Seven Stories benefits from Collecting Cultures



School pupil taking in some of the Seven Stories collections

Today HLF has announced a £5million funding package to a range of museums, libraries and archives across the UK. Under HLF's Collecting Cultures Programme, 23 organisations, from Glasgow to Brighton, will be able to enhance the scope of their collections.

Sarah Lawrence, Seven Stories, Collections Director, said: "We're absolutely delighted to have been awarded a Collecting Cultures grant by Heritage Lottery Fund. Seven Stories is the UK's only museum of children's books and already has a really strong core collection, but this funding is a fantastic opportunity to acquire artwork and manuscripts by leading writers and illustrators that have been out of reach up until now. We also have exciting plans to bring the collection to life through exhibitions and events at Seven Stories and further afield, including a new gallery telling the story of British children's reading through the work of favourite authors and illustrators."

Seven Stories will use the grant to develop three main areas in their collection; poetry, picture books and children's fiction from 1930 to 2000. In all three areas, Seven Stories will aim to collect work which showcases social and cultural diversity and change in Britain today as well as work which shows how the reading experience has changed across generations. The grant enables Seven Stories to their collection to tell more fully the story of modern children's literature.

Seven Stories is also planning an exciting range of events, exhibitions and activities for families as well as learning resources for schools, further and higher education, and staff training.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the HLF, said: “Collecting Cultures is unique: HLF is the only funding body that currently offers this type of advance funding support for museums, libraries and archives. Building on past success, a second incarnation of the initiative is back by popular demand.

“This upfront investment of £5m will enable a diverse range of collections, including children’s literature, robotics, fashion, football and the Black art movement, to be strengthened and enlivened. Curators will be able to ‘go shopping’ with their HLF grant, researching to identify works of art, images and objects that they would like to purchase over the five year life span of their Collecting Cultures project.”

Seven Stories’ Collection focuses on the heritage of modern and contemporary British Children’s Literature. The Collection comprises manuscripts, artwork, archives and books dating from 1930 to the present day. Seven Stories now have the holdings of national and international significance which had previously been overlooked before Seven Stories was established in 1996.

Notes to editors

This is the second time HLF has run Collecting Cultures, an initiative to support museums, libraries and archives in developing their collections through strategic acquisition projects. Grantees plan and deliver programmes of targeted purchase whilst developing staff skills and engaging a wider range of people with their collections.

To date, HLF has invested a third of its total commitment - £2billion - to transforming museums, libraries and archives.Acquisitions must be at least 10 years-old to be eligible for HLF support. The Collecting Cultures programme is now closed for applications.

Seven Stories, National Centre for Children’s Books
Seven Stories is the only place in Britain dedicated to the art of children’s books and the joy of reading, and one of just a few such places in the world. Their work is enjoyed by over 150,000 people every year.

Everything they do aims to inspire children and grown-ups to be curious, imaginative and creative. They strive to ensure that people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can take part to enjoy a lifetime of reading for pleasure.

Seven Stories are based in a carefully converted Victorian warehouse in Newcastle upon Tyne in the North East of England. They opened in 2005 and their seven floors house galleries for exhibitions, performances and creative spaces, a specialist children’s bookshop and a café.

Seven Stories is widely recognised for their abilities and achievements. They have established an important collection of artwork, manuscripts and archives of Britain’s most acclaimed writers and illustrators for children from 1930s to the present day. They bring this unique treasure trove to life through playful and immersive exhibitions, an entertaining and informative public events programme and research opportunities.

Seven Stories was awarded National status by Arts Council England in 2012 in recognition of the significance of their collection and its high standard of care, and the excellent way that they engage with visitors and users. They were also awarded with a National Lottery Award in September 2013 after being voted the UK’s favourite education project.

Further information



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Collecting Cultures: back by popular demand!