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From going to giving: national crowd-funding initiative heralds new era of creativity in museums

The Art Fund’s mission to help museums and galleries buy and show great art for everyone is taking a new turn, in which donating to museums becomes a creative and rewarding experience in its own right. Today the Art Fund launches Art Happens artfund.org/arthappens – a crowd-funding platform housed within the Art Fund website that will help UK museums raise money for new, small-scale, achievable and highly creative projects. Each project will forge an ongoing dialogue between museum and donor, ‘thanking’ all donors with limited edition rewards, and, unlike other crowd-funding platforms, every penny raised will go directly to the projects, with no fees charged to anyone. The Art Fund is proud to be launching this new and important free fundraising service for UK museums.

The first five museums to take part in Art Happens are: Compton Verney, Warwickshire; The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Shropshire; Jerwood Gallery, Hastings; St Fagans National History Museum, Cardiff; The Bowes Museum, County Durham. Each participating museum has proposed an innovative project with a feasible target; all projects range from £10,000 - £25,000. Throughout the year, several new projects will be added to the platform.

Art Happens: a response to research into what motivates museum visitors to give

Art Happens is a new approach to fundraising, involving and engaging everyday museum visitors in the creation and realisation of new areas of activity. It is launched following focussed research into what motivates museum visitors to give, co-commissioned with the National Museum Directors’ Council (NMDC). The research found that:

- Although 93% of museum visitors give to charities, only 40% of those give to museums
- Most visitors don’t realise museums need their donations – and don’t see giving to museums as ‘charitable giving’
- Visitors rarely have a sense of why their donation is needed, or what it might support
- The more engaged a donor is with the ‘cause’ - the higher the donation
- Visitors currently equate giving to the arts with very high value donations - they tend to think their small donation won’t make a difference

“Art Happens is about harnessing the support of everyday visitors to make highly creative things happen.” Stephen Deuchar, Art Fund director
• Supporting particular projects, such as education work or an acquisition, are seen as ‘charitable’

The Art Fund has used the findings of the research to create Art Happens, addressing many of the behaviours attached to giving to museums:

**The new approach of Art Happens:**

- **Donor rewards:** all donors are thanked with project-specific rewards - an artist’s limited edition print, for example, or a special publication, a tour of the project before it opens, or champagne reception
- **For everyone:** get involved with as little as £5 donation
- **Achievable:** every donation makes a tangible difference; all project targets are within £10,000 and £25,000
- **Personal involvement:** donors to receive personal updates from the project team and a special web log in will appraise donors of progress at any time; This will see museums deepening relationships with low-level / everyday donors, opening a new type of dialogue
- **National network of creative initiatives:** new projects will be added throughout the year, creating a rich platform of ideas that the public alone are bringing to life
- **100% money raised goes to each project:** Art Happens is generously supported by contributions from individuals, charitable trusts and Arts Council England’s Renaissance Strategic Fund, ensuring that 100% of donations go directly to the projects, with no fees or percentages deducted by anyone.

Stephen Deuchar, director of the Art Fund, said: “Building on the Art Fund’s historical success and recent experiments in digital crowd-funding, we are keen to use the tide of public engagement with museums to bring supporters ever closer to new, live museum projects. Through Art Happens anyone can be a patron as well as beneficiary of the arts. It’s the start of a new chapter for UK museums in terms of both public fundraising and public participation.”

**Art Happens’ first five projects:**

**Compton Verney, Warwickshire**

**Create the first ever Dan Pearson and William Morris Meadow - £15,000**

Compton Verney art gallery needs just £15,000 to create a mown parterre (a formal garden) based on the designs of legendary English designer William Morris. The parterre will live within a wildflower meadow developed by leading landscape designer Dan Pearson. Dan Pearson will be the first garden designer to have worked on the grounds at Compton Verney since Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown in the 18th century, and the project will complement our summer 2015 exhibition The Arts & Crafts House – which will also feature William Morris’s work. The meadow will be a striking sight when viewed from the gallery and will provide an immersive experience for visitors of all ages who journey through it. It will also provide a gateway to the rest of Compton Verney’s historic grounds. The meadow will have a long-lasting legacy, encouraging new species of native wildflowers, which were of particular interest to William Morris. The project team will work with volunteers and grounds staff to repopulate the meadow with the new species for the project. This process will allow different interpretations of the exhibition and grounds. The project will provide not only a captivating experience for visitors, but will also be hugely beneficial for the local wildlife.
The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Shropshire  
**Transform the Museum of the Gorge: Warehouse of the World - £25,000**

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust needs £25,000 to completely transform the Museum of the Gorge through a total redesign of the gallery and an upgrade of the existing auditorium, to create a dynamic space that can be used for museum and community events. The iconic building that houses the museum lies at the heart of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. It was built in 1832 in a gothic style and once served as the Severn Warehouse for the Coalbrookdale Company. Goods would be brought down from the furnaces and forges in Coalbrookdale and shipped down the river Severn to the markets of Gloucester, Bristol and the Empire beyond. Set right on the river, with wonderful views of the Iron Bridge, the new museum will narrate the story of how the river, roads, railways and canals came together to make the Gorge a vibrant hub of industry from the 1600s right up to the 1950s. Once completed, the Museum of the Gorge will be the starting point for visitors wanting to explore the unique museums and landscapes of Ironbridge. Upgraded audio-visual equipment will allow the museum to develop a varied programme of screenings, from historic Pathé footage to community film events.

Jerwood Gallery, Hastings  
**Bring the Chapman brothers home for their first major show in Hastings - £25,000**

Jerwood wants to bring a major exhibition of work by the Chapman Brothers, one of Hastings’s most famous exports, to the gallery. The exhibition will present new, previously unseen, work by Jake and Dinos Chapman, including pieces commissioned exclusively for the exhibition. The brothers will scour the antique emporiums and junk shops of Hastings for old artworks which will then be ‘fixed’ (or perhaps defaced) by the brothers in their inimitable style. There will be an unusual public programme of events to complement the exhibition, including a ‘live’ fixing clinic where members of the public will be able to witness artworks being doctored by the brothers, and there will also be a tattoo parlour, terrifyingly manned by Jake Chapman. The exhibition will mark a significant moment as it will bring the Chapman Brothers back home for their first major exhibition of new work in the town where they grew up and went to school.

St Fagans National History Museum, National Museum Wales, Cardiff  
**The reconstruction of Bryn Eyr, an Iron Age farmstead - £25,000**

Donations would facilitate the building of Bryn Eyr, an Iron Age farmstead based on an Anglesey archaeological site from the time of the Roman conquest. This rural settlement will consist of two roundhouses built with six-foot-thick clay walls and conical thatched roofs. With the help of volunteers, the specialist historic building team will raise up the clay walls using traditional construction methods. Where possible they will use replicas of Iron Age tools made by the museum’s resident blacksmith. The roof will be thatched with spelt grown in a field nearby. The homes in the settlement will be brought to life with household goods, ranging from bronze cauldrons and Roman-inspired pottery to colourful textiles hanging on looms and decorative glass beads. These goods will be handmade by some of the finest craftspeople in Wales, as well as volunteers specially trained at the museum. When Bryn Eyr is complete, visitors of all ages will be able to discover the lives of its original inhabitants. The settlement is part of the museum’s Making History Project, whose goal is to transform the much-loved museum into a space where visitors can follow the stories of the people of Wales, from the first human inhabitants to the present day.
The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham

Reveal hidden 15th century Renaissance art - £21,000

If the full amount is raised, The Bowes Museum, with the help of Rupert McBain – recognised furniture conservator, can re-display and conserve its 15th-century altarpiece to reveal six oil paintings that are currently hidden from view on the back of the shutters, and have never been seen by the public. The re-display will include building a new oak frame with a mechanism to regularly open and close the panels to give access currently restricted to the public. The altarpiece will be raised and displayed on a stand, in the Museum’s 15th-century picture gallery alongside paintings from the religious art collection, to recreate the impression of its original position in a church above the altar. The project will also reunite beautiful carved oak figures in the Museum store with those in the gallery, returning the Passion Altarpiece to its former glory.

The development and launch costs of Art Happens have been generously supported by a small number of individuals and charitable trusts, and a grant from Arts Council England through its Renaissance Strategic Support Fund.

For further information and high res images, please contact:
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Download Art Happens Images and Film here

Art Happens overview film
Compton Verney film
Jerwood Gallery film
Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust film
St Fagans National History Museum film
The Bowes Museum film

Notes to Editors:
The Art Fund
The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art, helping museums to buy and show great art for everyone. Over the past 5 years we’ve given over £26m to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections and placed hundreds of gifts and bequests, from ancient sculpture and treasure hoards to Old Master paintings and contemporary commissions, with 25% of grants going towards works by living artists. We also help museums share their collections with wider audiences through supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, including the national tour of the Artist Rooms collection and the 2013-2014 tours of Grayson Perry’s tapestries The Vanity of Small Differences and Jeremy Deller’s English Magic, the British Council commission for the 2013 Venice Biennale. Our support for museums extends to the Art Guide app – the comprehensive guide to seeing art across the UK, promoting a network of over 680 museums and galleries throughout the country, and the
£100,000 Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year – an annual celebration of the best of UK museums, won in 2013 by William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow. We are independently funded, the majority of our income coming from over 108,000 members who, through the National Art Pass, enjoy free entry to over 220 museums, galleries and historic houses across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions.

**Arts Council England** champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people’s lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries - from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2011 and 2015, we will invest £1.4 billion of public money from government and an estimated £1 billion from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

**National Museum Directors’ Council**
The National Museum Directors' Council (NMDC) represents the leaders of the UK’s national collections and major regional museums. Our members are the national and major regional museums in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the British Library, the National Library of Scotland and the National Archives. While our members are funded by government, the NMDC is an independent, non-governmental organisation.

The NMDC was founded in 1929, in anticipation of a Royal Commission recommendation that the national collections should 'coordinate their work and discuss matters of mutual concern'. Today the NMDC acts as an advocate on behalf of its members and their collective priorities, and provides its membership with a valuable forum for discussion and debate and an opportunity to share information and work collaboratively. [www.nationalmuseums.org.uk](http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk)