



## News Release

### **The V&A and Art Fund Launch Photographs Curators' Training Programme**

29 September 2014

The V&A has launched a two-year pilot programme, with support from the Art Fund, to work in partnership with Nottingham City Museums and Galleries and Museums Sheffield to train and develop two individuals with the skills to become curators of art photography. The application process for the trainee positions open today (29 September 2014).

Like many museums up and down the country, Nottingham City Museums and Galleries and Museums Sheffield both have art photography collections but no dedicated photography curator. The partners were selected by open competition, and each submitted exceptional applications, proving that their participation would provide both an excellent training opportunity and a public benefit in making their art photography collection more accessible.

Two trainees will be selected to spend approximately six months with the V&A under the guidance of a Museum curator in the Photographs Section. During this time they will gain specialist knowledge of photographic history and skills in cataloguing, storage, research and development of photographs collections. In addition, they will work on a project identified by their partner museum that will specifically benefit its collection and visitors.

Following their six months at the V&A, one trainee will be based at Nottingham Castle Museum for the second half of 2015, and the other will spend six months at the Graves Gallery, Sheffield in 2016. In this time they will complete their project which could culminate in an exhibition, a refocus of the collecting policy, a publication or cataloguing of the collection.

Martin Barnes, Senior Curator of Photographs at the V&A, said: *"Our world communicates in photographic imagery across many platforms and curators can help us to understand and interpret the language of photography. However, many photographs collections in the UK currently don't have specialist curators. This pilot programme aims to address this through first-class training and invaluable peer support. Photographs collections at museums such as Nottingham and Sheffield help us to preserve and learn more about our visual heritage. As home to the UK's National Collection of the Art of Photography, the V&A is keen to contribute to the curatorial knowledge of photographs collections around the country, develop peer support networks and raise the profile of regional photographs collections."*

Cllr Dave Trimble, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, Nottingham City Council said: *“We are delighted to be working with the world-renowned V&A to co-host a photography trainee to support a programme of work that will raise awareness of our important photographic collection. This partnership takes place at an exciting time in Nottingham Castle’s development, and will bring invaluable skills and knowledge for the future benefit of our citizens and visitors.”*

Sian Brown, Curatorial Services Manager at Museums Sheffield said: *“We’re thrilled to be working with the V&A to develop and share Sheffield’s photography collection. The programme is a fantastic opportunity to broaden expertise across the organisation and further the collection, which currently includes striking images by Man Ray, Cecil Beaton, Bill Brandt, Sam Taylor-Wood and many more.”*

Sarah Philp, Head of Programmes at the Art Fund, said: *“The Art Fund is committed to supporting and developing curatorial expertise, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact that having a dedicated photography curator will have on both partner museums’ excellent photography collections. The V&A, with its incredible Photographs Section, is the perfect museum to run this scheme, and I know the trainees will benefit hugely from their expertise and through their time spent with Nottingham City Museums and Galleries and Museums Sheffield respectively.”*

The first trainee will be based at the V&A from January 2015 and the second from January 2016. Funding to employ the trainees for 12 months allowing them to work between the V&A and in Nottingham or Sheffield is being provided by the Art Fund.

**-ENDS-**

## **Notes to Editors**

- Candidates can apply to become a trainee on the programme from 29 September 2014 through the V&A’s recruitment portal <http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/j/jobs/>
- The V&A was the first museum to collect photographs as an art form and the first UK museum to have an exhibition of photographs. It now holds the UK’s National Collection of the Art of Photography, which is one of the largest and most important in the world. The V&A has over 300,000 photographs in its collections, ranging from works created in 1839, when the medium was first invented, to the present.
- The V&A has four dedicated photographs curators and one paper conservator with a specialism in photographs.
- **Museums Sheffield** is home to over 6,000 paintings, sculptures, photographs, drawings, prints and watercolours. The Visual Art Collection is extremely varied,

reflecting the personal interests of directors and curators over the past 125 years.

<http://www.museums-sheffield.org.uk/>

- **Nottingham Castle Museum**, built on the site of the original medieval castle, houses important collections of fine and decorative art and galleries on local history and archeology. <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/article/22175/Nottingham-Castle>
- **The Art Fund** is the national fundraising charity for art, helping museums to buy and show great art. Over the past 5 years it has given £26m to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections, and placed hundreds of gifts and bequests, from ancient sculpture and treasure hoards to Old Master paintings and contemporary commissions. The Art Fund is independently funded, the majority of income coming from over 105,000 members who, through the National Art Pass, enjoy free entry to over 220 museums, galleries and historic houses across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions. Find out more about the Art Fund and the National Art Pass at [www.artfund.org](http://www.artfund.org)

For further PRESS information, please contact the V&A press office on 020 7942 2502 or email [press.office@vam.ac.uk](mailto:press.office@vam.ac.uk)

**ArtFund**♥