

Press Release: **Embargoed until 10.30am Monday 24 May 2021**

Manchester Museum announces Chinese Culture Gallery Designers

Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, is pleased to announce the appointment of **Imagemakers** as the design team for our new permanent Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery, which will open in late 2022. This new gallery is part of *hello future*, the exciting capital development project that will transform Manchester Museum as it becomes more inclusive, imaginative and relevant to the diverse communities it serves. The design appointment was shared today by Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, Vice Chancellor of the University of Manchester as she met with the Chinese Consul General for Manchester, Zheng Xiyuan, over zoom.

Imagemakers will work collaboratively with Manchester Museum in realising the vision of exciting new displays which will celebrate the rich cultural heritage of China and the historic links between China and Manchester. The new Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery will showcase rarely seen material, drawing upon powerful personal narratives to illustrate the sometimes turbulent episodes in our long, shared history. It will feature international research collaborations and partnerships at The University of Manchester to make meaningful connections with the museum's visitors. Working closely with our partner organisation, Manchester China Institute, we will highlight inspiring stories of friendship, collaboration and reciprocity between British and Chinese people to inspire empathy and build understanding between cultures.

Through creative design work, **Imagemakers** aim to awaken curiosity and conversation, and inspire challenging perspectives, with the surprising and striking juxtaposition of breathtakingly beautiful objects, images and their accompanying stories. **Imagemakers** are very experienced in showcasing the best of Chinese culture, and have previously undertaken creative design work for the China Botanical Museum in Kunming, Suzhou Intangible Heritage Museum and Liangzhu Culture Museum.

With a floorspace of 190 m², the Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture gallery will be Manchester Museum's first ever permanent space devoted to Chinese culture. It will bring together a range of intimate objects reflecting personal lived experiences as well as astonishing exhibits from the city's world-class Chinese collections, including fine porcelains, exquisitely carved jades, beautiful textiles, ancient bronzes and natural history specimens. At the heart of the gallery, there will be space for gathering and activity - a community hub for Manchester's many Chinese groups and societies.

Esme Ward, Director of Manchester Museum, said:

"I'm delighted to welcome Imagemakers to the Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture gallery project and can't wait to see what we will create together. Their experience and understanding of Chinese culture and their imaginative ideas for creating connection and empathy within the gallery make them a perfect fit."

Ian Haswell, Project Manager and Exhibition Designer at Imagemakers, said:

"We are delighted to be appointed as designers of the new Lee Kai Hung Gallery at Manchester Museum and looking forward to working with the Manchester Museum team to develop this exciting project, using the museum's world class Chinese collections to create engaging spaces which highlight the best of Chinese culture."

Peter Gries, Lee Kai Hung Chair and Director, Manchester China Institute, said:

"I'm thrilled by the appointment of Imagemakers to design the new Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery at the Manchester Museum. Exposure to stories about UK-China cultural encounters should promote perspective taking—and help our British and Chinese visitors celebrate our common humanity."

The Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery is independently funded with the generous support of the Lee Kai Hung Foundation. Opening in late 2022, this gallery is a very important part of *hello future*, the exciting new £13.5 million project to transform Manchester Museum. This transformation includes a new two-storey extension, which will house a new Exhibition Hall dedicated to major temporary shows and extraordinary projects, and a visually stunning South Asia Gallery, as well as further displays, shop, café and new entrance.

hello future is supported using public funding by Arts Council England and supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, The University of Manchester, and the generosity of numerous philanthropic supporters.

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Notes to Editors

About Manchester Museum

Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, first opened in 1890. It is the UK's largest university museum with a collection of about 4.5 million items from every continent. Its combination of the academic and the popular is what makes the Museum so distinctive and lies at the heart of its widespread appeal. The Museum's vision is to build understanding between cultures and a sustainable world. Every year over half a million people visit. Manchester Museum is working towards an exciting new £13.5 million project *hello future*, to transform and develop the Museum becoming more inclusive, imaginative and relevant to the diverse communities it serves.

The Museum will remain partially open during this time and in 2022 will become a bigger, more inclusive and imaginative Manchester Museum.

The *hello future* transformation includes:

- A beautiful two-storey extension
- A new Exhibition Hall
- South Asia Gallery
- Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery
- Belonging Gallery
- A new space for learning and environmental action
- New entrance and visitor facilities with focus on inclusive and accessible design

[@mcrmuseum](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/museum)

About Imagemakers

Founded in 1989, Imagemakers is an award-winning design agency specialising in museums and heritage. We are also the UK's leading museum exhibition designer in China, flying the flag for the UK's creative sector and promoting cultural exchange and understanding between Britain and China.

Further information:

For further information, please contact georgina.young@manchester.ac.uk

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