

News Release

Tuesday 20 October 2020

The Duchess of Cambridge and the National Portrait Gallery launch nationwide *Hold Still* community exhibition

Final 100 photographs, selected from over 31,000 entries, go on display in hundreds of locations across the UK, supported by the Co-op

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have today, (Tuesday 20 October), visited Waterloo in south London to mark the launch of the UK-wide *Hold Still* community exhibition, supported by the Co-op, which launched 'Co-operate' in April to help connect vulnerable people to local and national support initiatives and has recently provided emergency relief funding to 4,500 community causes.

The Duke and Duchess viewed the final one hundred *Hold Still* portraits displayed on billboards outside Waterloo station, one of 112 community exhibition sites in 80 towns, cities and areas across the UK. The Duke and Duchess were greeted by Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, Steve Murrells, Co-op Group, CEO and Sami Massalami Mohammed Elmassalami Ayad, a volunteer at a community Food Hub in Hackney, whose portrait, 'Sami' by Grey Hutton, is one of the *Hold Still* photographs on display. Their Royal Highnesses also visited St. Bartholomew's Hospital where they met frontline workers including Joyce Duah, a specialist oncology pharmacist at the hospital, whose photograph 'All In This Together' was selected as one of the final portraits, and her two colleagues Amelia Chowdhury and Dipal Samuel who feature in the photograph.

Spearheaded by The Duchess of Cambridge, Patron of the National Portrait Gallery, *Hold Still* is an ambitious community project, launched in May 2020, to create a unique collective portrait of the UK during lockdown.

From today, the final selection of portraits, unveiled in a [digital exhibition](#) in September, will be exhibited for a period of four weeks on billboard and poster sites across the country, including at bus stops, in high streets and outside train stations. One of the portraits 'Melanie, March 2020', taken by Johannah Churchill, has been recreated as a hand-painted mural in Manchester city centre.

Groups of works will be shown on posters in cities such as Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester and London. Many of the portraits will also be displayed individually in the

entrant's hometown with locations ranging from Belfast, Liverpool and Southampton to Somersham in Cambridgeshire and Auchinleck in East Ayrshire. Some of the portraits will also feature on community screens in over 1,500 Co-op stores across the UK.

All one hundred works will also be on display at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire from 23 October until the 6 December.

Hold Still invited people of all ages from across the UK to submit a photographic portrait, which they had taken during lockdown, in a six-week period during May and June. A panel of judges, including the Duchess of Cambridge and National Portrait Gallery Director, Nicholas Cullinan, selected the final 100 portraits from 31,598 submissions.

Focussed on three core themes – Helpers and Heroes, Your New Normal and Acts of Kindness – the images selected present a unique record of our shared and individual experiences during this extraordinary period of history, conveying humour and grief, creativity and kindness, tragedy and hope.

The *Hold Still* online exhibition has had over 4.8 million page views to date.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery said: “The public response to *Hold Still* has been overwhelming with so many extraordinary photographs submitted from all corners of the UK. We are delighted that, with the generous support of the Co-op, we are now able to share these remarkable images with communities across the country, creating a unique and highly personal portrait of the nation during this unprecedented time.”

Steve Murrells, CEO, Co-op Group, said: “Co-op has been supporting communities for over 175 years and we are very proud to have played a part in bringing the stories behind *Hold Still* to towns and cities across the country, through a unique outdoor exhibition which captures so vividly this extraordinary period in our history.

“Recent events have shown that amidst hardship and sadness, there have been some extraordinary acts of kindness, and I’ve seen first-hand how resilient communities can be. From our own front-line colleagues who have worked hard to help feed the nation and care for those we’ve lost and their loved ones, to our network of Member Pioneers, our community organisers, who have focussed their efforts on helping the most vulnerable, the common theme is one of cooperation and solidarity. I hope that the sight of *Hold Still*’s iconic portraits will serve as a reminder that we must continue to come together, as we strive to create a fairer world for everyone.”

www.npg.org.uk/holdstill

www.coop.co.uk/co-operate

#HoldStill2020

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Notes to Editors

The *Hold Still* community exhibition sites are in the following towns, cities and areas across the UK. Please note some locations have more than one community exhibition site.

Aberystwyth	Cumnock	Oxford
Arundel	Dulwich	Peterborough Rural
Alrewas (National Memorial Arboretum)	Eaglescliffe	Poole
Ashford (Kent)	East Ham	Preston
Baldock	Eastbourne	Purley
Balham	Edgware	Putney
Belfast	Edinburgh	Ramsgate
Bethnal Green	Fareham	Reading
Bingley	Finsbury Park	Roehampton
Birmingham	Folkestone	Rotherham
Bishop's Stortford	Forest Hill	Sale
Bootle	Gidea Park	Southampton
Borehamwood	Glasgow South	Southfields
Bournemouth	Gosport	St Ives
Bradford	Gravesend	Stenhousemuir
Bredbury Romiley	Harringay	Stoke On Trent
Brighton	Hemel Hempstead	Sutton
Bristol	Hitchin	Teddington
Brockley	Hyde	Tottenham
Burgess Hill	Kensington	Walthamstow
Burnt Oak	Lancing	Wanstead
Cambridge	Lewes	Waterloo
Cardiff	Litherland	Westminster (National Portrait Gallery)
Carshalton	Liverpool	Wimbledon
Cheltenham	Manchester	Wokingham
Cockenzie And Port Seton	Marylebone	
Croydon	Norwood	
	Notting Hill	

The Hold Still judging panel included: The Duchess of Cambridge; Nicholas Cullinan, Director of the National Portrait Gallery; Lemn Sissay MBE, writer and poet; Ruth May, Chief Nursing Officer for England and Maryam Wahid, photographer.

Her Royal Highness has been Patron of the National Portrait Gallery since 2012.

About the National Portrait Gallery, London

Founded in 1856, the aim of the National Portrait Gallery, London is 'to promote through the medium of portraits the appreciation and understanding of the men and women who have made and are making British history and culture, and ... to promote the appreciation and understanding of portraiture in all media'. The Gallery holds the most extensive collection of portraits in the world. www.npg.org.uk

About Co-op

Co-op is one of the world's largest consumer co-operatives with interests across food, funerals, insurance, legal services and health. It has a clear purpose of championing a better way of doing business for you and your communities.

Owned by millions of UK consumers, the Co-op operates 2,600 food stores, over 1,000 funeral homes and it provides products to over 5,100 other stores, including those run by independent co-operative societies and through its wholesale business, Nisa Retail Limited.

Co-op provides local funding boosts and saves shoppers money through its re-launched membership scheme, and shares 2% of the money spent on Co-op branded products with community causes.

In a bid to reduce the damaging impact of Coronavirus measures on the mental wellbeing of millions, in April, Co-op launched 'Co-operate' – an online community centre which connects vulnerable people to local and national support initiatives and also to volunteers who are willing to run virtual events.

The platform also highlights the inspiring activity being carried out by the Co-op's army of 'Member Pioneers' – those colleagues who work with causes within their local communities who are concentrating all their efforts into helping others throughout the crisis.