



Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Glasgow Women's Library shortlisted for prestigious Art Fund Museum of the Year 2018

Glasgow Women's Library today announced their inclusion on the shortlist for the prestigious Art Fund Museum of the Year 2018 – the only Scottish museum to make the shortlist this year, and the first nomination for a museum rooted in feminism.

Supported by Art Fund, the £100,000 Museum of the Year prize is designed to get to the heart of what makes a truly outstanding museum, seeking out innovation and exceptional achievement in museums and galleries all across the UK, and working to encourage more people to visit.

This achievement is in recognition of the innovative, community-driven approach that the Library, Museum and Archive has developed since its launch in 1991, and specifically the milestones it has achieved in 2017. The nomination is timely coming as it does at a time of fertile public campaigns and press interest in gender, representation and inequalities. In 2017 Glasgow Women's Library launched Equality in Progress, a programme of research and events drawing on its own ground breaking work with the aim of addressing issues of exclusion evident in the cultural and museum sectors.

Glasgow Women's Library is the only Accredited Museum in the UK dedicated to women's lives, histories and achievements and is a Recognised Collection of National Significance.

The organisation has grown from the grass roots through the support, donations and efforts of thousands of women and enjoys huge public goodwill from its local neighbourhood and across the world. It hopes to mobilise its supporters and attract new visitors with a public engagement campaign that will run until the winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2018 is announced at the Victoria and Albert Museum on 5th July.

The focus of the campaign will be to answer the question 'Why a Women's Museum?' addressing the misnomer of the name and conveying the unique qualities of this multi award-winning organisation. Glasgow Women's Library works across Scotland, is open to all and increasingly attracts international partners and visitors. An exemplar of a cultural institution attracting diverse users that is 'owned' by a wide community, Scotland's First Minister, the Rt. Hon. Nicola Sturgeon MSP has called Glasgow Women's Library, '...truly a national treasure'. Using the hashtag #MyMuseum, the museum will showcase the hugely varied backgrounds of its users – from stellar artist Linder Sterling (currently showing at GWL having been inspired by its collections), to women whose lives have been transformed through the Library's Adult Literacy and Numeracy project. The campaign will illustrate the importance of creating a museum that is grounded in social justice and equality.

Glasgow Women's Library appears on the shortlist alongside Brooklands Museum, Weybridge; The Postal Museum, London; Ferens Art Gallery, Hull, and Tate St Ives.

Adele Patrick, Lifelong Learning and Creative Development Manager, said:

“Being given the huge accolade of a place on the Art Fund Museum of the Year 2018 shortlist is both a public recognition of the innovative, impactful work we have been

delivering in 2017 and signals that the sector is ripe for change. This endorsement for GWL's radically inclusive approach is occurring in the febrile context of #blacklivesmatter, #metoo, #museumdetox and the blossoming of calls for action on representation and inclusion within and beyond the cultural and museum sectors. Whereas mainstream museums are being increasingly 'called out' for their resistance to changes in representation and exclusion, GWL is exploring and modelling ways of shaping governance, collecting, programmes, curating and access that are now being seen as relevant and timely.

To have made it onto the list of Finalists is a historically significant moment for GWL and its huge community of supporters, from renowned artists and writers who have been inspired by its collections to those who have had life changing experiences as literacy learners, volunteers and donors. We are hoping that this could also mark a sea change in the wider sector where the 'easy to ignore' become key agents for change in the museums of the future."

Stephen Deuchar, Director of Art Fund, and the Chair of the Judges, said:

"Each one of these five finalist museums for the £100,000 Art Fund Museum of the Year 2018 prize has had an exceptional year. They are the engines of cultural development in this country – centres of innovation and pioneering new ways of engaging with the public. They represent the height of creativity and ambition – whether through the collections they display, the means by which they engage audiences or how they address the issues of the moment. I would encourage everyone to go and experience them at first hand."

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For further information or images please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

Glasgow Women's Library

Glasgow Women's Library is the only Accredited Museum in the UK dedicated to women's lives, histories and achievements, with a lending library, archive collections and innovative programme of public events and learning opportunities. The organisation has grown from a small grassroots project into the main hub for information by, for and about women in Scotland and it is visited and enjoyed by people from around the world and around the corner.

www.womenslibrary.org.uk @womenslibrary

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 139,000 members who receive the National Art Pass and enjoy free entry to over 320 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 The Hepworth Wakefield in 2017) and a range of digital platforms.

Find out more about Art Fund and the National Art Pass at 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 six years were The Hepworth Wakefield (2017), the V&A (2016), The Whitworth (2015), Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2014), William Morris Gallery (2013) and Royal Albert Memorial Museum (2012).