

PRESS RELEASE
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Leighton House Museum Voted Most Romantic in Art Fund and eHarmony Online Poll

National charity Art Fund and relationship expert eHarmony today announced the winner of their Valentine's Day poll in search for the most romantic museum for a date. Leighton House Museum won with 33% of the vote and will now be added to the eHarmony Great Date Guide, which recommends inspiring locations for memorable experiences.

Located on the edge of Holland Park in Kensington, Leighton House Museum is one of the most remarkable buildings of the 19th century. The house was the former home and studio of leading Victorian artist, Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830-1896). Originally constructed on a modest basis, it grew to become a 'private palace of art' visited by many of the great artists of the day. The Arab Hall, designed to display Leighton's priceless collection of over a thousand Islamic tiles, is the centrepiece of the house with an opulent gold mosaicked interior, marble columns and golden dome. National Art Pass by Art Fund offers visitors free entry to this historic house, which offers an exciting programme of events year-round, and 50% off their internationally significant temporary art exhibitions.

On winning the poll, Daniel Robbins, Senior Curator of Leighton House Museum said: 'We see many couples come to experience the beautiful and intimate surroundings of Leighton's private palace of art. Whether it's discovering the house together for the first time or on a romantic date, the house always seems to work its magic - some even use it as a venue for their wedding celebrations. So, we are thrilled and honoured to have been chosen by Art Fund, eHarmony and the public as the UK's most romantic museum.'

Recent research shows that 83% of Art Fund members prefer to visit museums, galleries and historic houses with a loved one, friend or family member. With this in mind, Art Fund pulled together a list of ten museums and galleries from around the UK, which they thought are ideally suited to a visit with that special 'plus one'. The public were then asked to vote for their favourite. The shortlist comprised of: Abbotsford (Scottish Borders), Bletchley Park (Buckinghamshire), Holburne Museum (Bath), Nottingham Castle (Nottinghamshire), Osbourne House (Isle of Wight), Tullie House (Cumbria), Royal Pavilion (Brighton), Russell Coates (Bournemouth), Wallace Collection (London) and the winner Leighton House Museum (London).

Each shortlisted museum offers special discounts for Art Fund's 123,000 members, who each have a National Art Pass, ranging from 50% off major exhibitions, to free and discounted entry, as well as shop and café deals. Art Fund recently launched National Art Pass Plus One, a more flexible membership option, which allows members to bring any guest to venues and allows them to enjoy the same benefits, all year-round.

Charlotte Wood, Senior Marketing Manager (Museums) at the Art Fund congratulated Leighton House Museum: "Thank you to the 1,000 people who took part in our online poll, the ten museums for their enthusiasm and eHarmony for all of their support. We are so pleased for Leighton House Museum, whose win highlights them as a perfect date venue all year round. Leighton House Museum is just one of over 700 of our museum partners across the UK who offer free or discounted entry to anyone with a National Art Pass, and we hope the public will be inspired to make their next romantic excursion a visit to this remarkable building, or indeed other gems from our museum network."

Verity Hogan, UK Editor at eHarmony said: 'We're very pleased to be awarding a spot in our Great Date Guide to the Leighton House Museum. Our 4.5 million members often find cultural dates to be some of the most successful and we're glad to be able to introduce them to a great new date spot in the heart of London. In fact, artistic passion is one of the dimensions that eHarmony takes into consideration when determining compatibility and is a keen interest shared by many of our members.'

Join the conversation #ArtPlusOne

ENDS

For more information on the Art Fund or National Art Pass or imagery please contact SUTTON: Charlotte Sluter | charlottes@suttonpr.com | 020 7183 3577

For live updates follow Art Fund on social media:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ArtFundUK

Twitter: @artfund

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For live updates follow eHarmony.co.uk on social media:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/eharmonyuk/

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Notes to Editor:

About 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 123,000 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.

About eHarmony.co.uk

eHarmony launched in the UK in 2008 with a clear vision: to create more lasting love in the world. The relationship expert is committed to helping singles find the best possible match, using science and psychology to determine key personality traits. Prior to launch, the brand invested in further extensive research into love and relationships, conducted in partnership with Oxford University's Internet Institute to develop UK relationship-compatibility models. Today eHarmony, fondly known as 'the brains behind the butterflies', proudly serves almost 60million members globally, and has amassed 4.5m registered users since launching in Britain. Find out more at www.eharmony.co.uk/tour

About Leighton House Museum

Located on the edge of Holland Park in Kensington, Leighton House Museum is one of the most remarkable buildings of the 19th century. Owned and operated by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the house was the former home and studio of the leading Victorian artist, Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830-1896). The house was built to his precise requirements combining studio space with domestic accommodation and entertaining space. Originally constructed on a modest basis, it grew to become a 'private palace of art' visited by many of the great artists of the day and regarded as one of the architectural sights of London. The Arab Hall, designed to display Leighton's priceless collection of over a thousand Islamic tiles, is the centrepiece of the house. A compelling vision of the Orient is created through the Islamic tiles, mostly brought back from Damascus in Syria, combined with the gold mosaicked interior, marble columns and golden dome. The opulence continues through the richly decorated interiors, adorned with elaborate mosaic floors and walls lined with peacock blue tiles by the ceramic artist William De Morgan. On the first floor, the grand painting studio with its great north window, dome and apse is the room in which all Leighton's important later works were produced, including the celebrated Flaming June. Also on the first floor, the Silk Room displays paintings by Leighton's friends and contemporaries. The house was restored to great acclaim between 2008-10, winning an RIBA award and a Europa Nostra award.

Leighton rose to become the President of the Royal Academy in 1878 and the pre-eminent classical painter of his age. He remains the only British artist to have been raised to the peerage, becoming Baron Leighton of Stretton just before he died. He was buried in St Paul's Cathedral amidst great ceremony.