

PRESS RELEASE

THE
NATIONAL
GALLERY

ArtFund

NATIONAL GALLERY AND ART FUND CURATORIAL TRAINEESHIPS PROGRAMME CONTINUES TO FOSTER NEW CURATORIAL TALENT

The National Gallery and the Art Fund are pleased to announce that Birmingham Museums Trust and York Art Gallery are the latest organisations set to benefit from two new fully funded curatorial traineeships. These have been made possible through the National Gallery Curatorial Traineeship Programme supported by the Art Fund with the assistance of the Vivmar Foundation. From September 2013 the trainees will spend time at the National Gallery, London, moving to take up their respective positions in Birmingham and York in spring 2014.

Launched in 2011, the traineeships are the second phase of the initiative, which was established jointly by the National Gallery and the Art Fund to address the need for a renewed focus on object- and collections-based expertise. The programme invited applications from galleries and museums during early 2013. Following the selection of Birmingham and York, a panel convened during July as part of the curatorial trainee selection process.

This second tranche follows successful projects at Manchester Art Gallery and Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums, where curatorial trainees Henrietta Ward and Philippa Stephenson have been involved in research and have curated exhibitions that opened to the public this spring. Their training has significantly contributed to the expertise needed to work with Old Master paintings collections in the future.

Dr Nicholas Penny, Director of the National Gallery, said, *"We are delighted with the success of the programme thus far. Our aim is to help regional museums maintain a high level of curatorial excellence and to support new talent in the field. The projects are extremely interesting and challenging for the trainees and will greatly benefit the collections in Birmingham and York. We are very much looking forward to welcoming the trainees at the Gallery and working with Birmingham and York once they take up their posts."*

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund, said: *"We are so pleased to be part of a scheme developing the curators of the future. The first phase was a great success, and we look forward to the next step. The potential benefits lie not just with the individual curators chosen, but also for the museums and their visiting public in the long term."*

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Notes to editors

The National Gallery's curatorial traineeship programme, supported by the Art Fund, was initiated in 2011. The programme provides practical curatorial training alongside collections-based and specialist research skills. The trainee's time is allocated between the National Gallery and the partner museum during the 22-month appointment. After an initial training period of six months at the National Gallery, with trips to the partner organisation to discuss the project to be undertaken, the trainees move to the partner organisation to deliver the project.

The institutions involved in the first phase of the programme (2011–13) were Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums and Manchester Art Gallery.

The result of Philippa Stephenson's 2012–13 traineeship at Tyne & Wear is the exhibition *Divine Bodies* at Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle (8 June – 29 September 2013). <http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/laing-art-gallery/whats-on/exhibitions/divine-bodies.html>

The result of Henrietta Ward's 2012–13 traineeship at Manchester Art Gallery is the display *Home, Land and Sea in the Netherlands 1600–1800* (24 May 2013 – 23 May 2014). <http://www.manchestergalleries.org/whats-on/exhibitions/index.php?itemID=103>

Partner organisations 2013

Birmingham Museums Trust manages nine museum and heritage sites and cares for the city of Birmingham's collections of over half a million objects, encompassing fine and applied art, history, archaeology, science and technology and world cultures. The strength and quality of the paintings collection make it a major cultural resource for the West Midlands.

The curatorial trainee's time at Birmingham will be dedicated to a project that will transform the visitor experience of two galleries of 17th-century European art through their refurbishment and redisplay. The galleries contain an outstanding collection of Italian Baroque painting including the only autograph work by Orazio Gentileschi in a public collection in the UK. The curatorial trainee will carry out research into the collection of Dutch, Flemish and Italian paintings and sculptures and will oversee the development of new displays and interpretation and educational resources aimed at children and young people.

York Art Gallery's collection of paintings spans more than 600 years. The collection ranges from 14th-century Italian panels and 17th-century Dutch masterpieces to Victorian narrative paintings and 20th-century works by L.S. Lowry and David Hockney. The Gallery is currently undergoing an £8 million development which will see it reopen in Easter 2015 with 60 per cent more exhibition space.

The focus of the traineeship at York is research into a selection of the Gallery's Old Master paintings, a collection of 136 continental Old Masters that stretches from the 14th to the 18th century, which was the generous gift of F.D. Lycett Green through the Art Fund in 1995. The research will lead to the reinterpretation of the collection through the use of new technology and the involvement of contemporary artists, that will culminate in a major new display aimed at communicating new discoveries about York's Old Master paintings to a wider audience.

About the Art Fund

The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art, helping museums to buy and show great art for everyone. Over the past five years we've given over £26m to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections and placed hundreds of gifts and bequests, from ancient sculpture and treasure hoards to Old Master paintings and contemporary commissions. We also help museums share their collections with wider audiences through supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, including the national tour of the Artist Rooms collection and the 2013–14 tours of Grayson Perry's tapestries *The Vanity of Small Differences* and Jeremy Deller's *English Magic*, the British Council commission for the 2013 Venice Biennale. Our support for museums extends to the Art Guide app – the comprehensive guide to seeing art across the UK, promoting a network of over 650 museums and galleries throughout the country, and the £100,000 Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year – an annual celebration of the best of UK museums,

won in 2013 by William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow. We are independently funded, the majority of our income coming from over 100,000 members who, through the National Art Pass, enjoy free entry to over 220 hundred museums, galleries and historic houses across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions.

Find out more about the Art Fund and the National Art Pass at www.artfund.org.

About the National Gallery

The National Gallery in Trafalgar Square houses the national collection of Western European painting from the 13th to the early 20th century. The collection belongs to the nation and serves a diverse public from the UK and overseas. It is open to all, 361 days a year, free of charge. The Gallery's key objectives are to enhance the collection, care for the collection and provide the best possible access to visitors. www.nationalgallery.org.uk