



Press Release  
16 July 2015

## The University of Manchester's Whitworth shortlisted for RIBA Stirling Prize

The Whitworth, part of The University of Manchester, has today been shortlisted for the RIBA Stirling Prize following its major redevelopment by MUMA (McInnes Usher McKnight Architects). The RIBA Stirling Prize is the UK's most prestigious architecture prize and is presented to architects of a building that has made the greatest contribution to the evolution of architecture in the past year.

The Whitworth reopened its doors on 14 February 2015 following a £15 million redevelopment project by MUMA which transformed the 126 year-old Whitworth into a 21st century gallery in the park. Since reopening, over 230,000 people have visited the gallery, breaking all previous annual records.

Following the announcement, Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, President and Vice-Chancellor of The University of Manchester commented: *'The transformation of the Whitworth has been a significant project for The University of Manchester and I am delighted with MUMA's beautiful reimagining of the gallery in the park. The fact that RIBA has recognised the architectural importance of this new building makes me very proud. The Whitworth is a valued part of the University, housing internationally significant art collections. Now we also have a building which matches these collections and which can be enjoyed by local people, students, staff and visitors from around the world for many years to come.'*

Maria Balshaw, Director of the Whitworth commented: *'MUMA's sensitive extension and restoration of our building unlocks our potential as a university art gallery in a park. The collection and the knowledge held inside now connects to our local community of park users and the elegant, generous spaces for art are drawing people in from all over the world. We are delighted to have the quality of MUMA's architecture recognized by inclusion on the Stirling Prize shortlist.'*

The redevelopment, which was supported by a major Heritage Lottery Fund grant, The University of Manchester, Arts Council England and other funders, has doubled public space and created state-of-the-art new facilities including expanded gallery spaces, a study centre, learning studio, and a collections centre.

At the heart of MUMA's major renovation project is the creation of an elegant glass, stainless steel and brick extension, which sees two wings extend into Whitworth Park from the back of the existing 19th century building, connecting the gallery to the surrounding park beyond. For the extension, MUMA developed a unique Whitworth blend of British brick and a brickwork pattern with a traditional textile slash work effect, inspired by the gallery's extensive textile collection.

Extensive refurbishment of the existing gallery building has restored the volume of the three 19th century barrel-



vault exhibition gallery ceilings enabling the display of major, large scale international shows. Visitors can now also gain access to the reinstated Grand Hall on the first floor through glorious Edwardian staircases returned to public use for the first time in over 50 years.

The gallery received a national award from RIBA and won the RIBA NW Building of the Year award earlier this year. The Stirling Prize winner will be announced at a prestigious ceremony at RIBA headquarters in London on 15 October 2015.

## ENDS

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#galleryinthepark  
#museumoftheyear

## NOTES TO EDITOR

### About the Whitworth

The Whitworth is part of The University of Manchester. It is home to internationally renowned collections of modern art, textiles, watercolours, prints, drawings and sculpture. Created in 1889 as the first English gallery in a park, the Whitworth has developed a new vision for the role of a university gallery. A creative laboratory within an ambitious university, the Whitworth is a place where good, unusual things happen.

The Whitworth re-opened to the public on 14 February 2015 after a major £15 million redevelopment by architects MUMA. The Whitworth has welcomed over 230,000 visitors in its first four months, breaking its previous annual record. The redevelopment has doubled public space and created state-of-the-art new facilities including expanded gallery spaces, a study centre, learning studio, and a collections centre. The Whitworth redevelopment is just one part of an ambitious Campus Masterplan that will see The University of Manchester invest £1 billion over the next ten years to create a world class campus for staff, students and visitors. In July 2015 the gallery was awarded the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year.

[www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth)

### About The University of Manchester

The University of Manchester is the largest single-site university in the UK, with the biggest student community. In total, 25 Nobel Prize winners have worked or studied there. 83% of its research was ranked as 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent' by the Research Excellence Framework in 2014 and more than nine out of ten of its recent graduates go straight into employment or continued studies. The university was ranked 38th in the world, seventh in Europe and fifth in the UK in the 2014 Shanghai Jiao Tong World Ranking. The University is well underway with the biggest investment in facilities undertaken by any UK university, with £750 million spent so far and a further £1 billion to follow by 2022.

### About MUMA

MUMA (McInnes Usher McKnight Architects) was established in 2000 and since then has delivered a number of high profile, public projects. All of MUMA's projects have been secured through winning design competitions and each completed project has won national and international awards. MUMA's projects seek a sensitive response to



their contexts and brief with rational, strategic decisions informing the plan. Each project pursues an on-going fascination with light, views and composition and an interest in the crafted use of materials. MUMA's current projects include a third project at the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Community Centre and Nursery at the North West Cambridge Development for the University of Cambridge.