



PRESS RELEASE  
Monday 12 December 2016

## Art Fund Museum of the Year 2017 launched

### *Total prize money to increase by 40% to £140,000*

The search begins today for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2017. It is awarded to the best museum or gallery in the UK.

On the occasion of the opening of the competition, Art Fund Director Stephen Deuchar announced today a 40% increase in total prize money to £140,000. In addition to £100,000 awarded to the winning museum, for the first time each of the other shortlisted museums will also receive £10,000. The prize is the largest arts award in Britain and the biggest museum prize in the world.

Also announced today, the judging panel for the 2017 prize will be Richard Deacon, artist; Hartwig Fischer, Director, British Museum; Munira Mirza, former Deputy Mayor of London for Education and Culture, and Jo Whiley, BBC Radio 2 DJ and presenter. The panel, chaired by Stephen Deuchar, will consider entries from all eligible entrants across the UK before announcing a shortlist of finalist museums in April 2017

The award ceremony to announce the winner will take place on 5 July 2017 in the spectacular setting of the Great Court of the British Museum, before an invited audience of leading figures from the fields of culture and museums.

Stephen Deuchar, Art Fund director said: 'In these uncertain times museums are a trusted public realm, whose collections and programmes can help people make sense of the world we live in, and where we may be going. Whatever the challenges of the moment, museums and galleries across the UK are forces of innovation, driven by some of the best cultural leaders anywhere. I expect the competition for shortlisting to be intense'

HRH The Duchess of Cambridge presented Art Fund Museum of the Year 2016 to the Victoria and Albert Museum (London) at an award ceremony on 6 July this year, selected from a shortlist of five museums: Arnolfini (Bristol), Bethlem Museum of the Mind (London), Jupiter Artland (Edinburgh), the V&A (London) and York Art Gallery (Yorkshire).

Art Fund Museum of the Year will continue its partnership with the BBC in 2017, who will present a series of specially commissioned programmes across platforms.

[artfund.org](http://artfund.org)

[Twitter  
@artfund](https://twitter.com/artfund)

[Facebook  
theartfund](https://www.facebook.com/theartfund)

National Art Collections Fund. A charity registered in England and Wales 209174, Scotland SC038331

Tim Reeve, Acting Director of the V&A said: "We were all absolutely thrilled to win the prestigious Art Fund Museum of the Year 2016, and for our work to be acknowledged by such an esteemed jury. It was the best possible way to recognise and thank everyone who made the successes of the past year possible, from our incredible staff, to our visitors, volunteers, funders, and many partners and colleagues around the world. We are excited to put the prize fund towards developing a new strategy that will make our collections more widely available to those unable to visit the V&A's sites. This is a real opportunity to work even more closely with colleagues across the cultural sector to share knowledge and expertise, and to connect our objects with more communities in more dynamic ways."

@artfund #museumoftheyear [artfund.org/museum-of-the-year](http://artfund.org/museum-of-the-year)

Media enquiries:

Rachel Mapplebeck, Director of Communications, Art Fund  
[rmapplebeck@artfund.org](mailto:rmapplebeck@artfund.org) /+ 44 (0) 20 7225 4820

Or Madeline Adeane, Press Relations Manager, Art Fund  
[madeane@artfund.org](mailto:madeane@artfund.org) /+ 44 (0) 20 7225 4804

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

Application pack and submissions:

Rachael Browning  
Programmes manager (projects)  
Tel: 020 7225 4816  
Email: [rbrowning@artfund.org](mailto:rbrowning@artfund.org)

Notes to Editors:

Art Fund

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. In the past five years alone 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, and makes additional grants to support the training and professional development of curators. 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 240 museums, galleries and historic places across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions and subscription to Art Quarterly magazine. In addition to grant-giving, Art Fund's support for museums includes Art Fund Museum of the Year (won by the V&A, London, in 2016) and a range of digital platforms.

Find out more about Art Fund and the National Art Pass at [www.artfund.org](http://www.artfund.org)

## The 2017 judging panel

### Dr Stephen Deuchar CBE (Chair)

Art Fund director since 2010, Stephen Deuchar has chaired the judging panel since 2013. Before joining the Art Fund, Stephen was the first director of Tate Britain (1998 – 2009), having previously spent 12 years as a curator then exhibitions director at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

### Professor Richard Deacon CBE

Leading sculptor Richard Deacon was the subject of a large-scale exhibition at Tate Britain in 2014, while a ten-year survey of his work – ‘On The Other Side’ – toured to museums in Switzerland, Azerbaijan and Germany in 2015 – 16. A collection of his writings, ‘So, If, And, But’ was published in 2014. He has recently completed commissions in Beijing and Tokyo and is currently building a bridge in Belgrade. In 2015 he retired from his post as professor at the Kunstakademie Dusseldorf, ending 38 years of teaching at art schools in the UK and other countries. He has been an Art Fund trustee since 2015.

### Dr Hartwig Fischer

Director of the British Museum since early 2016, Hartwig Fischer began his career at the Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland, before becoming director of the Folkwang Museum, Essen, in 2006, where he oversaw a major building project with David Chipperfield architects. In 2012 he was appointed director general of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden (State Art Collections, Dresden), with responsibility for 14 museums and associated libraries, archives and research centres. Here he led on the development of significant international exhibitions and research projects and oversaw several major building projects and renovations to the State Art Collection’s estate.

### Munira Mirza

An adviser on arts and philanthropy, Munira Mirza was deputy mayor for Culture and Education at London’s City Hall for eight years. Here she oversaw the city’s cultural programme for the Olympics, Paralympics and Diamond Jubilee, and initiated a wide range of projects, events and funding programmes to support London’s creative life. She has previously worked for a range of arts and research organisations, including the Royal Society of Arts, Tate and Policy Exchange. She has written and broadcast extensively on cultural policy and is currently chair of the Royal Opera House’s Learning and Participation Committee.

### Jo Whiley

Radio DJ and television presenter, Jo Whiley presents an evening show on BBC Radio 2. Previously she worked at BBC Radio 1 – which she joined in 1993 – hosting shows including The Evening Session with Steve Lamacq and The Jo Whiley Show. Throughout her career she has also presented coverage of the Glastonbury Festival on Radio 1, Channel 4 and BBC TV, and in July 2009 she published her autobiography, ‘My World in Motion’. She is passionate about museums and galleries and for BBC Radio 2 visited organisations shortlisted for Art Fund Museum of the Year, reporting on the MAC in Belfast in 2015 and on Jupiter Artland in 2016.

### About Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year

Art Fund has supported Museum of the Year since 2008. Its forerunner was the Prize for Museums and Galleries, administered by the Museum Prize Trust and sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation from 2003-2007. The prize champions what museums do, encourages more people to visit and gets to the heart of what makes a truly outstanding museum. The judges present the prize to the museum or gallery that has best met 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 in exceptional ways – engaging, inspiring and extending public understanding
- Delivered an innovative programme of audience development, learning or outreach
- Clearly won the support and enthusiasm of its visitors and users.

Winners over the past six years are the V&A (2016), The Whitworth (2015), Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2014), William Morris Gallery (2013), Royal Albert Memorial Museum (2012) and the British Museum (2011).