PRESS RELEASE

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**Maria Balshaw to step down as Director of The University of Manchester’s Whitworth and Manchester City Galleries**

After 11 years at the forefront of Manchester’s arts and cultural scene, The University of Manchester today announces that Dr. Maria Balshaw will step down as Director of the Whitworth and Manchester City Galleries in early summer, to take up the role as the first female Director of Tate.

Maria has been an integral part of the city’s cultural reinvigoration, helping to secure Manchester’s place as an internationally significant home for the arts. Alongside her role as Director of two major Manchester institutions, she held the post of Director of Culture for Manchester City Council and in 2015 was awarded a CBE for services to the arts in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List.

Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, President and Vice-Chancellor of The University of Manchester, said: “Under Maria’s inspiring leadership the Whitworth, and the arts in Manchester, have been transformed. The numerous awards and accolades the Whitworth has received are a testament to the high esteem her work is held in by the culture sector. Though we are very sad to see her leave, it is in recognition of her achievements in Manchester that she has been selected for such a prestigious new position.”

Maria Balshaw commented: “I am honoured that the Tate trustees have asked me to be Director and take forward the next exciting chapter of Tate’s life. I’m immensely proud to have played a part in making Manchester one of the leading cultural cities in the world and I look forward to seeing what my wonderful colleagues at the Whitworth and Manchester Art Gallery do next.”

An academic by training Maria has worked as a Director within the cultural sector for the past 14 years. Since 2006 she has coordinated a challenging programme of historic, modern and contemporary exhibitions that capitalised on the Whitworth’s university location as well as having a strong international profile. She was the driving force behind the £17 million redevelopment project of the Whitworth, which has seen the gallery enjoy record-breaking visitor figures since it reopened in 2014 and win the Art Fund Museum of the Year Prize in 2015. She has also been a key player in the creation of Factory, Manchester’s £110 million arts venue planned for the former Granada TV studios.

In 2011 she took on the role of Director of Manchester City Galleries alongside her duties at the Whitworth. This dual Directorship represented a unique partnership between The University of Manchester and Manchester City Council, bringing the two institutions and Manchester’s historic and modern art collections into complementary alliance for the first time in their history. Retaining their separate governance arrangements and their distinctive personalities the two Galleries evolved complementary programmes and joint exhibition projects that built on the strength of the city collections and a spirit of Manchester radicalism.

Professor Colin Bailey, Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who has responsibility for the University’s cultural institutions, added: “Working closely with Maria over the last few years has been a genuine pleasure as I’ve been able to see first-hand her passion for the arts. The Whitworth is an incredible success, inspiring thousands of people of all ages, thanks in no small part to the work Maria has carried out.”

**Ends**

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**NOTES TO EDITOR**

**About the Whitworth**

The Whitworth is part of The University of Manchester. It is home to internationally renowned collections of modern art, textiles, watercolours, prints, drawings and sculpture. Created in 1889 as the first English gallery in a park, the Whitworth has developed a new vision for the role of a university gallery. A creative laboratory within an ambitious university, the Whitworth is a place where good, unusual things happen.

The Whitworth re-opened to the public on 14 February 2015 after a major £17 million redevelopment by architects MUMA. The Whitworth has welcomed over 700,000 since re-opening, and more than doubled its previous annual records. The redevelopment has doubled public space and created state-of-the-art new facilities including expanded gallery spaces, a study centre, learning studio, and a collections centre. The Whitworth redevelopment is just one part of an ambitious Campus Masterplan that will see The University of Manchester invest £1 billion over to create a world class campus for staff, students and visitors. The gallery was crowned Art Fund Museum of Year 2015, nominated for the prestigious Stirling Prize, named Best Emerging Cultural Destination in Europe, and Large Visitor Attraction of the Year by Visit England, continuing to establish itself as a leading cultural destination and housing an internationally significant collection of art. [www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth)

**About Manchester Art Gallery**

Manchester Art Gallery is one of country’s finest art museums. It welcomes over half a million visitors each year to its home in the heart of the city, a blend of historic and contemporary architecture that echoes our innovative artistic programme.  The gallery mixes works from the historic collections with the best international contemporary art to bring fresh perspectives to familiar artworks, create visual dialogues and encourage conversation and debate.

**About The University of Manchester**

The University of Manchester, a member of the prestigious Russell Group, is the UK’s largest single-site university with 38,600 students and is consistently ranked among the world’s elite for graduate employability. The University is also one of the country’s major research institutions, rated fifth in the UK in terms of ‘research power’ (REF 2014). World class research is carried out across a diverse range of fields including cancer, advanced materials, addressing global inequalities, energy and industrial biotechnology. No fewer than 25 Nobel laureates have either worked or studied here. It is the only UK university to have social responsibility among its core strategic objectives, with staff and students alike dedicated to making a positive difference in communities around the world. Manchester is ranked 35th in the world in the Academic Ranking of World Universities 2016 and 5th in the UK. The University had an annual income of almost £1 billion in 2015/16.

Visit [www.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/) for further information.

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