

**LONDON, 25 August 2023:** Hartwig Fischer has announced that he will be stepping down from his position.

The Board of Trustees has accepted.

**Hartwig Fischer said:**

*“Over the last few days I have been reviewing in detail the events around the thefts from the British Museum and the investigation into them. It is evident that the British Museum did not respond as comprehensively as it should have in response to the warnings in 2021, and to the problem that has now fully emerged. The responsibility for that failure must ultimately rest with the Director. I also misjudged the remarks I made earlier this week about Dr Gradel. I wish to express my sincere regret and withdraw those remarks.*”

*“I have offered my resignation to the Chairman of the Trustees, and will step down as soon as the Board have established an interim leadership arrangement. This will remain in place until a new director is chosen.*”

*“The situation facing the Museum is of the utmost seriousness. I sincerely believe it will come through this moment and emerge stronger, but sadly I have come to the conclusion that my presence is proving a distraction. That is the last thing I would want. Over the last seven years I have been privileged to work with some of the most talented and dedicated public servants. The British Museum is an amazing institution, and it has been the honour of my life to lead it.”*

**George Osborne, Chair of Trustees said:**

*“The Board of Trustees has accepted the resignation of Hartwig Fischer as Director. He has acted honourably in confronting the mistakes that have been made. No one has ever doubted Hartwig’s integrity, his dedication to his job, or his love for the Museum.*”

*“Hartwig had already announced his intention to step down some weeks ago, so the process of finding a new permanent Director is already underway. The Trustees will now establish an interim arrangement, ensuring that the Museum has the necessary leadership to take it through this turbulent period as we learn the lessons of what went wrong, and use them to develop plans for a strong future. The Trustees also wish to thank the many, many staff who work so hard for the Museum and keep it running.*”

*“I am clear about this: we are going to fix what has gone wrong. The Museum has a mission that lasts across generations. We will learn, restore confidence and deserve to be admired once again.”*

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**Further information:**

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