ART FUND MUSEUM OF THE YEAR 2022

UK’S MUSEUMS INVITED TO APPLY FOR THE WORLD’S LEADING MUSEUM PRIZE

• Applications to open from 5 January 2022
  • Prize fund total £160,000
  • 2022 prize will celebrate creativity, resilience and inspiring the audiences of today and tomorrow

More information at: https://www.artfund.org/museum-of-the-year
#museumoftheyear

Art Fund Museum of the Year, the world’s largest museum prize, is a celebration of the UK’s museums and galleries. It is announced today that the UK’s 2,500 museums, galleries and heritage sites have from 5 January 2022 until 8 February 2022 to apply for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2022.

The 2022 prize will be more important than ever in championing the UK’s vital museums, and Art Fund is seeking applications from organisations whose achievements tell the story of the creativity and resilience of the sector, with a particular focus on engaging audiences of today and the future in ways that can be sustained.
Jenny Waldman, Art Fund director and Art Fund Museum of the Year chair of judges, said, “Throughout the pandemic museums have been a source of great inspiration, joy, and support for many people. Organisations have shown incredible imagination and creativity in adapting in the face of constant change and challenge – finding new ways of working, new stories to tell and new audiences to engage. Museum of the Year will celebrate the extraordinary achievements of museums, galleries and historic houses over the past year. I urge everyone to continue to visit, engage or support their local museums.”

Art Fund is encouraging applications from any museum, gallery or historic house, whatever their scale, and from wherever they are located in the UK. Applicants will be asked to answer three questions:

- What did you do in the last year which showed imagination and creativity?
- How did this make a difference?
- How will you sustainably build on this in the future?

The 2022 judging panel, chaired by Art Fund director Jenny Waldman, will include: Diane Lees, director of Imperial War Museums; artist Harold Offeh; and two others to be announced.

The winner of the prize will receive £100,000 and each of the four other finalists will receive £15,000.

A shortlist of five museums will be announced in early May and the winner will be revealed in July.

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. Art Fund Museum of the Year complements Art Fund’s charitable programme in support of museums at this time, which comprises its ongoing programme of grant giving, support and partnerships.

The winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2021 is Firstsite in Colchester.

Art Fund Museum of the Year will continue its collaboration with the BBC in 2022, with details to be announced in due course.

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Notes to editors:

About 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.

Winners 2008 - 2021:
2008 - The Lightbox, Woking
2009 - Wedgwood Museum, Stoke-on-Trent,
2010 - Ulster Museum, Belfast
2011 - British Museum
2012 - Royal Albert Memorial Museum
2014 - Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield
2015 - Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
2016 - Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London
2017 - The Hepworth, Wakefield
2018 - Tate St Ives
2019 - St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff
2020 - Aberdeen Art Gallery; Gairloch Museum; Science Museum; South London Gallery; and Towner
Eastbourne.
2021 – Firstsite, Colchester

ART FUND STEPS UP FOR THE UK’S MUSEUMS IN 2021

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

Helping museums navigate the pandemic

- Together for Museums fundraising campaign raises over £1.1 million for museums and galleries in the pandemic
- New Reimagine grants announced worth a total of £2 million
- New research published in May, Looking Ahead, to understand the needs of the sector at this challenging time.
- Energise Young Minds campaign launched with target of £1million to help museums connect with young people.

Celebrating museums and galleries

- Resilience and imagination of the UK’s museums and galleries celebrated through Art Fund Museum of the Year 2021 with winner, Firstsite in Colchester

Building and sharing collections
• Outstanding works of art and commissions supported such as Camille Claudel’s *L’Implorante*, Thomas Lawrence’s *The Red Boy*, Hew Locke’s *Armada* and Phyllida Barlow’s commission for Highgate Cemetery.

• 18 exhibitions supported with loans through Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund.

• New partnership announced with Freelands Foundation to support the acquisition of work by women artists in public collections

Making connections

• Art Happens and Art Tickets platforms supported museums with crowdfunding and advance ticketing.

• 130,000 members connected through award-winning podcast *Meet Me at the Museum, Art in Your Inbox* bulletins, and other events, with the latest news from over 800 museums

Art Fund, the national fundraising charity for art, has stepped up in 2021 with funds to enrich the UK’s collections, to help museums and galleries grow new audiences and to raise the profile of the sector in one of the most challenging years in living memory.

Thanks to generous museum lovers and donors across the UK, over £1.1m was raised to help museums, galleries and historic houses respond to the impact of Covid-19. Alongside a major donation from the Headley Trust more than 4,500 people donated to *Together for Museums*, and leading artists such as Cornelia Parker and Lubaina Himid helped to rally public support through the offer of rewards. The campaign was backed by famous museum devotees such as Harry Hill and Russell Tovey. Art Fund set another ambitious goal in 2021: to reach a £1 million target through a new campaign, *Energise Young Minds*, to help museums and galleries to connect with children, students and young people in the year ahead. Thanks to a major commitment from Art Fund and donations from people across the UK they have just under £400k remaining to raise.

Art Fund Museum of the Year 2021 raised the awareness of what smaller museums and galleries across the UK had achieved for their communities during the pandemic through resilience and imagination against all the odds. The £100,000 prize this year was awarded to Firstsite in Colchester.

The charity’s core purpose to help build collections was fulfilled with support for numerous outstanding acquisitions including Thomas Lawrence’s *The Red Boy*, Kehinde Wiley’s *Portrait of Melissa Thompson*, Camille Claudel’s *L’Implorante*, James (Jacques) Joseph Tissot’s *Quiet* and through spectacular commissions such as the Hackney Windrush Commission by Veronica Ryan and Phyllida Barlow’s work for Highgate Cemetery.

The first round of Reimagine grants was announced in October 2021, part of a £2 million commitment made in direct response to issues facing museums and galleries due to the pandemic. These included a collaboration with the Vindolanda Fort in Hexham, Newcastle University and Creative Assembly to create an online resource for seven-to-eleven year olds, and digitising the Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum collection which will provide a valuable resource for outreach to schools. Rounds two and three of the Reimagine grants will be announced in January 2022.
Art Fund has also empowered museums to develop their operational capacity by providing access to and support for use of a range of free platforms; the crowd funding platform Art Happens, the online ticketing system Art Tickets which grew to over 200 users; and in 2021 it launched Art Pass Unbooked, which shows ticket availability at local museums.

Art Fund has also kept the public connected in 2021 through two new series of its award-winning podcast Meet Me at the Museum, this year featuring Lolita Chakrabarti, Deborah Frances-White, Russell Kane, Jack Lowden, Kirsty Wark and Benjamin Zephaniah among others.

Art Fund’s work is made possible by its 130,000 members through the National Art Pass, and by the generosity of trusts, foundations and individual donors. Members enjoy free entry to hundreds of museums, galleries and historic houses across the UK with their National Art Pass, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions and subscription to Art Quarterly magazine and Art in Your Inbox emails every fortnight. Membership and support has remained loyal throughout the pandemic, despite closures, showing the philanthropic public wants to support the sector in more ways than visiting. This has had a significant impact and Art Fund is grateful for this continued support.

Highlights from the charitable programme in 2021 include:

**Building collections**

- Art Fund supported many major acquisitions which joined museum collections in 2021, among them Thomas Lawrence’s *The Red Boy* (National Gallery), Hew Locke’s *Armada* (Tate), Ben Nicholson’s *Quai d’Auteuil – Paris* (Hepworth Wakefield), Camille Claudel’s *L’Implorante* (The Burrell Collection), Kehinde Wiley’s *Portrait of Melissa Thompson* (V&A East), and *Saint Adelaïde* (Stained Glass Museum in Ely), James (Jacques) Joseph Tissot’s *Quiet* (Ulster Museum, National Museums NI), Wangeci Mutu’s *Histology of the Different Classes of Uterine Tumours* (Scottish National Gallery) and *the Ryedale Roman Hoard* (Yorkshire Museum).

- Artist commissions were a big feature this year. Those realised this year included: Hackney Windrush Art Commission by Veronica Ryan commissioned by Hackney Council; *The Institute For The Magical Effect Of Actually Giving A Shit (a note to our future self)* by Joanne Tatham & Tom O’Sullivan for the newly refurbished Studio Voltaire; Phyllida Barlow’s commission at Highgate Cemetery; *Lumen* by Sutapa Biswas for Bristol Museum & Art Gallery; Harold Offeh’s *Hail the New Prophets* for Bold Tendencies in South London; and the Liverpool Biennial Commission: *La Pensee Ferales* by Daniel Steegmann Mangrané. There were further commissions, among others for Glasgow International, British Art Show 9 and Coventry Biennial and the Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open 2021.

**Reaching Audiences**

- A total of 65 museums have so far participated in the Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund. Created by the Garfield Weston Foundation and Art Fund, the Programme is the first ever UK-wide funding scheme to enable smaller museums to borrow works of art and artefacts from national and major regional collections. Details of the sixth round of museums partners will be announced early in 2022. Works that were lent this year
include: key pieces to *Freud, Minton, Ryan: unholy trinity*, at Bath’s Victoria Art Gallery; the world-famous late 16th century portrait of Richard III from the National Portrait Gallery to Yorkshire Museum and Gardens; and Antony Gormley’s monumental installation *Field for the British Isles*, comprising 40,000 small clay figures and last seen in the North East 25 years ago, to the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art in Sunderland.

**Shaping futures**

- Eleven new Headley Fellowships with Art Fund were announced this year, through the scheme supported by the Headley Trust, giving curators the space and time to examine a range of collections in depth.
- Twenty-eight curators have received support through the Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Grants with Art Fund.
- Art Fund’s Student Art Pass now has over 26,500 members giving students in higher education free or discounted access to the UK’s museums, galleries and exhibitions for £5 a year. Paid opportunities with cultural organisations are among the most popular part of the Student Art Pass programme, supported through grants to museums of up to £10,000, to help provide CV-building experiences that open career pathways into visual arts and creative industries before students graduate. Since 2019, Art Fund has helped place 230 students into 14 cultural organisations. Over the last year, these were offered at Coldharbour Mill Museum, the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, Glasgow International Festival, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, New Hall Art Collection, The MAC, in Birmingham, Art Night 2021 and the Scottish Maritime Museum.

**Making connections**

- Firstsite in Colchester was named Art Fund Museum of the Year 2021, winning the £100,000 prize. The four finalists were: Centre for Contemporary Art, Derry-Londonderry; Experience Barnsley; Thackray Museum of Medicine in Leeds; and Timespan in Helmsdale. Each received £15,000.
- Art Happens, Art Fund’s crowdfunding platform, helped several organisations raise funds for transformative arts projects across the UK.
- New Research, *Looking Ahead*, was published in May which asked over 320 museums curators and professionals what they most needed from Art Fund as they navigated the ongoing pandemic.
- There are over 130,000 Members with a National Art Pass and 800+ venues in the National Art Pass network.

To find out more about Art Fund’s current campaign to enable access for young people at the UK’s museums and galleries - Energise Young Minds - visit: [https://www.artfund.org/get-involved/campaigns/energise-young-minds](https://www.artfund.org/get-involved/campaigns/energise-young-minds)

**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 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. A further £2 million has been
made available in 2021 for Reimagine projects. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by Art Partners, donors, trusts and foundations and the 130,000 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 winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2021 is Firstsite in Colchester.

www.artfund.org