

Press release

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Arts Council England appoint Dr Nick Merriman as Chair of the Designation Scheme Panel



Dr Nick Merriman. Courtesy Horniman Museum and Gardens.

Dr Nick Merriman has been appointed as the new **Chair of the Designation Scheme Panel of Arts Council England**, taking over from Dr Stella Butler, whose tenure as Chair is coming to an end in Summer 2021.

The **Designation Panel** identifies outstanding collections around the country, assessing and making decisions on applications to the Designation Scheme, a mark of distinction that helps raise the profile of these vital collections and encourages people to safeguard them.

The [Designation Scheme](#) recognises cultural collections of outstanding importance held in non-national museums, libraries and archives across England. These vital collections are located in rural and urban centres right across the country, from Cornwall to Suffolk, and the South Coast to Cumbria.

This mark of distinction means their importance can be further recognised by funders, researchers and the public, helping to ensure these collections are protected and developed for wider enjoyment, learning and research.

Nick brings a wealth of skills and knowledge to the role through his experiences in a wide range of institutions, including Manchester Museum and University College London. Nick has published widely on museum studies topics, was Chair of the International Council of



Museums (UK) from 2001 to 2004, President of the Council for British Archaeology from 2005 to 2008, Chair of the University Museums Group from 2009 to 2013, Convenor of the Museums Association's Ethics Committee from 2008 to 2014 and was Chair of the Collections Trust from 2013 to 2017. Nick is currently the Chief Executive and Director of the Horniman Museum and Gardens in London.

From Monday 24 May, Arts Council England also begin the recruitment of five new panel members to join Nick Merriman on the Designation Panel. The Designation Panel members, who work across the fields of arts, cultural heritage and historical research, meet twice a year to consider applications for Designated status. For further details on the responsibilities of the Designation Panel members and how to apply, please refer to the [Arts Council recruitment pages](#).

Nick Merriman, Chief Executive and Director of the Horniman Museum and Gardens, said:

“It’s a great honour to be appointed as Chair of the Designation Scheme Panel, highlighting the absolute best of non-national collections in England. I’m really looking forward to working with Arts Council colleagues and fellow expert panel members to bring the scheme to even wider public attention and to integrate it further with wider Arts Council initiatives.”

Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England, said:

“The Designation Scheme plays a crucial role in the Arts Council's ambition to support and showcase culturally diverse and significant collections across the country, protecting them for generations to come. We’re delighted to appoint Nick Merriman for the role of Chair of the Designation panel; the scheme will benefit greatly from the experience and expertise he brings with him.”

For more information please contact:

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Notes to editors

The **Arts Council** is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let’s Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. www.artscouncil.org.uk

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million **Emergency Response Package**, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of several bodies administering the Government’s **Culture Recovery Fund** and unprecedented support package of £1.57 billion for the culture and heritage sector. Find out more at www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19.