

PRESS RELEASE

12 December 2018

Search for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019 begins today

Today, Wednesday 12 December, the search for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019 begins.

The biggest museum prize in the world – with a total prize value of £140,000 – Art Fund Museum of the Year seeks out, celebrates and rewards innovation and exceptional achievement in museums and galleries across the UK.

Each year an independent panel selects the finalists and winner. The judges for 2019 are also announced today: David Batchelor, artist; Brenda Emmanus, broadcaster and journalist; Bridget McConnell, chief executive of Glasgow Life; and Bill Sherman, director of the Warburg Institute. The Jury will be chaired by Stephen Deuchar, director of Art Fund.

There are around 2,500 museums in the UK, many of them free, including national museums, local authority museums, university museums, independent museums, historic properties and heritage sites, National Trust properties and royal palaces. More than 100 million visits are made to UK museums every year, making museums some of the most popular visitor destinations in the country.

Art Fund Museum of the Year champions the work of museums – shining the spotlight on the originality and creativity of museums of all kinds and sizes from every part of the UK. To be considered, museums are asked to show how their achievements of the preceding year stand out, what makes their work inventive and the impact it has had on audiences. These achievements might include: bold and imaginative exhibitions, collection displays or conservation projects; learning programmes; acquisitions with a real impact on the museum and its audiences; creative use of technology or digital media; audience engagement and participation initiatives; new buildings, refurbishments or reinventions of existing spaces.

The application deadline is 6 February 2019 and the finalist museums will be announced in May 2019.

The winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019 will be announced at an award ceremony at the Science Museum in London on 3 July. The winning museum will receive £100,000. Each other finalist will receive £10,000.

Art Fund Museum of the Year has helped draw national and international attention to UK museums. Previous winners of the prize include: British Museum, London (2011), Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter (2012), William Morris Gallery, London (2013), Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield (2014), The Whitworth, Manchester (2015), V&A Museum, London (2016), Hepworth Wakefield (2017), Tate St Ives (2018).

Art Fund Museum of the Year will continue its partnership with the BBC in 2018, which will cover the prize through programming across television, radio and online platforms

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 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 Tate St Ives in 2018) and a range of digital platforms. Find out more about Art Fund and the National Art Pass at artfund.org

The judges

Stephen Deuchar

Director of Art Fund since 2010, Dr Stephen Deuchar has chaired the judging panel since 2013. Before joining Art Fund, Stephen was the first director of Tate Britain (1998-2009), having previously spent 12 years as a curator then exhibitions director at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

David Batchelor

Artist David Batchelor has exhibited widely internationally, with recent exhibitions in London, Tehran and Melbourne. Deriving from a long-term interest in colour and urbanism, his work comprises three-dimensional structures, photographs, paintings and drawings.

Brenda Emmanus

Broadcaster and journalist Brenda Emmanus has presented programmes and documentaries across BBC television and radio. Previously an arts and features editor for the Voice Newspaper Brenda has also been a facilitating judge for two anthologies commissioned by Penguin Books and the Creative Arts Awards for the Stroke Association.

Bridget McConnell

Chief executive of Glasgow Life, Bridget McConnell is the strategic lead ensuring Glasgow is a world-leader in culture and sport. Career highlights have included overseeing the £35 million refurbishment of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and the opening of the Riverside Museum, named European Museum of the Year in 2013.

Bill Sherman

Professor Bill Sherman is director of the Warburg Institute (University of London), one of the world's leading centres for the study of images, ideas and societies, and was previously director of research and collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum and founding director of the Centre for Renaissance & Early Modern Studies at the University of York.

How to apply:

Art Fund Museum of the Year is open to all museums, galleries and historic sites in the UK. Applications open 12 December and the deadline to apply is 6 February 2019. For further information and to apply visit artfund.org/museumoftheyear or contact Emma Coleman at ecoleman@artfund.org or on 020 7225 4822.

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