

### UK MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES FACING CRISIS WITH 60% WORRIED ABOUT SURVIVAL

- Visitor figures for October just 25% compared year-on-year to October 2019
- Income significantly or severely down for 77% of organisations
- Only a third of closed museums think they will reopen in the coming months
- 61% of museum and gallery workers worried about losing their job
- Art Fund launches crowdfunding appeal **Together for Museums** to raise £1m for museums to adapt and thrive, backed by leading artists Lubaina Himid, Anish Kapoor and Michael Landy
- Every donation at [www.artfund.org/together](http://www.artfund.org/together) will make a difference #TogetherforMuseums

Museums, galleries and historic houses across the UK are facing a crisis due to the impact of Covid-19, with **six in ten (60%) surveyed worried about their survival**. Today Art Fund, the national charity for art, is releasing new research showing the perilous position of the country's much-loved museums, alongside an urgent new crowdfunding appeal: **Together for Museums**.

The UK's 2,500 museums were thriving before the pandemic hit, providing inspiration, joy and education, enriching lives and bringing communities closer together. But national and local lockdowns, combined with social distancing limiting visitors, have been catastrophic. Despite this, only half (55%) have received emergency funding to date, with 56% of those saying they would have gone under if they had not received it.

Museums have shown they can respond to this crisis with creativity and serve their communities, but need urgent help. 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.

Museums rely on visitors and the income they bring to survive, but many are struggling to reopen. Amongst Art Fund's 800 museum partners, 20% have been unable to reopen at all following the first UK-wide lockdown. This number will remain high as museums in England are now shut in line with government guidelines, whilst those in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have also been subject to localised lockdowns. The new research found just 35% of museums closed between lockdowns were confident that they will reopen again in the coming months.

# Art Fund\_

Last month, average visitor levels fell to just 25% compared to October 2019. This has led to a huge reduction in income – 77% say that it is ‘significantly or severely’ down or they are earning nothing at all. These statistics have worrying implications for the future of these organisations, and the tens of thousands of people who work at them - over half (61%) are concerned about losing their job.

Museums know a new approach is needed to come out of this crisis: nine out of ten (92%) say that they will need to ‘adapt and innovate’ in order to survive Covid-19 and post-Covid times. Applications to Art Fund’s emergency Respond and Reimagine funding programme this year showed museums rethinking how they work, making their venues Covid-safe, and taking exciting projects out into their communities despite enormous challenges. The £1 million target for Together for Museums will enable so many more to respond to the crisis with creativity, and imagine a better future: from pioneering projects for schools; to taking collections out to the community; adapting spaces for visitors; digital engagement for those that can’t currently visit; and creating exhibitions for reopening. Over £250,000 for Together for Museums has already been raised through over 2,000 donations from Art Fund members and supporters, taking the charity a quarter of the way towards the target.

Jenny Waldman, Art Fund director, said: *“Over the last six months it’s been hugely inspiring to see innovative ideas from museums to adapt and evolve, but heartbreaking that we cannot support them all. This terrible pandemic, which separates us from our loved ones but has brought us closer in support of our local communities, has taken museums to a make-or-break point. Single-handedly, we cannot solve this crisis - but together, we can make a huge impact. We are urging everyone who loves and uses museums to come together now, to help so many more museums thrive.”*

Sir Ian Blatchford, Director & Chief Executive Science Museum Group and Chair, National Museum Directors’ Council said: *“Museums always find creative responses to problems, and over the course of lockdown they have done so with gusto. Millions of people turned to museums to find inspiration and education while their physical doors were closed. Sadly, reopening alone is not a smooth path back to sustainability as museums face tough challenges to adapt what they can offer to visitors in person or online. These figures show the stark financial reality. This excellent campaign asks what we can give back to ensure museums survive for their communities.”*

Lubaina Himid, artist, said: *“As a child I visited museums with my mother - so the idea of being an artist was always a possibility in my mind. It’s essential that museums, so many of which are free to visit, are supported through this crisis and are there to inspire the next generation.”*

## **Supporting Information:**

£1.5m of Art Fund’s £2.25m Respond and Reimagine funding has been awarded to 44 organisations to date, with final funds to be allocated this month. New recipients announced today, include:

- Roald Dahl Museum, Great Missenden, to live-stream Roald Dahl’s amazing archive into classrooms around the UK and beyond
- Postal Museum, London, who have adapted their interactives, route and access resources to ensure an engaging experience despite Covid-19 restrictions
- Lakeland Arts, Cumbria, for ‘Museum on the Move’ to take its collections out to people in the remote Cumbrian community
- Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art to commission artists to engage with audiences both on site and digitally
- Salford Museum and Art Gallery for a new blended learning programme enabling physical and digital engagement with its collections, expert educators, and unique learning experiences

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**Editors notes:**

- Images available at <https://artfund.getbynder.com/web/739910c1e95a85f6/t4m-press/>
- Research conducted by Opinium in November 2020, amongst 210 UK museums

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**About Together for Museums**

Donations can be made at [www.artfund.org/togetherformuseums](http://www.artfund.org/togetherformuseums)

Follow the campaign at @artfund #TogetherForMuseums

**About 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](http://www.artfund.org)