



Date of issue: Tuesday 30 April 2024

CRAVEN MUSEUM SHORTLISTED FOR ART FUND MUSEUM OF THE YEAR 2024

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Craven Museum at Skipton Town Hall has been announced as one of five finalists for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2024, the world's largest museum prize.

Art Fund annually shortlists five outstanding museums for Museum of the Year. The 2024 edition recognises inspiring projects from autumn 2022 through to winter 2023, with audiences and communities at their heart – with a particular focus on community engagement, sustainable ways of working, and demonstration of ambition by reinventing what it means to be 'the best' museum for the audiences of today and tomorrow.

On behalf of Craven Museum, Danielle Daglan, Head of Culture and Archives at North Yorkshire Council said: *"We are absolutely delighted to have been shortlisted for Art Fund Museum of the Year; to have the work of this small but hugely dedicated and passionate team recognised by this award is amazing!"*

"Craven Museum at Skipton Town Hall sits at the heart of its community and has accessibility considerations running through everything the team does. We believe all communities deserve the highest quality cultural experiences – this is our ethos, and we think small museums have the potential to lead the way in innovation of access and community engagement - we are proof of this and we want to inspire others to do the same."

Craven Museum is located in the Grade II listed Skipton Town Hall, a modern multi-arts cultural hub on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales. The venue also includes an exhibition gallery, historic concert hall, education, and community spaces which all work in unison with the museum to enrich and expand the cultural experiences on offer. The museum is focused on the local area - spanning pre-history to contemporary in areas as diverse as archaeology, textiles, fine art, literature, social history, and more – the museum has something for everyone.

The museum was recognised as the Kids in Museums Family Friendly Museum 2023 and Best Accessible Museum 2023. It was judged one of the top 3 museums for access provision out of over 2,000 UK museums and heritage sites. Craven Museum programmed free or low cost

activities or events every day of the 2023 school holidays for families, in recognition of the current cost of living crisis.

Between 2022-2023, 115 artists displayed work in the museum's exhibition gallery, and 8 community groups created displays in the community cases. The museum welcomed 156,391 visitors in the 2022-23 period, an increase of roughly 56,000 visitors compared to the same period the previous year.

The other four shortlisted museums are Dundee Contemporary Arts (Dundee); Manchester Museum (Manchester); National Portrait Gallery (London); Young V&A - Victoria and Albert Museum (London).

The winning museum will be announced at a ceremony at the National Gallery in London on 10 July and will receive £120,000. £15,000 will be given to each of the four other finalists – bringing the total prize money to £180,000.

The 2024 judging panel, chaired by Art Fund director Jenny Waldman, includes: Anupam Ganguli (Finance Director, Historic Royal Palaces), Vick Hope (broadcaster), Tania Kovats (artist) and Sir John Leighton (former Director-General, National Galleries of Scotland). The judges will visit each of the finalists to inform their decision-making, while each museum will make the most of being shortlisted over the summer through events and activities for new and current visitors.

Speaking on behalf of the judges, Jenny Waldman, Director, Art Fund said:

"Congratulations to Craven Museum on being shortlisted for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2024. Each of our finalists truly has something for everyone and all have community at the very heart of their programming. Their commitment to innovative partnerships whilst operating within an extremely challenging funding environment is incredible, and I'm so pleased to see the way they support and centre young people through their work. Across a wide range of size and scale, these organisations are all real leaders in their field. I urge everyone to go and visit these extremely special spaces."

#museumoftheyear

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High-res press for download:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

THE 2024 JUDGING PANEL

Anupam Ganguli

Anupam has worked in arts, culture, and heritage for the last 20 years and is currently Finance Director of Historic Royal Palaces. He has held senior finance and business roles at the V&A, Arts Council England (ACE), Royal Museums Greenwich and the Royal Albert Hall.

He has also been a trustee of various organisations over the last 30 years including the Almeida Theatre, Whitechapel Gallery, Opera Holland Park, Studio Wayne McGregor, Central School of Ballet, Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and Chisenhale Gallery. He was a regional council member of ACE London from 2002 to 2008, and a governor of the University of Westminster.

Anupam's cultural interests include performing and visual arts, film and music. He has had a lifelong interest in the music of the Bengali Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore, and holds a performance degree in Tagore's music.

Vick Hope

A Nigerian-Geordie with a Cambridge degree, Vick Hope is a multilingual, multi-skilled and multifaceted broadcaster spanning TV, radio, podcasts and much more. Dubbed 'the voice of a generation' by Sunday Times Style, Vick has fast become one of the nation's favourite broadcasters, presenting two national Radio 1 shows each week plus the highly acclaimed Women's Prize for Fiction weekly podcast, Bookshelfie – where Vick interviews and celebrates many of the world's most exciting and revered literary talents and book lovers. Her TV career has seen her host her own Sunday morning show on ITV, Vick Hope's Breakfast Show, co-host the iconic Pointless on BBC One, Glastonbury coverage across the BBC and the Paralympics coverage on Channel 4. Elsewhere, Vick works as an ambassador for Amnesty International and Choose Love (Help Refugees) and is a regular supporter of Comic Relief.

Tania Kovats

Tania Kovats is a British born artist whose work explores how culture negotiates how we connect to the natural world. Her practice embraces sculpture, drawing and writing, often working in the public realm. She has focused on the element of water as the connective element in the landscape. Tania explores the psychological and poetic, as well as activating water to provide a route to explore critical environmental and socio-political questions.

Tania is an advocate for drawing in its expanded field, as a highly significant tool of thinking and expression, that provides an infinite and varied means of communication that continues to be expanded and enriched by practitioners. She regularly seeks out engagement and impact with audiences beyond the gallery context. Her works are in both public and private collections in the UK and abroad, including Arts Council, Jupiter Artland, The British Council, Government Art Collection, the National Maritime Museum Greenwich and the V&A. She is also Professor of Drawing and Making, and Co-Director of the Centre for Ecology Futures, at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee.

Sir John Leighton

John Leighton was Director-General of the National Galleries of Scotland from 2006 to 2023. Previously, he was Director of the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (1997-2006) and Curator of 19th-century paintings at the National Gallery, London (1986-97). John has curated numerous exhibitions and published on various aspects of 19th and 20th-century art. He has been an advisor and board member for several international museums, including the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Mauritshuis in The Hague.

Jenny Waldman

Jenny Waldman joined Art Fund as Director in 2020, leading the organisation in increasing its support for the sector through its charitable funding programme, growing audiences through the National Art Pass, and championing museums and galleries with major events such as Art Fund Museum of the Year, the world's largest museum prize. In 2023, Art Fund led The Wild Escape together with 530 museums across the UK, engaging over 100,000 primary school children in the creation of an epic collective artwork unveiled on Earth Day 2023. Jenny was previously Director of 14-18 NOW, the UK's art commissions programme for the First World War Centenary, Creative Producer of the London 2012 Festival, and Public Programmes Consultant to Somerset House Trust, where she created the ice rink, film and concert seasons. She was awarded a CBE in the 2017 New Year Honours for services to the arts.

About Art Fund Museum of the Year

The first 'Art Fund Museum of the Year' was awarded in 2013 to the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow. Its forerunner was the Prize for Museums and Galleries, administered by the Museum Prize Trust. Art Fund supported this prize between 2008 – 2012, when it was known as the 'Art Fund Prize'. It was sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation from 2003-2007, when it was known as the 'Gulbenkian Museum Prize'.

There is a rich history of prizes for museums, the first running from 1973-2003, called 'The National Heritage Museum of the Year'

Art Fund Museum of the Year 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.

Winners of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2013 - 2023:

2013 - William Morris Gallery, London

2014 - Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield

2015 - Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester

2016 - Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London

2017 - The Hepworth, Wakefield

2018 - Tate St Ives

2019 - St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff

2020 - Aberdeen Art Gallery; Gairloch Museum; Science Museum; South London Gallery; and Towner Eastbourne.

2021 – Firstsite, Colchester
2022 – Horniman Museum and Gardens, London
2023 – The Burrell Collection, Glasgow

Winners of The Art Fund Prize 2008 – 2012

2008 - The Lightbox, Woking
2009 - Wedgwood Museum, Stoke-on-Trent,
2010 - Ulster Museum, Belfast
2011 - British Museum
2012 - Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter

Art Fund

Art Fund is the national charity for art, helping museums and people to share in great art and culture for 120 years. Art Fund raises millions of pounds every year to help the UK's museums, galleries and historic houses. The charity funds art, enabling the UK's museums to buy and share exciting works, connect with their communities and inspire the next generation. It builds audiences, with its National Art Pass opening doors to great culture. And it amplifies the museum sector through the world's largest museum prize, Museum of the Year, and creative events that bring the UK's museums together. Art Fund is people-powered by 135,000 members who buy a National Art Pass, and the donors, trusts and foundations who support the charity.

The National Art Pass provides free or discounted entry to over 900 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and Art Quarterly magazine.

www.artfund.org

Craven Museum / Skipton Town Hall

Historic Skipton Town Hall is a cultural hub in North Yorkshire, home of Craven Museum, an Exhibition Gallery, and a grand Concert Hall. It is owned by North Yorkshire Council and run by its Cultural & Archives Team. The venue reopened in 2021 following a major £4.7m restoration and redevelopment project.

Craven Museum, originally founded in 1928, is a treasure trove of around 60,000 objects representing millions of years of Craven history. The museum was winner of the Kids in Museums Family friendly Museum Award 2023 as well as Best Accessible Museum. Entry is free.

www.skiptontownhall.co.uk