

YOUNG VISITORS GUIDE

This book provides an introduction and 'guide' to Aberdeen Art Gallery for children and young people. Several architectural features have been illustrated by Lorraine Dow while taking part in a children's workshop at the Art Gallery.

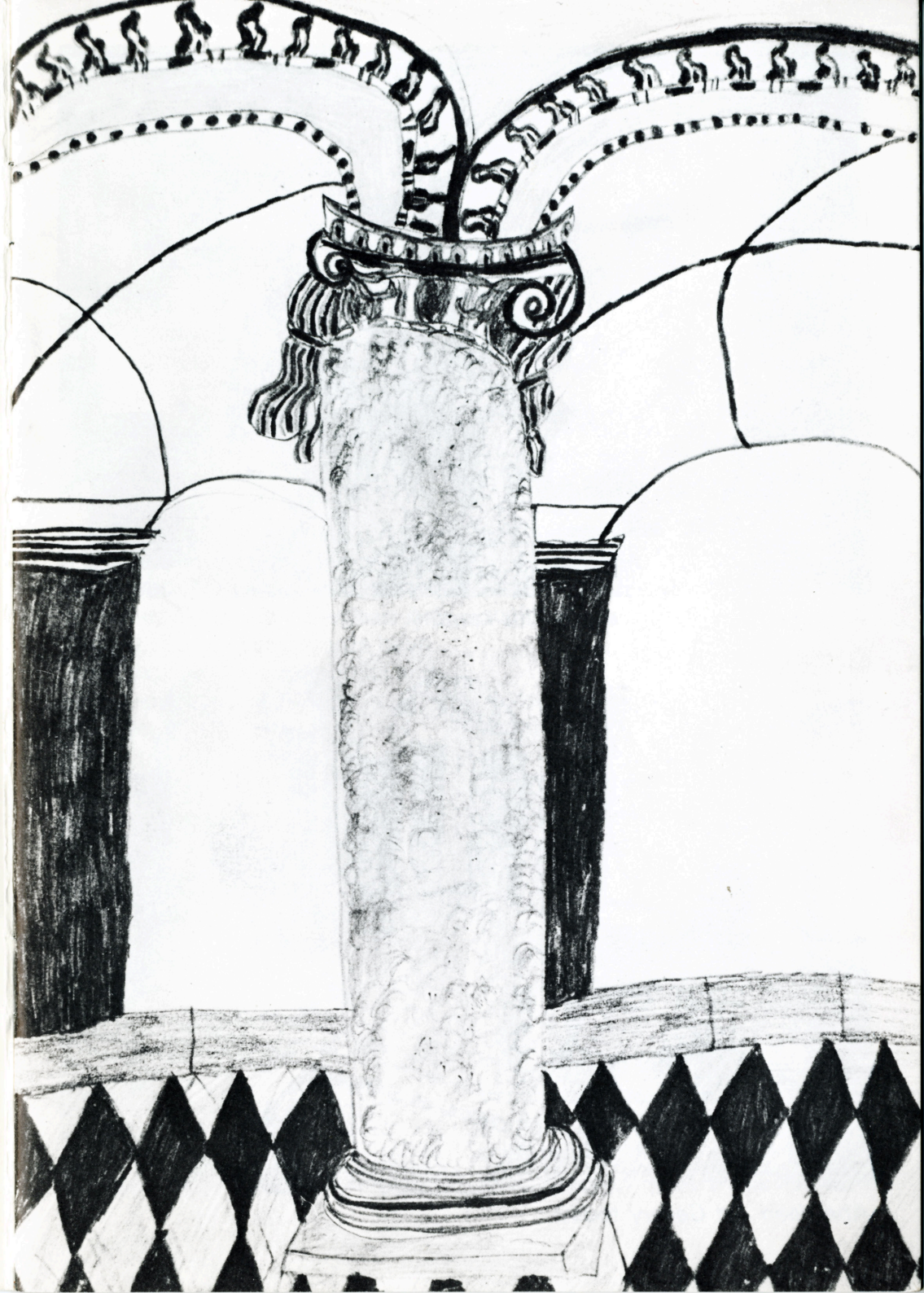
### **What is a museum ?**

A museum is a building or a place which contains, explains and displays, objects from the past as well as objects from the present.

As an organisation, a museum is concerned with collecting and conserving a wide variety of things. An Art Gallery is a special kind of museum which houses fine art objects such as paintings and sculpture as well as exhibits from the decorative arts such as glass, ceramics or textiles.

### **Aberdeen's Art Gallery**

Aberdeen Art Gallery was designed by a local architect, A. Marshall MacKenzie. The facade of the Art Gallery has several features which are similar to Italian architecture of the Renaissance period. Stability and poise are the two main effects achieved by the monumental character of the frontage. (The shapes are originally derived from those of an ancient temple.) Local, pink granite from Kemnay has given a rich surface texture to the main elevations. Granite is of a special significance in the history of the Art Gallery as the Aberdeen Granite Merchants were one of the groups most closely associated with the creation and erection of the Gallery in 1885.



### Conservation

Conservation is the science and practice of preserving works of art for future generations of Art Gallery visitors.

Paintings and sculptures are fragile objects and require careful care and attention.

Various factors such as the materials chosen for creating the work of art, as well as strong light and extremes of temperature and humidity effect the condition of art objects both on public display and in storage. Daylight damages paintings because it causes colours to fade; watercolour paintings and textiles are particularly vulnerable. In Aberdeen Art Gallery the upper picture galleries have been fitted with treated panels of perspex to limit harmful ultra-violet light rays.

Several times a day, throughout the Art Gallery, accurate records are taken of changes in room temperature and humidity.

Paintings and sculpture can shrink or crack or even crumble and these measurements can help to prevent this form of damage. In the past, varnish was often applied over oil paint in thick layers and as a result many works of art require careful 'cleaning' with chemicals to reveal their true colours. In contrast many artists working in the 20th Century simply do not use picture varnish at all and this could create conservation problems for the future.

The support of a painting is the material the paint is applied to, whether it be paper, canvas or board. Sometimes a canvas support can get torn or become thin and fragile.

When this happens the painting is repaired by repainting the damaged area and 'lining' the original picture canvas with a new layer of fabric.