



Young V&A

PRESS RELEASE

Date of Issue: Thursday 11 July 2024

YOUNG V&A WINS £120,000 ART FUND MUSEUM OF THE YEAR 2024

High-res press images available for download via: <https://tinyurl.com/WinnerMOTY2024>

Young V&A has been announced as Art Fund Museum of the Year 2024. Dr Helen Charman, Director of Young V&A, was presented with the £120,000 prize – the largest museum prize in the world – by Vick Hope, broadcaster and judge for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2024, at a ceremony at the National Gallery, London.

Dr Helen Charman, Director of Young V&A, said: *“We’re thrilled to win Art Fund Museum of the Year 2024 and to have been part of a shortlist of such brilliant museums changing lives across the UK. This win is a clarion call for the vital role of creativity, culture and play in children’s lives when so many opportunities have been taken away through the cost-of-living crisis and ongoing under-investment in creative education nationally. We recognise the positive impact creative experiences in early years has on young people’s futures - and that’s why we’ll be investing the prize money in founding a creative network and programme for early years providers along the Thames Estuary, where a higher proportion of children live in low-income households than the England average.”*

The prize money will enable Young V&A to build on its deeply embedded local community programme, working with some of the country’s most deprived children. From the Isle of Dogs to Southend on Sea and beyond, Young V&A will work in partnership with caregivers, artists, museum professionals and early years educators to expand this programme, and create new cultural and playful learning experiences, using its collection to unleash the power of creativity and its impact on young lives.

Young V&A is a museum sparking creativity now and for the future. Created with children from early years to early teens, it is a place for young people to imagine, play and design, and get inspired by almost 2000 toys, characters, objects and artworks on display from around the world and across history. Rooted in its local community with a 150-year heritage as East London’s first museum, Young V&A strives to energise young creators as well as empower everyone to promote creativity now and for the next generation and support the teaching of art and design education for all.

Jenny Waldman, director, Art Fund and chair of the judges for Art Fund Museum of the Year, said: *“Young V&A is a truly inspirational museum. With a brief from its young co-designers to create ‘the world’s most joyful museum’, Young V&A has achieved that*



and more. It has radically reimagined the museum with and for young people, creating a museum experience that's active, empowering and dynamic, centred on learning through play. Young V&A has established a deep engagement with its local community and, at the same time, it has become an international beacon for what a children's museum can be.

"I give my warmest congratulations to the fantastic team at Young V&A on being crowned Art Fund Museum of the Year 2024. You truly are the world's most joyful museum and will inspire young people now and for generations to come."

Vick Hope, broadcaster and judge for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2024, said:

"Young V&A is such a special and unique place, offering an experience for children (and their adults) like no other out there. The museum truly places young people centre stage, encouraging them to play, design and get creative through a fascinating collection of objects and artworks.

"I was inspired by the museum's vision to become a space for the next generation to feel empowered and to imagine their future; a space that will cement museums as places they belong and feel welcome as they grow up, regardless of their background. In such a short time the Young V&A's global impact has been really incredible, demonstrating the potential of what museums can be for children around the world – and I can't recommend it enough for a visit."

Culture Secretary, Lisa Nandy, said: *"Our world-leading museums are a source of creativity and curiosity that can inspire lifelong passions for learning, history and the arts. This year's Art Fund Museum of the Year was a tough competition with an exciting shortlist representing institutions from across the country. Congratulations to Young V&A on this achievement, recognising their hard work to create a unique space dedicated to young people."*

Young V&A opened on 1 July 2023 following a £13 million capital project to transform the former V&A Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green into a trail-blazing museum of creativity with a brief from the museum's young co-designers to create 'the world's most joyful museum'. Young V&A offers three active, innovative permanent galleries (Play, Imagine and Design); a dynamic temporary exhibition space; beautifully restored Grade II listed architectural features; improved retail and café spaces; new accessible routes and facilities, including an accredited Changing Places Toilet (the first and only in Tower Hamlets); and an enhanced and expanded Clore Learning Centre and Creative Studios.

Following opening, Young V&A received overwhelming positive critical acclaim for its ambitious approach to child-centred museum experiences and thoughtful consideration of audience needs. Young V&A welcomed a remarkable 730,526 in its first year of opening – demonstrating its significant appeal, and impact on young people's lives.

Art Fund annually shortlists five outstanding museums for Museum of the Year. The 2024 edition recognises inspiring projects from autumn 2022 through to winter 2023, with audiences and communities at their heart – with a particular focus on community engagement, sustainable ways of working, and demonstration of ambition



by reinventing what it means to be ‘the best’ museum for the audiences of today and tomorrow.

The winner was one of five finalists. The other shortlisted museums are: Craven Museum (Skipton, North Yorkshire), Dundee Contemporary Arts (Dundee), Manchester Museum (Manchester) and National Portrait Gallery (London).

Each finalist will receive £15,000. Together with £120,000 received by the winning museum, the total prize money for Art Fund Museum of the Year is £180,000, specially increased in 2023 to mark 120 years of Art Fund supporting museums.

The 2024 judging panel, chaired by Art Fund director Jenny Waldman, includes: Anupam Ganguli (Finance Director, Historic Royal Palaces), Vick Hope (broadcaster), Tania Kovats (artist) and Sir John Leighton (former Director-General, National Galleries of Scotland). The judges visited each of the finalists to inform their decision-making.

The prize is funded thanks to the generosity of Art Fund’s members who buy a National Art Pass. Pass holders enjoy discounts and benefits at the shortlisted museums and hundreds of museums and galleries across the UK, whilst also supporting Art Fund’s vital work in championing museums and preserving the country’s cultural treasures.

#museumoftheyear

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Press images available for download:
<https://tinyurl.com/WinnerMOTY2024>

THE ART FUND MUSEUM OF THE YEAR 2024 FINALISTS WERE:

Craven Museum (Skipton, North Yorkshire)

Craven Museum is embedded in the Grade II listed Skipton Town Hall, a modern multi-arts cultural hub on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales. The venue also includes an exhibition gallery, historic concert hall, education, and community spaces which all work in unison with the museum to enrich and expand the cultural experiences on offer. The museum is focused on the local area - spanning pre-history to contemporary in areas as diverse as archaeology, textiles, fine art, literature, social history, and more – the museum has something for everyone.

The museum was recognised as the Kids in Museums Family Friendly Museum 2023 and Best Accessible Museum 2023. It was judged one of the top 3 museums for access



provision out of over 2,000 UK museums and heritage sites. Craven Museum programmed free or low-cost activities or events every day of the 2023 school holidays for families, in recognition of the current cost of living crisis.

Between 2022-2023, 115 artists displayed work in the museum's exhibition gallery, and 8 community groups created displays in the community cases. The museum welcomed 156,391 visitors in the 2022-23 period, an increase of roughly 56,000 visitors compared to the same period the previous year.

Dundee Contemporary Arts (Dundee)

Dundee Contemporary Art (DCA) is one of Scotland's foremost contemporary arts organisations. DCA's mission is to enable audiences, artists, and participants to see, experience and create through its four programme areas: exhibitions, cinema, print studio and learning. In 2024, DCA celebrate 25 years of bringing the best in contemporary art to Dundee.

From autumn 2022 to winter 2023 DCA showcased five artists in its galleries: Matthew Arthur Williams, Saoirse Amira Anis, Zineb Sedira, Rachel Eulena Williams and Michelle Williams Gamaker. These exhibitions spanned painting, sculpture, moving image and installation, and featured artists and themes that reflect the diversity of the visual arts and the museum's audiences, particularly focusing on lost or hidden histories, uncovered archives and generational memory.

In June 2023, DCA was the lead partner on Art Night Dundee, a major contemporary art festival held outside of London for the first time. Art Night Dundee welcomed over 15,000 visitors from across the UK, delivered 10 commissions and 12 projects with local collectives, worked across 35 sites, employed 168 people, and had an estimated economic impact of £394,800 in Dundee.

Manchester Museum (Manchester)

Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, is one of the largest university museums in the UK. Over 130 years old, it is home to around four and a half million objects from natural sciences and human cultures. It has always been a place for research and learning and remains a critical part of the city's research infrastructure today.

Built on values of inclusion, imagination and care, the Museum has undergone a transformation designed to bring communities together and build understanding between cultures. As part of this, a £15 million capital project, 'hello future', was completed in February 2023. The project included new galleries, partnerships, visitor facilities, sector-leading programming and collections practice and digital innovation.

Visitor numbers for 18 February 2023 to 10 January 2024 were up 103% on 2019/20, with 57% of visitors new to Manchester Museum. All of this is on top of the world-leading conservation work done through its vivarium, home to a collection of live amphibians and reptiles including many critically endangered species and has



contributed significantly to the University of Manchester's performance against UN Sustainable Development Goals, where it ranks second among universities globally.

National Portrait Gallery (London)

Founded in 1856, the National Portrait Gallery tells the story of the United Kingdom through portraits, using art to bring history to life and explore living today. From global icons to unsung heroes, the Collection is filled with the stories of those that have shaped, and continue to shape a nation. The Gallery offers encounters with some of the world's greatest and most exciting new artists, promoting engagement with portraiture in all media to a wide-ranging public by conserving, growing and sharing the world's largest collection of portraits.

In summer 2023, the new National Portrait Gallery reopened after its most significant transformation since 1896, comprising a complete redisplay of its Collection and a major refurbishment of its building. This included the creation of new public spaces, a more welcoming visitor entrance and a state-of-the-art Learning Centre. While its doors were closed, the Gallery initiated a programme of innovative nationwide partnerships with museums, local groups and schools, as well as an international touring programme, collectively reaching 1.6m people to date.

Now open to the public, the NPG has significantly increased the number of portraits on display, with over 50 new acquisitions and commissions exhibited across historic and contemporary galleries. Presenting a more inclusive and dynamic picture of the people who have contributed to the UK's rich history, 48% of the portraits in the post-1900 galleries are of women (up from 35%), 11% of all works on display are portraits of UK ethnic minority sitters (up from 3%), and 7% of exhibited portraits feature sitters from the LGBTQI+ community (up from 4%). In the six months since reopening, the Gallery has welcomed 1.2m visitors – including 37,000 more families and 76,000 more visitors with a disability compared to pre-closure – and its online audience has doubled with 4.5m web visits since April 2023. Over 11,000 schoolchildren visited the Gallery during the summer term alone in 2023, representing a 200% increase in visits compared to pre-closure.

Young V&A - Victoria and Albert Museum (London)

Young V&A is a museum sparking creativity now and for the future, with spaces to imagine, play and design. Created with 0-14-year-olds, it is a place for young people and grownups to be inspired by the power of creativity and discover the creative possibilities of our national collections.

Young V&A was made possible by The McLain Foundation, Prue MacLeod, Dunard Fund, Buffini Chao Foundation, The BAND Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Andrew Hochhauser KC, Oak Foundation, The Portal Trust, The Thompson Family Charitable Trust, Wolfson Foundation, and many other supporters.

vam.ac.uk/young



About Art Fund Museum of the Year

The first 'Art Fund Museum of the Year' was awarded in 2013 to the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow. Its forerunner was the Prize for Museums and Galleries, administered by the Museum Prize Trust. Art Fund supported this prize between 2008 – 2012, when it was known as the 'Art Fund Prize'. It was sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation from 2003-2007, when it was known as the 'Gulbenkian Museum Prize'.

There is a rich history of prizes for museums, the first running from 1973-2003, called 'The National Heritage Museum of the Year'

Art Fund Museum of the Year 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 shown how their achievements of the preceding year stand out, demonstrated what makes their work innovative, and the impact it has had on audiences.

Winners of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2013 - 2023:

2013 - William Morris Gallery, London
2014 - Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield
2015 - Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
2016 - Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London
2017 - The Hepworth, Wakefield
2018 - Tate St Ives
2019 - St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff
2020 - Aberdeen Art Gallery; Gairloch Museum; Science Museum; South London Gallery; and Towner Eastbourne (joint winners)
2021 - Firstsite, Colchester
2022 - Horniman Museum and Gardens, London
2023 - The Burrell Collection, Glasgow

Winners of The Art Fund Prize 2008 – 2012

2008 - The Lightbox, Woking
2009 - Wedgwood Museum, Stoke-on-Trent,
2010 - Ulster Museum, Belfast
2011 - British Museum
2012 - Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter

Art Fund

Art Fund is the national charity for art, helping museums and people to share in great art and culture for 120 years. Art Fund raises millions of pounds every year to help the UK's museums, galleries and historic houses. The charity funds art, enabling the UK's museums to buy and share exciting works, connect with their communities and inspire the next generation. It builds audiences, with its National Art Pass opening doors to



great culture. And it amplifies the museum sector through the world's largest museum prize, Museum of the Year, and creative events that bring the UK's museums together. Art Fund is people-powered by 135,000 members who buy a National Art Pass, and the donors, trusts and foundations who support the charity.

The National Art Pass provides free or discounted entry to over 900 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and Art Quarterly magazine.

www.artfund.org