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An alternative canvas for art

Artwork by some of Britain's greatest artists has been projected on to a building on Northumbria University's campus as part of a nationwide celebration of the BBC's Your Paintings.

The projections were made onto Northumbria's Wynne Jones Centre and showed paintings of national interest. The artworks shown in Newcastle include *Coming from the Mill* by L S Lowry and *Mr and Mrs Andrews* by Thomas Gainsborough.

The Wynne Jones Centre is one of 28 buildings and landmarks across the country taking part in the project.

The projections mark the start of a month of exhibitions and events organised by the BBC and the Public Catalogue Foundation to celebrate the completion of Your Paintings, a website showing the entire UK national collection of over 210,000 oil paintings.

Hundreds of oil paintings, which have not been seen by the public in generations will go on show at galleries, museums and civic buildings across the UK from 8th - 28th February 2013. They include one of the last paintings by 'Pitman Painter' Jimmy Floyd, Frozen Pit Pond, 1974, on show for the first time at Woodhorn Museum in Northumberland.

Held in over 3,000 galleries, museums and other civic buildings around the country, these paintings span over 600 years of art history – arguably the greatest national collection of its kind in the world. Due to limitations of exhibition space, 80% of these works are normally held in storage and not easily visible to the people who own them – the UK public.

The public is invited to 'tag' paintings in their local collections on the website. This data will allow future users of the Your Paintings website to easily find paintings by subjects, themes and events that interest them. The tagging process doesn't require expert knowledge, but those with specialist information on paintings in the collection are invited to contact the Public Catalogue Foundation.

Saul Nassé, Controller BBC Learning said "The idea that we could put on virtual display all the UK's paintings was madly ambitious, but thanks to a brilliant partnership with the PCF, we've realised that ambition. Your Paintings is a thing of beauty and I'm hoping the events that we're rolling out right across the country are going to inspire thousands more people to learn about these wonderful paintings."

Taken together, this collection of 211,861 paintings presents an unparalleled insight into the nation's culture and history. Paintings by over 37,000 artists are on the Your Paintings website, including Old Masters and works by leading British artists. Just under 30,000 paintings do not have firm artist attributions, leaving the possibility of important discoveries in years to come. The National Trust is the largest single collection on the website with 12,567 paintings however, approximately half of the collections on the site have ten or fewer paintings. The vast majority of the collection has never been photographed before.

To see and tag Your Paintings and find out more about visiting participating galleries, museums and public buildings, please visit: bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings

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