New Collecting Awards

Guidance for applicants

Art Fund
1. About

Our New Collecting Awards provide funding for curators to pursue new avenues of collecting for their organisations and build critical professional skills. Through these awards we aim to support the next generation of ambitious curators across the UK, as well as to promote the value of research-led collecting and cultivate curatorial expertise at both the individual and institutional level.

This guidance gives detail about the programme and will help you consider whether this opportunity is for you. Below, you will find further information on eligibility and how to develop a strong application.

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact our team via ytan@artfund.org or 020 7225 4865.

The New Collecting Awards are made possible by a number of generous individuals and trusts including the Wolfson Foundation, the Ruddock Foundation for the Arts, and the Coral Samuel Charitable Trust.
2. Before you apply

Aims

Our New Collecting Awards respond to the need for ongoing collections development in museums, underpinned by curatorial expertise, vision and ambition.

Specifically, the programme aims to:

– promote the value of research-led collecting
– cultivate curatorial expertise at both individual and institutional levels
– encourage ambitious approaches to collecting

With this seventh round of the programme, we particularly hope to support curators in:

– diversifying representation in their collections
– making their collections and the narratives therein more relevant to their audiences and communities

What we’ll support

We offer 100% funding for focused collecting projects, enabling curators to expand museum collections of fine art, design or visual culture into exciting new areas, or to deepen existing holdings in significant ways.

Each awardee also receives a funding allocation towards research, travel and training costs to facilitate their proposed collecting plans and professional development. The allocation for this will be no more than 10% of the total sum awarded. Additionally, awardees are offered the ongoing support of a mentor, Art Fund staff and our trustees.

We have up to £150,000 available to award. Typical grant awards fall between £30,000 and £80,000. Applicants can apply for any amount but you should demonstrate that the sum is reasonable and proportionate in relation to the types and number of works you propose to collect.

We expect awardees to complete their collecting project within 2 years of commencement.
Examples of previously supported projects

- Marenka Thompson-Odlum, Research Associate, Pitt Rivers Museum was awarded £50,000 to collect new works by indigenous artists from around the world to interact with the colonial past of the museum’s collections.

- Uthra Rajgopal, Assistant Curator (Textiles and Wallpaper), Whitworth Art Gallery was awarded £38,600 to develop the gallery’s collection of South Asian textile artworks by women artists.

- Louise Pearson, Curator (Photography), National Galleries of Scotland was awarded £65,000 to address the gaps in Scotland’s national photography collection by acquiring photographs of underrepresented groups of people, using Scotland’s census data to identify said groups.

- Mark Doyle, Art Gallery Curator & Collections Manager at Touchstones Rochdale was awarded £65,000 to strengthen holdings of work by women artists.

Who we’ll support

We welcome applications from curators who are either in the early stages of their career or have had limited opportunities to collect.

Typically applicants are in full- or part-time employment at a museum or gallery that is accredited or working towards accreditation. If you are working with a non-accredited museum, we may request more information about your standards of collection care.

We can also consider applications from freelance curators or researchers, provided they can demonstrate that they will be officially affiliated with a museum or gallery for the duration of the project, that the works acquired will join a public collection and that their participation will have a longer-term institutional impact.

In your application you will be expected to demonstrate why receiving a New Collecting Award would benefit not only your museum, its collections and its audiences but also, crucially, your own professional development in a way that would not otherwise be possible.
3. Your application

How to apply

After reading through this guidance, we’d appreciate it if you could get in touch to discuss your proposed project. We will be able to give advice on eligibility and timescales for applications. All applicants should contact Ying Tan, senior programmes manager, on 020 7225 4866 or ytan@artfund.org.

You can apply for a grant using our online application system. For application forms and to apply, log in to My Art Fund or create an account at artfund.org/my-art-fund.

You must be registered as a professional user. If you already have a My Art Fund account, but are not registered as a professional user, you can add your professional details when logged in.

If you encounter any difficulties registering or accessing the application form, please email the team at programmes@artfund.org.

The application form can be downloaded as a Word document to help you prepare the content and share it among colleagues as needed. However, as far as possible, please submit your application through your My Art Fund account. This will help us assess it more easily and swiftly. If you have accessibility requirements, you could send us an email with your application attached as a Word document. We can also accept your supporting statement as a video submission. Please contact us to discuss other options or solutions: programmes@artfund.org.

We do advise that you work on a Word version of the form before adding the information into the online form. This will ensure your answers are backed up elsewhere.
Completing the application form

In the application form we will ask you to submit a supporting statement, either as a 1,000 word written statement or an 8-minute video submission. We’d like to know:

What you’ll collect:
– Outline your curatorial vision for the museum; describe what you wish to collect and how this will transform your museum’s current collections
– Why you are interested in this collecting area
– What the legacy will be for your museum and its visitors
– Provide an idea of the approximate number of works you may collect and the budget required

Why you’d like to do this project:
– How this project will uniquely develop your professional skills and ambitions
– What this opportunity will provide that would not otherwise be possible
– How the project might benefit other areas of museum activity, contribute to future programming and/or promote collaboration both within the museum and with sector colleagues

How you’ll go about it:
– What type of research and training will be necessary
– How you would work with a mentor and what they could contribute to the project. If you have ideas who you’d like to approach as a mentor, let us know.

Your supporting statement should be accompanied by:
– an indicative outline timetable and budget for your project
– a one-page CV
– a letter of support from your line manager
– a selection of 8-10 images that illustrate the proposed collecting strategy

The deadline to submit your application is midnight on Tuesday 16 November 2021.
4. What happens next

Decision-making

Your application will be assessed by a grants caseworker. If they have any questions about your application, or if they think something is missing, they will contact you for more information.

Decisions will be taken by a panel of Art Fund staff and trustees approximately one month following the deadline.

Confirmation of outcome and claiming the grant

If your application is successful we will issue our formal offer to your museum. The offer paperwork includes:

- offer letter
- agreement to terms and conditions
- a schedule of the proposed activities, including key project dates and aims and desired outcomes – details of how to claim your grant

Please note that no portion of the funding can be paid directly to awardees; all funds must be paid to the museum. Any expenses incurred by awardees as part of their research and training should be reclaimed from their institution.
5. Terms and conditions

If your application is successful, an appropriately authorised signatory in your organisation will be required to sign an agreement which will set out the terms and conditions of our grant offer. These terms and conditions are summarised below:

1. the grant must be used solely for the project and cannot be put towards any other purpose;
2. the grant will be paid in accordance with an agreed schedule and subject to the provision by you of certain information including invoices, a financial statement setting out how the grant has been utilised and an evaluation report;
3. the grant will be paid to the museum bank account;
4. Art Fund reserves the right to require you to complete and submit a progress report or a statement of expenditure at any time during the term of the project, or to provide supplementary information in support of a final expenditure statement
5. each of us will obtain the other’s prior written approval in advance of publication of any publicity materials relating to the project. However we, at our absolute discretion, may publicise details of the grant offer in any way we think fit;
6. you must ensure that the support of Art Fund is acknowledged and credited as specified by us on all materials related to the project. You must also obtain our approval in advance of the publication of any display or print materials related to the project. Successful applicants will be provided with our branding and crediting guidelines;
7. you will be required to link any websites owned or operated by you which provide information about the fellowship to the homepages of the Art Fund websites. However, such links must not be used to falsely portray any endorsement or affiliation between you and Art Fund;
8. you will be expected to work with us in good faith to promote and showcase the project and the New Collecting Awards;
9. you must not use Art Fund’s name or logo in any way which causes either of us any negative publicity or damages our reputation;
10. your rights and obligations under the agreement must not be transferred in whole or in part in any manner without our prior written approval;
11. if your financial statement indicates that you have not spent the full amount of the grant, we may withhold all or part of the grant or demand repayment of grant monies already paid. We may also require you to provide receipts evidencing any expenditure claimed;
12. neither of us shall be liable or responsible for failure to fulfil our obligations under the agreement caused by events beyond our control. In these circumstances, the affected party’s obligations under the agreement will be suspended for the duration of the event but both of us will work together during this period to find a way to enable that party to carry out its obligations under the agreement; and
13. we may demand repayment of all or part of the grant at our absolute discretion if you fail to comply with or contravene any of the terms and conditions of the agreement. Interest will be charged on any repayments which have not been made by the date notified to you.