

2015 MUSEUM OF THE YEAR PRIZE LAUNCHED

- **Nationwide search begins for UK's Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2015**
- **International judging panel announced**
- **Prize ceremony at Tate Modern Turbine Hall on 1 July 2015**
- **Martin Parr to judge public photography competition**

The search begins today for the winner of the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2015. Announcing the plans for the 2015 Prize, Stephen Deuchar, director of the Art Fund and chair of the judging panel, revealed the line-up of the Panel: Michael Landy, artist; Alice Rawsthorn, design critic and author; Fiammetta Rocco, books and arts editor of The Economist, and Axel Rüger, director of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

The 2015 Prize ceremony will take place in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern on Wednesday 1 July 2015, before an invited audience of leading figures from the fields of culture and museums.

The renowned British documentary photographer and photo-journalist, Martin Parr, has been selected as the official photographer of the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2015 and will create a special portfolio of images of the shortlisted museums. He will also be a judge of the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year national photography competition, inviting members of the public to make and submit their own photographs of the shortlisted museums. The winning entry will be published in Art Quarterly and featured on the Art Fund website.

The £100,000 Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year is the largest arts award in Britain and the biggest museum prize in the world. It is awarded to the museum or gallery in the UK that is judged to have best demonstrated excellence, innovation and imagination. Submissions are now open for the 2015 Prize. The shortlisted museums will be revealed on Saturday 25 April 2015.

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund said: *"The UK is home to the world's finest museums. Our arts, culture and heritage are internationally admired and we are home to some*

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of the world's brightest and most creative minds. The Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year is a showcase for the groundbreaking work that we see across the country each year. This is an important opportunity to celebrate the best that British museums and galleries have to offer."

Yorkshire Sculpture Park won the 2014 Prize. Peter Murray, director of YSP, commenting on the impact of receiving the Prize, said: "We were honoured to be named Art Fund Museum of the Year 2014. It is a great testament to the commitment and determination of everyone at Yorkshire Sculpture Park who has worked hard over many years to establish our international reputation.

"Already we have seen the impact of the Prize with increased visitor numbers: to date we are up 40% on 2013/14 and hope to break our previous record. We've had fantastic media coverage, new opportunities and the validation of our peers. The Art Fund is a pleasure to work with: the team truly understand what YSP is about and their support is invaluable. These are challenging times but the Prize is a wonderful recognition of our work and has given us the motivation and enthusiasm to continue to move forward."

The Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year will continue to partner with VocalEyes, a charity that provides access to arts and heritage for blind and partially sighted people. As well as creating introductory audio descriptions, VocalEyes will offer visual awareness training opportunities for staff and volunteers at the shortlisted museums to ensure that they are equipped to greet and guide blind and partially sighted visitors - while also setting a model of good practice to the sector.

@artfund #museumoftheyear artfund.org

Media enquiries:

Victoria Asare-Archer / Madeline Adeane, the Art Fund
07525 832081 /+44 (0) 20 7225 4804 vasare@artfund.org or madeane@artfund.org

Jane Quinn/Dennis Chang, Bolton & Quinn +44 (0) 20 7221 5000 jq@boltonquinn.com or dennis@boltonquinn.com

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 five 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.

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The Judging Panel

Dr Stephen Deuchar

Stephen Deuchar has been the director of the Art Fund since 2010, having previously served as the founding director of Tate Britain from 1998. Prior to working at Tate he spent 12 years as a curator and exhibitions director at the National Maritime Museum.

Michael Landy

Michael Landy studied art at Goldsmiths College and exhibited at Damien Hirst's iconic Freeze exhibition in 1988. He is best known for his piece *Break Down* (2001), in which he destroyed all of his possessions at a disused shop on Oxford Street. Recent projects include Art Bin at South London Gallery (2010) and Saints Alive at the National Gallery (2013), where he was the Rootstein Hopkins associate artist in residence. He was elected a member of the Royal Academy in 2008.

"As the National Gallery's artist-in-residence from 2010 - 2013, I have been lucky enough to step behind the curtain to see how a museum works behind the scenes. The Museum of the Year prize is a wonderful opportunity for us to celebrate British museums and explore just what it takes to makes a museum stand out."

Alice Rawsthorn

Alice Rawsthorn writes about design in the International New York Times and Frieze magazine, and is the author of the critically acclaimed book *Hello World: Where Design Meets Life*. Alice was director of the Design Museum in London from 2001 until 2006. She is a trustee of the Whitechapel Gallery and the dance group Michael Clark Company, as well as chair of trustees at the Chisenhale Gallery. She was awarded an OBE for services to design and the arts in 2014.

"There are so many wonderful museums in Britain that make an invaluable contribution to our cultural life and the economy. After all, tourists don't come here for the weather. The Museum of the Year award is a welcome opportunity to recognise their success."

Fiammetta Rocco

Fiammetta Rocco has been the books and arts editor of *The Economist* since 2003. She was born in Kenya to French-Italian parents and read Arabic at Oxford University. Her journalism has won awards on both sides of the Atlantic and she has been named British Feature Writer of the Year. In December 2013, *The Economist* published *Temples of Delight*, her 10-page special report on the future of museums.

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"Museums all over the world are going through a golden age. It's wonderful at this moment to be able to reward the best museums in Britain."

Axel Rüger

Axel Rüger has been the director of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam since 2006. Previously he was curator of Dutch paintings at the National Gallery, London, and has worked at the Royal Court Theatre, Sotheby's Berlin and several art galleries in the USA. He studied art history at Freie Universität, Berlin, and Cambridge University.

"The UK is world-renowned for its museums so this is a delightful opportunity for me to be able to explore the best that the country has to offer."

Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2015 selection criteria:

As part of the application, each museum must supply information about activities and accomplishments that demonstrate excellence, innovation and imagination. The Prize may be awarded by the judges in recognition of one or several achievements in the calendar year 2014.

The judges will present the 2015 Prize to the museum or gallery that has best achieved some or all of the following criteria:

- Undertaken projects that will provide a lasting legacy or have a transformative effect on the museum
- Brought its collections to life for audiences - engaging, inspiring and extending public understanding
- Delivered an original learning and outreach programme
- Clearly won the support and enthusiasm of its visitors and users

Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2015 photography competition:

Members of the public are invited to submit their personal photographs of the shortlisted museums. The competition will open on 25 April 2015, the day that the shortlist of finalist museums is announced. Martin Parr will select the shortlist of photographers, one for each finalist museum. The winning photograph, as chosen by the public, will be printed in Art Quarterly magazine and will also appear on the Art Fund website. Closing date 1 June 2015.