

UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 7.45PM, MONDAY 14 MAY 2012

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From portraiture to pottery, Arts and Crafts to the avant-garde: four museums in running to win £100,000 Art Fund Prize for ‘museum of the year’

The shortlist for the tenth Art Fund Prize for museums and galleries has been announced today.

Including one national institution and one local museum, one radical new building and a painstakingly restored one, the shortlist reveals the diversity, eclecticism and quality of the UK’s museums.

The four shortlisted museums are:

- **Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire**
Designed by acclaimed architect David Chipperfield, Hepworth Wakefield opened in May 2011 following a £35 million development. Presenting the collection of the old Wakefield Art Gallery alongside a unique collection of works by Barbara Hepworth and an innovative programme of temporary contemporary art exhibitions, the museum attracted more than 100,000 visitors in the first five months.
- **Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery, Exeter, Devon**
The Museum for the city of Exeter, RAMM reopened in December 2011 following the first major redevelopment in its 140-year history. With collections ranging from fine art to archaeology, botany to geology, the museum attracted over 50,000 visitors within its first month of opening.
- **Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh**
The world’s first purpose-built portrait gallery, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery reopened in December 2011 following a £17.6 million transformation, the first refurbishment in the museum’s 120-year history. The ‘Portrait of a Nation’ project involved not only the thorough renovation of this Victorian Gothic building but a comprehensive rehang and reinterpretation of its world-class collection.
- **Watts Gallery, near Guildford, Surrey**
This purpose-built museum devoted to the work of eminent Victorian painter George Frederic Watts (1817–1904) is widely regarded as one of the finest Arts and Crafts building in the country. The museum has been shortlisted following the success of its £10 million restoration by architects ZMMA, and the introduction of storage and restoration facilities, an education and outreach programme fit for the twenty-first century.

The shortlist was chosen by an independent panel of judges chaired by **Lord Smith of Finsbury**, former Labour MP and Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The judging panel includes **Professor Jim Al-Khalili** OBE, theoretical physicist, author and broadcaster; **Charlotte Higgins**, Guardian journalist and author; **Lucy Worsley**, Chief Curator at Historic Royal Palaces, author and broadcaster; **Sir Mark Jones**, Master at St Cross College, Oxford and former V&A director; **Rick Mather**, architect; and **Lisa Milroy**, artist and Head of Graduate Painting at the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL.

Lord Smith of Finsbury said: “The museums on this shortlist are truly outstanding institutions, very varied in scale and theme, but sharing a remarkable commitment to connecting with their visitors and telling powerful stories through objects and images. Whittling ten really strong nominees down to a list of four was a supremely difficult process, and I’ve no doubt that deciding on a ‘museum of the year’ from this list will prove equally tough.”

Penelope, Viscountess Cobham, Chairman of The Museum Prize Trust said: “In this tenth year of the Prize for museums it seems particularly fitting to have a shortlist of such truly exceptional quality. In these challenging times it is more important than ever to acknowledge the achievements of such original and vibrant organizations, museums which ask questions about history, culture and the world around us.”

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund said: “With the Olympics and the Cultural Olympiad almost upon us, Britain has an unrivalled opportunity to show to the world the very best its culture has to offer. Taken together, these four terrific institutions offer the perfect snapshot of the best of our museums and galleries – dynamic, forward-thinking, inclusive and diverse. The Art Fund Prize judges have an extremely difficult decision ahead of them to select a winner.”

The winner will be announced live on BBC Radio 4 Front Row and at an event at The British Museum on 19 June 2012.

Ends

Notes to Editors

The Art Fund Prize 2012 rewards excellence and innovation in museums and galleries in the UK for a project completed or undertaken in 2011. The annual prize has been awarded since 2003.

The ten longlisted museums are:

- **Bletchley Park**, Milton Keynes, Bucks.: *The Life and Works of Alan Turing*
- **M Shed**, Bristol: *A New Museum for Bristol*
- **National Museum of Scotland**, Edinburgh: *National Museum of Scotland Development*
- **Riverside Museum, Scotland's Museum of Transport and Travel**, Glasgow: *Riverside Museum Project*
- **Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery**, Exeter, Devon: *RAMM Development Project*
- **The Hepworth Wakefield**, Wakefield, West Yorkshire: *The Hepworth Wakefield*
- **The Holburne Museum**, Bath, Somerset: *The Holburne Museum Development Project*
- **The National Galleries of Scotland**, Edinburgh: *Portrait of the Nation*
- **Turner Contemporary**, Margate, Kent: *Turner Contemporary*
- **Watts Gallery**, Guildford, Surrey: *The Watts Gallery Hope Project*

Clore Award for Museum Learning

Organised under the umbrella of the Art Fund Prize, the longlist for the Clore Award for Museum Learning was also announced today. Supported by the Clore Duffield Foundation, the £10,000 award champions quality museum and gallery learning with children and young people in or out of school. The award is judged by a separate panel co-chaired by Dame Vivien Duffield DBE, Chairman of the Clore Duffield Foundation and Sally Bacon, Executive Director.

The shortlisted museum learning initiatives are:

- **Camden Arts Centre**, Get The Message
- **Florence Nightingale Museum**, Our Generation's Re-interpretation
- **Leicestershire County Council Heritage and Arts Service**, Held in the Hand and Touch Tables
- **The Whitworth Art Gallery**, The Manchester Early Years Partnership
- **Yorkshire Museum**, Celebrating Severus

More information on the Clore Award for Museum Learning can be found at

www.artfundprize.org.uk/clore-award

Ten Years of the Museum Prize

2012 is the tenth year of the Art Fund Prize for Museums (formerly the Gulbenkian Prize).

The past winners are:

2011 The British Museum, for A History of the World

2010 The Ulster Museum, Belfast

2009 Wedgwood Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

2008 The Lightbox gallery and museum, Woking

2007 Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, East Sussex

2006 Brunel's SS Great Britain, Bristol

2005 Big Pit: the National Mining Museum of Wales

2004 Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh

2003 National Centre for Citizenship and the Law, Galleries of Justice, Nottingham

The Art Fund Prize is administered by The Museum Prize, a charitable company created in 2001 by representatives of National Heritage, the Museums Association, the Art Fund and the Campaign for Museums and chaired by Lady Cobham. These organisations agreed to put aside award schemes they formerly ran (including National Heritage's Museum of the Year) and lend their support to this single major prize.

The Art Fund is the national charity which helps museums and galleries to buy, show and share art for the enjoyment of all. Over the past five years, the Art Fund has given over £24 million towards art of all kinds, from Old Masters to new media, and supported a range of programmes which share and show art to wider audiences, including the national tour of ARTIST ROOMS, the Art Fund Prize for Museums and Galleries, and Art Guide, a pioneering smartphone app offering the most comprehensive guide to seeing art in the UK. The Art Fund is independently funded and the majority of its income comes from 90,000 supporters who purchase a National Art Pass, costing from £50, which gives free entry to over 200 museums, galleries and historic houses across the country as well as 50% off many major exhibitions.

Find out more about the Art Fund and the National Art Pass at www.artfund.org.uk. The press office can be reached on 020 7225 4888 or media@artfund.org

The Clore Duffield Foundation is chaired by Dame Vivien Duffield DBE and has a strong focus on supporting cultural learning, particularly within museums and galleries and at heritage sites. www.cloreduffield.org.uk. It is one of the founding partners of the Cultural Learning Alliance, a collective voice working to ensure that all children and young people have meaningful access to culture in this difficult economic climate. www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk