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On creativity

“Regardless of your discipline, passion or industrial sector, our future relies on ingenuity, curiosity and a spirit of adventure. Creativity, and the cultural activity that can inspire it, is a precious and invaluable commodity.”

The University of Manchester is a place where creativity is fostered and recognised for its transformational value. We have what we believe is a unique set of cultural assets in Manchester Museum, The Whitworth, John Rylands Library and Jodrell Bank Visitor Centre and so many other activities across the University. We have a powerful academic track record in creativity centred around, but not limited, to our School of Arts, Languages and Cultures. We are also a major source of talent for Britain’s £87 billion creative industries sector. We now need to ensure that creativity is embedded in all of our activities.

Creative Manchester is our strategic response to what is both a challenge and an opportunity. How can the UK continue to make creativity a crucial part of its international pitch? And what part can a University like ours play? Addressing this question is something we take seriously. Our investment in new research, new posts and new courses will, take our work across the creative and cultural sectors to a new level of significance and impact.

Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell
President and Vice-Chancellor
Ageing, Home and Wellbeing

Researchers from the University’s History Department explored the concept of what home means to the older generation. This was part of an ongoing research project into age and care, working in partnership with Oldham Coliseum and two local housing organisations. Members from two Oldham-based community groups came together with researchers to look at treasured objects and what the stories were behind them. The project culminated in a celebration day hosted at Oldham Coliseum, which brought everyone together for a special event, exhibition and theatre performance, all developed in collaboration with the groups.
Manchester Together Archive

Manchester Together aims to develop a digital archiving platform to support the interpretation of more than 10,000 items that were left in St Ann’s Square in Manchester following the Arena attack on 22nd May 2017. The items, which include letters, drawings, poems, soft toys and balloons, have been kept by Manchester Art Gallery and will form the Manchester Together archive. The University’s Institute for Cultural Practices, in collaboration with Manchester Art Gallery Archives and Belle Vue Productions, is leading a programme of research related to the spontaneous memorials of the Manchester Arena attack. Postgraduate students from the Art Galleries and Museums Studies MA programme have been integral to this project.

“I am glad that those expressions of solidarity will be preserved and kept – they are now part of Manchester’s rich history and we should remember and reflect upon them.”

Sir Richard Leese
Leader of Manchester City Council
Creative power

We are at our most creatively powerful when we work together. The University of Manchester is your partner of choice. Our doors are open and we want to hear your ideas about the ways we can work together. We already collaborate with partners across the world to deliver events that are internationally significant, such as Manchester International Festival.

We have a strong history of investment in the cultural sector and we know from recent successes what we can achieve when we collaborate. The University led on the successful bid for Manchester to become a UNESCO City of Literature. The Blue Dot festival at Jodrell Bank Observatory is a dynamic meeting of arts and science and we are carrying out research projects and placements with The National Trust.

We want to enhance our contribution to the cultural and creative growth of the region through more collaborations. We can develop placement opportunities, employability initiatives and we have access to some of the best collections and cultural minds in the world. We are continuing to push the boundaries of creativity. Together we can build a future with creativity at its core, which will bring social and economic benefits to the city and beyond.
Listen to our Voices!

Listen to our Voices is a collaborative project between the Centre for Translation and Intercultural Studies at The University of Manchester and Women Asylum Seekers Together (WAST). The project offered support with the creative writing, design, publication and launch of a booklet of poems and stories by members of the group. One of the key objectives, through the stories told by the women, was to increase public awareness of the lives of women asylum seekers and of the difficulties for people in the asylum system. All proceeds from the publication will go to the WAST organisation in order to support their work in helping female asylum seekers and campaigning for human rights for asylum seekers.
Schools Poetry Competition

This year, on World Poetry Day, an annual school’s poetry competition was launched by Jeanette Winterson, author and Professor of New Writing at The University of Manchester. The theme for this year’s competition was home and PhD students from the Centre for New Writing delivered poetry clinics within the participating schools, offering feedback, advice and guidance for pupils from years seven to 11. Winners selected in each age group were invited to read their poem at a special celebration event, hosted at the University’s Martin Harris Centre.
Manchester has always had vision, and running through that vision is creativity. The University can lay claim to 25 Nobel prize winners amongst its current and former staff and students. The latest in 2010 to Konstantin Novoselov and Andre Geim in Physics for demonstrating how to extract graphene from graphite using Sellotape. That is a perfect example of our vision and creativity. It is embedded in all we do. The University continues to conduct ground breaking research in the field of science, but it has a long-standing relationship with the arts too. With nearly 1,000 academics and research staff we are the largest and most diverse department of humanities researchers and teachers within one faculty in Europe.

Creative Manchester is about ensuring that we continue to offer the most exemplary teaching and leadership. We will be increasing our cultural and academic staff. We will continue to create opportunities for students to gain real world experience with some of the best creative organisations. Employers look to Manchester when seeking the best talent. We’re one of the most targeted universities in the UK by the nation’s top graduate employers.

We know that creativity in industry is integral to its success and that the economy is supported and enhanced by these creative minds.

Jeanette Winterson, CBE, Professor of New Writing, The University of Manchester
Creative communities

“We are investing in the community because we are part of the community.”

Creativity isn’t fixed in one place. It isn’t the domain of one social group, one geographical area, or even one creative ‘hub’. It is made, shaped and owned by all. That’s why our doors are open to all. Whether it’s our museums, galleries, libraries or festivals, we embrace everyone.

As The University of Manchester, we’re awash with incredible places for communities to connect with creativity. From our internationally significant collections at the multi-award winning The Whitworth, John Rylands Library, Manchester Museum and Tabley House, to Bluedot, the cutting-edge festival that unifies culture and science in one captivating festival at Jodrell Bank Observatory. And it’s not only about people popping in for a visit (although that’s incredibly rewarding), it’s about sharing, engaging with and growing our collections, our resources, our community.

Our communities don’t just come to us. We also go out to them. We take our creative ideas, skills and resources out to our communities. With them, we create new ideas, new innovations, new skills and ever more creative relationships. It’s what keeps us fresh, interesting and relevant.

Our programme of events, talks, workshops and festivals are open to all. Immerse yourself in a world of creativity and discovery, all with a uniquely Mancunian character.
Coffee, Cake and Culture

Coffee, Cake and Culture is a programme specifically designed for people living with dementia, their families and carers. Hosted by the Manchester Museum and The Whitworth it aims to provide a stimulating environment to experience life beyond a Dementia diagnosis and demonstrate how art, activities and cultural engagement can support positive health and wellbeing, resulting in benefits that range from the physiological to the emotional.
The future? Create it.

It is a brave soul that predicts the future. A decade or two from now, we can only guess at what books we’ll read (and how), what films we’ll watch, which areas of industry will flourish and grow. What work will even look like is a truly speculative exercise. We can be certain of one thing, and that is that creativity and innovation will be at the heart of it all, as they have been since our ancestors started shaping tools out of stone and painting on cave walls.

We have it within our grasp not just to be prepared for that future, but to shape it. Creative Manchester is a platform we have created to bring educators, civic leaders and employers together in a dynamic union to collaborate and importantly, help the next generation of innovators reach their true potential.

Our programme of investment will have three principal strands. There will be new and pioneering research that has a direct impact on the creative sector; we will make innovative changes to our curriculum, particularly where it can benefit employability; and we wish to become a much more active partner in the cultural sector, in Manchester and beyond.

Through partnerships and engagement, each of these strands will make a measurable difference to our graduates, to the creative economy and to Greater Manchester, one of the most innovative, creative and diverse cities in the world. Taken together, they will also prove once more than Arts and Humanities are as essential to foster economic growth as they are to promote a more inclusive, open and diverse society.

Professor Alessandro Schiesaro  
Head of the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures
Musica Festival: Celebrating International Women’s Day

To celebrate International Women’s Day students from the Manchester University Music Society organised Musica, a week-long festival celebrating all aspects of female music making, including composition, performance, conducting and academic and leadership roles. Venues across the city hosted events, which included a symposium, roundtable discussion and concerts performed by Manchester music students.
The Flamenco Project

Students from Spanish Studies and Music worked together to deliver an outreach programme of Flamenco in Manchester’s inner city schools. Led by Dr Samuel Llano, Lecturer in Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies at The University of Manchester, the project saw pupils engage in Spanish language and the art and heritage of Flamenco’s music and movement. Students worked together to lead workshops, gaining relevant experience of working in the community with schools and pupils, as well as collaborating with the Instituto de Cervantes.
“When I was younger, I was inspired by my teachers and by other students, and I wanted to do that, to inspire the next generation.”

Siobhan Shay, Music student, The University of Manchester
Join the conversation, get involved...

Creative Manchester
School of Arts, Languages and Cultures
The University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL

www.creative.manchester.ac.uk
creative@manchester.ac.uk