mottner, 2011).

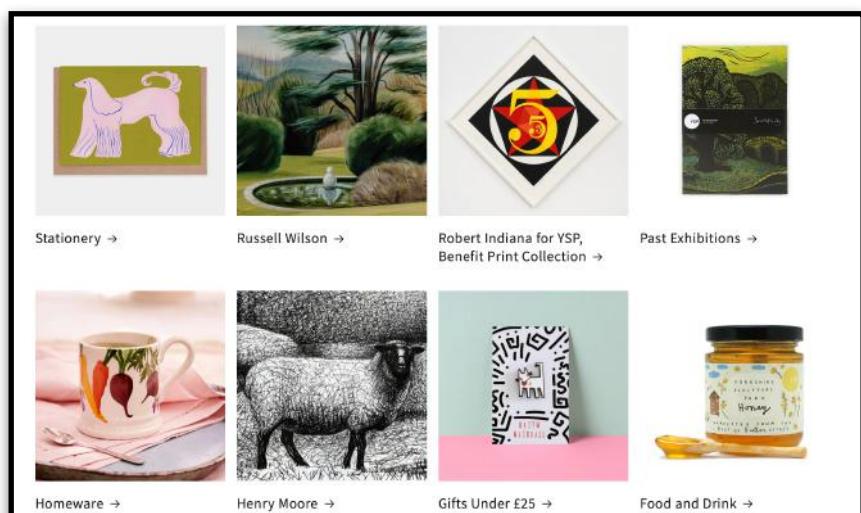
A range of books caters to a maturer demographic, with online purchases easily facilitated. However, the retention of purchase and brand identity is less fruitful from the consumer's perspective. Upon enquiring with staff members, there are no existing incentives for patrons to enjoy seasonal sales or demographic-based discount. Evidence of the logo or font branding is marginal between exhibitions and commercial opportunities.

Stimulating a commercial, educational and cultural transaction, Leeds Art Gallery deliver inquisitive exhibitions. The organisation offers a relevant, yet rooted, curation of work, speaking loudly to contemporary discourse of integrated culture, heritage and identity. Alternating exhibitions frequently also aids in the return of satisfied customers (French, 2011).

Price

Free admission is attractive to consumers, but not unique to galleries — generating intense competition (Slater, 2011).

French (2011) suggests a competitor analysis of commercial sectors to gain advantage. Regional



competitor, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, thematically presents their online commerce. This design allows for a cohesive experience and enticing personal element, to the artist's craft.

The gift pricing presents a competitive advantage but online visits increase slowly (1.9%) (LM&G, 2025). Advertising these lower prices amongst online content, can direct attention to the website, or sold with the facilities of apps. This method of digital marketing is largely low cost for organisations (Rahardja, 2022). Researchers found that retention of these consumers can develop brand loyalty over the long-term, through content or feedback; even within a highly competitive market of voluntary loyalty (Chahal and Bala , 2017).

Promotion

The last traditional advertising campaigns were in (Jules Lister) 2024 and (Journal Studios) 2023, with the annual report annotating a 19.5% increase in admissions revenue, but a decreased 2.8% of venue visitors (LM&G 2024). From the street, two small posters alert potential visitors or tourists of current activity. This is an ideal location to highlight the artistry, inside and out of the building. Furthermore, the minimal approach of interior advertisement, upon entry, could be a missed opportunity to direct consumers around the multi-faceted building.



Given the observed attendance of several workshops, on two occasions, the gallery remains consistent in their community engagement. Accounting for the lack of visual promotion surrounding the workshops, one must conclude that the event communication is achieved through third parties (MindWell, 2025; Leeds Inspired, 2025), social media, or word-of-mouth. Centring the consumer in service and employing increasingly informal marketing allows for involvement — apt in expanding participation within the arts (Azmat et al., 2014).

The consumer value of artistic engagement ricochets for all when the gallery provides meaningful experiences (Morgan, 2014). This fulfilment of desire achieves its goals of creativity, community, and confidence, having observed a group of women address the staff members by name and provide positive feedback. Satisfaction can manifest into a stronger brand identity and increase tourism, when organisations engage with social media content (Zollo et al., 2021); sharing stories and prioritising participation (Martin, 2020). Active online accounts provide slightly disorganised updates on events, exhibitions and workshops, which can limit online engagement (Sashi, 2012).

Place

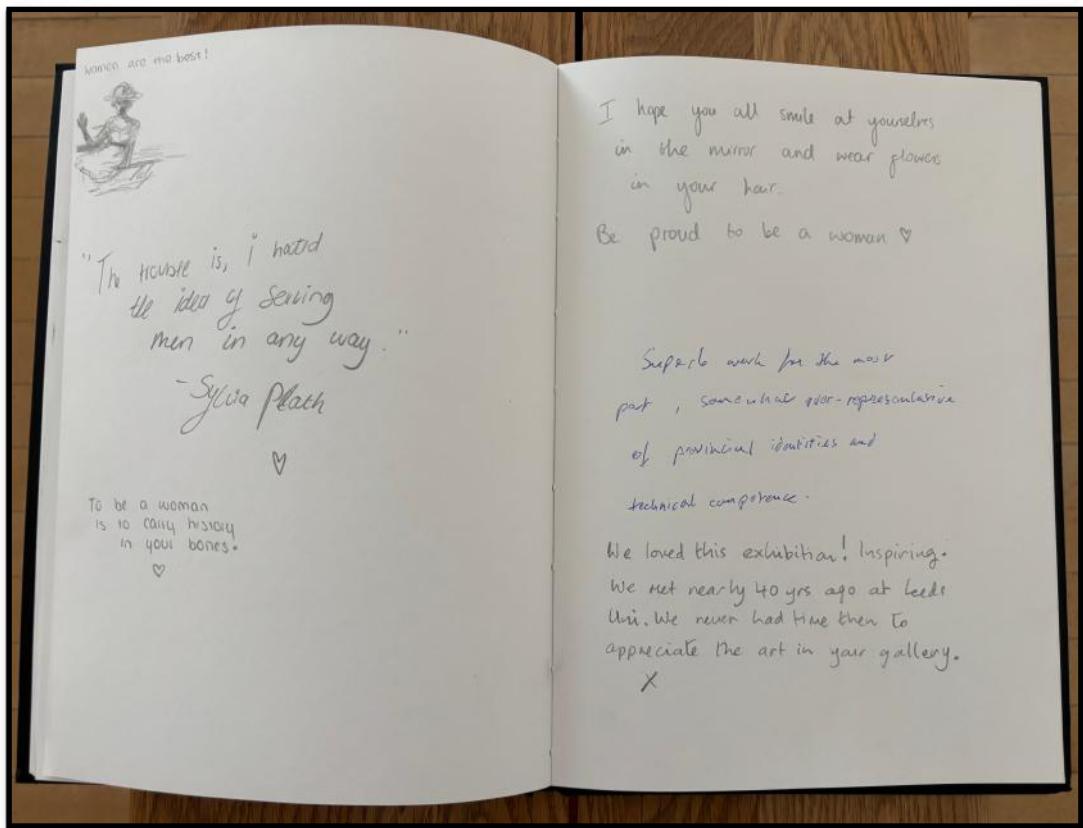
Leeds Museums and Galleries manage several institutions within the vicinity. The cove of culture upholds the vibrant social scene of Leeds, situated directly within the action. The geographical advantages of the transport options, namely a railway station, bus stops and bike paths, reveal a harmoniously sustainable interest between the organisation, shareholders and visitors. This mutual benefit is not to be overlooked — pivotal when assessing the eco-centred priorities of funding organisations (John Ellerman Organisations, 2024) and government policy (UK Government, 2024). Moreover, a larger attendance of students within the cafe and libraries can be observed — related to the neighbouring universities. Opportunities to converge the objectives of these local institutions can be seen through the gallery's youth incentives. The gift shop and cafe are located in an ideal position for efficient sales (Mottner, 2011).

People

The staff at Leeds Art Gallery exceed their observational and commercial roles, to curate experiences and foster involvement (Jogulu and Rentschler, 2014). Through personal and tertiary exchanges, it is evident that the volunteers are eager to drive the gallery's mission and respect their environment (LM&G, 2025). Traditionally, galleries were frequented by those of a privileged socio-economic status, neglecting those with diverse backgrounds, whom may have found sanctity within the arts (Azmat et al., 2014). Engaging with the arts primarily, are those from higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations (UK Government, 2024). Despite empirical evidence, the audiences discerned across visits were assorted in their ages, gender and ethnicity; perhaps accrediting the aim of attracting various visitors (LM&G, 2025).

Physical Evidence and Process

This angle of the strategy utilises the senses to harness memories for the consumer (Mottner, 2011). The ‘Portrayals of Women’ exhibit ties the consumer to their experience through a touching opportunity to read the written thoughts of other visitors. Comments said, “I hope you all smile at yourselves in the mirror... be proud to be a woman”; one noted, “I am her, she is me”.



5. (2025). Thoughts and Feelings Book in the ‘Portrayals of Women’ exhibition

This opportunity to leave a mark, deepens the experience for the target demographic — creating safe environments for visitors to express oneself. Corrêa et al. (2024) addresses the utility of connective mechanisms, felt by groups in times of crisis. The socio-economic context for political struggles denotes a facilitation of discourse on social media and emphasises the facets of escape (Corrêa et al., 2024), with parallels to the refuge of galleries.

In relation to the logistical process (Mottner, 2011), the commercial items were stocked, available and tidy. One visitor at the Leeds City Museum published a video online, expressing a jeer at the

sold-out Miffy merchandise (@vivalafrankie, 2025). After a productive social media strategy, multiple videos arose from the gratified experience and digital interaction (Zollo et al., 2021), although, two-way communication does not guarantee positive feedback.

Gallery experiences permit an exploration of sight, sound, and touch, for a comprehensively enriched lesson (Mottner, 2011). Personable interactions with art in exhibitions can be executed successfully through digital innovation, illustrated by the National Gallery's (2025) AI exhibition and by the National Portrait Gallery's (2025) immersive experience in Salford.



6. The National Gallery, 2025, The AI Gallery.

A study by the University of Glasgow saw 79% of respondents, through a range of ages, enticed by digital immersion within the arts (Bruce et al., 2025). Innovative methods of experiential arts marketing can provide learning for children (Bell and Smith, 2020) and overcome cultural barriers to information (Lee et al., 2020).

Digital engagement at Leeds Art Gallery has an existing demand, with reports of podcast downloads increasing (prior to the cancellation of Museums n' That) (LM&G, 2024; UK Government, 2024). These digital adoptions are at the forefront of the long-term plan outlined by the Leeds Culture Programmes for 2030 (LCP, 2017) and mission of developed outreach (LM&G, 2024).

PEEST Analysis

The considerations of a postmodern gallery implicate the political policies; social development for communal prosperity; environmental adjustments; review of the economic impacts; and the integration of technology (Kolter et al., 2008).

PEEST	Analysis	Critical Review	Marketing Analysis
Political	Government industrial policy injected £310 million into the arts across the Cultural Development Fund (UK Gov, 2025) and Arts Everywhere Fund (UK Gov, 2025). Stimulating growth, through accessible cultural infrastructure, expands the capacity for careers and overall development.	In times of economic instability, the competition for funding, rises (Rushton, 2003). The literature highlights implementing consistent strategies to foster patronage (Kerrigan et al., 2004). Davies (2015) highlights how returning visitors are more likely to support online fundraising campaigns.	This emphasises the need for an online strategy, combining community welfare with mutual prosperity and clear representation of the mission .
Political	Younger audiences — a key demographic of Leeds (Leeds Observatory, 2023)— are increasingly aware of political quandary (Statista, 2021). Discourse surrounding complex issues are facilitated in online communities, but may not substantiate an appropriate environment to learn (Lutz and Hoffman, 2017).	There is a high competition for the attention of younger people (French, 2011). However, art as a medium of political communication can manifest in many forms; fashion is a popular vehicle amongst young women (Titton, 2019).	The integration of textiles amongst exhibits could be inspired by any plethora of socio-cultural heritage and provide a sentimental experience for those looking to connect to their identity (Rodriguez et al., 2024). Alternatively, art of the activism genre could adorn popular merchandise items (like tote bags).
Environmental	The LCP (2017) argues that 'cultural diversity is as important for humankind as biodiversity is for nature'. The increased focus on ethical standards can be seen through the improved website carbon rating or community tree planting project (LM&G, 2025).	French (2011) comments that sustainable actions are most suited to a localised strategy. Which compliments several of the organisational objectives, but does not attain to the international.	As company morals can impact the criteria of consumption (Faarup, 2010), Leeds Art Gallery must vocalise their achievements through marketing or digital communications. Consumers are actively seeking adoptable and productive alternatives to harmful consumption (Capgemini, 2024).

Economic	Studies observe that young people are exhibiting higher patterns of spending, especially women within the apparel sector (Subbing, 2012). These themes are permeated by autonomy and identity.	Research observes that, in the USA, citizens are unaware of the motivations for publicly-funded institutions, and thus, struggle to identify the conditions and benefits of participation (Hart, 1984). However, adjustments to the UK curriculum to highlight civil morale and could be improving attitudes towards public goods (Peterson, 2011).	Successful awareness and engagement could present the aforementioned opportunity for expressive merchandise revenue (Aruna, 2016) or lean into the proven willingness to purchase in social contexts (Subbing, 2012), such as with peers at the cafe.
Economic	The Connecting Leeds Transport strategy for 2027 has launched the largest e-bike scheme in the UK and significantly funded railway improvements. Aiming to connect the community further with accessible, public transport, ongoing advancement with buses, has proven to be successful (Oddfield and Foster, 2025).	This agenda provides ample opportunity for Leeds Art Gallery both geographically and logically. The location of the gallery is encompassed by public transport options, used frequently by the gallery's maturer and younger demographics, (UK Gov, 2023).	This strategy has the ability to reach those deterred by location or cost. Focused advertisement placement on public transport and their environments, presents the procurement of key demographics. Alongside the mutual environmental efforts (Oddfield and Foster, 2025).
Technological	Recent success for the Leeds City Museum's Miffy Exhibition saw a 237% increased retail income (LM&G, 2025). The strategy implemented promotional content on social media, was observed frequently by myself and evident through a surge of user-generated content.	Digital spaces can be stimulated to raise awareness, procure loyalty and generate feedback (Zollo et al., 2021). This strategy benefits a localised and international approach, that first harnesses the user's audience, but also grants opportunities for wider exposure, upon interaction (Martin, 2020).	Facebook is the most effective advertising platform (Social Media Examiner, 2024), generating a higher return on investment (HubSpot, 2025). A persistent and enhanced posting schedule could increase engagement with workshops and exhibitions.
Social	The Leeds Culture Programme (2017) aims to augment social welfare by celebrating inclusion and equality. Broadening the scope of involvement, they hope to unite and utilise the cultural data.	Chung et al. (2014) denote the benefits of using social sites to connect a network of institutions, local bureaus and artists. This survey of museum staff emphasised the unreliability of all information received.	When assessing the aforementioned benefits of a social strategy (Zollo et al., 2021), the educational and emotional returns of engagement also contribute to the humanitarian incentives of an arts organisation.

Technological	A desire to echo the stories of artists is evident through digital experiences that provoke sensory commitment (LM&G, 2025). Working to preserve heritage and culture, films, audios and interactive experience can deliver a more touching experience (Mandelli, 2019).	Mandelli (2019) criticises that digitalised exhibitions have been adopted too slowly by galleries. Naturally there is the consideration of funding and capacity (Gül and Akmehmet, 2015).	Study found these innovations are attractive to families with children and are also popular with schools (Gül and Akmehmet, 2015)
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SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diverse and culturally relevant curation of art • Fostering community through workshops, events and close relationships with other institutions and groups within the greater Leeds area • An attentive and informative staff and volunteer base • Interactive spaces to create independently or collectively • The convenience of additional institutions and facilities • A resonating educational ethos • Digital incorporation of film • Supporting local business and enterprise, through bulletins and other promotional product • Calm, yet mentally stimulating, internal environment • Free feminine hygiene products for women • Eco-friendly commerce and catering aspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimalist direction of the exhibition locations or informative exhibition status information, upon entry • Little advertisement around the perimeters of the gallery regarding exhibits, featured artists or learning opportunities • Workshop promotion is evident only at the location of the activity • Low reinforcement of branding, through font or logo • Moderate presence on social media across select platforms
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional facilities, such as the cafe, gift shop and libraries are marketable amenities for the outlined demographics • Leeds Town Hall reopening next door • Cultural Development Fund 2025 • Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy 2027 • Arts Everywhere Fund 2025 • Funding from The Costume Society • A continuation of welcomed thoughts from visitors through interactive action, creating tangible experiences • Loyalty boosters - incentives or rewards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missed opportunity to connect with consumers producing content and engaging directly with the organisation, on TikTok, where other competitors have • Decline in the rate of public funding • High competition with other local, heritage tourism organisations

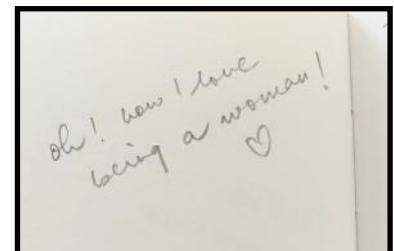
Recommendations

Leeds Art Gallery shines as an organisation that celebrates local friendships, preserves cultural heritage, and encourages the collaboration of unique identity. There are a number of long and short term goals that the organisation could implement to retain existing patrons and reach new audiences. Firstly, the gallery should consider traditional promotional methods, such as bus shelter and train station advertisement. Utilised highly by those aged 17-39 and 69+, the bus is chosen more by women and also a prominent resource of Leeds (UK Government, 2024). These consumers may seek low priced options and prioritise sustainable options (Capgemini, 2024): thus, mirroring the conditions of visitors and the Gallery alike. A highly walkable city means that these would also be noticeable to pedestrians. To suggest otherwise, shelter advertisements could be most effective outside the inner city, to inform maturer demographics (Office for National Statistics, 2020). For maximum engagement from the existing target demographics, advertisements could highlight the connections made at specific workshops, as survey participants report not knowing what is available and having no accompaniment (UK Government, 2024). The communication of the social message lowers the aforementioned barriers and subsidises the efforts made online, for those who may not encounter the content.

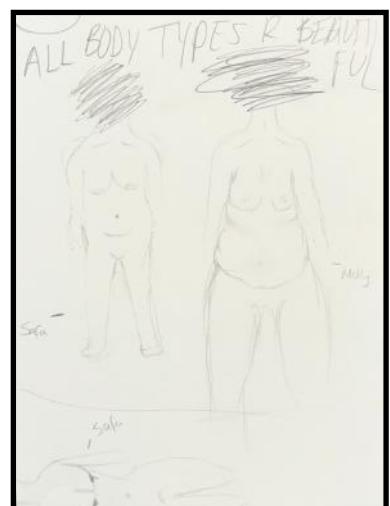
To continue harnessing retention, the existing demographics can be motivated through quick and low maintenance methods. Incentivising a range of ages, loyalty rewards aim to retain consumers over sustained periods of time (Lacey and Sneath, 2006). For example, a coffee rewards scheme appeals directly to library users, workshop attendees or frequenting parents (Başgöze et al., 2021). Sweet (2011) outlines the benefits of price incentives across collective sites, like Leeds Museums and Galleries, to increase the collective visits. To overcome issues of equity, regarding economic contribution, incentives could reward accumulative gallery and museum visits (Lacey and Sneath, 2006). This interactive method could attest to efforts of local engagement and build on successful retail and catering revenue. Practical and sustainable implementations can be identified through the take-away packaging for cafe beverages. Additionally reinforcing the gallery's visual identity through a sticker, of the logo or other decoration, could initiate user-generated content (Dennhardt, 2013). Accompanied by the turquoise of the Tiled Hall, trendy content prompts younger visitors to share online — effective social strategy can decrease the cost of marketing (Martin, 2020).

Solidifying the gallery's brand identity through media, can engage audiences while facilitating the translation of public good objectives (Shawky et al., 2019). Sashi (2012) states the importance of providing and promoting information, noting advocacy and supportive interaction. Entertaining content could include behind the scenes videos or interviews (Martin, 2020), although interactive engagement is also pivotal through internet trends (Kim and Ko, 2012). This attempt to intrigue a younger demographic is relatively low cost (Rahardja, 2022) with long-term benefits (Sashi, 2012). Social exchange across a range of interactive platforms, like Instagram and Tiktok, is advantageous for arts awareness (Chung et al., 2014), but also develops the relationship (Shawky et al., 2019). As social media adjusts to cultural activity, the facets of an enhanced community remain strong (Zollo et al., 2021).

Online platforms augment the ability to gauge the needs of audiences (Martin, 2020) through two-way communication (Zollo et al., 2021). The gallery could alert interested students to the accessible library and cafe facilities, or encourage further educational pursuit within the gallery. Video concepts could highlight rewarding oneself with an exploratory afternoon around the premise, after an afternoon of studying; or identify online interest with social and cultural issues, mirrored in the collection (Budge and Burness, 2017) to adopt to this demographic (Martin, 2020). These experiential insights speak to the service-based product of a gallery visit (Urdea et al., 2021). Proven to be substantial in the behavioural research of consumers (Dolan et al., 2019; Zollo et al., 2021), loyalty generated online can augment the visitors commitment and make economic impacts, in retail (Bigné et al., 2008).



7. 2025, Thoughts and Feelings Book in the 'Portrayals of Women' exhibition.



For future endeavours, the gallery could explore the use of textiles within a multimedia exhibit (Tang et al., 2024) or thematic focus within paintings and sculpture. The recent curation of 'Portrayals of Women' translates a willingness to educate visitors on the social, cultural and political barriers of gender, race and sexuality. Fashion heritage in art has the ability to represent a range of socio-cultural environments



9. 2025, Thoughts and Feelings Book in the 'Portrayals of Women' exhibition.

and plays a large role in diversity (Van den Bosch, 2011). A centralisation of autonomy through the arts must also lend space for dialogue to ensue when aiming to curate productive experiences (O'Sullivan, 2013). Building on the book of 'thoughts', feedback should be facilitated through interactive areas and pose as physical evidence to others (Mottner, 2011). A collaboration of these ideas could improve representative audiences (LM&G, 2025) and platform stories that identify across generations (Martin, 2020).

Summary

While the optimisation of the consumers role is the primary focus of arts marketing (Morgan, 2014), a considered and practical strategy must raise awareness (Hede, 2011), engage communities (Meamber, 2011) and promote creative identity (Rodriguez et al., 2024). Ultimately, communication between the organisation and its visitors, fosters loyalty (Zollo et al., 2021) and generates long-term alliances (Sashi, 2012). Increased government funding and alternative opportunities through sustainability (John Ellerman Foundation, 2025) or textiles (Museum Development North, 2024), can be accessed through a clearly articulated mission (Morgan, 2014).

Reacting adeptly to social adjustments, digital engagement is increasing (UK Government, 2024) while facilitating diverse discourse (Shawky et al., 2019) and proposing innovations of immersive experience (Tang et al., 2024; Bruce et al., 2025). Martin (2020) emphasised the utilisation of social media in galleries to artistically advertise and give attention to consumer needs. The demographic statistics complement the recommended local strategy to prioritise representation, whilst considering increased domestic tourism (UK Government, 2024) and the benefits of a wider audience (Zollo et al., 2021). Caring to conserve the social signals of art and culture, through social engagement (Jogulu and Rentschler, 2013) or educational mission (Bell and Smith, 2020), the gallery must prioritise the translation of its admirable attributes.

The recommendations centre five of the gallery's strategic outcomes, namely: sustainable responsibility, international reach, peer representation, effective collaboration and developed engagement (LM&G, 2025). Focusing on a communal approach, helps to acknowledge the interests of the consumer (Morgan, 2014), be they the accumulative facilities and resource, or the tranquil pleasure of the gallery itself. Leeds Art Gallery shows a sustained nobility to include a diverse market of demographics, by remaining true to their values of public education and accessible artistry.

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