



PRESS RELEASE

Pitt Rivers Museum shortlisted for £100,000 Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019

The Pitt Rivers Museum has been selected as one of five finalists for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019, regarded as the most prestigious museum prize in the world. The annual award celebrates innovation and exceptional achievement in museums and galleries across the UK.

The other four museums shortlisted for the title are HMS Caroline, Belfast; Nottingham Contemporary; St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff; and V&A Dundee.

The winning museum, which will receive £100,000, will be announced at a ceremony at the Science Museum, London, on Wednesday 3 July 2019. The other shortlisted museums will receive £10,000 each in recognition of their achievements.

This year's judging panel for the Art Fund Museum of the Year 2018 award, chaired by Stephen Deuchar, Director of Art Fund, are David Batchelor, artist; Brenda Emmanus, broadcaster and journalist; Bridget McConnell, Chief Executive, Glasgow Life; Bill Sherman, Director, Warburg Institute.

The Pitt Rivers Museum has been shortlisted for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019 for its creative programmes of reinvention and reinterpretation, which show a much-loved Victorian space challenging perceptions and demonstrating the vital role museums can play in contemporary society.

2018 saw the Pitt Rivers welcome a record-breaking half a million visitors; deliver a range of powerful exhibitions, such as *Kwibuka Rwanda*, which told the story of survivors of the 1994 genocide and their attempts to come to terms with loss and trauma; start innovative partnerships with contemporary artists, such as young Tibetan photographer Nyema Droma; and launch an exciting collaboration with Maasai communities to change the narrative used by UK museums to display Maasai artefacts and tell Maasai stories as part of a living culture.

Using its collections of anthropology and world archaeology as a vehicle to debate social and political questions about common humanity, the Pitt Rivers is keen to be of personal relevance to every visitor and remains committed to engage in difficult conversations about problematic pasts and presents in order to forge less violent futures.

Dr Laura Van Broekhoven, Director of the Pitt Rivers Museum, said: "We are thrilled to have been shortlisted for the Museum of the Year Award, and to have the support of the Art Fund in showing how museum spaces like ours are relevant to the contemporary world. Every object in the Museum contains multiple layers of stories, which question conventional narratives, acknowledge challenging histories, and show the differences and commonalities that come with being human. With the help of the Art Fund, we can share those stories, invite new stories, and imagine new - less divided - futures."

Speaking on behalf of the judges, Stephen Deuchar said: "The five shortlisted museums have each offered outstanding and different approaches to the vital task of engaging with the widest

public in new and adventurous ways. We congratulate all those who are on the shortlist and encourage everyone to go and visit them.”

This year Art Fund is asking visitors to the five finalists to share their best museum stories, reviews, photos, memories and moments on Twitter using @artfund #museumoftheyear

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Notes to editors

The Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) is one of the leading archaeological and ethnographic museums in the world. Founded in 1884 by General Pitt Rivers, it is unlike any other museum of its kind, housing over 600,000 fascinating objects, photographs and manuscripts from almost every country in the world and from all periods of human existence. The Museum has consciously cultivated its characteristic layout: artefacts are arranged by type, rather than by time or region, revealing compelling distinctions and parallels across cultures.

Today the Museum welcomes over half a million visitors a year, and its innovative outreach programmes – which challenge the messages intrinsic to the Museum’s nineteenth-century origins and encourage new transformative interpretations – are attracting increasingly diverse audiences. The PRM aims to be a pioneering institution which challenges and crosses boundaries; to influence the lives of local, national and international audiences; and to be a place of welcome, where difficult conversations can take place alongside enjoyment in discovery.

For further information, visit www.prm.ox.ac.uk or contact Louise Hancock, Marketing and Media Officer, press@prm.ox.ac.uk / 01865 613017.

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 six years were Tate St Ives (2018), The Hepworth Wakefield (2017), the V&A (2016), The Whitworth (2015), Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2014) and William Morris Gallery (2013).

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 Tate St Ives in 2018) and a range of digital platforms.

Find out more about Art Fund and the National Art Pass at www.artfund.org