

## PRESS RELEASE

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### St Fagans winner of £100,000 Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019

St Fagans National Museum of History, near Cardiff, was announced as Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019 this evening (3 July 2019), the most important museum prize in the world. David Anderson, Director General of National Museum Wales, was presented with the £100,000 prize by artist Jeremy Deller at a ceremony in the spectacular setting of the Science Museum, London.

St Fagans is the first Welsh winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year and Wales' most visited heritage attraction.

The winner was chosen from five finalists: HMS Caroline (Belfast), Nottingham Contemporary, Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford), St. Fagans National Museum of History (Cardiff) and V&A Dundee. Each of the other finalist museums receives a £10,000 prize in recognition of their achievements.

Among the 400 guests at the dinner hosted by Stephen Deuchar, director, Art Fund, were:

Artists: Ron Arad, Ruth Beale, Zarina Bhimji, Sonia Boyce, Michael Craig-Martin, Edmund De Waal, Antony Gormley, Eva Grubinger, Roger Hiorns, Chantal Joffe, Michael Landy, Langlands and Bell, Ian McKeever, Melanie Manchot, Mariele Neudecker, Katrina Palmer, Gerald Scarfe, Yinka Shonibare, Matt Smith, Annika Strom, Mitra Tabrizian, Gavin Turk, Clare Twomey, Barbara Walker, Gillian Wearing, Alison Wilding, Richard Wentworth and Stephen Willats.

Arts leaders: Bruce Boucher, Ian Blatchford, Tony Butler, Iwona Blazwick, Peter Bazalgette, Nicholas Cullinan, David Dumbleby, Caro Howell, Kevin Fewster, Liz Gilmore, Simon Groom, Melanie Keen, Phillip Long, Tim Marlow, Sarah McRory, Tamalie Newbery, Adele Patrick, Victoria Pomery, Tim Reeve, Axel Rüger, Jennifer Scott, Nicholas Serota, Sam Thorne, Esme Ward and Iain Watson.

High profile guests: Jane Asher, Peter Bazalgette, Kevin Brennan, Neil Mendoza and Jon Snow.

Art Fund awards the Art Fund Museum of the Year annually to one outstanding museum, which, in the opinion of the judges, has shown exceptional imagination, innovation and achievement across the preceding 12 months. It is the largest arts award in Britain and the most prestigious museum award in the world.

The judges for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019 were: David Batchelor, artist; Brenda Emmanus, broadcaster and journalist; Bridget McConnell, Chief Executive, Glasgow Life; Bill Sherman, Director, Warburg Institute.

Stephen Deuchar, Art Fund director and chair of the judges for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019 said, 'St Fagans lives, breathes and embodies the culture and identity of Wales. A monument to modern museum democracy, it has been transformed through a major development project involving the direct participation of hundreds of thousands of visitors and volunteers, putting the arts of making and building into fresh contexts – social and political, historic and contemporary. This magical place was made by the people of Wales for people everywhere, and stands as one of the most welcoming and engaging museums anywhere in the UK.'

Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019 judge Bridget McConnell, said, 'Everyone I met and saw at St Fagans was in constant, lively conversation about their shared history, culture and lived experiences. This is their place – and it is strongly felt on every visit. It is heartening that the museum's major supporter, the devolved Welsh government, has put culture at its core for the wide benefits of everyone in the country. This is truly a role model museum, and thanks to Art Fund Museum of the Year the world will now see its groundbreaking work.'

## WINNING MUSEUM

Wales' most visited heritage attraction, St Fagans explores the history and culture of the country. This living history museum just outside Cardiff includes over 40 historical buildings, transported from across Wales, which have been faithfully re-erected and set within 100 acres of parkland.

Last year the museum completed its Making History project, a £30 million redevelopment to become Wales' National Museum of History, opening new galleries and workshop spaces and transforming its visitor experience. A beautifully restored 1970s entrance building now offers a warm welcome to all visitors. Volunteers helped recreate Llys Llewelyn, a 13th century Prince's Court, based on archaeological evidence from Anglesey. Bryn Eryr, is St Fagans' newest oldest building – iron Age roundhouses recreated based on an archaeological site from the time of the Roman conquest. Meanwhile, Gweithdy (Welsh for 'workshop') is a new eco-friendly space surrounded by woodland, where visitors can celebrate and learn the centuries-old skills of makers. Working in partnership with makers and community organisations, children and adults can now experience a wide range of craft skills including, quilting, pottery, stone carving and woodworking.

The redevelopment has provided an eight fold increase in dedicated learning spaces. They have created an active participatory learning environment, underpinned by the new Weston Centre for Learning, designed with the Youth and Teacher Fora. Since the opening of the Weston Centre for Learning in September 2017, 67,384 children have used the Centre. The long-term active involvement of 120 third and public sector partners has transformed St Fagans learning programmes, supporting skills, creativity and health and wellbeing.

Throughout the six-year development, the museum remained open, welcoming 3 million visitors.

720,000 people were involved in shaping the museum's transformation through an imaginative public programme – reflecting the museum's aim to create history 'with' rather than 'for' the people of Wales.

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For downloadable press images, please go to: <https://bit.ly/2KWw5ZG>

#### Notes to Editors:

The Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019 finalists were:

#### HMS Caroline, Belfast

As the last remaining British light cruiser ship from the First World War and the Royal Navy's sole survivor from the Battle of Jutland, the largest sea battle of the First World War, HMS Caroline offers an extraordinary insight into naval history, maritime warfare and the story of the Irish sailor. After averting plans to scrap the ship, an ambitious £20 million project to rescue, conserve and restore HMS Caroline was completed in 2018. The ship now offers an inclusive and accessible space for everyone to enjoy. An innovative learning programme and an immersive introductory exhibition in the newly renovated Victorian pump house surrounding the ship brings HMS Caroline's long history and 90-year presence in Belfast alive.

# Art Fund\_

## Nottingham Contemporary

Since opening in 2009, Nottingham Contemporary has reached over 2 million people through its contemporary art exhibitions and engagement activities. Last year contained several watershed moments for the gallery, in which three critically acclaimed exhibitions shined a light on the work of women artists, and on overlooked and marginalised cultural practices. Virtual reality tours of the exhibitions allowed online visitors across *the world to engage remotely*. In 2018, the gallery also presented innovative performance art and ran educational programmes aimed at families, pupils, teachers and women in difficult circumstances, which saw a 25% increase in participation within these groups.

## Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

Showcasing one of the most important collections of anthropology and archaeology, the Pitt Rivers Museum is remarkable for its singular approach to the presentation of objects and its willingness to encourage new interpretations. In 2018, the museum embarked on a series of innovative programmes: 'Hope' asked radical questions about their collection's colonial past, 'Making' examined the link between making objects and health, 'No Boundaries' worked with refugees to reinterpret collections, and 'No Binaries' encouraged queer responses to the museum's collections to celebrate diversity and challenge prejudices. The museum's 600,000 strong collection of objects and new creative programmes brought in a record-breaking 502,000 visitors last year.

## V&A Dundee

In September 2018 V&A Dundee opened its doors after 11 years of planning and construction, becoming the UK's first design museum outside London. At the heart of Dundee's waterfront, the building designed by Kengo Kuma is both a striking intervention and a feat of engineering. The museum showcases international design alongside the outstanding achievements of Scotland in the museum's permanent Scottish Design Galleries and a programme of major exhibitions. Born from a unique partnership between the V&A, local government, universities, enterprise and communities, the new museum has helped regenerate the area, with 100,000 people interacting with the museum's pre-opening programme and over 500,000 people visiting since it launched.

## 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 151,000 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 St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff in 2019) 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)

## About Art Fund 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 shown how their achievements of the preceding year stand out, demonstrated what makes their work innovative, and the impact it has had on audiences. These achievements might include:

**Bold and imaginative exhibitions, collection displays or collection conservation projects**

- Learning programmes that have developed the skills, knowledge and enjoyment of children, young people and adults in new ways
- Exceptional acquisitions that have had a real impact on the museum and its audiences
- Audience engagement, diversity or access initiatives that have greatly broadened participation, and creative use of technology or digital media
- Substantial programmes of modernisation, reorganisation or reinterpretation that have had a transformative impact
- New building, refurbishments or reinventions of existing spaces that have had a strong impact on the museum and its audiences

Winners over the past seven years were Tate St Ives (2018), The Hepworth Wakefield (2017), 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).