

PRESS RELEASE  
13 December 2017

## ART FUND MUSEUM OF THE YEAR 2018 LAUNCHED

Today, Wednesday 13 December, the search for the Art Fund Museum of the Year 2018 was launched with prize money of £140,000 at stake.

The biggest museum prize in the world, Art Fund Museum of the Year seeks out and celebrates innovation and exceptional achievement in museums and galleries across the UK. £100,000 is awarded to one outstanding winner and £10,000 to each other finalist.

The 2018 judges are also announced today: Ian Blatchford, director of the Science Museum Group; Rebecca Jones, BBC arts correspondent; Melanie Manchot, artist; and Monisha Shah, independent media consultant and Art Fund trustee. The judging panel will be chaired by Stephen Deuchar, director, Art Fund.

The winning museum will be announced before an invited audience of leading figures from the fields of culture and museums, on Thursday 5 July 2018 at the V&A Museum in London, itself a winner of the prize in 2016, at a ceremony in the spectacular setting of the Raphael Cartoons Gallery.

Stephen Deuchar, director, Art Fund, said: "The announcement today to launch Art Fund Museum of the Year 2018 is a reflection of our commitment to the UK's museums. We believe that our museums and galleries are engines of cultural development in this country: centres of innovation, pioneering new ways of engaging with the public, and encouraging more people to understand and enjoy the diverse cultures of the UK. The search is now on for our next Art Fund Museum of the Year, and we encourage organisations nationwide to apply."

Simon Wallis, Director of The Hepworth Wakefield, winner of the top award in 2017, receiving £100,000, commented today on the impact of their win: "We were absolutely delighted and honoured to have won Art Fund Museum of the Year 2017. We will always be proud of this achievement, as are the residents of Wakefield and Yorkshire. Winning this prestigious accolade was a fitting acknowledgement of the ambitious and passionate team at The Hepworth Wakefield, but also of our loyal and engaged members, patrons, supporters and local residents. The impact of winning has delivered even greater audience growth this year as the broad media exposure introduced the gallery to new people and convinced those who have long been meaning to visit to finally make the trip".

Art Fund Museum of the Year will continue its partnership with the BBC in 2018, who will present a series of specially commissioned programmes across television, radio and online platforms.

@artfund #museumoftheyear [artfund.org/museum-of-the-year](http://artfund.org/museum-of-the-year)

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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 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 The Hepworth Wakefield in 2017) and a range of digital platforms.

Find out more about Art Fund and the National Art Pass at [www.artfund.org](http://www.artfund.org)

The 2018 judging panel:

Stephen Deuchar (Chair)

Director of Art Fund since 2010, Stephen Deuchar has chaired the judging panel since 2013. Before joining Art Fund, Stephen was the first director of Tate Britain (1998-2010), having previously spent 12 years as a curator then Exhibitions Director at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

Ian Blatchford

Director of the Science Museum Group since 2010, Ian Blatchford began his career in the City before joining Arts Council England and later the Royal Academy

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of Arts in senior finance roles. Prior to joining the Science Museum Group, he was Deputy Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, having joined the museum in 2002 as Director of Finance and Resources. Ian is chair of the National Museum Directors' Council. He is also Chairman of the Board of De Montfort University and sits on the international advisory board of the Museum of Tomorrow in Rio de Janeiro. He was awarded the Pushkin Medal in 2015.

#### Rebecca Jones

Rebecca Jones is BBC's Arts Correspondent, covering arts stories across BBC Radio, TV and Online. She is also a presenter on the BBC News Channel as well as being a regular presenter of the programmes Meet the Author and Talking Books. Previously Rebecca has worked as a foreign correspondent for the BBC, based in Berlin. She has also worked in regional television, presenting the nightly news programme at Anglia. She has been a judge of the Costa Book Awards and is a former trustee of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. She has also served on the Board of Birmingham Royal Ballet.

#### Melanie Manchot

Artist Melanie Manchot works with photography, video, film, sound and performance. She has exhibited internationally and her work can be found in important public and private collections including the Arts Council Collection and Brooklyn Museum, New York. For Art Night 2017, she produced 'Dance (All Night, London)', a performance and multi-channel video work. Recent solo exhibitions include Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne (2016), Bloomberg Space and fig-2 at the ICA, London (both 2015), Toronto Photography Festival (2012), and Whitechapel Gallery, London (2010). In 2017 she was shortlisted for the Jarman Award.

#### Monisha Shah

An Art Fund trustee since summer 2017, Monisha Shah is Chair of Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, among many other roles. She has served as a trustee of Tate from 2007 to 2015, of the National Gallery from 2013 to 2015 and has served on the Boards of the Foundling Museum and Art UK. Monisha's last executive role was with BBC Worldwide, where she worked for 10 years as Director of Sales for Emerging Markets, including Europe, the Middle East, India and Africa.

#### Museum of the Year timeline

Applications open: 13 December 2017

DEADLINE: 6 February 2018 at noon

Announcement of finalists: w/c 30 April 2018

Art Fund Museum of the Year 2018 award ceremony: 5 July 2018

#### Art Fund Museum of the Year

Art Fund has supported Museum of the Year since 2008. Its forerunner was the Prize for Museums and Galleries, administered by the Museum Prize Trust and sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation from 2003-2007. The prize champions what museums do, encourages more people to visit and gets to the heart of what makes a truly outstanding museum. The judges present the prize to the museum or gallery that has shown how their achievements of the preceding year stand out, demonstrated what makes their work innovative, and the impact it has had on audiences. These achievements might include:

- Bold and imaginative exhibitions, collection displays or collection conservation projects
- Learning programmes that have developed the skills, knowledge and enjoyment of children, young people and adults in new ways
- Exceptional acquisitions that have had a real impact on the museum and its audiences
- Audience engagement, diversity or access initiatives that have greatly broadened participation, and creative use of technology or digital media
- Substantial programmes of modernisation, reorganisation or reinterpretation that have had a transformative impact
- New building, refurbishments or reinventions of existing spaces that have had a strong impact on the museum and its audiences