**Press release 31 August**

***We will be back.* Manchester Museum’s big send off!**

Manchester Museum, part of the University of Manchester, hosted a number of celebratory events this weekend that wowed audiences before temporarily closing its doors to the public so that redevelopment work can be completed.

Stars of Channel 4’s Drag SOS, Family Gorgeous, kicked off the celebrations in an evening of stunning performances. Cheddar Gorgeous, Liquorice Black and Lill turned the Living Worlds gallery into a catwalk, bringing queer culture and a joyful atmosphere into the museum.

The museum has hosted Family Gorgeous as part of its Manchester Pride celebrations every year since 2018 when the creative drag queens disrupted hundreds of years of tradition to reinterpret the museum’s collections through a queer eye.

Local dance collective I M PACT, led by Yandass Ndlovu, then impressed audiences with an emotive dance piece, Vuka. A performance journey around the museum at dusk, Vuka challenged audiences to wake up to how we tell our global story, and the lessons we need to learn.

Opening hours were also extended this weekend so that more people had chance to experience the collections before the temporary closure.

These events mark an important milestone for Manchester Museum as it reaches the final stage of its £13.5million transformation project, hello future. The museum is now closed to the public until late 2022, so that this phase of construction work can take place safely.

Once complete, hello future will include a beautiful two-storey extension and new galleries including a large Exhibition Hall, Belonging Gallery, the Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery, and the South Asia Gallery. The museum will also gain an impressive new entrance, shop, café, and inclusive visitor facilities that are fully accessible.

This project 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.

**Director of Manchester Museum, Esme Ward, said:**

“We are honoured to have marked our final weekend before closing with such amazing performances from the Family Gorgeous and I M Pact. It was also Manchester Pride this weekend so the celebrations were in full swing!

“Our doors are now closed to the public so that we can complete work on our ambitious transformation project, hello future. We will be back in late 2022 when we emerge as a new museum for the 21st century.

“During the closure, we will be holding pop-up events and outreach programmes and our collections are available to explore online.”

**Cheddar Gorgeous said:**

“We’re delighted to have been part of such a bold, inclusive celebration at the museum during Manchester Pride, and we look forward to returning in 2022.”

**Yandass Ndlovu said:**

“Our site specific piece was developed to provoke thought, and spark action. We hope to return to the museum in 2022 and bring works by emerging artists into the stunning new spaces that are being created.”

To keep up to date with the latest hello future project developments, visit https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/about/hellofuture/

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Notes to editors

For Manchester Museum media enquiries contact: Anna.Pickard@manchester.ac.uk

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. Over the next two years, 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 caring to the diverse communities it serves.

The hello future transformation, includes:

· A new Exhibition Hall

· South Asia Gallery

· Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery

· Redisplayed galleries

· New entrance and visitor facilities with focus on inclusive and accessible design

www.museum.manchester.ac.uk

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