

ART FUND AMBITION TO RAISE £1 MILLION TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESS MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES



- Engaging younger audiences is a top priority, two thirds of museums tell Art Fund
- Children and young people among the hardest hit by the pandemic
- One third of museums in a recent survey had no published offer for schools and young people
- Art Fund is asking the public to help reach £1million target for projects that inspire young people

artfund.org/energise
#EnergiseYoungMinds

Art Fund, the national fundraising charity for museums and galleries, is launching a public campaign, Energise Young Minds, to enable them to spend £1 million on programmes across the **UK's museums and galleries which will** increase access and inspire children and young people. This £1 million pledge represents a major commitment to fuelling museum visiting for the next generation, after months of disruptions for both museums and young people nationwide.

Art Fund are over half way there, having committed £500k from their charitable resources and raising a further £50k from their National Art Pass members. The charity is now turning to the

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wider public for help to reach the £1 million target and make a big difference for young people in 2022.

Art Fund research, published earlier this year, revealed that engaging this age group (those under 24), and breaking down barriers to visiting, is one of the most urgent priorities for the sector following the pandemic – identified by 64% of its partner museums, galleries and historic houses, at a time when engaging wider audiences is critical to their survival. But in a further recent survey commissioned by the charity, a third of museums had no published offer for schools and young people*. As museums continue to tighten budgets in the year ahead, opportunities for young people are especially vulnerable: redundancies in museum Learning and Engagement are widespread, on a par with those in front of house teams**.

Jenny Waldman, director of Art Fund, **said**, “There is an almost perfect storm brewing. During lockdown, school trips to museums and galleries were not possible - **and it’s not clear that these** will resume at previous levels. Meanwhile, cash-strapped cultural institutions have had to make difficult decisions that have often had an impact on learning teams.”

“We cannot allow cultural poverty for kids and must act now to help young people, those with least access to experiencing the arts, have opportunities to enjoy all that the **UK’s** museums can offer. This age group has missed out after enormous disruption to their learning and wellbeing and we know those in the most deprived areas have been hit hardest. I would encourage everyone who cares about children and young people having access to culture to donate whatever they can afford. Even a small amount will make a huge difference.”

Art Fund believes all young people, no-matter where they live, have a right to culturally rich activity through **the UK’s brilliant** museums, galleries and historic houses. At a time of **unprecedented financial difficulty, museums’** future resilience relies on serving these communities more meaningfully than ever.

Lemn Sissay, author and broadcaster, who features in an Art Fund film to promote the campaign, **said**, “Museums are like time machines: they hold the past and the present and predict the future. We need to connect with all young people right now – if not, the museum and gallery experience will not enrich their adult lives.”

Caro Howell, Director of the Foundling Museum **said**, “**The Foundling Museum’s 300 year**-old-story offers powerful proof of the role that the arts play in transforming profoundly disadvantaged young lives. Culture cannot be the preserve of those who are lucky enough to have access to it – it is a human right. We must do all we can to ensure that every young person can claim it for themselves, **whatever their circumstances.**”

Artist, Bob and Roberta Smith **said**, “The experience of making art in museums and schools builds children’s voices and helps create self-empowered individuals who feel they can contribute and build **a better world. We need that! Support the Art Fund’s campaign because art makes children powerful!**”

Art Fund also identified a number of barriers for using museum collections in the classroom and on school visits revealing an unequal playing field. An initial Art Fund survey in 2021 of over 230 teachers from state schools showed that only 32% said they were aware of professional development opportunities to use museums to improve learning outcomes in their teaching.

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Andria Zafirakou, British winner of the Global Teacher Prize in 2018, **said**, “We can all remember those wonderful experiences that we had whilst at school of visiting museums and galleries and how they inspired us and have given us great memories. Igniting interest in museums and galleries at school can have lasting, and sometimes life-changing, benefit. ***It’s important that all children have access to what’s on offer and that means making it easier for teachers on slim resources to plan visits, making sure information is readily available, and giving museums the means to make the most of their wonderful collections for this crucial audience.***”

While there are trailblazing student programmes and school partnerships across the UK, pressures on funding mean that it is a lottery for those young people able to benefit.

If we do not act now, we face a real risk in limiting the experiences of young people, and holding back those who will lead, shape and support society in decades to come.

Art Fund has a strong and demonstrable commitment to improving access to museums for children and young people, made possible by their supporters across the UK. The charity is now calling on the public to enable them to respond to museum ambition in this area – from supporting new museum partnerships with schools, to digital resources that bring public art collections into the classroom, to involving young people in devising and delivering programmes, to providing opportunities to access careers in the arts.

Donations to the £1 million will go towards programmes in 2022 specifically aimed at this age group.

Art Fund’s Student Art Pass now has over 25,000 members giving students in higher education **free or discounted access to the UK’s museums**, galleries and exhibitions for £5 a year. Paid opportunities with cultural organisations are among the most popular part of the Student Art Pass programme, supported through grants up to £10,000, to help remove the barrier young people face when entering the creative and visual arts as a career. Since 2019, Art Fund has helped place 230 students into 14 cultural organisations. Over the last year, these were offered at Coldharbour Mill Museum, the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, Glasgow International Festival, the Royal Albert Memorial, New Hall Art Collection, The MAC, in Birmingham, Art Night 2021 and the Scottish Maritime Museum. A six-month, part-time paid opportunity is being supported in curating and exhibition planning at Midland Arts Centre.

A Student Art Pass member and participant in south London’s **Bold Tendencies Art Trainee Programme 2018, supported by Art Fund said:** “We live in a complicated world but one exhibition, gallery or museum experience has the ability to show you something new, teach you compassion, allow you to heal mentally, have fun, socialise - ***the list goes on!***”

Almost fifty percent of its first round of Reimagine grants for 2021, announced in October and made in direct response to issues facing museums and galleries due to the pandemic, were for projects which will engage young people and new audiences. These included the Story Museum, Oxford which will ask young people aged 14 to **18 to use the museum’s collection as an** inspiration for a digital version of its Enchanted Library gallery. A collaboration with the Vindolanda Fort in Hexham, Newcastle University and Creative Assembly will create an online resource for seven-to-eleven year olds, and digitising the Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum collection will provide a valuable resource for outreach to schools.

To donate, visit <https://www.artfund.org/get-involved/campaigns/energise-young-minds/donate>

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To find out more about **Art Fund's** campaign to enable access for young people **at the UK's** museums and galleries, Energise Young Minds, **and to view Art Fund's film** visit: artfund.org/energise

For images visit <https://bibli.artfund.org/web/5cfd5cd45a0b7e76/energise-young-minds/>

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Notes to Editors:

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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 made £3.6 million in urgent 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. A further £2 million has been made available in 2021 for Reimagine projects. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by Art Partners, donors, trusts and foundations and the 131,000 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. The winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2021 is Firstsite in Colchester.

www.artfund.org

To read Art Fund's most recent sector research, Looking Ahead, published May 2021 visit: <https://bit.ly/looking-ahead-artfund>.

*Source: a survey of partner museums commissioned in 2018 by Art Fund from EdComs to look at provision across the sector

**Source: Museums Association: Redundancies in the Museums Sector after one year of Covid