

Art Fund_

PRESS RELEASE
Wednesday 15 May 2017

Art Fund announces significant growth in its charitable programme supporting UK museums in 2016

- £4.5m grants given to museums for the purchase of works of art
- 75% of grants go to organisations outside London
- Over 400 curators supported
- Investment in New Collecting Awards reaches £1m
- V&A wins £100,000 prize as Art Fund Museum of the Year 2016
- Art Fund membership grows to 123,000 and National Art Pass Plus One launched

Today Art Fund publishes its 2016/17 annual report in which it announced that the total value of its charitable programme in 2016 increased to £16.6m (2015: £11.2m), helping museums to build their collections, funding the development of emerging curators, increasing its 123,000 strong community of members, and supporting touring programmes to bring great works of art to venues nationwide.

Art Fund chairman, Lord Smith of Finsbury, said: "We know these are difficult times for UK museums and that, for many, the future looks uncertain. Over the past year our work – not just as a funder, but also as an advocate of and ally to arts organisations – has never seemed more important, or more crucial."

Building collections

In 2016 Art Fund awarded acquisition grants of over £4.5m to contribute to UK museums' purchase of 96 acquisitions with a total value of £23,425,170, by 129 different artists and makers. Highlights include *St Luke Drawing the Virgin and Child* (c. 1440-75), attributed to the studio of Dieric Bouts the Elder for The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle; Steve McQueen's *Ashes* (2002-15) for The Whitworth, Manchester; *The Orozco Garden* (2016) by Gabriel Orozco for South London Gallery; and *The Message of the Forest* (1936) by Czech Surrealist Toyen, for the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh. 75% of acquisition grants were awarded to organisations outside London.

Further to this, 113 works were placed with 15 museums and galleries through the charity's gifts and bequests scheme, thanks to the generosity of 14 donors.

Developing talent

As public funding declines and knowing that it is increasingly difficult for museums to support curatorial development, Art Fund continues to expand its programme in response. Art Fund's total investment in the New Collecting Awards scheme has reached £1m helping curators to collect in areas ranging from contemporary light-based art to classic French couture. 50 curators were awarded Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Grants to fund research trips across six continents and five new curators received traineeships, seeing them mentored at two major London galleries before being placed at museums across the UK. Further to this, Art Fund supported networking and training opportunities that benefited more than 400 curators nationwide.

Helping curators with the development of their research, expertise and creativity promises a future of inspiring exhibitions and imaginative collections displays for the public to enjoy.

Supporting museums

Art Fund supports museums in a variety of ways. In 2016 Art Fund ran a public campaign to save the *Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I* for Royal Museums Greenwich. Proving the nation's enthusiasm for the portrait, 8,000 people donated to the appeal in just 10 weeks. More than 420 years after it was painted, the portrait has entered a public collection for the first time, and is now on display at the Queen's House in Greenwich.

In 2016 the V&A in London was named Art Fund Museum of the Year, winning the £100,000 prize for a year of exceptional achievement, including its record-breaking Alexander McQueen exhibition, transformed Europe 1600-1815 galleries and imaginative India Festival. They recently announced that they will use their award to support DesignLab Nation, an ambitious national programme to support design education for 11 to 16 year olds, working with regional museums. In April 2017 the five finalists for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2017 were revealed, and the winner will be announced on 5 July at the British Museum.

In 2016, 1,284 people donated to Art Happens crowdfunding campaigns, including re-gilding the proscenium arch in Old Royal Naval College's Painted Hall, and helping River & Rowing Museum, Oxfordshire, to create a permanent John Piper gallery and archive in his hometown.

National Art Pass

The National Art Pass brings UK museums and the public together. The pass generates the incomes that makes Art Fund's work with museums possible and, in turn, allows Art Fund members to see the impact of their support first hand, by visiting for free or at reduced price.

In 2016 Art Fund membership increased to 123,000, and the National Art Pass Plus One was launched, a new flexible form of double membership allowing pass holders to take any guest along on their museum visit.

Art Fund added 17 new National Art Pass partners to its network, including Blenheim Palace; Freud Museum; Scottish Maritime Museum and Talbot Rice Gallery, expanding the network of museums and galleries for members to explore with their pass.

Thanks to the support of a consortium of private donors, trusts and foundations, Art Fund has been able to provide free National Art Passes to more than 12,000 art students at 22 universities over the last five years. 87% of recipients surveyed said that regular visits to museum and galleries were crucial to their studies, confirming that the pass is an invaluable asset to creative education.

In 2016 Art Fund focused on promoting awareness of the National Art Pass for Companies, launched in 2015. The charity's corporate members have shared that National Art Pass experiences have helped fuel their creative thinking, brought them closer to their colleagues and provided new spaces for them to recharge and relax. Art Fund believes it to be the cultural benefit of choice, and that organisations of all sizes and across all sectors can benefit from taking part.

Art Partners

As Art Fund's closest supporters, Art Partners play a crucial role in enabling the charity to do more for museums across the country, believing in the importance of strengthening public collections, and pledging their philanthropic support to help make that possible. In 2016, 188 Art Partners enjoyed a programme of exclusive visits to 14 museums, galleries, art collections and artists' studios. They also donated over £650,000 towards the acquisitions of works of art, and special projects including the Armada Portrait campaign, the New Collecting Awards scheme, and the Student National Art Pass.

Artist Partners

In 2016, Art Fund announced a new strand of its Art Partners scheme. In recognition of Art Fund's important relationship with contemporary British art, a dozen leading artists joined as ambassadors and supporters: Zarina Bhimji, Richard Deacon, Jeremy Deller, Isaac Julian, Anish Kapoor, Michael Landy, Cornelia Parker, Martin Parr, Bob and Roberta Smith, Mitra Tabrizian, Clare Twomey and Jonathan Yeo.

Art on tour

Art Fund aims to help everyone get closer to art, no matter where they live in the UK. The touring programmes it supports create crucial opportunities for individual works, exhibitions or collections to be shown in museums both inside and outside of the capital.

In 2016 a multi-venue exhibition in Bristol completed the six-city Art from Elsewhere exhibition tour in July. Works by Ai Weiwei, Kara Walker and Imran Qureshi, amongst many others, travelled to Glasgow, Middlesbrough, Birmingham, Preston, Eastbourne and Bristol as part of the programme (in partnership with Hayward Touring).

Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, whose acquisition was supported by Art Fund in 2013 with a grant of £1m, was shown at Oriol y Parc in Pembrokeshire as part of a series of celebrations marking the artist's 240th birthday. In the autumn it returned 'home' to Salisbury Museum, to be displayed next door to the cathedral it depicts. Its five-year tour finishes in Edinburgh this year (in partnership with Tate and the Heritage Lottery Fund).

Van Dyck's *Self-portrait*, acquired by the National Portrait Gallery in 2014 with a grant from Art Fund, starred in an exhibition at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in 2016, curated by artist John Stezaker. The painting is being shown in Newcastle and Edinburgh this year (in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery and the Heritage Lottery Fund).

Meanwhile, Artist Rooms, the important touring collection of international contemporary art that Art Fund is helping to share the length and breadth of the UK, celebrated its 40 millionth visitor.

For further info, please see Art Fund's annual report 2016/2017.

<https://www.artfund.org/assets/about-us/annual-report/art-fund-annual-report-16-17.pdf>

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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, 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 123,000 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.