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Appeal to save Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I reaches £2.7 million following rapid public response

Huge public generosity sees appeal pass £2.7 million in one of the Art Fund's most successful appeals ever

Every public donation matched pound for pound, as match fund is extended



The Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I, circa 1590, English School

Art Fund and Royal Museums Greenwich announced today its appeal to save the iconic Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I for the museum has brought in an extraordinary £1.3 million from over 7,000 donations by the public and a match fund contributed by private donors, as well as grants from charitable trusts, in just one month. This makes it one of the most successful Art Fund appeals ever, as fast and as popular as the Save Wedgwood appeal in 2014. For the Armada campaign, the public has been digging deeper than ever before, with an average donation of £82.

Encouraged by the groundswell of public support, major donors have responded generously to extend the match fund and encourage more people to contribute. Every donation is matched pound for pound.

The #SaveArmada appeal was launched on 23 May 2016 with £1.4 million in contributions from Art Fund and Royal Museums Greenwich, towards the £10m needed. The appeal total now stands at £2.7m with further approaches to major funders underway.

If the fundraising campaign for the remaining funds is successful, the painting – once owned and possibly commissioned by Sir Francis Drake - will enter public ownership for the first time in its 425-year history and in the 90th birthday year of our present Queen. As part of the national collection it would hang in the Queen's House, on the site of the original Greenwich Palace, which was a major political and symbolic centre for the Tudor dynasty and the birthplace of Elizabeth I herself. The Queen's House sits at the heart of the Greenwich World Heritage Site and is reopening later this year following major restoration.

The campaign has received backing from high profile advocates, including historians Sir Roy Strong and David Starkey. In a film hosted on Art Fund's website, David Starkey calls on the public to "help keep this picture in Britain", and to donate generously in order to prevent this work from being lost from public view. He said: "The campaign is going well but there is still some way to go and we need your help to secure the future of this painting. It is in a very fragile state and needs urgent conservation work. There is also the risk that if we fail to raise the necessary [funds] the painting will be sold on the open market, and it might even go abroad...Please give generously."

The portrait commemorates the most famous conflict of Elizabeth's reign (1558 – 1603), the failed invasion of England by the Spanish Armada in summer 1588. One of the definitive representations of the English Renaissance, encapsulating the creativity, ideals and ambitions of the Elizabethan era, it is amongst the most famous images of British history, the inspiration for countless portrayals of Elizabeth I in film or on stage, and a staple in school textbooks.

Up and down the country people have been doing their bit to help the appeal. Christina Ryder, 7, who attends Wakefield Girls' High School Junior School, started a fundraising campaign for the portrait and not only has a magnificent costume inspired by the painting but also made a brilliant poster to support the appeal. As well as asking for donations, she has arranged with her school to do a cake sale today (30th June), selling cupcakes featuring her own design inspired by the Armada portrait. Christina's mother, Jennifer Ryder, said "Christina says it is her dream to go to London and see the portrait, and she's worried that if it gets sold she'll never get to see it."

'St Paul's Girls' School in London is also holding a bake sale today in aid of the Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I. History teacher Blanche Girouard said, "We study the portrait when we teach Elizabeth I and the Armada, so the girls are very keen to help save it for the nation!"

Dear Parents
The Armada Portrait is a historic painting of Queen Elizabeth I. The painting is for sale and we want it to stay in England.
I am raising money to help the museum buy the painting. It will cost £8,600,000. Please send donations to school in an envelope marked Armada Portrait.
Also on Thursday 30th of June I will be selling cupcakes at school. Please bring £1.00 to buy a cupcake.
Thank you
Christina in 2GH
P.S. Find out more at www.savearmada.org.

Letter to parents from Christina Ryder, aged 7



Cupcake designed by Christina Ryder, aged 7. Image © Jennifer Ryder

The campaign has also generated a lot of social media activity. The Twitter account @StudioTeaBreak challenged its followers to recreate the Armada Portrait as part of its regular #PortraitChallenge for illustrators – which led to dozens of creative responses to the painting being shared on the hashtag.

Art Fund and Royal Museums Greenwich hope to have the funds in place by July.

Donations can be made at artfund.org/armada or text 70800 Armada to give £10.
0844 415 4100
Text ARMADA to 70800 to donate £10
#savearmada

Notes to Editors

Royal Museums Greenwich incorporates the National Maritime Museum, the Royal Observatory Greenwich, the 17th-century Queen's House and *Cutty Sark*. Royal Museums Greenwich works to illustrate for everyone the importance of the sea, ships, time and the stars and their relationship with people. This unique collection of attractions, which form a key part of the Maritime Greenwich UNESCO World Heritage Site, welcomes over 2 million British and international visitors a year and is also a major centre of education and research. For more information visit www.rmg.co.uk.

About Art Fund

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. In the past five years alone Art Fund has given £34 million 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 Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows by John Constable, and makes additional grants to support the training and professional development of curators.

Art Fund is independently funded, with the core of its income provided by 122,000 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, 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.

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

Ends

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