

Press Release

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Whitworth and Towner art galleries first to participate in pilot scheme for collecting artists' film and video

Philanthropists back pilot scheme launched by the Art Fund with Thomas Dane Gallery to share artists' films with the nation

The Moving Image Fund for Museums is an Art Fund project conceived in partnership with and supported by Thomas Dane Gallery, launched today to respond to the challenges faced by UK museums in building up their collections of moving image works, an ambitious and complex medium. The scheme is the first of its kind in the UK and aims to ensure that the most significant works of contemporary film and video art can be acquired for public collections. Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne and the Whitworth in Manchester will be the first two museums to benefit from the fund.

In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in artists using digital media, video and film. In the current climate UK galleries struggle to raise funds to make new acquisitions of any kind, but the challenge is especially great with artists' film and video, which is expensive to produce and technically complex to exhibit. There are many important galleries with internationally significant collections in towns and cities across the UK, but most have modest budgets to put towards collecting – and some have none at all. The forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review is expected to mean museum operating budgets are cut even further. The Moving Image Fund for Museums, currently in its pilot phase, will provide £200,000 each, over two years, to Towner Art Gallery and the Whitworth for artists' film and video acquisitions.

The Moving Image Fund for Museums is generously supported by the Ampersand Foundation, the Art Fund, Iain Canning and Emile Sherman, Thomas Dane Gallery, Gerry Fox, David and Rose Heyman, Pierre Lagrange, Rebecca Marks, the Outset Young Production Fund, The Rothschild Foundation and the Sfumato Foundation.

Stephen Deuchar, director of the Art Fund, said: "This pioneering scheme aims to bring significant film and video works into public collections on a more regular basis, promoting and protecting an increasingly important medium. We are extremely grateful to the generous consortium of supporters for making the Art Fund's Moving Image Fund for Museums possible. We keenly look forward to seeing what the Towner Art Gallery and the Whitworth select for their first acquisitions."

Thomas Dane and Martine d'Anglejan-Chatillon, partner at the gallery, added: "Works of film, video and digital media are important expressions of the culture in which we live. Artists working in these media deserve to take their rightful place in public collections alongside the great exponents of painting, sculpture and photography. We are very pleased to have worked with the Art Fund in bringing this fund into being."

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Notes to Editors

The Art Fund

The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. In the past five years the Art Fund has given £34 million to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections. The Art Fund also helps museums share their collections with wider audiences by supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, including ARTIST ROOMS and the 2013-18 Aspire tour of Tate's Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows by John Constable, and makes additional grants to support the training and professional development of curators.

The Art Fund is independently funded, with the core of its income provided by 117,000 members who receive the National Art Pass and enjoy free entry to over 230 museums, galleries and historic places across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibition. In addition to grant-giving, the Art Fund's support for museums includes the annual Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year, a publications programme and a range of digital platforms.

Find out more about the Art Fund and the National Art Pass at www.artfund.org

Thomas Dane Gallery

Thomas Dane Gallery opened in Duke Street, St James' in 2004 with an inaugural exhibition of projected works by Steve McQueen, who remains a cornerstone of their program. Ever since, the gallery has cemented its reputation by hosting the first UK shows of Glenn Ligon, Albert Oehlen, Jean-Luc Moulène, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Walead Beshty, Kelley Walker and many others, while representing key British artists such as Michael Landy, Caragh Thuring, Anya Gallaccio, Cecily Brown and Philip King.

Throughout its history Thomas Dane Gallery's program has shown a strong commitment to film, video and digital work. Celebrated moving image artists shown at the gallery have included: Kutlug Ataman, Akram Zaatar, John Gerrard and Paul Pfeiffer. A range of historic artist film works have been exhibited at the gallery such as: Bruce Conner, Tony Morgan and Lynda Benglis, projected 35mm films by Straub & Huillet, and rare experimental film and video by John Hilliard, Daniel Spoerri, David Hall and Barry Flanagan.

www.thomasdanegallery.com

Towner Art Gallery

Towner Art Gallery is an award-winning gallery set in Eastbourne presenting major exhibitions of contemporary and historic visual art, as well as displays from the internationally renowned 4500-strong Towner Collection. The Collection is best known for its modern British art – including the largest and most significant body of work by Eric Ravilious (1903-1942) – and a growing collection of international contemporary art. Towner delivers a dynamic associated public programme and learning offer and welcomes more than 120,000 visitors each year, with a strong commitment to inclusive practice and accessibility. On 1 July 2014, Towner became an independent charitable Trust, supported by a Board of Trustees, chaired by David Dimbleby. Towner is supported by Eastbourne Borough Council and Arts Council England through its National Portfolio Programme.

www.townereastbourne.org.uk

The Whitworth

The Whitworth is part of The University of Manchester. It is home to internationally renowned collections of modern art, textiles, watercolours, prints, drawings and sculpture. Created in 1889 as the first English gallery in a park, the Whitworth has developed a new vision for the role of a university gallery. A creative laboratory within an ambitious university, the Whitworth is a place where good, unusual things happen.

The Whitworth re-opened to the public on 14 February 2015 after a major £15 million redevelopment by architects MUMA. The Whitworth has welcomed over 230,000 visitors in its first four months, breaking its previous annual record. The redevelopment has doubled public space and created state-of-the-art new facilities including expanded gallery spaces, a study centre, learning studio, and a collections centre. The Whitworth redevelopment is just one part of an ambitious Campus Masterplan that will see The University of Manchester invest £1 billion over the next ten years to create a world class campus for staff, students and visitors. In July 2015 the gallery was awarded the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year.

www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth