

## PRESS RELEASE

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### ART FUND LAUNCHES NEW 'REIMAGINE GRANTS' TO SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

- 'Reimagine grants' will provide £2 million in funding in 2021
- Further Art Fund support of £175,000 goes to Museum Development UK to help small to medium-sized museums
- Applications for third round of Headley Fellowships with Art Fund announced

Art Fund, the national charity for art, announced today that it is opening applications for its new £2million project grants scheme to support the museum and gallery sector as it navigates the next phase of recovery from the pandemic.

Reimagine grants will help UK organisations transform their activities and build expertise, capacity and connections within and beyond the sector. Museums, galleries, historic houses, archives, libraries, festivals, biennials and a range of professional networks will be eligible to apply for support of between £5,000 and £50,000. The first deadline for applications is 5 July 2021. Two further rounds of applications to the Reimagine programme will be held in August and October. The Reimagine grants will support large and small projects and professional networks.

Building on the successful partnership and collaborative response to the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, Art Fund will also provide £175,000 to Museum Development UK (MDUK) for distribution to small and medium-sized museums across the UK by MDUK and their partners - Museums and Galleries Scotland, the Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Museums Council - to support on-going recovery from the pandemic and to ensure our funding can reach as many museums and galleries as possible. This will be match funded by MDUK.

Art Fund is also opening applications today for the third round of Headley Fellowships, a £600,000 funding programme supported by The Headley Trust, to help curators, expand specialist skills and develop expertise. Eleven fellowships, each with a value of £27,500, will be available to help back-fill museum professionals' posts for up to six months to facilitate new research into collections.

Jenny Waldman, Art Fund Director said, "Museums have endured their toughest year in living memory and have done incredible work in reopening safely and welcoming back visitors. Art Fund is once again responding rapidly to their evolving needs, and through the exceptional generosity of our members and supporters we're delighted to allocate £2 million in 2021 to our new Reimagine grants. I would encourage all organisations with creative ideas for a sustainable future to consider applying."

# Art Fund

Reimagine funding was developed in direct response to Art Fund's survey of over 300 museum directors in the UK, published earlier this month, who told us how they need help to move forward in these challenging times.

The grants aim to increase creativity and stability in the sector with funding provided for projects that enable experimentation, deepen engagement with diverse audiences, and result in greater expertise. Areas of priority for the programme will be collections, digital, engagement and workforce. The Reimagine programme will offer small grants of between £5,000 and £15,000 and large grants of between £15,000 and £50,000.

Reimagine grants are made possible thanks to public donations from across the UK. Launched in summer 2020, Art Fund's Together for Museums campaign raised over £1.1 million to support museums through the challenges of the pandemic, with the backing of artists and over 4,000 donors – including Art Fund members, individual donors, trusts and foundations. This includes the Headley Trust, who made a major donation to this campaign in addition to their support of the fellowships programme at Art Fund.

These donations further boosted the ongoing support of Art Fund members who purchase the National Art Pass, Art Partners and donors who make an annual donation, and legacy gifts, which are the backbone of all Art Fund's charitable activity. Alongside this pandemic response funding, Art Fund remains committed to its wide range of funding programmes that support museums for the benefit of visitors nationwide – from providing grants for acquisitions of works of art and objects, to supporting touring programmes and curatorial development.

Last year, Art Fund's Respond & Reimagine funding supported £2.25 million in grants to 67 organisations to help them through the pandemic. However, applications totalled £16.9m from 451 organisations, a fifth of all the UK's 2,500 museums, demonstrating the scale of need across the sector.

The response funding enabled museums to reopen safely, reach new audiences and contribute to community and wellbeing. Highlights include:

- Ceredigion Museum's *Human Threads* project in Aberystwyth which brought together members of the community to record their experiences of Covid-19
- A major health and wellbeing initiative at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham addressing Covid's mental health crisis directly through a pioneering partnership with the university's medical college – including welcoming a nurse-in-residence to the museum;
- A newly recruited bilingual digital engagement officer at Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway to attract new audiences; and
- Bradford's Impressions Gallery creating outdoor capsule exhibitions in the city centre alongside their online offering.

Since its launch in 2018, the Headley Fellowships programme has supported 11 curators to pursue a wide range of projects. Among them are the creation of new exhibitions, like the 2019 *Displays of Power: A Natural History of Empire* at UCL Culture's Grant Museum of Zoology, which explored the colonial contexts behind the museum's natural history collections; and the publication of books like Headley Fellow Karen Logan's *Curating Conflict: The Troubles and Beyond*, which shares how National Museums Northern Ireland evolved its work around contested histories. The programme has also made possible the redisplay of collections such as Nottingham Natural History Museum's significant herbarium holdings.

# Art Fund

Helen McLeod from The Headley Trust said, "The Headley Trust is delighted to be supporting a further round of the Headley Fellowships. The Trust strongly believes that curatorial research and expertise lie at the heart of the imaginative ways in which museums engage with a wide public."

For full details of how to apply to the Reimagine programme, applicants should log in to their My Art Fund account, or create an account at [artfund.org/my-art-fund](https://artfund.org/my-art-fund)

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For images visit: <https://bibli.artfund.org/web/6eed884a7bbb64b4/museums-reopening/>

Notes to editors:

## Art Fund

### **About 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 £2 million in adapted 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 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. In a unique edition of the prize for 2020, Art Fund responded to the unprecedented challenges that all museums are facing by selecting five winners and increasing the prize money to £200,000. The winners are Aberdeen Art Gallery; Gairloch Museum; Science Museum; South London Gallery; and Towner Eastbourne.

[www.artfund.org](https://www.artfund.org)

### **About The Headley Trust**

The Headley Trust was founded in 1973 by Sir Timothy Sainsbury, who remains the Chairman 48 years later. It is one of 16 Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts. The Headley Trust makes grants of around £5million a year, largely in the Arts and Heritage field. Among its priority areas are museums and galleries, particularly those operating in the regions. The trustees particularly wish to support the professional development of curators, as well as the display, study and acquisition of British ceramics and the conservation of industrial, maritime and built heritage.

[www.sfct.org.uk/Headley](https://www.sfct.org.uk/Headley) for information about the full range of the trust's interests.