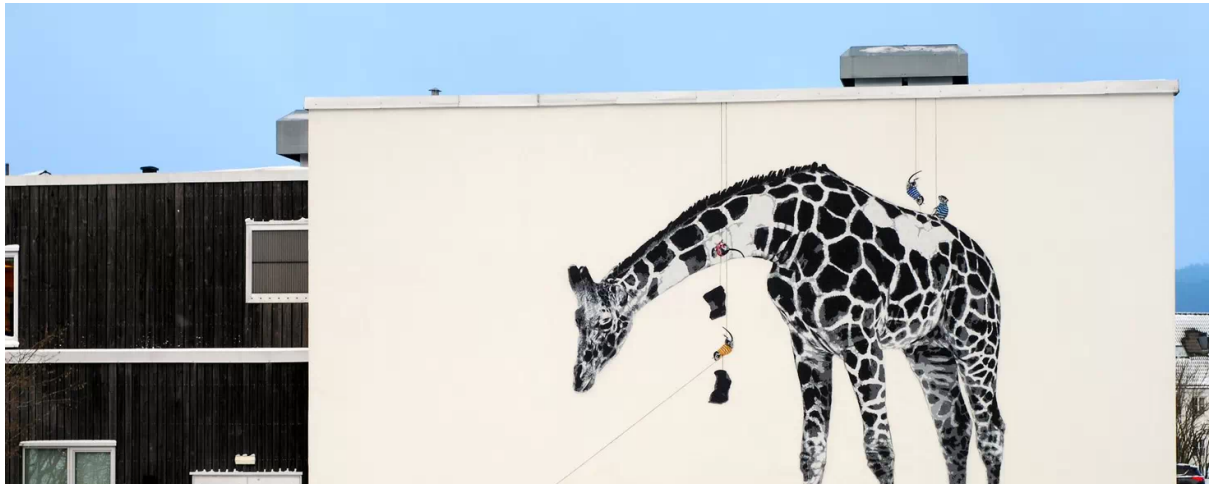


ART



FEATURE

Aberdeen: Art and Culture in the Granite City

23 Apr 2019

By [Sandy Di Yu](#)

Aberdeen is making a name for itself as a cultural staple for championing street and contemporary art, design, jazz and more. Here's a snapshot of the hidden gems and cultural treasures that we've encountered while exploring the Granite City.

A mix of endless granite slabs and medieval buildings that marks the architecture of Aberdeen might initially give us the impression of an identity crisis caught somewhere between Glasgow and Edinburgh. But upon further inspection, it's not so much an identity crisis as it is an identity revelation, with the ornate scenery of Edinburgh and the groundedness of Glasgow culminating in the ever-walkable, perfectly-sized port city. Aberdeen has long been known for its gas and oil industry, with housing prices fluctuating in tandem with the price of oil. But as environmentalism rightly takes hold throughout culture and headlines and with growing disdain for non-renewable energy sources in the face of our dying planet, Aberdeen has since gotten a makeover.

The bid to make Aberdeen more culturally engaging is a practical move by tourism boards to relieve some of Edinburgh's tourist congestion. By redirecting the streams of visitors further north, there's hope that individuals will discover the cultural offerings of Scotland as not simply isolated to the capital. In this vein, Aberdeen is making a name for itself as a cultural staple for championing street and contemporary art, design, jazz and more. Here's a snapshot of the hidden gems and cultural treasures that we've encountered while exploring the Granite City.

Street Art

Started by the venerable street art organisation of the same name from Norway, [Nuart Aberdeen](#) is a celebration of street art and graffiti, now in its 3rd iteration. Anyone will notice upon visiting that Aberdeen has no shortage of flat walls of grey granite stone. The locals say that in the sunshine their city seems to sparkle, but they lament the underwhelming greyness on overcast days (which, as Scottish weather will have it, seems to be more often than not). Nuart Festival serves as the perfect antidote, with colourful interruptions by world-renowned graffiti artists scattered throughout the city.

[Mural-sized artworks](#) are bolstered by an offering of smaller images and tags, and the unveiling of these works each year is accompanied by a programme of talks and workshops that add to the vibrant conversations involving street art and urban spaces. This year's programme is Walk through the city and forge your own trail as you discover the marvellous designs that have been added each year, or stumble upon them on your daily treks through the city for a spontaneous dose of visual pleasure. Or better yet, be inspired by these sanctioned vandals and tag a street corner yourself.

**EVENT****Nuart Aberdeen 2019**

18 Apr 2019 – 21 Apr 2019

Aberdeen, United Kingdom

You can also sign up for one of the many walking tours happening throughout the summer for expert insight into the works around the city.

**ART TOUR****Nuart Aberdeen Walking Tours**

20 Apr 2019 – 28 Sep 2019

Aberdeen, United Kingdom

Galleries/Museums

The WORM at Peacock Centre for Contemporary Art features an excellent programme of exhibitions, residencies and more, acting as a gathering space for creatives and art lovers alike. Their current exhibition by Scottish artist Alec Finlay was commissioned by Hauser and Wirth, the owners of which also own the Fife Arm, a hotel in Braemar that boasts an impressive collection of over 14,000 works of original art from the likes of Picasso, Louise Bourgeois, Gerhard Richter and more. While it's a bit of a drive out into the highlands and while it costs a pretty penny for an overnight stay, the hotel's origins present an important part of the UK's history in the art market.



EXHIBITION

Alec Finlay - gathering

05 Apr 2019 – 18 May 2019

the W O R M

Aberdeen, United Kingdom

Study and Play Spaces

The Aberdeen Central Library is more than a century old, and housed within its granite confines are endless repositories of knowledge, serene areas to study, and at times, exhibitions that give a vivid portrayal of the city's historic industries.



EXHIBITION

Granite Workers of Aberdeen

03 Apr 2019 – 27 May 2019

Aberdeen Central Library

Aberdeen, United Kingdom

Other places that boast great coffee and atmosphere includes [Foodstory](#), as well as its [zero waste](#) iteration near the University of Aberdeen. Also worth checking out is [Bonobo Cafe](#), which boasts a 100% vegan menu and is a workers' co-op. Talk about an antithesis to big oil!

Another cultural staple is [Brewdog](#), whose brand and beer was founded and is based in Aberdeen but is now available all over the world. The original bars in Aberdeen feature a wide selection of homebrews as well as guest beers, with a staff that can tell you every little detail about the ale you're drinking. For either beer or coffee, try [The Craftsman Company](#), a place that nurtures cafe culture without overcomplicating anything.

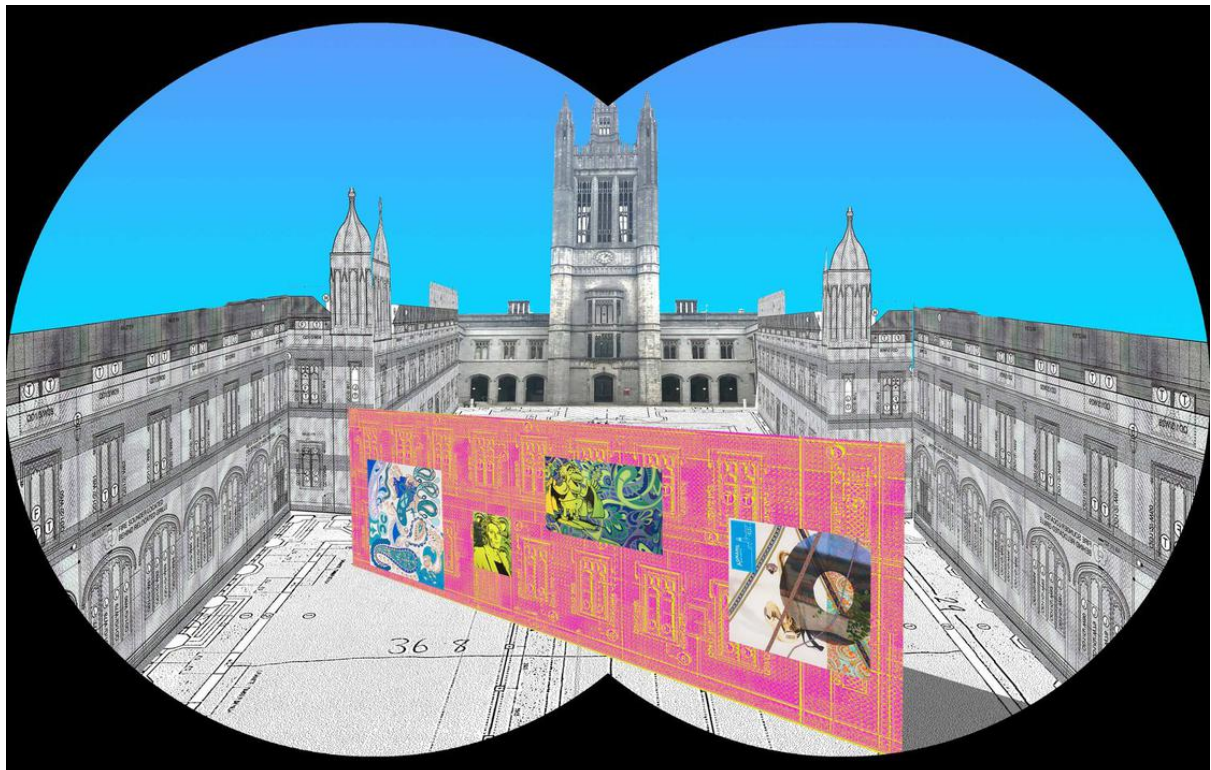
And for a nicer outing, [Moonfish Cafe](#) is one of many Michelin guide mentions in Aberdeen offering amazing food in a relaxed, unpretentious environment.

Alternative and art cinemas

Belmont Filmhouse is an arts cinema tucked away in the picturesque and cobblestoned Belmont Street. Along with an array of independent and international films, the venue also holds talks and conferences for the festivals and events happening in town. During Nuart Festival, the space featured a panel of experts including a talk by Professor Jeff Ferrell about street art in terms of temporary engagement zones, ghost narratives and eloquent vandals, as well as an interview with celebrated Scottish artist and playwright John Byrne.

Adornments for your calendar

While Nuart is quickly becoming a staple for Aberdeen, it's only one of several festivals that take place in the city throughout the year. Next on the docket for art and design is Look Again Festival, an event that spans various disciplines and venues across the city.



EVENT

Look Again Festival 2019

07 Jun 2019 – 16 Jun 2019

Aberdeen, United Kingdom

Also to be looked out for is this season's degree show from [Gray's School of Art at Robert Gordon University](#), which will be worth a visit like any [degree show](#) that will be taking place in the coming months.

Of course, there are always exhibitions worth checking out in Aberdeen, so be sure to check out the [dedicated city page](#) next time you visit for current and upcoming exhibitions and events in Aberdeen or download the [ArtRabbit app](#).

We have [Visit Aberdeenshire](#) to thank for the insight into the cultural gems of Aberdeen and for organising our trip to experience Nuart Festival Aberdeen.

[Sandy Di Yu](#), London-based writer, art theorist and artist. Follow her on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#), or visit her [website](#).

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