NEW RESEARCH INTO UK TOURING EXHIBITIONS PUBLISHED TODAY

- Over 200 arts professionals' views show current practice and future potential of touring exhibitions within and across the UK
- Tailoring to local context, brokering new partnerships and maximising the potential of UK collections, all highlighted as priorities
- Sustainability a critical consideration to help museums move to carbon neutrality
- Government urged to make Museum and Gallery Exhibitions Tax Relief permanent to help museums and galleries
New research, Going Places: Touring and shared exhibitions in the UK commissioned by Art Fund in partnership with Creative Scotland, was published today providing an overview of current practice and future potential for touring and sharing museum and gallery exhibitions and visual arts programmes within the UK. Over 200 museum, gallery and heritage professionals across the four nations were surveyed to find out how cultural organisations are working together to share collections and programme temporary projects. The research will inform the development of funding programmes of support and help to build a strong UK-wide policy framework.

The research highlights the following key developments in UK exhibition touring:

- **Touring models tailored to local contexts** - A vital step for post-pandemic survival, given the trend towards people taking part in cultural activities closer to home, is to expand touring models tailored to local contexts.

- **Collections-based exhibitions and new partnerships** - A notable shift is towards collections-based exhibition making, avoiding the costly borrowing of works of art and objects from overseas. This is seen by many as an opportunity to form dynamic new partnerships.

- **Online networking** — A seismic acceleration during the pandemic in producing online content and developing online networks. Wider support is needed to develop these links and resources.

- **Sustainability** - Sustainability remains a critical consideration across the piece and regional tours could help organisations move towards carbon neutrality.

Sarah Philp, director of Programme and Policy at Art Fund, said, “This research is invaluable, offering a full picture of the current touring landscape, identifying what museums, galleries and visual arts organisations need most from us to help share their work even more widely. Although the pandemic has been incredibly challenging for our sector, new models for touring shows and programmes offer exciting possibilities both for partnerships between organisations and for local communities to get more involved.

“**Impressive programmes have been running for years but there is huge potential to do even more, and this will take time, energy and resources. It has been a privilege working with Creative Scotland on this and we look forward to working with partners to support the priorities identified.**”

Amanda Catto, Head of Visual Arts at Creative Scotland said, “**This report highlights the benefits** that come from touring and hosting exhibitions as well as the barriers that organisations face in developing and sustaining this activity. It demonstrates that collaborative working between cultural organisations is critical as we start to address the impacts of Covid 19 and other pressing issues impacting the country, including the climate emergency, social justice and racial inequality. Creative Scotland welcomes the report’s findings and will continue to work with Art Fund and other UK partners to explore how we can ensure the best possible conditions for museums and galleries to be ambitious in their programming and to share their learning and their work with the public into the future.”

Although many outstanding examples of touring models already exist, the research identified demonstrable need for much stronger support across the UK to help establish a new era of creative partnerships.
The most cited barrier to developing a touring exhibition was time/staff capacity. Other barriers included finding suitable museum partners, cost, onerous paperwork, stringent loan conditions and difficulty researching appropriate funding.

Going Places therefore highlights the urgent need for:
- Better information about how to access funding sources for touring
- Funding for infrastructure to improve environmental conditions
- Deepening of ‘matchmaking’ between museums

There is also a need for better joined up thinking between the four nations and more availability of smaller-scale, family-friendly exhibitions for loan to less well-resourced institutions.

In addition, the research advocates for making the government’s Museum and Gallery Exhibition tax relief (MGETR) permanent. This would allow museums and galleries to recover significant costs, particularly where budgets are stretched to breaking point.

The research also highlighted many wonderful examples of touring models, among them: split-site tours such as The British Art Show; single work tours such as the National Gallery’s Masterpiece Tour; smaller specialist exhibitions such those developed by Impressions in Bradford for both art and non-art venues; the Jerwood Art Fund Makers’ Open, a biennial award offering new commissions to five early-career artists whose work is then displayed in a UK-wide exhibition tour; ARTIST ROOMS which has over 80 Associate venues across the UK; and collaborative exchange such as at Ruthin Craft Centre in North Wales who have been sharing contemporary craft exhibitions for 25 years. The recently established Museums and Galleries Network of Exhibition Touring (MAGNET), a network of eleven museums, all of them outside London apart from lead partner the Horniman Museum, will make a series of co-curated exhibitions.

Nick Merriman, Chief Executive of the Horniman Museum and Gardens said, “Given the pressure on every institution, it’s really important that we develop models of exhibition touring, like MAGNET, that enable regional museums to share their resources and introduce wider audiences to the wonderful things we hold on their behalf.”

Beth Bate, Director of Dundee Contemporary Art (DCA) said, “I welcome the findings and recommendations of this new research, which has taken on a new light since the start of the pandemic. The museums and galleries sector is innovative and inventive, and the research highlights the need to capitalise on this, with better joined-up thinking between our four nations, support for capital infrastructure improvements and the promotion of good practice, particularly around online working, diversity, and environmental sustainability. Partnership working and a commitment to audiences and access are cornerstones of our work, and the new research makes clear what can be achieved when we work together.”

To view Going Places: Touring and shared exhibitions in the UK visit: https://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/tools-and-resources/industry-insights#going-places

For images visit https://bibli.artfund.org/web/73d3c2505f54da2c/goiing-places-research/
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Notes to Editors:

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

About Creative Scotland
Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland distributing funding provided by the Scottish Government and The National Lottery. Further information at creativescotland.com.

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About Wafer Hadley
Going Places was commissioned from Wafer Hadley. Established in 2006, Wafer Hadley is a research and strategy consultancy working with museums, galleries, heritage and cultural organisations across the UK.

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