

PRESS RELEASE

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MUSEUMS' COLLECTIONS DIVERSIFY AND GROW THROUGH NEW COLLECTING AWARDS

- £300,000 awarded by Art Fund for UK curators to grow their museums' collections through the New Collecting Awards.
- New photographic portraits of people underrepresented in Scotland's national collection and the acquisition of works by indigenous artists made possible thanks to scheme.
- Funding from Art Fund goes to National Galleries of Scotland, Pitt Rivers Museum, Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, V&A and National Trust.

Today Art Fund announces funding to help expand and diversify museum collections. It will enable museums such as the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, to collect contemporary works by indigenous artists which address the colonial history of the organisation and National Galleries of Scotland to commission new photographic portraits that reflects the diversity of Scotland's population.

Five rising curators have been awarded the funding through Art Fund's New Collecting Awards.

The New Collecting Awards give curators 100% funding to research and buy works that grow their museums' collections in new directions or deepen existing ones.

The scheme has awarded a total of 35 curators over £1.8 million during the past six years. Each winning curator receives a budget for acquisitions alongside funding for research, travel, and training, plus the support of a mentor and Art Fund staff and trustees.

The 2020 winners are:

Louise Pearson, Curator (Photography), National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh:

Louise Pearson will use Scotland's census data to identify groups which are underrepresented in the national photography collection and address these gaps by acquiring and commissioning photographs that reflect the true breadth of Scotland's population. These groups are likely to include single parent families, people of a mixed ethnic background, individuals from the Pakistani and Polish communities and residents of the Scottish islands.

Marenka Thompson-Odlum, Research Associate, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

Marenka Thompson-Odlum will collect new works by indigenous artists from around the world to question and interact with the colonial past of the museum's collections and find new ways of telling stories. The project will focus on the following indigenous cultures: Ainu (Japan), Haida (North America), Edo (Nigeria), and Polynesian (focusing on Hawaii). It is an extension of Thompson-Odlum's *Labelling Matters* project, which explores the often-problematic historic language used within the Pitt Rivers Museum when referring to objects. The new indigenous works will focus on

language and self-determination and include works that use written language, textile works, sculptures and performance art (video / digital art).

Andrew Ferrara, Project Curator, Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Norwich:

Andrew Ferrara's project will build a collection of exemplar medieval East Anglia coins, ranging from the 7th to 12th century, which will help expand the numismatic collections of Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery and deepen the understanding of the region's medieval history.

Xiaoxin Li, Curator (China), V&A, London

Xiaoxin Li will research and collect contemporary Chinese studio craft, a field significantly under-represented both inside and outside China. Li will help expand the V&A's expertise on the field by acquiring applied art works created using craft techniques from the 1980s to today.

Catherine Troiano, Curator, National Photography Collections, National Trust

Catherine Troiano will develop a collection of photography since the 1970s, that represents diverse experiences of British heritage and speaks to local, regional and national histories. The project seeks to expand the Trust's existing national collections of photography, which are richest in material from the 1840s to the mid-twentieth century. Collecting will focus on emerging and established photographers working in Britain, whose work engages with varied perspectives of identity, land and history.

Jenny Waldman, Art Fund Director, said: *"Supporting curators and their development is core to Art Fund's charitable programme. Museums have been closed for much of this year due to the pandemic, but curators are still caring for, researching, and expanding museum collections for the benefit of audiences. During a year in which we all are reflecting more deeply on critical issues including equality and diversity, we are delighted to support projects broadening representation in UK collections."*

Art Fund's programme allows museums to bring works of art and objects into public view and invests in the curatorial talent which is key to driving them forward.

The charity is also fundraising to support museums through the urgent crowdfunding appeal Together for Museums, aiming to raise £1m to help museums adapt to Covid-19 and evolve in the future.

The New Collecting Awards are made possible by a number of generous individuals and trusts including the Wolfson Foundation, the Ruddock Foundation for the Arts, and the Coral Samuel Charitable Trust. This latest round of funding includes a ring-fenced Award to give a curator a mandate to build a pre-1600 collection for their museum, supported by the Ruddock Foundation for the Arts. This funding will go towards the project at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery by Andrew Ferrara.

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Notes to editors:

- Images available at <https://artfund.getbynder.com/web/2c1c7fa93f0be1dd/new-collecting-awards-2020/>
- Awardees headshots available at <https://artfund.getbynder.com/web/61fc6488b6716b41/nca-headshots/>

Together for Museums

Together for Museums aims to raise £1 million directly for museums to adapt to today's challenges and evolve. Art Fund is asking the public to make donations of any size. From just £15, unique objects and artworks are available as rewards, created by leading artists including Lubaina Himid, Anish Kapoor, Michael Landy, Melanie Manchot, David Shrigley and Supermundane.

The need for support is huge. In the last six months, Art Fund received applications totalling over 16.9m from 451 organisations for its £2.25m emergency funding to help museums adapt to Covid-19, which is now exhausted. In the first two rounds, just 17% of applications could be supported.

Art Fund

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. It provides millions of pounds every year to help museums to acquire and share works of art across the UK, further the professional development of their curators, and inspire more people to visit and enjoy their public programmes. In response to Covid-19 Art Fund has made £2 million in adapted funding available to support museums through reopening and beyond, including Respond and Reimagine grants to help meet immediate need and reimagine future ways of working. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by the 159,000 members who buy the National Art Pass, who enjoy free entry to over 240 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and receive Art Quarterly magazine. Art Fund also supports museums through its annual prize, Art Fund Museum of the Year. In a unique edition of the prize for 2020, Art Fund responded to the unprecedented challenges that all museums are facing by selecting five winners and increasing the prize money to £200,000. The winners are Aberdeen Art Gallery; Gairloch Museum; Science Museum; South London Gallery; and Towner Eastbourne. www.artfund.org