

News Release

Wednesday 24 November 2010

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE MUSEUM: GALLERY REVEALS SECRETS BEHIND EXHIBITIONS IN NEW TEACHING WEBSITE

- First online resource for students and teachers to show the 'backstage' life of museums**
- Unprecedented online interviews with Gallery staff**

The National Portrait Gallery has launched a ground-breaking new online resource www.npg.org.uk/creativeandmediadiploma which, for the first time, invites students and teachers behind the scenes at a national museum, revealing all the processes in staging an exhibition from start to finish, from concept and curating, to creating a marketing campaign, designing the 3D exhibition space and organising events.

The website, which has been developed with Atticmedia, has interviews with young people and industry professionals and provides careers advice as well as project resources and blogs. The site is a dynamic and sustainable national learning resource which enables young people to turn both the Gallery and its activity 'inside out'.

It is a creative resource for work-related learning which responds to the Creative & Media Diploma qualification for young people aged 14-19, but it has been designed to have a wider application to appeal to young people who wish to become participants within the museum and gallery sector.

The website explores two exhibitions developed by the Gallery and its Strategic Commissioning partners using the Gallery's Collections: *Writers of Influence: Shakespeare to JK Rowling* (currently at Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery before touring to Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens in January 2011), which was curated by young people from Sheffield, and *Comedians: From the 1940s to Now*.

The target audience for the website is young people aged 14-19 years studying the Creative & Media Diploma and their teachers, but also to have a profile amongst museum and gallery sector professionals. It has been developed by the National Portrait Gallery in partnership with Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens, Museums Sheffield, Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery, and Southampton City Art Gallery.

Laura Down, National Programmes Manager, National Portrait Gallery, London, says: 'Partnership working has been at the heart of creating this new web resource working with colleagues from partner galleries and young people in Sheffield, Southampton, Plymouth and Sunderland. We hope that this approach, in which young people have taken such a full and active part, will appeal to other young people wanting to engage in the creative and media elements of creating exhibitions.'

Anita Hamlin, Schools Learning Coordinator, Museums Sheffield, says: 'The website is a really useful tool for teaching and learning the ins and outs of how museums and galleries work, and it gives a great insight into the range of roles available. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with young people in Sheffield while developing content for the resource. The energy and fun they radiate is inspiring and hopefully this comes across in the website.'

Adam Milford, Education Assistant, Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery, says: 'This new website represents a wonderful opportunity for students on the Creative and Media Diploma to gather information for their studies. The interviews with industry professionals, downloadable resources, and constantly updating 'blog' will no doubt become an invaluable resource for students, and develop their knowledge base of the museum and gallery profession.'

Tanya Weall, Learning and Outreach Projects Officer, Liza Morgan, Lead Learning Officer, and Alice Workman, Lead Exhibitions Officer, Southampton City Art Gallery, say: 'Being involved with the National Portrait Gallery and partner galleries has made us re-evaluate the way that we engage with young people. We have witnessed these young people developing their skills in the context of real life gallery experiences.'

This Strategic Commissioning Project is a DCMS/Department of Education-funded initiative aimed at encouraging directly funded national museums and galleries to work more closely on educational and access projects with regional partners. In-depth consultation has also been undertaken with teachers, practitioners and industry experts through an advisory group and ongoing consultation with young people.

The Creative & Media Diploma is a qualification for young people aged 14–19 years which offers hands-on, practical experience of a range of creative methods and ideas. Students gain knowledge, experience and skills enabling them to master processes common to all creative industries. It is a vocational qualification and includes work-experience and industry engagement.

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To download press releases and images, please go to: www.npg.org.uk/press

National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, WC2H 0HE, opening hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday: 10am – 6pm (Gallery closure commences at 5.50pm) **Late Opening:** Thursday, Friday: 10am – 9pm (Gallery closure commences at 8.50pm) **Nearest Underground:** Leicester Square/Charing Cross
General information: 020 7306 0055 **Recorded information:** 020 7312 2463 **Website:** www.npg.org.uk