

## **Major boost for contemporary art collecting, as the Art Fund announces the next six winners of its New Collecting Awards**

- **Scheme continues to develop the UK's most talented curators**
- **Majority of grants go towards contemporary art collecting across the UK**
- **Projects range from light art in Blackpool, to revealing the hidden histories of the British Army**

The Art Fund today announced the winners of its £400,000 funding programme, which invests in the development of some of the UK's most ambitious and exciting curators. Through the New Collecting Awards, curators are each given a budget to pursue a completely new avenue of collecting in their museums. For the scheme's second round these are in Brighton, Edinburgh, London, Cambridge and Blackpool. Five out of six of the awards were presented to support contemporary art collecting. The scheme not only benefits the museums' collections, but helps the curators to learn at first-hand about the process of making great acquisitions, and contribute significantly to their professional development.

### **The six winners:**

- Richard Parry, Curator at the Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool was awarded £80,000 to build a collection of light-based art.
- Julie-Ann Delaney, Curator at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (SNGMA), Edinburgh was awarded £80,000 towards a project focussing on contemporary performance art, collection care and display.
- Jenny Lund, Curator of Fine Art at Royal Pavilion & Museums (RPM), Brighton & Hove, was awarded £80,000 to build a nationally significant and inspiring new collection of artists' moving image works.
- Rebecca Newell, Curator at the National Army Museum, London was awarded £60,000 to build a collection of contemporary art that explores hidden histories in the British Army.
- Mark Elliott, Curator for Anthropology at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge was awarded £50,000 to build a collection of contemporary works by artists and makers from indigenous communities in India.
- Thomas Hockenhull, Curator: Modern Money, Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, London was awarded £50,000 to build a collection of numismatic material from socialist and former socialist governed countries.

Stephen Deuchar, director of the Art Fund, said: *"Following on from the unprecedented success of the first round, we were able to unlock a further £100,000 of funding for the scheme's second round. This means we are able to support even more generously some of the UK's brightest early-career curators. I look forward to seeing how these six innovative and pioneering projects unfold, further confirming the importance of developing and supporting curatorship."*

The six winners were selected from a shortlist who each presented their proposals to a panel of judges.

This announcement follows on from a successful first round of the scheme, which was launched in September 2014. £300,000 was awarded to five curators from London, Liverpool, Durham and Edinburgh. The scheme aims to: offer special acquisition grants to help a new generation of curators hone their skills in developing museum collections and in buying works of art; help museums and galleries extend holdings into new areas, or deepen existing holdings in imaginative ways; promote the value of research-led collecting and foster curatorial expertise at individual and institutional levels, thus enriching museum practice over the long term.

The New Collecting Awards recipients will also receive funding dedicated to their own professional development - to spend on research, travel and training costs to support their proposed collecting plans, as well as the ongoing support of a mentor, Art Fund staff and trustees.

The New Collecting Awards are made possible through the generous support of a consortium of funders, including the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, The Wolfson Foundation, The Headley Trust, The Ruddock Foundation for the Arts, Richard Reed, and other contributions from private individuals.

**-Ends**

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**Notes to Editors:**

**New Collecting Award winners - second round:**

**Richard Parry, Curator at the Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool**

Richard would like to build a new strand for collecting light-based artworks at the Grundy, introducing significant work into their collection, and becoming the gallery nationally (and internationally) known for its collection in light-based work. Blackpool is in many ways the cultural 'home' of light in the UK, with the Illuminations drawing 3-4 million visitors each year, and the award will help build a new and substantial chapter to this. Using the award, Richard will be able not only to research and develop key relationships with highly regarded artists and curators working with light, but also then to purchase and display works by artists internationally-recognised for their work in this medium. A core aim will be to build audiences through the programme, contributing to national conversations around how contemporary art can contribute to audience development, especially in seaside economies such as Blackpool. Through studio visits, curatorial research, and exploring links with other organisations, the award will significantly contribute to building the curatorial knowledge and skills base within the Grundy.

**Julie-Ann Delaney, Curator at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (SNGMA), Edinburgh**

The SNGMA holdings encompass over a century of artistic endeavour, with works made across a huge expanse of media including painting, sculpture, works on paper, photography, video and installation, but crucially, not performance. Julie-Ann proposes to undertake a period of in-depth study around current and historical performance art practice, collection care, and display. Through the research project she hopes to identify the first performance work(s) for the gallery to acquire, filling one of the most significant gaps in the collection. The award will also be used to develop a public programme of performance - enabling insight into the challenges of display and invigilation, as well as providing an opportunity to gain visitor feedback. The ultimate aim is to identify a number of performances by contemporary artists that can join SNGMA's holdings, be displayed to the public, and be made available to loan to other institutions.

**Jenny Lund, Curator of Fine Art at Royal Pavilion & Museums (RPM), Brighton & Hove**

The award will bring RPM's important historic Film & Media collection, which reflects Brighton & Hove's early film pioneers, up to date, with a contemporary selection that appeals to the city's local, national and international audiences. Critically, the project will also establish firm foundations for the future development of this collection: investing in and extending curatorial and collections knowledge, skills and contacts, researching audiences, and establishing new policies and procedures relating to moving image care and conservation. Jenny's New Collecting Award will enable her to develop a network of professional contacts, visit archives, attend seminars and make studio visits, deepening her knowledge of contemporary British artists' moving image practice.

**Rebecca Newell, Curator at the National Army Museum, London**

Rebecca wants to further develop the National Army Museum into a twenty-first century museum that fully engages with the broad content of its collections. By gathering artistic responses to the British Army she wants to address interpretive 'gaps' through collecting, and in doing so ask questions that curators alone cannot - about gender, diversity, LGBT issues, adaptability and discrimination. The National Army Museum is a storehouse of rich and diverse stories and objects that are of interest to contemporary artists, but possibilities of artistic scrutiny and collaboration are still relatively untapped. Stories of diversity in the army are inherent but not manifest in the museum's conventional material collecting culture and historical interpretation. With the award Rebecca aims to deepen and embed expertise, time and resource to the collecting of art for the Museum that speaks about sensitive, underexplored, hidden histories, draws in audiences in the contemporary, and works in dialogue with existing collections.

**Mark Elliott, Curator for Anthropology at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), Cambridge**

Mark wants to acquire important modern and contemporary works by indigenous, Adivasi or 'tribal' artists and makers in India, commissioning pieces that respond directly to MAA's existing historical collections. Working with partners in central, eastern and

northeast India, and targeting makers and traditions not widely represented in UK museums, acquisitions will unlock the potential of Cambridge's largely unrecognised collections from India: new works will form the centrepiece of Another India, a major exhibition at MAA in 2017, juxtaposing contemporary and historic artworks to trace encounters between Europeans, Indians and indigenous people from the 19th century to the present. The project will transform existing collections, creating a coherent body of work, and collaboratively reimagine and reinterpret indigenous material histories for a new generation. It will create new relationships between MAA and communities in India, engage scholars and communities in the UK and build a constituency for these reinvigorated collections for years to come.

**Thomas Hockenull, Curator: Modern Money, Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, London**

Thomas aims to build a visual record of communist economies by amassing a national collection of numismatic material from socialist and post-socialist governed countries, with a particular focus on former Soviet satellite states. This will take the form of banknotes, coins, posters, designs, bank books, documents and financial ephemera to provide a unique snapshot of all aspects of finance under the planned state economy, as well as illustrating the effects of the upheaval during periods of transition from socialist to post-socialist governments. A major aim of the project is to establish longstanding ties with former state-run institutions, galleries and overseas numismatic societies, creating potential for further collaborations and acquisitions in the future. Another major outcome will be a free exhibition at the British Museum using a selection of the material acquired (possibly accompanied by a publication), in time touring to other venues across the UK.

**The Art Fund**

The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art, driven by the belief that everyone should have access to great art. In the past 5 years alone the Art Fund has given £34m to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections. It also helps museums share their collections with wider audiences by supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, including ARTIST ROOMS and the 2013-18 Aspire tour of Tate's Constable's Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows, and makes additional grants to support the training and professional development of curators.

The Art Fund is independently funded, with the core of its income provided by more than 117,000 members who receive the National Art Pass and enjoy free entry to over 230 museums, galleries and historic places across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions. In addition to grant-giving, the Art Fund's support for museums includes the annual Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year (won by The Whitworth, Manchester, in 2015), a publications programme and a range of digital platforms including a website and the Art Guide app, promoting a network of over 650 museums and galleries across the country.