# National Portrait Gallery launches immersive exhibition in Salford to reach new audiences



An exhibition showcasing a range of British icons is set to captivate audiences with its immersive art experience. The exhibition, titled "Stories Brought To Life," is being presented by the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) and is housed in a temporary venue at MediaCity in Salford. It officially opens to the public today, featuring digital and animated portrayals of 19 figures from history and contemporary culture including Winston Churchill, Amy Winehouse, and the current star of Doctor Who, Ncuti Gatwa.

The NPG has integrated digital versions of its portraits with dynamic graphics and voiceovers, aiming to narrate the stories of these notable individuals in an innovative format. As the NPG director, Victoria Siddall, explained to the BBC, "The main driver of this is taking the collection to new audiences outside of London." She acknowledged the necessity of generating revenue to support the gallery's operations, particularly given the current forecasted operating deficit. "Obviously we're always looking at new innovations that can help engage audiences. And if that brings us revenue too that's wonderful," she added.

The exhibition will run in Salford until August before embarking on a UK tour, although future locations have yet to be disclosed. Visitors will find the venue adorned with approximately 40 massive picture frame-style boxes, upon which the portraits and accompanying animations are projected. This unique format stands in stark contrast to the free access to the original portraits in the NPG's London location. Ticket prices for the immersive show range from £22 to £30 for standard adult admissions, with an additional option for a flexible ticket priced at £5 more. On Mondays, a limited number of "affordable" tickets are available at £10.

Critics are weighing in on the pricing structure, with Joy Coker, the editor of arts platform Alt A Review, noting the potential barrier the costs may create. "Right now with the cost of living it might not be something everybody can afford," she remarked. However, she also expressed that the experience is thought-provoking and allows viewers to engage with each figure's historical significance in a new way.

The exhibition features an eclectic mix of historical figures such as Charles Darwin and Emmeline Pankhurst, alongside more contemporary personalities like Malala Yousafzai and Nelson Mandela. Each individual's story is told in brief segments lasting two to three minutes, culminating in a closing tribute to Queen Elizabeth II.

Complementing the NPG exhibition, a separate immersive experience celebrating the work of LS Lowry is also being launched in Salford this weekend. This free event animates Lowry's work "Going To The Match," transforming the gallery's walls, floor, and ceiling into a dynamic projection of the renowned artist's painting. The narrative is delivered by local comedian and actress Sophie Willan, further enriching the experience for visitors.

Overall, the "Stories Brought To Life" exhibition marks a significant moment for the National Portrait Gallery's outreach efforts, as it seeks to connect with wider audiences while navigating the financial challenges faced by cultural institutions.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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