

News Release

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National Portrait Gallery to reopen to the public on 22 June 2023

The National Portrait Gallery will reopen its doors for the first time since 2020, following the most extensive redevelopment of its building since 1896

- *Inspiring People project made possible by major grants from the Blavatnik Family Foundation, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Garfield Weston Foundation and the Ross Foundation*
- *Herbert Smith Freehills announced as Reopening Partner*



*L-R: The Gallery's North Façade exterior undergoes a major transformation, including the Blavatnik Wing (above) Photo © David Parry.
National Portrait Gallery forecourt proposal by Jamie Fobert Architects © Forbes Massie.*

The National Portrait Gallery in London has today announced that it will reopen its doors on 22 June 2023, following the most significant redevelopment in its history. Supported by longstanding supporter and Reopening Partner, Herbert Smith Freehills, visitors to the new National Portrait Gallery will experience a complete redisplay of the Collection, a transformational refurbishment of the building, as well as an enhanced welcome and greater access through the new Ross Place entrance.

The redevelopment project – titled *Inspiring People* – has included a comprehensive redisplay of the Gallery's Collection from the Tudors to today, which will be displayed in beautifully refurbished galleries, and the restoration of the Grade I listed building and many historic features. The designs, by Jamie Fobert Architects working in partnership with Purcell, and thanks to the historic gift from the Blavatnik Family Foundation, will incorporate the Blavatnik Wing, the entire first floor encompassing nine galleries, which will explore society and culture in the 19th and early 20th

centuries. The designs will also see the return of the Gallery's East Wing to public use as the Weston Wing, restoring original gallery spaces and creating new retail and catering facilities. The Gallery's Ross Place entrance will create three new doors, converted from large windows, opening up the North Façade of the building in St Martin's Place. A new Learning Centre will also welcome visitors of all ages with studios, breakout spaces, and high-quality facilities.

In addition to the Blavatnik Family Foundation gift, the *Inspiring People* project has been supported by a major grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, in addition to major donations from the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Ross Foundation, Mildred and Simon Palley, the Julia and Hans Rausing Trust, the David and Claudia Harding Foundation, Bjorn and Inger Saven, the Law Family Charitable Foundation, the Deborah Loeb Brice Foundation and Art Fund. The National Portrait Gallery is grateful to these visionary supporters, alongside others who are making the building project and its related activity possible.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, said: *"As we approach 2023, the countdown to our reopening after the largest and most comprehensive redevelopment in our history has well and truly begun. I am thrilled to be able to announce the date that our new doors will open to the public, and we eagerly look forward to welcoming visitors back into our transformed Gallery in June."*

Sir Leonard Blavatnik, said: *"The Blavatnik Family Foundation is proud to support the National Portrait Gallery, and we look forward greatly to next year's opening."*

Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: *"It is really exciting news that the National Portrait Gallery will reopen in June 2023, following a major, multi-million pound project, which thanks to National Lottery players we have supported with a £9million grant. The National Portrait Gallery has been a source of inspiration and delight for over a century. This project will transform and reimagine the building, collection and public engagement and ensure it continues to inspire generations to come. We look forward to seeing it fully revealed in June."*

Philippa Charles, Director of the Garfield Weston Foundation, said: *"Our Trustees are delighted to support the creation of the new Weston Wing at the National Portrait Gallery. The new space, with its own dedicated entrance, will help open up access to the building and create much needed additional public and gallery spaces. The Foundation has a long relationship with the Gallery and we are delighted to be part of this exciting new phase in the Gallery's history."*

David Ross, Chairman of the Ross Foundation, said: *"It's very exciting that this amazing national landmark will be reopening next year. The Inspiring People project has opened up our collection to communities across the UK and will continue to encourage people from all over the country and beyond to come and see the amazing works we have on display. It is an honour as Chair of the Gallery's Trustees and the Ross Foundation to be able to support the conservation and restoration of this iconic British institution, and I look forward to welcoming guests through our doors once again."*

Alison Brown, Executive Partner at Herbert Smith Freehills, said: *"We are delighted to continue our long-standing relationship with the National Portrait Gallery and in particular, to be their Reopening Partner for the Inspiring People redevelopment project. The National Portrait Gallery is an organisation uniquely placed to showcase the rich tapestry of our social history and build an understanding of what binds us together."*

Since closure, the National Portrait Gallery has facilitated a number of ambitious partnerships with museums, local groups and schools to bring its Collection closer to communities across the UK.

Collaborative exhibitions have enabled the Gallery to share hundreds of works across the country – from St Andrews to Swansea, and Cornwall to Coventry. As part of *Coming Home*, a project that returned portraits of iconic sitters to places of personal significance, the Gallery exhibited over 30 portraits, including Virginia Woolf, Stormzy and Jessica Ennis-Hill, in their respective hometowns – Lewes, Croydon and Sheffield. In 2020, the Gallery undertook one of the most ambitious projects in its history, a community exhibition called *Hold Still*. Resulting in a unique collective portrait of the UK during the first national lockdown, spearheaded by the Gallery’s Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess of Wales, the Gallery received over 31,500 photographic entries from all corners of the UK, with entrants ranging from 4 to 75 years-old. A hundred of these photographs were featured in a digital exhibition and a nationwide outdoor display, seen by 5 million people with 400 posters in 80 locations in local communities where entrants came from. In addition to these UK-based projects, the Gallery shared hundreds of portraits with international museums and galleries throughout its closure, with portraits travelling to Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, South Korea, Taiwan and the United States of America.

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National Portrait Gallery

The [National Portrait Gallery](#) was founded in 1856 to encourage the appreciation and understanding of the people who have made and are making British history and culture. Today it promotes engagement with portraiture to a wide-ranging public by conserving, growing and sharing the world’s largest collection of portraits. The Gallery in St Martin’s Place, London is currently closed until 2023, while essential building works take place on the [Inspiring People](#) redevelopment project. During the closure period, the Gallery has continued to share its Collection through its digital channels and a series of nationwide partnerships and collaborations. www.npg.org.uk

The Blavatnik Family Foundation

[The Blavatnik Family Foundation](#) is an active supporter of world-renowned cultural, educational, scientific, and charitable institutions throughout the world. The foundation is headed by Sir Leonard Blavatnik, a global industrialist and philanthropist and the founder and chairman of Access Industries, a privately held investment group based in the U.S. with broad strategic interests.

The National Portrait Gallery and the Blavatnik Family Foundation have a successful history of collaboration, including the sponsorship of the exhibitions *Russia and the Arts* (2016), *Sargent: Portraits of Artists and Friends* (2015), *Glamour of the Gods* (2011), and *Andy Warhol: 10 portraits of Jews of the 20th century* (2006).

The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we Inspire, lead and resource the UK’s heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future. www.heritagefund.org.uk.

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Since The National Lottery began in 1994, National Lottery players have raised over £46 billion for projects and more than 670,000 grants have been awarded across the UK. More than £30 million

raised each week goes to good causes across the UK.

The Garfield Weston Foundation

Established in 1958, the Garfield Weston Foundation is a family-founded charitable grant-making trust, which gives away around £90 million a year to charities across the UK.

Each year the Foundation gives away its income and donations have continued to grow. Since it was established, it has donated over £1.4 billion, of which over half has been given away in the past 10 years alone. In the most recent financial year, the Foundation gave away nearly £90 million to over 1,980 charities across the UK.

The Ross Foundation

The Ross Foundation was created in 2007 with a core mission to help children and young people discover their strengths by offering them a wide range of world-class educational opportunities. We support organisations that inspire young people and encourage them to take the chance to embrace new skills and passions.

Herbert Smith Freehills

Operating from 25 offices across Asia Pacific, EMEA and North America, Herbert Smith Freehills is at the heart of the new global business landscape providing premium quality, full-service legal advice. The firm provides many of the world's most important organisations with access to market-leading dispute resolution, projects and transactional legal advice, combined with expertise in a number of global industry sectors, including Technology, Banks, Consumer Products, Energy, Financial Buyers, Infrastructure & Transport, Mining, Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare, Real Estate, and Manufacturing & Industrials.

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