

PRESS RELEASE

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UK adults planning 66m trips to museums and galleries this summer – but two thirds will head to the top ten ‘big names’ instead of smaller institutions

- 65% of those visiting museums or galleries this summer will go to one of the top ten big name UK institutions with just 39% planning a trip to one of the other 2000+ smaller venues
- Eight of the top ten UK museums and galleries are in London, suggesting the cultural sector in the capital is set to recover more quickly than in other parts of the UK
- Two thirds expect to encounter big queues at larger institutions this summer, whilst half expect to see price hikes
- Art Fund launches the innovative Art Pass Unbooked to help visitors support local cultural institutions

People across the UK are planning a massive 66m trips to museums and galleries this summer, as lockdown lifts and beloved institutions across the country reopen their doors. But according to new consumer research commissioned by Art Fund – the national charity for art – the vast majority (65%) of people who are planning to visit a museum or gallery this summer will do so to one of the top ten biggest museums in the UK, compared with just 39% who said they would visit one of the 2,000-plus smaller venues across the country.

Eight of the ‘top ten’ museums and galleries in the UK are based in London however, and the data suggests that there could be a regional disparity in museums’ fortunes, with large, London-based institutions enjoying a busy and successful re-opening, while smaller, regional museums and galleries continue to struggle.

To help local museums have a successful reopening, Art Fund has this week launched the innovative Art Pass [Unbooked](#) – which brings together hundreds of museums and galleries from across the UK in one place for the first time. It is a one stop cultural shop, showing users museums and galleries near to them, ticket availability, and allows them to book there and then.

Data from Art Fund shows that smaller museums and galleries desperately need the support of the public to get back on their feet. Indeed 55% of museums and galleries across the country – the vast majority of which are smaller operations - remain concerned about their long term survival.

Despite most people saying they plan to visit larger museums, galleries and attractions this summer, many have concerns about what they will face. Nearly two thirds (62%) say they expect

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to encounter long queues due to the combination of COVID measures and increased demand. Nearly half (43%) expect to see price hikes as venues attempt to recoup lost earnings. Demand will also be an issue - one in five (20%) say that they have already tried to book an event or attraction in the UK this summer and found it to be sold out.

Art Pass Unbooked is also aimed at helping to address this issue, allowing users to find nearby museums that have tickets available – helping them beat the queues for entry expected at the larger institutions. And for those who have a National Art Pass – the cost of which goes right back into supporting museums and galleries – entry to hundreds of museums is free or reduced-price, and many major exhibitions can be enjoyed for half price.

Jenny Waldman, Art Fund director, said: "As the country opens up, there is finally some light at the end of the tunnel as people begin visiting museums again. Our new research shows that many visitors expect to encounter crowds and queues. To open up the possibilities and support local museums and galleries across the UK, we have launched Art Pass Unbooked. This is a one stop shop for culture, allowing users to search among hundreds of museums and galleries, find availability, and book a spontaneous day out. It's the perfect way to get a culture fix, avoid the big crowds, and support these vital institutions.

"Our research also shows that the vast majority of trips planned this summer will be to the bigger name institutions. But I'd urge people not to forget about their local museums and galleries over the summer and to support them as they recover. Smaller, local museums offer an incredible array of collections, exhibitions and activities and staycations are the perfect opportunity to discover the UK's amazing local museums. "

Art Pass Unbooked can be accessed here: <https://unbooked.artfund.org/>

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Editors notes:

- Research conducted by Opinium for Art Fund between 8-9 July 2021 amongst 2,001 UK adults, nationally representative.
- Images can be downloaded here: <https://bibli.artfund.org/web/2b3a6ba9cffe19bc/art-pass-unbooked/>

For more information contact

Chris Bull, Newsfeed PR, Cbull@NewsfeedPR.co.uk / 07760 273 160

Ruth Findlay, Art Fund rfindlay@artfund.org / 020 7225 4840

[About Art Fund](#)

Art Fund_

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. It provides millions of pounds every year to help museums to acquire and share works of art across the UK, further the professional development of their curators, and inspire more people to visit and enjoy their public programmes. In response to Covid-19 Art Fund has made £3.6 million in urgent funding available to support museums through reopening and beyond, including Respond and Reimagine grants to help meet immediate need and reimagine future ways of working. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by the 131,000 members who buy the National Art Pass, who enjoy free entry to over 240 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and receive Art Quarterly magazine. Art Fund also supports museums through its annual prize, Art Fund Museum of the Year. The shortlisted museums for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2021 are: Centre for Contemporary Art Derry~Londonderry; Experience Barnsley; Firstsite in Colchester; Thackray Museum of Medicine in Leeds; and Timespan in Helmsdale.

About National Art Pass

Art Fund's National Art Pass offers members free or reduced-price entry to hundreds of museums, galleries and historic houses across the UK as well as well as 50% off major exhibitions (including those at Tate, the V&A and the British Museum). Art Fund's growing membership of 131,000 encourages people see more for less, but it also gives something back. It helps Art Fund to support art places and spaces, so that everyone can enjoy the UK's brilliant museums. Many of the destinations available through Art Pass Unbooked offer free or reduced-price entry with a National Art Pass (artfund.org/NationalArtPass).

About Art Pass Unbooked

Art Pass Unbooked is a new platform that helps people explore local museums and their upcoming availability. This smart new online tool will enable culture seekers to get back into the habit of making spontaneous visits. With social distancing measures in place, tickets to higher-profile museums are in demand, with many booked out ahead of time, particularly for key timeslots. Open to everyone, Art Pass Unbooked inspires great ideas for days out, provides local availability and gives enhanced visibility to the nation's less well-known museums and galleries as they recover post lockdown. It also highlights the many discounts available at museums and galleries with Art Fund's National Art Pass. Art Pass Unbooked has grown out of Art Fund's Art Tickets platform which provided museums and galleries with a free ticket management system to make selling tickets online simple.