Turner Prize 2017 ran at the Ferens Art Gallery from 26th September 2017 – 7th January 2018, attracting over 119,625 visitors in total, an average of 1208 a day. This figure makes it the second most visited Turner Prize exhibition outside of London and helped the Ferens secure a 309% increase in visitor numbers over the year. The exhibition surpassed our overall prediction of 100,000 visitors and was the third most visited Turner Prize ever when compared to past totals:

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| 2016 54,554 (574 per day)2015 74,787 (Glasgow)2014 50,331 (519 per day)2013 52,696 (Derry-Londonderry)2012 70,547 (759 per day)2011 149,770 (Gateshead)2010 51,975 (579 per day)2009 76,799 (883 per day)2008 92,332 (855 per day)2007 71,802 (854 per day, Liverpool)2006 79,415 (786 per day) | 2005 94,042 (1,000 per day)2004 75,928 (1,168 per day)2003 101,216 (1,281 per day)2002 69,245 (1,065 per day)2001 70,754 (983 per day)2000 (68,727 (870 per day)1999 133,597 (1,201 per day)1998 102,454 (1,404 per day)1997 85,003 (1,076 per day)1996 59,362 (813 per day) |

Turner Prize 2017 and the associated programme was organised in partnership between Hull UK City of Culture 2017, Hull Culture and Leisure and Tate, with BBC as the official media partners. Turner Prize 2017 was the first event of the wider Hull 2017 programme to be announced; The Hull 2017 team led on planning and delivery, with a core project team of a Project Manager, Assistant Producer and two Curators all appointed by late April 2017. The team then worked with colleagues across internal departments to develop an extensive learning programme, a marketing strategy and to evaluate the exhibition. In hindsight, it would have been beneficial for the core project team to take up their posts earlier, so that they were involved in the preliminary research, planning and budgeting. The appointment of a dedicated core team worked well and allowed the staff to build fruitful relationships with partners and each other. This team also worked as a central point of knowledge to ensure that deadlines across departments were met, questions could be answered quickly, and which allowed the project to continue seamlessly when the Project Manager left post in late September 2017.

The four shortlisted artists were announced on 3 May 2017, receiving a flurry of international press coverage, including headlines such as “The Turner Prize 2017 shortlist is here, and it’s more diverse (and older) than ever” (ArtNet), “Turner Prize: Black painting pioneers break award age barrier” (BBC News) and “Turner Prize’s diverse shortlist ‘makes a powerful political statement’” (The Guardian). This, along with an artists’ visit in late May, helped build anticipation locally, regionally and internationally. This enthusiasm and excitement helped us to secure in-kind support from a number of businesses, including G.F. Smith, Crown Paints, JZ Flowers, Jayhawk Fine Art Shippers, Marino Gamper and exhibition design by David Kohn Architects. The artists worked closely with David Kohn and the curators to produce an exhibition with an impressive two-room cinema, bespoke plinths, benches and shelves. The scale of the above meant that we spent more on exhibition build than we had originally budgeted for and the fast-paced timescale of the Turner Prize meant we faced difficulties with procurement as many contractors were already booked up.

Hull 2017 Marketing and Digital teams identified a number of different audiences to engage and developed a campaign with key copy lines which fitted in with the existing Hull 2017 voice. Phrases were chosen for particular locations and advertisements spanned; locally around the city and key venues; regionally across Northern arts institutions and travel networks; and nationally/internationally through selected editorials and a strong online presence. The success of this marketing campaign is evidenced through collected audience data: 57% of visitors came from outside of Hull and East Riding, with 1.9% coming from outside the UK. Hull 2017 Facebook posts and advertisements saw 664158 impressions and the event webpage had over 51,000 views.

The curatorial team, Sacha Craddock and George Vasey, brought a mix of experience, opinion and character to their roles, creating a healthy dialogue and resulting in a well-balanced and dynamic Turner Prize exhibition. Each curator worked closely with two of the artists, and with a staggered install, were able to devote enough time and means to support each artist properly. The curators presented solid reasoning for each artist exhibiting in each particular room: All were pleased with the choice and embraced working alongside the collection and with the history of the building and the city.

Turner Prize 2017 was the first Turner Prize exhibition to have no set route; There were multiple entrances to the exhibition and visitors were free to view the rooms in any order they wished. This encouraged audiences to spend more time in the exhibition and allowed them to interact with the entire gallery and collection, not just the prize. Permanent collection galleries were used to display Turner Prize 2017, cementing the prize in the history of the building and, through a re-hang, the well-known and well-loved collection was reinvigorated for both new and familiar audiences.

Four Turner Prize Supervisors were hired for the duration of the 15 week exhibition, whose roles were to oversee the daily running of the exhibition and to manage 452 specially-trained Turner Prize volunteers. Volunteer training consisted of three waves; A Masterclass to raise awareness, an Introduction to cover the prize history and this year’s shortlist and an Orientation, giving them a sneak peak of the exhibition before it opened to the public. Volunteers were integral in mediating between the artworks and the visitors, encouraging increased engagement and initiating a mass of positive feedback, donations and repeat visits. However, an increase in hired staff to manage the invigilation and safety of the artworks would have been valuable. Overall, 3224 volunteer shifts were completed, reaching approximately 12,896 hours overall, with some individuals completing up to 29 shifts. Throughout the course of the 15-week exhibition, the exhibition remained popular and the Ferens saw little drop in visitor numbers.

Over 30 arts correspondents travelled from London for the press preview and the exhibition received critical acclaim, with review headlines reading; “Deals with themes you might actually care about” (The Times), “Turner Prize 2017: Older artists, better show” (Financial Times) and “A quiet but powerful Turner Prize” (Apollo Magazine).

Upon entering the gallery, the Ferens Central Court gallery offered an orientation space for visitors, including a written welcome from the curators, a map and a bespoke bureau which housed the four specially made artists’ films. Two editions of a newspaper, The Ferens Echo, were developed by the curators and available for free from the gallery. The first edition offered further context including words from the curators, an art quiz and interviews with the artists. The second edition was launched at Turner//Return – a free, late night event at the gallery which formed part of the joint Hull 2017 and Hull Culture and Leisure public programme. This edition included responses from the curators to some of the best comments left by visitors, reinforcing one of the chosen marketing phrases, “Whatever you think about Turner Prize 2017, you’re right”. Screens in the central court bureau also showcased comments that were collected through iPads and through physical cards, encouraging discussion and interaction. The success of the above highlighted the lack of orientation space when entering the Ferens and the bureau has been donated to the gallery for future use.

The Turner Prize 2017 learning and engagement programme was a collaboration between Hull 2017 and Heritage Learning, Hull Culture and Leisure’s engagement department. Together, we developed an extensive programme of workshops, talks and events for schools and for the public. Building on existing Heritage Learning formats, Hull 2017 were able to support our partners by expanding their artist and audience networks, and through underwriting costs so that events were made more financially viable for audiences. A large proportion of the public programme was free and the majority of paid events were £5 or under. We were able to test innovative ideas that were new to the gallery and to Hull; These risks paid off, with the majority of events selling out within the first week of the exhibition.

Highlights included *Turner//Return*: an ‘artist take over’ of the gallery which succeeded in attracting a new, less engaged audience to the Ferens and Turner Prize 2017 through a range of exciting talks, performances, workshops, tours and live music. The event brought 735 people to the gallery, compared to the usual average of 84 on a Thursday evening. *Meet Me At The Blue Box* was one of the Ferens’ most ambitious community outreach projects, engaging with over 5000 people in hard-to-reach communities around Hull to break down barriers and build confidence in thinking and talking about visual art.

The free curator tours were extremely popular; However, demand shows that it would have been beneficial to programme more, or to train Front of House staff or Volunteers to lead tours. School group visits were also popular, with almost 3000 school children coming to see the prize on organised visits. To avoid overcrowding, groups were encouraged to book in to time slots. Although self-led, each group were provided with learning resources to aid their visit but tours, if resources were available, would have been beneficial. Many more people attended BSL Interpreted and Audio Descriptive Tours of the exhibition than we expected, when compared with take-up for similar tours on other Hull 2017 events across the year. These tours have helped strengthen the Ferens’ reputation for providing bespoke opportunities for those with access needs, as it was not something they had previously offered.

The Turner Prize 2017 Award Ceremony took place on 5th December 2017 and was presented by artist and DJ Goldie. The grandeur of the venue made it an excellent choice for the ceremony and it looked great for the press, but came with inherent difficulties such as having to bring in field catering and lack of accessible toilets. Hull 2017’s experienced events team led on the operational logistics of the event, and mediated between Tate, BBC and Bolton & Quinn to ensure the smooth running of the ceremony over two venues; Hull Minster and the Ferens Art Gallery. We received a positive amount of RSVPs on our first wave of invitations, meaning a second wave was not sent out. The guest list was a healthy mix of local, national and international artists and arts professionals. Local and national press attended the event, including 15 arts correspondents from London. Pinning down timings for the live BBC broadcast proved difficult as it was only the second Turner Prize with them as media partners and, because of this, they were unsure about which format they’d like their coverage to take. Despite this, we were able to plan as much as possible and still managed to send the invitations with timings out on time.

Announcement of the winner of Turner Prize 2017 received international coverage, including headlines such as “Turner Prize 2017: Lubaina Himid’s Win Makes History” (BBC News) and “Turner Prize win shows art can flourish up north” (The Guardian). Additional coverage from the BBC included BBC News at Ten, BBC Breakfast, BBC Radio Lancaster, BBC Radio Humberside, BBC Radio 3 – Free Thinking, BBC Look North, BBC The World Tonight and BBC Radio 4 Today. Lubaina Himid was the first black female artist to win the Turner Prize and her win has helped her to secure new commissions for Glasgow International, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Knole House and the Berlin Biennial over the coming year.

The Hull 2017 team recently hosted a group from Turner Contemporary, Kent County Council and Thant District Council to hand over knowledge about what is involved in hosting Turner Prize and to give advice on how they might leverage the opportunity to link with other cultural activities and develop a complete tourist experience for those visiting Margate.