

PRESS RELEASE

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Art Fund reports record-breaking year

This week, Art Fund, the national charity for art, published its 2017/18 annual report. It showed Art Fund's charitable programme helped more museums and galleries nationwide and inspired more people to see more art than ever before in its 115-year history.

Highlights from the past year include:

- £5.5m given to 94 organisations for the purchase of 200 works of art and objects – 85% of grants going to organisations outside of London
- The £750,000 Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund was launched to enable smaller and local authority museums to borrow objects from national collections
- Hepworth Wakefield won the £100,000 Art Fund Museum of the Year 2017, with other finalist museums receiving £10,000 each
- National Art Pass holders rose to 139,000, including 12,000 students taking up Art Fund's £5 Student Art Pass

Art Fund chairman, Lord Smith of Finsbury, said: 'As we reflect on 2017 and look forward to the future, we are listening more closely than ever to those we serve. The UK has seen dramatic changes in recent years, but that has not dimmed the dynamism or determination of our museums and galleries. Art Fund is committed to investing more effectively to address their evolving needs, and we are taking bold steps to increase our grant giving to £10m per year by 2020'.

In its report, the charity articulates four strands that drive its grant-giving programme and clarify its areas of focus:

- Building collections – Art Fund's central commitment is to help museums and galleries to acquire works of art. We also encourage strategic collecting initiatives the commissioning of new works of art. We will provide over £6 million a year in acquisition grants by 2020.
- Reaching audiences – For collections to have the greatest impact, they need

to engage and inspire audiences. The charity is planning to increase grant giving to £2 million a year to support the exhibition, display, conservation and touring of collections.

- Shaping futures – Art Fund is increasing the funding to help curators and museum professionals develop their skills and pursue forward-thinking initiatives, aiming to invest a £2 million per annum in this area by 2020.
- Making connections – Art Fund is investing substantially in fostering networks between museums, their audiences and all those who want to support the UK's cultural organisations and their communities.

Art Fund's increased charitable programme will be made possible by further expansion of the National Art Pass – which gives Art Fund's 139,000 members free or reduced entry to over 320 museums, galleries and historic houses across the UK as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions – along with growth in income from trusts and foundations, individuals and corporate organisations.

Building collections

In 2017, Art Fund awarded acquisition grants totalling £5.5m to 94 UK organisations to help bring more than 200 objects and works of art by 138 artists into their collections. Highlights include: The Galloway Hoard (c. 850-950) for the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh; The Felix Dennis OZ archive (1968-74) for the V&A, London; Junko Mori's Silver Poetry; Spring Fever Ring (2014) for Temple Newsam House, Leeds; Middle Eastern photography (1980-present) for the British Museum, London; and Yinka Shonibare's Trumpet Boy (2010) for The Foundling Museum, London. 85% of acquisition grants were awarded to organisations outside London.

Further to this, over 400 individual works were placed with 15 museums and galleries through the charity's gifts and bequests scheme, thanks to the generosity of 14 donors.

Reaching audiences

Art Fund supports museums and their collections in a variety of ways. In 2017, the charity funded several touring exhibition projects. It supported Van Dyck's final self-portrait as it finished its three-year tour of the country and returned to the National Portrait Gallery, as well as provided funding to bring works from the Venice Biennale to the UK. Representing Scotland and Wales respectively, Rachel Maclean's Spite Your Face and James Richards' Music for the gift will be on display at galleries in Cardiff and Edinburgh throughout 2018. Art Fund has also supported Wolverhampton Art Gallery's exhibition of works by seven artists who participated in the 2017 Diaspora Pavilion in Venice.

In 2017, the Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund was created by the Garfield Weston Foundation and Art Fund to enable smaller and local authority

museums to borrow works of art from the National Collections – some for the first time. The first borrowed works are on display throughout 2018. Highlights include a Rembrandt from the National Gallery traveling to Barnsley as part of Cannon Hall Museum's exhibition of Dutch Masters, and Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery borrowing the Becket Casket from the V&A to mark the 900th anniversary of Peterborough Cathedral.

Shaping futures

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. In 2017, Art Fund provided £300,000 to six curators through the New Collecting Awards scheme, enabling them to pursue new areas of collecting and research for their museums. These ranged from one project extending the medieval holdings of the National Portrait Gallery to another, at Royal Museums Greenwich, documenting forced migration through the collection of contemporary objects. 74 curators received Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Grants to fund research trips across six continents. Along with this, Art Fund supported a range of networking and training opportunities that benefitted hundreds of curators nationwide.

Making connections

In navigating the challenges of today's arts landscape, museums engage more inventively with their audiences and collaborate more closely with each other. Art Fund is helping them to bridge these connections more easily.

Considered the biggest museum prize in the world, 2017 saw the Art Fund Museum of the Year prize expand to £140,000 with £100,000 to the winner, the Hepworth Wakefield, and £10,000 to each remaining finalist in recognition of their achievements..

In 2017, Art Fund's membership grew to 139,000, who, with a National Art Pass, enjoy free or reduced entry to over 320 museums, galleries and historic houses across the UK. The pass contributes to the income 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. Art Fund also launched the £5 Student Art Pass which saw over 12,000 students join the scheme between October and December 2017.

Art Fund added 22 new National Art Pass partners to its network, including Edinburgh's Fruitmarket Gallery, the Gordon Russell Design Museum in Worcestershire, Yorkshire's Castle Howard and the National Justice Museum in Nottingham.

For further information, please see Art Fund's annual report 2017/18: https://www.artfund.org/assets/about-us/annual-report/af_annual-report2018_full_catalogue.pdf

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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 139,000 members who receive the National Art Pass and enjoy free or reduced entry to over 320 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 Hepworth Wakefield in 2017) and a range of digital platforms.