

Art Fund_

PRESS RELEASE
Monday 12 December 2016

Art Fund's £1 million scheme nurturing the UK's curatorial talent

- *Art Fund invests £1m in New Collecting Awards to help build collections and develop talented curators nationwide*
- *Tracey Emin neon for Blackpool is one of latest acquisitions*
- *Latest funding released includes special award for pre-1600 curatorship*

Art Fund announced today that it has invested £1 million in its New Collecting Awards scheme since launching it in 2014. The charity's landmark funding programme enables the next generation of curators to build critical professional skills by pursuing new avenues of collecting for their museums. Applications for the latest round of this scheme are now in, with curators competing for their share of £300,000. Art Fund will announce the winners and their funding in April 2017.

Stephen Deuchar, director of the Art Fund, said: "Museum collections flourish in the hands of visionary curators, and yet our latest research reveals a profession under pressure and even in danger of decline. The New Collecting Awards offer new hope and new prospects."

The programme responds to the need for ongoing collections development in our museums, underpinned by curatorial experience, vision and ambition. Award recipients also receive a specific funding allocation dedicated to their own professional development, to spend on research, travel and training costs, plus the ongoing support of Art Fund staff, trustees, and a mentor.

Through the New Collecting Awards, eleven curators have so far each received a significant grant to pursue a new avenue of collecting in their museums in Blackpool, London, Liverpool, Brighton, Cambridge, Durham and Edinburgh respectively. Projects have included the formation of a fine art collection of LGBT culture and history, a collection of work exploring war and the digital, a project focusing on contemporary performance art, and an inspiring new collection of artists' moving image works.

Acquisitions made so far include 20th-century Northern European Modernist

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jewellery and Soviet numismatic material. The most recent acquisition was made by Richard Parry, curator at the Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool, who has acquired a neon work by Tracey Emin through the scheme, which is currently on display in the gallery's NEON exhibition. He received a New Collecting Award of £80,000 to build a collection of light-based art.

He said: "I really appreciate the investment and support from the Art Fund – investment all round, not simply financially to buy artwork, but also personally through mentoring and introductions which are helping the gallery to connect with more people and tell the story of what we are doing in Blackpool. Through all of this, the Award is enabling us to set our sights higher."

"Purchasing this outstanding early neon work by Tracey Emin for the Grundy means a massive amount not only for the gallery but also for Blackpool – to have such a prominent artist who genuinely understands what it means to grow up in a seaside town in the collection is hugely exciting. We have only just embarked on our journey to build a collection of outstanding light-based art and Tracey's work is a fantastic first acquisition to signal our ambitions. It is an artwork that we feel will resonate strongly with audiences for years to come, in what is after all the home of light in the UK."

Noting that the majority of previous New Collecting Awards have been for modern and contemporary art, the Art Fund is also keen to encourage curators with an interest in historic collections to apply. With support from The Ruddock Foundation for the Arts, in 2017-18 one award will be ring-fenced to give a curator experience in making pre-1600 collection acquisitions for their museum.

The previous winners are:

- Mariam Rosser-Owen, Curator Middle East at the V&A has been awarded £50,000 to build a collection of contemporary applied art from the Middle East.
- Hannah Jackson, Assistant Curator of Fashion & Textiles at The Bowes Museum, County Durham, has been awarded £60,000 to build a collection of French haute couture.
- Sara Bevan, Curator of Contemporary Art at IWM (Imperial War Museums) London has been awarded £80,000 to build a collection of work exploring the theme of war and the digital.
- Charlotte Keenan, Curator of British Art for National Museums Liverpool has been awarded £60,000 to build a fine art collection relating to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) culture and history.
- Sarah Rothwell, Assistant Curator of Modern & Contemporary Design at National Museums Scotland has been awarded £50,000 to build a collection of Northern European Modernist Jewellery circa 1945-1979.
- 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 develop their 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.

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

www.artfund.org/newcollecting

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Notes to Editors

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, 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 240 museums, galleries and historic places across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions and subscription to Art Quarterly magazine. In addition to grant-giving, Art Fund's support for museums includes Art Fund Museum of the Year (won by the V&A, London, in 2016) and a range of digital platforms.

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