



Bluebells by David Gamm from the portfolio of works selected for Macmillan  
Image: David Gamm



Full Time, external sculptural seating by Petter Southall of i tre studios, Macmillan Renton Unit cancer care centre, Hereford,  
Image: Paul Highnam.



Detail of decorative stained glass window by Tamsin Abbott, Macmillan Renton Unit cancer care centre, Hereford  
Image: Paul Highnam.

**A long-term working relationship with a client brings a variety of benefits for both sides. For example, Willis Newson has worked with Macmillan Cancer Support for over five years, and in that time we have developed a real understanding of the organisation's needs, systems and values. This means that we can provide detailed and tailored advice and practical support as and when necessary, with significant time and efficiency savings for the organisation.**

Our support over an extended period of time has included:

- Strategic guidance on how the arts can benefit cancer environments and help with defining aims and objectives relating to art
- The development of tailored processes, structures and toolkits to achieve these objectives
- Ongoing support, advice, expertise and project management to deliver specific projects.

In practice this also means we are on hand whenever the client needs us.

This kind of relationship allows both sides to consider the 'bigger picture'. It also may allow us to embed within the client team the knowledge and tools necessary to commission public art in future projects themselves.



Decorative stained glass window by Tamsin Abbott, Macmillan Renton Unit cancer care centre, Hereford  
Image: Paul Highnam.

## Background

Macmillan Cancer Support has been creating healing cancer environments since 1976. The charity has provided over 170 treatment and care buildings and information and support centres throughout the UK, in both hospitals and community settings.

## Scope

Willis Newson has worked with Macmillan to create a flexible structure and system – a toolkit – to enable art to be integrated within capital build and refurbishment projects. Our work has involved strategic development and practical and strategic support on specific capital schemes. We have been able to develop relationships with other Macmillan suppliers, working with them as a team. We also offer ongoing advice and have created and manage a Portfolio of specifically chosen artists and artworks identified as being appropriate for Macmillan environments. This is intended as a cost-effective tool for projects with smaller budgets.



Autumn Flowers by Simon Cook from the portfolio of works selected for Macmillan  
Image: Simon Cook

## Process

Our relationship with Macmillan began with a 'getting to know you' stage. Research involving key stakeholders helped us identify what the organisation wanted to achieve by integrating art into their building schemes. We were able then to advise on how this could be done most effectively.

A regular annual review process, involving a committed steering group of Macmillan staff and relevant external consultants ensures that we can remain up to date with changing requirements and continue to identify new opportunities.

As part of our ongoing relationship with Macmillan we now deliver support, advice, expertise and project management on various schemes.

Smaller schemes benefit from the Portfolio service. Staff responsible for the purchase of art are able to call on us to identify and commission artists or acquire artworks from the Portfolio.



Detail of external sculptural seating by Petter Southall of i tre studios Macmillan Renton Unit, Hereford  
Image: Paul Highnam



Detail of decorative stained glass window by Tamsin Abbott, Macmillan Renton Unit cancer care centre, Hereford  
Image: Paul Highnam

## Strategy

We created an Art in Cancer Environments Guidance document and Toolkit specifically tailored to Macmillan's needs and capital procurement processes. This included advice on how to develop a business case for the integration of art and detailed advice on the best practice commissioning process for major capital schemes and artwork purchase for smaller schemes. As part of this process we also reviewed the evidence relating to art and cancer, and have used this to inform all future guidance.

We have been able to pinpoint a range of differing organisational needs and objectives and created processes for tackling them. We have worked closely with Macmillan to explore and develop systems that function both from the point of view of the organisation, its structure and the way it works with partner organisations and in terms of public art best practice. The result is a series of tailored services and processes that fit across a range of Macmillan projects that will benefit from the integration of art.



Full Time, external sculptural seating by Petter Southall of i tre studios, Macmillan Renton Unit cancer care centre, Hereford  
Image: Paul Highnam

## Conclusions

The initial strategic element of our relationship has been vital in giving us and Macmillan the opportunity to work together to install efficient best practice processes and to embed skills and learning within the Macmillan team. Our guidance has given them the tools they need to present the business case for art and to persuade their partners (often NHS Trusts) of the benefits of art and, in particular, the necessity for involving artists early on in the build process. As a result, more Macmillan environments are benefitting from the advice of artists in areas such as wayfinding, interior design, and the design of clinical treatment and exterior spaces, in addition to the commissioning of high quality and appropriate permanent artworks.



Glass panel in main reception area by Emma Waller, Macmillan Renton Unit cancer care centre, Hereford  
Image: Paul Highnam



Detail of decorative stained glass by Tamsin Abbott  
Image: Paul Highnam

**Project:**

Macmillan Renton Unit, Hereford

**Artists:**

Tamsin Abbott, Jean Miller, Petter Southall (itre studios), Emma Waller



Glazing pieces in main reception desk by Emma Waller  
Image: Paul Highnam

**Macmillan Cancer Support commissioned Willis Newson to create and deliver a public art plan for the new Macmillan Renton Unit (MRU) in Hereford in 2009. The new unit is a partnership between Macmillan and Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust and replaces an existing building, providing an integrated cancer care and information service. The new MRU came into operation in June 2011.**

The public art plan was developed through research including engagement with stakeholders, initial 'visioning workshops' with staff, patients and visitors and consultation with the design team. We commissioned two main artists. Emma Waller produced surface glazing treatments for the main reception and waiting areas and ran a workshop in which patients and staff created wireframes for glazing panels now hung in a linking corridor. Contemporary furniture designer Petter Southall has crafted beautiful external sculptural seating made from Herefordshire oak, for a courtyard garden. We also placed donated prints from local artist and cancer patient Jean Miller and commissioned a single glass panel from another local glass artist, Tamsin Waller.



External sculptural seating by Petter Southall of i tre studios  
Image: Paul Highnam

This project benefited from the contribution of a committed and hard-working steering group including representatives from all key stakeholders and from our existing knowledge of Macmillan's needs and methods of working.