

Museum Maths

– the art of counting the uncountable

2025 is a special year for The Nordic Watercolour Museum. We are celebrating the 25th anniversary of our successful institution.

How do you write a museum's history from within? It can, of course be presented in plain but dry facts and figures. The number of exhibitions and guided tours. The number of artists and visitors. The number of works in the ever-growing collection ...

Other factors can be added. Harder to define but still quantifiable. The hours of planning and preparation, e-mails and agreements sent back and forth. The number of nails, cleaning rounds, labelling in the museum shop. Steps taken and kilos lifted when switching exhibitions ...

On top of that, the numbers that are the hardest to calculate. Furrowed brows when unexpected problems appear. And sighs of relief, laughter and shouts of joy when we always finally make it in the end.

Museum maths is an extraordinary discipline. In purely logical terms, the energy equation usually doesn't add up, and yet things magically come together, as if working together for a common cause gives us superpowers. The point is that our visitors get to enjoy the whole, without having to think of the parts.

For 25 years, we at the museum have exhibited, collected, preserved, researched and reached out. Museums that only deliver what visitors think they want soon lose their relevance and attraction. Instead, we have learned together to combine lightness with heft and seriousness with humour. We have a firm belief in our mission, that art can build bridges between people and worlds.

– Joanna Persman
Curator & writer
2025

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Sólveig Aðalsteinsdóttir, *Evaporated Watercolours in Glass*, 2000