

4 October 2021

22 MUSEUMS, GALLERIES AND NETWORKS SECURE ART FUND REIMAGINE GRANTS TO SUPPORT THEIR FUTURE AND COMMUNITIES

- **£660K awarded in first round of Reimagine grants from £2 million pot**
- **22 organisations to receive much-needed funds to develop access, expertise and digital capacity**

Art Fund, the national charity for art, announced today that it has awarded £658,331 in the first round of £2 million Reimagine grants for 2021. The support will go to 22 UK museums, galleries, historic houses, trusts and professional networks. Recipients are located across Britain - from the Isle of Bute in Scotland, to Caernarfon in Wales, to Launceston in Cornwall and to Ushaw Moor in County Durham.

Among the projects to be supported are: an exploration of the human history of **The Clifton Suspension Bridge** with couples from all over the world who've chosen the bridge as the ideal spot to get engaged; community quilt-making at **Mount Stuart** on the Isle of Bute; and an exhibition of 70 years of ceramics by women of colour from West Africa through the diaspora to the UK at **Two Temple Place** in London.

Art Fund's director Jenny Waldman said, "Art Fund's new Reimagine grants will allow many more museums to understand, and work deeply with, their communities. Museums often produce what seem like miracles on a shoestring, but they need enhanced resources - such as in digital, specialist support and staffing - to truly build for the future. We are proud to support these impressive projects, something we could not have done without the exceptional generosity of our members and donors."

The Reimagine grants will support large and small projects and professional networks and will help these organisations build expertise, capacity, connections and access as they navigate their way to recovery from the pandemic.

The second round of grants will be announced in November. The deadline for submissions for the third and final round of 2021 Reimagine grants is 11 October and these will be announced in December.

Organisations are able to apply for support of between £5,000 and £50,000. 71 applications were received in this first round with a total ask of £1.9 million demonstrating the continued level of need in the sector.

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A number of projects from this round will focus on families, schools and young people. Engaging young people in the community will be at the heart of a project at **The Charles Causley Trust** in Cornwall focusing on creative writing. At **Ely Museum**, in collaboration with a local secondary school, a work will be produced and displayed at the museum. The **Vindolanda fort** in Hexham will create an online children's exhibition in partnership with Newcastle University and Creative Assembly for seven to 11 year olds. And digitising **the Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum** collection will provide a valuable resource for outreach to schools and other community groups.

Expertise will be deepened through several major projects: Led by **National Museums Liverpool** a new national network - the first of its kind - will share current discourse and create a narrative thread to fully represent slavery and its legacies in the UK. *Re-imagining Disability Collections*, a partnership involving nine museums led by **Screen South/Accentuate** will explore new co-production methodologies with Disability Heritage Co-production Groups to re-imagine and re-interpret collections through a disability lens. **CVAN** will support the sector to address systemic issues of inequality, decarbonisation, and relevance. **Project Art Works**, a collective of neurodivergent artists and activists who have been nominated for the Turner Prize this year, will expand its programmes raising awareness in the cultural and care sectors.

The resonance of place for different communities will also be explored. In partnership with the Royal Parks and Mayesbrook Park School, an alternative provision school in Becontree, **RIBA** is marking the centenary of the Becontree Estate in East London, once the UK's largest housing estate. **Norton Priory Museum and Gardens**, once a centre for medieval contemplation and spirituality, will revisit its Augustinian roots to provide a 21st century place for well-being and mindfulness.

The grants aim to increase creativity and stability in the sector with funding provided for projects that enable experimentation, deepen engagement with diverse audiences, and result in greater expertise. Areas of priority for the programme are collections, digital, engagement and the workforce.

The funding is being made available in direct response to Art Fund's survey of over 300 Museum Directors in the UK, published in May 2021 and reflects the demand there is for Art Fund support. In response to this and because we wanted to make an impact at a critical time, Art Fund's Together for Museums campaign in 2020/21 raised over £1.1 million through the generosity of over 4,000 funders, including the Headley Trust. This, together with the ongoing support of members, Art Partners, donors and legacy gifts, make the Reimagine grants possible. Alongside this, Art Fund continues to provide grants for acquisitions and professional development.

Full details of this round of allocations are outlined below:

Smaller grants (between £5K and £15K)

- **Nottingham Contemporary - 'Caption-Conscious Ecology' - £11,025.** 'Caption-Conscious Ecology' is an ambitious research and commissioning initiative. It will produce a series of talks and workshops, a new caption-conscious moving-image commission and an access toolkit.
- **Redbridge Museum – 'Reimagining Redbridge Museum' - £15,000.** The project will create a temporary exhibition space within the redeveloped permanent Redbridge Museum local history exhibition which reopens in 2022.

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- **The Charles Causley Trust – ‘Expanding our Visual Arts Offer: Communities, Networks and Young People’ - £14,900.** This will produce an artistic commission and residency at Charles Causley’s house with a series of engagements with young people which draw inspiration from the writing and locations of Charles Causley’s Launceston and the reinterpretation of the English Heritage castle. There will be displays and exhibitions in the town and at Terre Verte gallery at Altarnun. The project will consolidate the cultural partnership developing in the town.
- **National Museums Liverpool - ‘Transatlantic Slavery and Legacies in Museums Forum’ - £11,000.** Led by National Museums Liverpool in partnership with Museum of London, Black Cultural Archives, Bristol Culture, Hull Museums and Glasgow Museums, the Transatlantic Slavery and Legacies in Museums Forum, this national network will share current discourse and create a narrative thread to fully represent slavery and its legacies in the UK.
- **The Clifton Suspension Bridge - ‘The Union’ - £15,000.** This is a new initiative to celebrate the symbiotic relationship between the bridge and the people for whom it means so much. Couples from all over the world choose the Clifton Suspension Bridge as the ideal spot to pop the question. This project, in collaboration with Artist Emily Sorrell, invites couples to become members of The Union to honour their contribution to the landmark’s human history.
- **Hebden Bridge Arts Festival - ‘Engaging Neighbourhoods’ - £7,500.** Six Calderdale groups will work with artists to interpret a shared theme, exploring relationships with the local and global environment, culminating in a public sharing of the work. Making and embedding new organisational connections, the project celebrates culture made by people who do not self-identify as currently engaged with ‘the arts’.
- **RIBA - ‘Becontree Centenary Reimagined’ - £15,000.** In partnership with the Royal Parks and Mayesbrook Park School, RIBA will mark the centenary of the Becontree Estate in East London with new in-gallery and public realm artistic and architectural commissions, events and learning programmes, engaging local residents and national audiences with the stories of the UK’s largest housing estate.
- **Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum – ‘Impressions of a Welsh Regiment’ - £9,585.** This project will improve access to collections by digitisation enhancing the digital offer to a global audience. Digitising the Museum’s art collection will provide a valuable resource for a variety of activities including outreach to schools, community groups and harder to reach audiences.
- **Mount Stuart Trust - ‘Stitching Recovery’ £14,725.** Mount Stuart Trust will work with creative partnership *Arrange Whatever Pieces Come Your Way* (Sheelagh Boyce and Annabelle Harty) on a community quilt-making project and exhibition. Boyce and Harty’s bold, architectural designs reimagine traditional quilt-making. This project will include an exhibition of quilted works by the artists presented across the historic house, and working with island communities on Bute to weave their own stories into newly created quilted pieces, also to be displayed in the house. A third element of the project sees the artists constructing a large-scale tablecloth to cover the dining room table in the Dining Room at Mount Stuart.

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Larger grants (between £15K and £50K)

- **Screen South/Accentuate – ‘Reimagining Disability Collections’ £49,915.** *Re-imagining Disability Collections* will be delivered in partnership with nine museums (Museum of Liverpool; Black Country Living Museum; Thackray Museum of Medicine; National Railway Museum; The Pitt Rivers and Ashmolean Museums; Bristol Museum and Art Gallery; Hastings Museum and Historic Dockyard Chatham) and will explore new co-production methodologies with Disability Heritage Co-production Groups of D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people, seeking to re-imagine and re-interpret collections through a disability lens.
- **Ely Museum – ‘People and Place: Engaging East Cambridgeshire’ £39,548.** This project will deliver re-imagined audience engagement activities to the communities of East Cambridgeshire. A creative project in collaboration with a local secondary school will produce a work to be displayed at the museum. There will be family sessions at weekends and during the school holidays. Sessions for under-fives each month will encourage young families to feel at home in the museum.
- **CVAN – ‘Fair and Equitable Practice’ £49,995.** This project is about repositioning the Contemporary Visual Arts Network for England (CVAN) to strengthen the sector nationally. CVAN will support the sector to address systemic issues of inequality, decarbonisation, and relevance through an alliance and collective development. It will present a national professional development programme aimed at the visual art sector across nine regions in England that will reflect the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Project Art Works – ‘Creative Pathways for Neurodivergent Artists’ £40,000.** Project Art Works is a collective of neurodivergent artists and activists who have this year been nominated for the Turner Prize. Its programmes evolve through creative practice and radiate out to awareness-raising in the cultural and care sectors, promoting more diverse representation in programming and relevancy for audiences. The Reimagine grant will support the development of this work.
- **Two Temple Place – ‘Exhibition 2022: Body, Vessel, Clay’ £50,000.** Two Temple Place’s 10th annual exhibition, *Body Vessel Clay*, and programme of learning, participation and events will be supported by the Reimagine grant. Running from January – April 2022, the exhibition will span 70 years of ceramics, celebrating work by women of colour from West Africa through the diaspora to the UK, tracing the shift from functional pottery to the purely formal and decorative, and showcasing work from regional UK collections.
- **Ushaw Historic House – ‘The Hidden Treasures of Ushaw’ £40,000.** This project will explore new technologies to share collections digitally to welcome a wider variety of people. An interactive outdoor adventure trail with the museum’s contents will support new audiences to uncover the hidden stories and treasures at Ushaw. Augmented reality will bring the collections to life outdoors through a specially created app using tag and tag-less AR and GPS. Gamification will improve user engagement.
- **Norton Priory Museum and Gardens – ‘The Mindful Museum’ £43,500.** Once a centre for medieval contemplation and spirituality Norton Priory will revisit its Augustinian roots to provide a 21st century place for well-being and mindfulness. Using the archaeological site and collection as inspiration and its modern, purpose-built facilities, Norton Priory will provide restful, imaginative and mindful activity to all. This is a new path for the museum, as it seeks to connect its historical past to contemporary visitors.

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- **Artlink Hull – ‘87 Gallery’ £48,559.** 87 Gallery is a contemporary visual art gallery and artist space developed by Artlink Hull. With this Reimagine grant a 12-month programme of exhibitions and public engagement activities will be secured, and two key new gallery staff roles (Curator and Digital Engagement Producer) will be enabled to play a central role in developing the future strategic direction and programming of the gallery.
- **Block Universe – ‘Digital Engagement Strategy Development’ £34,795.** This grant will support Block Universe (BU) to reimagine its activities following the pandemic by creating and delivering a new digital engagement strategy. This will include a new website, targeted digital engagement programme, a new hybrid digital and live public programme ‘Mutations’ in May 2022 and online earned income activities.
- **Society of Genealogists – ‘Reimagining how we work and engage with people’ £50,000.** 8,000 Pedigree Rolls tell the stories of many extraordinary lives of ordinary people of every race, place, class and creed. Conserving and making these family trees available to many people is challenging due to their size, age, fragility, and handwritten nature. In collaboration with Academics at Imperial College and Socially Bright, leading-edge software will be developed to make these unique family trees available to people in an engaging and virtual way.
- **Broadway Gallery and Studio – ‘Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation’ £28,000.** Funding will enable the recruitment of an Arts and Heritage Officer to support the delivery of a community-driven cultural engagement programme built around three core strands: a new exhibition programme, workshops and artistic development activity; community consultation to create a new cultural programme that directly reflects community need and maximises engagement; and the piloting of new activities to engage those groups disproportionately affected by Covid.
- **Vindolanda Trust – ‘Digital Bibliographies’ £24,300.** The Vindolanda Trust will create an online children’s exhibition in partnership with Newcastle University and Creative Assembly. The exhibition, through mentorships, will be developed by a student at Newcastle’s Games Lab. It will be targeted at seven to 11 year-olds and it will be an interactive space featuring two characters from Roman Vindolanda supported by content from Vindolanda Trust and Creative Assembly.
- **The Story Museum – ‘Young Curators: Minecraft Museum’ £45,995.** In this co-curation project with young people aged 14-18, The Story Museum and participants will exchange skills in curation and narrative gaming, using the collection as inspiration to create a digital version of the Enchanted Library gallery, along with three new digital story realms in Minecraft. These will be added to the collection and participants will design and host events for the public.

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About Art Fund

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 £2million has been made available for the 2021 Reimagine grant programme. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by 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