

## **2016 Museum of the Year Prize launched**

The search begins today for the winner of the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2016.

Announced today, the judging panel for the 2016 Prize will be Gus Casely-Hayford, curator and cultural historian; Will Gompertz, BBC Arts Editor; Ludmilla Jordanova, Professor of History and Visual Culture, Durham University and artist Cornelia Parker. The panel will be chaired by Stephen Deuchar.

The Prize ceremony will take place in the spectacular setting of the Natural History Museum in London in early July 2016, before an invited audience of leading figures from the fields of culture and museums.

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 exceptional achievement and innovation. Submissions are now open for the 2016 Prize. The shortlisted museums will be revealed on 29 April 2016.

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund said: *"The Museum of the Year above all seeks out and rewards innovative practice. It matters, both for the museums, for whom winning the £100,000 Prize can have a transformative impact, and for their audiences. Everyone wants to see the Museum of the Year. We're proud to lead this national celebration of the UK's outstanding cultural heritage."*

The 2015 Art Fund Prize was awarded to The Whitworth in Manchester, selected from a shortlist of six museums: Dunham Massey (National Trust), Altrincham; IWM London; the MAC, Belfast; Oxford University Museum of Natural History; HM Tower of London (Historic Royal Palaces); The Whitworth, Manchester.

Maria Balshaw, Director of the Whitworth, said: *"Winning the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2015 meant a huge amount to everyone, not just the staff and visitors to the museum, but to Manchester as a city that is proud of its cultural heritage and leading the way as a powerhouse of creativity."*

The Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year will continue its partnership with the BBC in 2016, who will present a series of special content on BBC Radio 2 and BBC Online.

**Press release Wednesday 9 December**  
**2016 Museum of the Year Prize Launched**

For the first time in 2016, the Art Fund will be offering bursaries to finalists who might require financial support to help them make the most of their public engagement campaigns, which can be a challenge to resource.

VocalEyes, a charity that provides access to arts and heritage for blind and partially-sighted people will work with the Art Fund to create introductory audio descriptions, as well as offering visual awareness training opportunities for staff and volunteers at the finalists and winning museum 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

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**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 £34m to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections, with 25% of grants going towards works by living artists. The Art Fund also helps museums and galleries share their collections with wider audiences by supporting a range of tours and exhibitions as well as making additional grants to support the training and professional development of curators.

**The judging panel**

**Stephen Deuchar**

Stephen Deuchar has been the director of the Art Fund since 2010, having previously been 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, Greenwich.

**Dr Augustus Casely-Hayford**

Gus Casely-Hayford is a curator and art historian. He is a King's College Institute Associate, research associate at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, and sits on the board of the National Portrait Gallery. He has worked extensively in television and radio, presenting the BBC Lost Kingdoms of Africa series, an award-winning South Bank Show on African art, and a Channel 4 documentary on Chris Ofili. He is a former

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executive director of Arts Strategy for Arts Council England and ex-director of the Institute of International Visual Arts.

**Will Gompertz**

Will Gompertz has been BBC arts editor since 2009. Before that, he was a director at Tate for seven years, where he was responsible for the award-winning Tate Online and Tate Etc. Gompertz has written extensively for the Guardian and The Times newspapers. He is the author of *What Are You Looking At? 150 Years of Modern Art in the Blink of an Eye* and *Think Like an Artist: Imaginative Ways to a More Creative and Productive Life*. He was voted one of the world's top 50 creative thinkers by the New York-based Creativity magazine.

**Professor Ludmilla Jordanova**

Ludmilla Jordanova is Professor of History and Visual Culture and Interim Director Centre for Visual Arts and Cultures (2015-16) at Durham University. She was previously Professor of Modern History at King's College London, director of the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Cambridge, and Professor of Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia. A fellow of the Royal Historical Society and of the Royal Society of Medicine, she was also the president of the British Society for the History of Science. A trustee of the National Portrait Gallery from 2001 to 2009, in 2011 she became a trustee of the Science Museum Group.

**Cornelia Parker OBE RA**

One of Britain's most celebrated artists, Cornelia Parker works in a wide variety of media and is well known for her large-scale, often site-specific, installations. Nominated for the Turner Prize in 1997, Parker was elected to the Royal Academy of Arts London in 2009, and appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 2010. A show celebrating Parker's innovative career was one of the highlights of the Whitworth's grand reopening.

**Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2016 selection criteria:**

As part of the application, each museum will be asked to show evidence of exceptional achievement and innovation in the preceding year.

The judges will present the 2016 Prize to the museum or gallery that has best fulfilled some or all of the following criteria:

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