

Museum Wellbeing trail

Ten mindful moments

This trail is to help you to 'reset' and find some moments of mindfulness and wellbeing at the National Museum of Scotland, noticing and enjoying the sensations, sights and sounds around you.

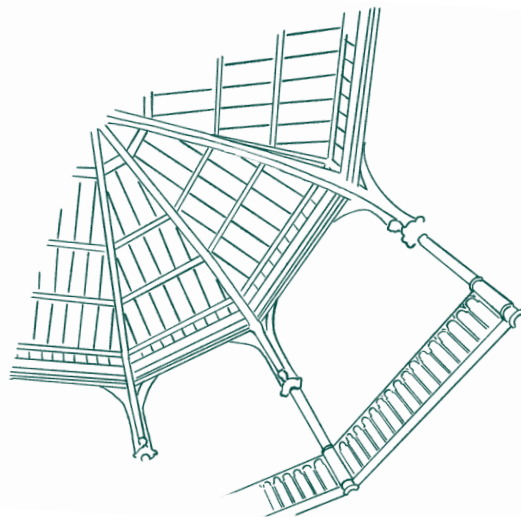
Mindfulness top tips

- At each of the ten stops take a moment to really look. If your attention drifts away, gently guide it back to the object or space. This is mindfulness.
- As you walk through from one space to the other, be aware of the experience of walking – the shifting sensations of touch and pressure as your feet meet the floor, the shift in balance of the body from one side to the other.
- Take notice of the activity in your mind. Perhaps you are thinking, remembering, planning...and if so, that's ok. Mindfulness is not trying to get rid of thoughts, emotions or sensations, but simply knowing our busy minds a little better.



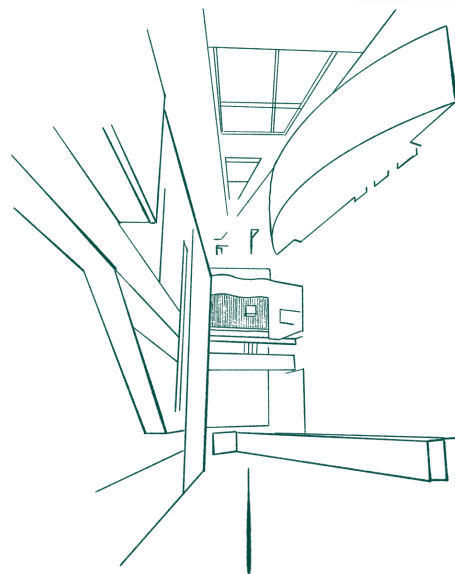
1. Grand Gallery

Stop and pause for a moment to look up and around you. Notice the height and light of the Grand Gallery. Let your gaze follow the patterns and shapes the architecture makes. What sounds can you hear? Take a few deep breaths and settle yourself into this moment. Let your attention move into the space around you. Looking down at the shiny stone-tiled floor, notice the many fossilized sea animals in the marble.



2. Hawthornden Court

Look up and around you as you enter Hawthornden Court. Notice the changes in ceiling height, and the strong, angular shapes and feeling of spaciousness made by the architecture. The building here is inspired by Scottish castles and tower houses. Find the slits and openings in the walls that reflect this.



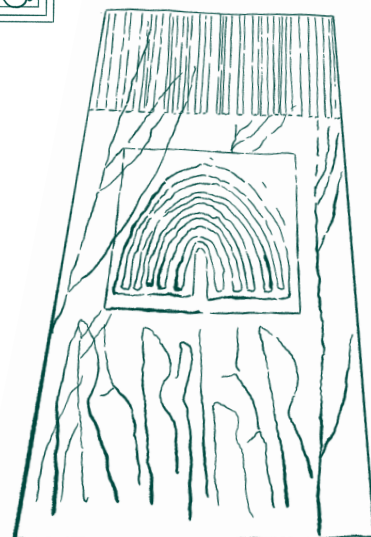
3. Carved oak panels, Scottish, 1530s

Go into the Kingdom of the Scots gallery and find this carved wooden panel. Focus on just one panel and spend a few minutes really looking at it, letting your eyes move slowly across the surface of the work. Observe the shapes and patterns. What thoughts, emotions, memories, and ideas arise? Imagine running your fingers over it, tracing the carvings, feeling the sensations of smooth and rough.



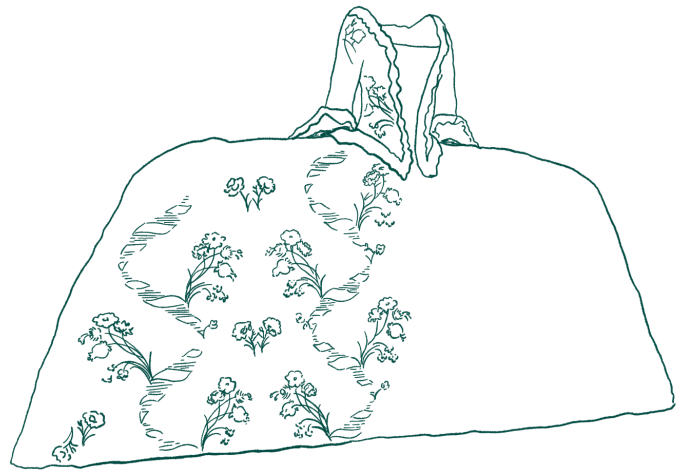
4. Corryvreckan, Kate Whiteford, 1977

From Kingdom of the Scots return to Hawthornden Court and find the large red tapestry. Take a few minutes to notice the colours, lines and shapes of this tapestry, letting your eyes drift across the tactile surface. The tapestry is inspired by a whirlpool off the Isle of Jura. Imagine for a moment watching it swirling round and round. Take three deep breaths.



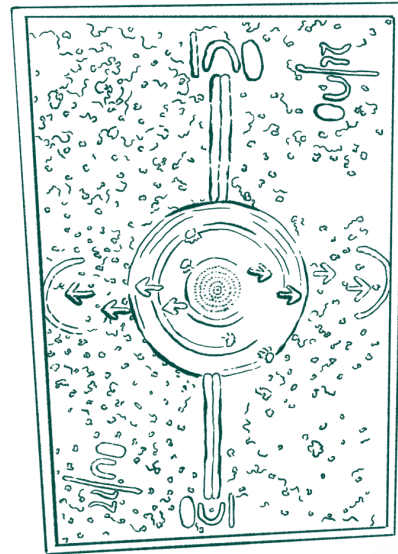
5. Court Mantua dress, silk brocade, c1750s

At this 18th century court mantua dress, try simply being with the object in the Fashion and Style gallery. Looking, noticing it, savouring the experience of being in this space, in this moment. Ask yourself the question: 'what can I notice about this object?' What thoughts and emotions arise from looking at the textures, shape, patterns and colours on this dress?



6. *Emu and Dingo Dreaming*, Raylene Biscoe Nungala, 1988

In our Living Lands gallery absorb yourself in this painting by Aboriginal artist Raylene Biscoe Nungala. Starting at the top, work your way clockwise around the artwork, take a moment to notice what you see, attending to each area bit by bit. Observe the different colours, patterns, lines and shapes. Following the dotted circles in the centre round and round all the way to the middle, taking your time to savour the experience.



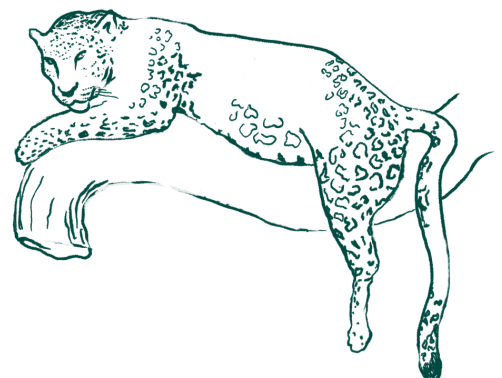
7. Buddhist prayer wheel, Scotland and Tibet, 2009-11

At the nearby Buddhist prayer wheel, pause to enjoy the abundance of colours and patterns – a visual feast for your eyes. Notice the intricate coils of gold, and the fantastical faces in the patterns and on the roof top. Let your gaze roam across the object, from left to right...from right to left, from top to bottom. If your mind wanders, gently guide your attention back to the prayer wheel.



8. Leopard

Find this leopard in a relaxed pose in the Animal World gallery. Think about how you could channel this in your own body. Scan how you are feeling, from the top of your head all the way down to your toes, noticing where there might be tension. Take three big deep breaths, and with each out breath, let any tension flow out of your body.



9. Vista from Animal World to the Grand Gallery

Moving into the Grand Gallery take a moment to enjoy this view from Animal World. Notice the calm order of the repeating lines the arches and columns make as they travel away from you into the distance.



10. Buddha Amida, bronze, Japan, late 19th century

Pause here at the nearby 19th century Japanese statue of the Buddha Amida. Take a moment in quiet contemplation to notice the smoothness of his face and body, and the curving, soft lines of his features and drapery. Do any details catch your eye? It can be something as simple as the shine of the metal or the decoration of lotus leaves around his feet. Copy the pose he makes with his hands – placing index finger and thumbs together in front of you.

Close your eyes if that feels comfortable and listen once more to the sounds of the Grand Gallery.

Now, give yourself a few moments to wrap up this experience before moving into the next moments of your day.



Thank you for taking our Museum Wellbeing trail.
We wish you a lovely rest of your day.

Text and audio created in collaboration
with Mindfulness practitioner Laura Baxter.

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