

Press release, Tuesday 14 June 2016

## Art Fund celebrates a year of growth in membership, programme and impact

- Art Fund sets out ambitions for 2016/17
- 80% of individual grants awarded outside of London

Today Art Fund launches its [2015/16 annual report](#) in which the charity announces that the total value of its charitable programme in 2015 was £11.2m, helping museums and galleries to buy works of art and share them with an increasing audience through supporting tours and exhibitions. It was recently reported that 71 million people visited the UK's national museums and galleries in 2014-15 and Art Fund revealed that its membership has increased by 58% in the last five years alone. Building on the successes of the past year, Art Fund has announced that in 2016/17 it will continue to broaden the scope and ambition of its charitable activity, in direct response to need in the sector.

Stephen Deuchar, Art Fund director, said: "Our growing membership reflects a new reality: Britain's appetite for art has never been greater. And though we are perhaps best-known for supporting museums through giving grants for acquisitions – which we continue to do on an ever greater scale - our role is also to help and encourage more and more people to visit and enjoy them. This past year we've also invested significantly in helping to foster and fulfil the ambition and talent of the curators who work in our museums and galleries. We spend a lot of time listening to what's happening in the museum sector the length and breadth of the country, and we try to respond quickly and decisively to make a real difference. Thanks to the support of our 122,000 members, we will continue to grow in reach and impact."

Investing in people:

Responding directly to need, against a backdrop of savage cuts to many of the best-loved institutions around the UK, this year Art Fund has invested in initiatives to help develop the skills of the people behind the national potential of UK museums and galleries.

During 2015, 165 curators and other museum professionals benefited through Art Fund schemes and the charity plans to double the support on offer by 2020.

6 curators benefited through the second round of New Collecting Awards in 2015, launched with an increased fund of £400,000. These awards not only mean that

museums' collections benefit from new and creative collecting projects, but they also provide funding for professional development, and a mentor programme, directly investing in a new generation of creative and energetic curators.

60 curators received grants through Art Fund's Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Grants programme, which during 2015 was generously increased by Jonathan Ruffer to £75,000 annually.

#### Acquisitions:

The annual report for 2015/16 shows that Art Fund gave grants for acquisitions of £4.6m. In 2015 alone Art Fund supported 160 new acquisitions for 65 organisations across the country, with a total value of £18.5m, by 85 different artists. Highlights include El Greco's *Christ on the Cross* (c. 1600-10) for Auckland Castle, Bishops Auckland and Douglas Gordon's *Pretty Much Every Film and Video Work From About 1992 Until Now* (1992-in progress) for Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow.

Early in 2015 Art Fund worked behind the scenes to raise £1.56m, including a £1.16m grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, to save the Minton Archive, which was in danger of being sold and dispersed. After its acquisition, it was gifted to Stoke-on-Trent City Archives.

80% of individual grants are awarded to institutions outside London.

Further to this in 2015, 118 gifts and bequests of works of art were placed in 17 museums and galleries around the country thanks to the generosity of 12 donors.

In 2015 Art Fund launched the Moving Image Fund – the first scheme of its kind in the UK – which helps to bring major works of artist film and video into public collections. This innovative new funding partnership with Thomas Dane Gallery has enjoyed the generous support of a number of trust and individuals. Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne and the Whitworth in Manchester are the first to benefit from the £400,000 fund in its pilot phase. The first acquisitions to be announced are Isaac Julien's acclaimed *Ten Thousand Waves* (2010), jointly acquired by the two galleries, and the first time this work has entered a UK public collection outside of London, while Omer Fast's *5,000 Feet is the Best* (2011) has been jointly acquired by Towner Art Gallery and Imperial War Museums. Art Fund aims to open up this opportunity to more museums in the future, and will work in partnerships with the ICA and Arts Council Collection to encourage further curatorial interest in this medium.

#### National Art Pass:

Art Fund's membership has doubled in the last 5 years, reaching 122,000 National Art Pass holders in December 2015 and meaning more people than ever before supporting Art Fund.

Thanks to the backing of a generous consortium of donors the student scheme was extended to 8,000 participants at 22 Universities during 2015. The free pass means that students – studying fine art, history art or applied art subjects - can make the most of

exhibitions and public collections as part of their studies. Art Fund hopes that this will extend even further over the next five years, to benefit more students, in more Universities and Colleges, and use Art Fund's network of museum partners, artists and curators, to help students find new pathways in their journey towards careers in the arts.

In 2015 a new iteration of the National Art Pass was launched – the Corporate National Art Pass – which brings art and creativity into companies by giving the cards directly to employees.

In the last few weeks Art Fund's Patrons Circle scheme was relaunched as Art Partners. This better reflects the unique relationship that this supporter group has to the charity's work – they help Art Fund activity and in turn join on some of the most exciting projects happening in museums today.

Helping museums go further:

Art Fund has helped increase access to art everywhere, with touring programmes from Aberystwyth to Orkney. Art Fund has supported the national tours of Van Dyck's final self-portrait, George Stubbs' *The Kongouro from New Holland*, and Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, which have continued this year. There has also been particular focus on the ancient, with the continuation of Art Fund's Treasure Plus scheme, which has funded 36 archaeology displays, exhibitions and community projects the length and breadth of the country – proving that small amounts of funding can have a big impact.

Art Fund support has also seen the continuation of Art from Elsewhere, a Hayward Touring show. The show is currently at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and Arnolfini (who are also a Museum of the Year 2016 finalist). At the end of the June there will be a two-day conference at Arnolfini, as part of the exhibition, which will consider the future of international contemporary art in UK public collections.

This year Art Fund supported the UK display of British artist Sarah Lucas's 2015 Venice Biennale pavilion. Her witty representations of the female body were installed in a small but perfectly formed intervention within Sir John Soane's Museum.

Art Fund was delighted to be involved with fig-2, which saw 50 exhibitions in 50 weeks throughout 2015 at the ICA. The charity supported the curator Fatos Ustek to programme this series, which proved to be an exhilarating and kaleidoscopic look at contemporary artistic practice.

In 2015 Art Fund also confirmed a further three years of funding for ARTIST ROOMS, which was acquired with help from Art Fund in 2008 and which has, in the years since, been touring the UK – from Exeter to Shetland – with Art Fund support. In this time, there have been 143 displays and exhibitions, at 76 museums and galleries nationwide, seen by 40 million visitors.

Museum of the Year

Last year there were six finalists with the Whitworth in Manchester winning the £100,000 Art Fund Museum of the Year 2015. Their £15m development redefined the way the gallery engages with its audiences, connecting the building and surrounding park to its local community in Manchester to create a strong sense of openness and invitation. In April 2016 the shortlist for Museum of the Year 2016 was revealed, and the winner will be announced on 6 July.

For further info, please see the Art Fund's annual report 2015/16:

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Notes to Editors:

### About the Art Fund

The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. In the past five years alone the Art Fund has given £34 million to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections. It 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 122,000 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 exhibitions. In addition to grant-giving, the Art Fund's support for museums includes the annual Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year (won by The Whitworth, Manchester, in 2015), 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](http://www.artfund.org)