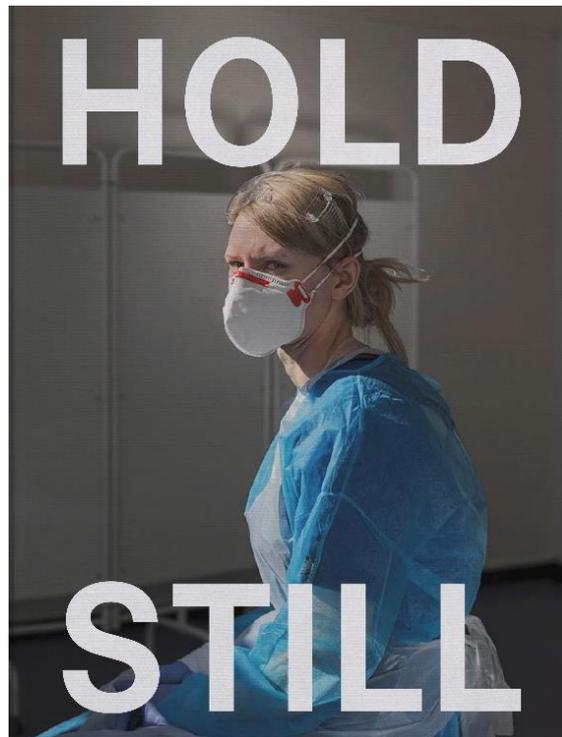


News Release

Sunday 28 March 2021

***HOLD STILL: NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY AND THE DUCHESS OF
CAMBRIDGE ANNOUNCE PUBLICATION FEATURING FINAL 100 PORTRAITS***

***New Publication, supported by Co-op, captures a portrait of the nation during
the first national lockdown.***



Hold Still book cover

The National Portrait Gallery is to publish *Hold Still*, a new book of photographic portraits from the *Hold Still* exhibition, on the 7 May 2021, marking one year since HRH The Duchess of Cambridge and the Gallery launched the ambitious community project to create a collective portrait of the UK during lockdown.

Featuring an introduction from The Duchess of Cambridge, the new publication, which is supported by Co-op, will include the one hundred portraits selected for the *Hold Still* exhibition from 31,598 submissions during the project's six-week entry period. Focussed on three core themes – Helpers

and Heroes, Your New Normal and Acts of Kindness – the images 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 net proceeds from the sale of the book will be equally split to support the work of the National Portrait Gallery and Mind, the mental health charity (registered 219830).

The one hundred photographs were selected by a panel of judges including 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. Each of the photographs is accompanied by the story behind the picture told through the words of the entrants themselves, offering a highly personal perspective on this unprecedented time. From virtual birthday parties, handmade rainbows and community clapping, to brave NHS staff, resilient keyworkers and people dealing with illness, isolation and loss.

The final selection of portraits were first unveiled in an [online exhibition](#) in September 2020, which has had over 5.8 million page views to date. The images were also exhibited on hundreds of billboard and poster sites in towns and cities across the UK in October last year, as part of a unique community exhibition, which came to life with the support of the Co-op. One of the portraits 'Melanie, March 2020', taken by Johannah Churchill, was recreated as a hand-painted mural in Manchester's Northern Quarter. Photographs of the nationwide exhibition will feature in the *Hold Still* publication. As will, a piece of poetic prose by judge Lemn Sissay reflecting on the entries and the judging experience.

The hardback book will be available on the National Portrait Gallery [online shop](#) and in bookstores across the UK from the 7 May 2021, priced at £24.95. The publication was designed and art directed by North Design.





Hold Still inside pages

Quotes

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery said: “Since its founding in 1856, the National Portrait Gallery has existed to record British history through portraiture. In 2020 it became even more important for the Gallery to find new ways to document and share our individual and collective stories, as the coronavirus pandemic impacted everybody’s lives in a multitude of ways.

The public response to *Hold Still*, which was spearheaded by our Patron, Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Cambridge, has been phenomenal. The photographs submitted have helped to create a unifying and cathartic portrait of life in lockdown. We are honoured to have been able to share a selection of these photographs with the nation, first through the online and community exhibition and now through this new publication. The proceeds raised from the book will help us to continue to care for and share our national Collection and to provide free access, inspiration and learning, through the work we do at the Gallery and our UK wide community and education projects.

Hold Still is an important record of this extraordinary moment in our history – expressed through the faces of the nation – and we hope will remain so for generations to come.”

Paul Farmer, Chief Executive, Mind, said: “The coronavirus pandemic is a mental health emergency as well as a physical one. The devastating loss of life, the impact of lockdown, and any recession that lies ahead means there has never been a more crucial time to prioritise our mental health.

This inspiring collection of portraits illustrates the impact of the pandemic in all its complexity, but also how creativity, art and human connection can help us find meaning in unprecedented challenges. Thank you to everyone who submitted a portrait to tell such a moving and deeply human story of the pandemic. And to the National Portrait Gallery and The Duchess of Cambridge for choosing Mind as a beneficiary of a portion of the proceeds from the sales of this book.”

Steve Murrells, CEO, Co-op Group, said: “*Hold Still* is a poignant reminder of a year that changed all of our lives. I am incredibly proud that Co-op could play a role in bringing both the community

exhibition, and now, the book, to life.

Whilst the last twelve months have presented us with challenges on a scale we never imagined, the images depicted in the book clearly show the power of cooperation: cooperation in our homes, communities, care homes, hospitals, shops, schools and vaccination centres. So much can be achieved when we work together.

We know the pandemic has taken a huge toll on people's mental health and wellbeing so I'm delighted that some of the proceeds of this book will go to support Mind – an organisation very close to Co-op's heart, who carry out incredible work in local communities across the UK."

Last April, Co-op also launched 'Co-operate' to help connect vulnerable people to local and national support initiatives and has provided emergency relief funding to 4,500 community causes.

www.npgshop.org.uk/products/hold-still-hardcover

www.npg.org.uk/holdstill

www.coop.co.uk/co-operate

#HoldStill2020

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Notes to Editors

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.