



StoryFutures /ACADEMY/

National Centre for Immersive Storytelling

NFTS

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FILM AND  
TELEVISION  
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Press release

23 June 2022

## Residents invited to see Dundee and Dumfries differently as free, ground-breaking UK-wide series of storytelling events launch in Scotland

This summer, [StoryTrails](#), the UK's largest immersive storytelling experience, invites residents of Dundee and Dumfries to explore untold and local stories about each town through ground-breaking multimedia technologies. Actress and Dumfries resident Joanna Lumley and Dundonian athlete Eilish McColgan are among the narrators of stories that range from Dundee's forgotten Olympians, to Dumfries' the annual crowning of the 'Queen of the South'.

StoryTrails, part of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, comes to Scotland with two, free live events taking place on 7 and 8 July in Dundee and 12 and 13 July in Dumfries, as part of a tour of 15 towns and cities across the UK this year. Centred around Dundee Central Library and Ewart Library in Dumfries, as well as on the streets of the towns themselves, the events feature digital experiences that allow people to experience their town in completely new ways through the magic of augmented (AR), virtual reality (VR) and immersive cinema. Both Scottish StoryTrails events are part of Scotland's Year of Stories 2022 partner programme.

In Dumfries, the AR trail has been developed by local Mobile AR TrailMaker DJ McDowell and is narrated by actress Joanna Lumley. The trail celebrates Dumfries' 90-year tradition of crowning a 'Queen of the South' at the annual Guid Nychburris or Good Neighbours Festival. The trail features queens throughout history, from crowd-pleasing carnival queens to rebel queens, and modern-day community queens, who defy stereotyping.

In Dundee, the trail has been developed by local Mobile AR TrailMaker Duncan Cowles and is narrated by Dundonian Olympian, runner Eilish McColgan. It follows the story of two of Dundee's sporting heroes, Dick McTaggart, who in 1956 won an Olympic gold medal in amateur boxing, and Sarah 'Cissie' Stewart, who won Dundee's first Olympic medal in 1921 for swimming. Both athletes achieved Olympic glory, yet it was only Dick that was recognised on his return from the Games.

Both AR trails use cine film and video home movie footage, and photography from the BBC and British Film Institute, as well as local and national archive materials to present a window into the past. Visitors can borrow devices from the library and follow a guided augmented reality trail which run on the hour throughout the live events. They can also download the StoryTrails app on their smart phone and follow the story trail route from outside the libraries. Both trails can also be experienced via the mobile app outside of the two live events, with the app available to download until the end of the year.

At each location there will also be a physical installation unique to the town and viewed on a cycloramic cinema screen set up inside the libraries. Immersive virtual maps of the towns have been created using 3D scans of the local buildings, people, objects and areas, telling stories of people and place. This 15-minute film will play on a loop throughout the day. An expanded version of the map can also be viewed

on iPads inside the library.

In Dundee, the map was developed by local spatial StoryMapper, Neil Cullen, and features iconic places from established landmarks like The Jute Mills to local favourites, such as Spex Pistols and Dudhope Skatepark.

Duncan, Neil and DJ were three of just 50 emerging creatives around the UK to be selected to take part in the development of StoryTrails and benefit from expert training and mentoring opportunities from StoryFutures Academy, the National Centre for Immersive Storytelling, the team behind StoryTrails. StoryFutures Academy is run by Royal Holloway, University of London and the National Film and Television School (NFTS).

DJ said: "It's taken months of work to get to this point and we can't believe we finally get to share it with everyone. We've unearthed incredible stories of powerful local characters that deserve to be told. We've worked closely with BFI and BBC archives to help tell those stories and we're using new technologies like AR to bring them to life in a way that makes them accessible to all. If you don't have a smartphone you can borrow one on the day – come along to the library in July and you'll be able to give it all a go, for free."

Time travel continues inside the libraries across the two live event days, when visitors enter digitally created worlds using a virtual reality (VR) headset. They can expect to find themselves in the shoes of a rebellious teenager as she discovers her mother's punk past; take part in one of the many South Asian daytime raves that took place across the UK in the 1980s and 1990s; and hear what earlier generations thought life would be like today. All the stories featured on the VR headsets are available at every stop on the StoryTrails UK tour.

Historian and television presenter David Olusoga, familiar to viewers of the BBC's *A House in Time*, narrates a further AR experience that invites visitors to turn a dial on a virtual giant radio and travel back in time. From Beatlemania and the flares and haircuts of the swinging sixties, to dancing to the end of the millennium in crop-tops and trainers, audiences will experience a potted history of the UK through the decades.

This innovative project is led by StoryFutures Academy, the National Centre for Immersive Storytelling. It was developed by teams of leading technologists and creatives, brought together for UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, a UK-wide celebration of creativity taking place in 2022, including immersive animation pioneers, ISO Design and Nexus Studios, and the company behind Pokémon GO, Niantic. It is brought to life in The Reading Agency's national network of libraries and by event-making specialists ProduceUK.

Professor James Bennett, Director of StoryFutures and StoryTrails, said: "This is about getting people excited about where they live – helping them connect with stories of their town from the past and present through a new lens. New technologies like AR and VR can help build these connections and reignite people's passion for the past. These technologies are for everyone – we want to find ways to engage people from all generations and spark a genuine celebration in each of our incredible locations."

Martin Green CBE, Chief Creative Officer UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, said: "StoryTrails is one of ten ground-breaking UNBOXED projects taking place in 2022 that demonstrate the power of creative

collaboration across science, technology and the arts to create extraordinary and never-seen-before public experiences. StoryTrails uses cutting edge technology to offer people the opportunity to hear about the places they live - the stories of individuals and communities - in a way that has not been done before.”

StoryTrails’ 15-stop UK tour runs from 1 July to 18 September 2022 and culminates in a new film presented by David Olusoga that will screen in UK cinemas and BBC iPlayer. The StoryTrails app, augmented reality story trails and immersive maps will be available throughout 2022. The Reading Agency’s annual Summer Reading Challenge, for children aged 4 to 11, takes a StoryTrails theme.

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is funded and supported by the four governments of the UK and is commissioned and delivered in partnership with Belfast City Council, Creative Wales and EventScotland.

StoryTrails takes place:

- Dundee 7-8 July
- Dumfries 12-13 July

Locations:

- Dundee Central Library, Wellgate, Dundee DD1 1DB
- Ewart Library, Catherine Street, Dumfries DG1 1JA

Library opening hours: 11 - 7pm

The StoryTrails app will launch on iTunes and Google Play stores to coincide with the event. The app and immersive trail will be available online throughout 2022.

StoryTrails forms part of VisitScotland’s Year of Stories 2022 partner programme.

[story-trails.com](http://story-trails.com)

Facebook and Instagram @StoryTrailsProject. Twitter @StoryFuturesA

-Ends-

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**The StoryTrails Live Tour**

StoryTrails takes place in 15 locations across the UK, with free two-day residencies in each town centred around libraries:

- Omagh, 1 – 2 July: Omagh Library, 1 Spillars Place, Irishtown Road, Omagh BT78 1HL.
- Dundee, 7 – 8 July: Dundee Central Library, Wellgate, Dundee DD1 1DB
- Dumfries, 12 – 13 July: Ewart Library, Catherine Street, Dumfries DG1 1JA
- Blackpool, 16 – 17 July: Blackpool Central Library, Queen Street, Blackpool FY1 1PX
- Bradford, 22 – 23 July: City Library Bradford, Centenary Square, 9 Aldermanbury, Bradford BD1 1SD
- Sheffield, 27 – 28 July: Sheffield Central Library, Surrey Street, Sheffield City Centre, Sheffield S1 1XZ
- Lincoln, 30 – 31 July: Lincoln Central Library, Free School Lane, Lincoln LN2 1EZ
- Wolverhampton, 6 – 7 August: Wolverhampton Central Library, Snow Hill, Wolverhampton WV1 3AX
- Swansea, 10 – 11 August: Swansea Central Library, Oystermouth Road, Maritime Quarter, Swansea SA1 3SN
- Newport, 13 – 14 August: Newport Central Library, John Frost Square, Kingsway Centre, Newport NP20 1PA
- Bristol, 20 – 21 August: Bristol Central Library, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TL
- Swindon, 27 – 28 August: Central Library Swindon, Regent Circus, Swindon SN1 1QG
- Slough, 3 – 4 September: Library @ The Curve, William Street, Slough SL1 1XY
- London Borough of Lambeth, 10 – 11 September: Brixton Library, Brixton Oval, London SW2 1JQ
- London Borough of Lewisham, 17 – 18 September: Catford Library, Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, London SE6 9SE

## **UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK**

UK-wide, 1 March – 2 October 2022

Unboxed2022.uk

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **About StoryTrails**

StoryTrails is a unique immersive storytelling experience, where untold stories from the past are brought to life through the magic of the 3D internet using augmented and virtual reality to reanimate public spaces in towns and cities across the UK. Audiences will time-travel via the wonder of new technologies to experience untold local histories where they happened. StoryTrails is led by StoryFutures Academy which is run by Royal Holloway, University of London and the National Film and Television School (NFTS).

StoryTrails is one of 10 projects commissioned for [UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK](#), a ground-breaking UK-wide celebration of creativity in 2022 that will bring people together and reach millions through free, large-scale immersive installations and globally accessible digital experiences in the UK's most ambitious showcase of creative collaboration.

StoryTrails will culminate with a specially commissioned film by David Olusoga which will screen in cinemas across the UK and be made available to audiences on BBC iPlayer.

StoryTrails is delivered in partnership with the British Film Institute (BFI), broadcaster and filmmaker, David Olusoga, the BBC, Uplands Television, and leading immersive specialists ISO Design and Nexus Studios. It will use cutting edge technology from Niantic, makers of Pokémon Go, and it will be brought to life in The Reading Agency's national network of libraries and by event-making specialists ProduceUK.

StoryTrails runs 1 July – 18 September 2022. For further details go to [story-trails.com](http://story-trails.com)

#### **About StoryFutures Academy - [storyfutures.com/academy](http://storyfutures.com/academy)**

StoryFutures Academy is the UK's National Centre for Immersive Storytelling, run by Royal Holloway, University of London and the National Film and Television School (NFTS). Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, part of UK Research and Innovation, the Academy develops cutting-edge creative training and research programmes, to ensure the UK creative workforce is the most skilled in the world in the use of virtual, augmented and real-time production technology for immersive storytelling.

Alumni of StoryFutures Academy labs have so far included Oscar and BAFTA winning Director Asif Kapadia, Oscar winning VFX Supervisor Paul Franklin and Turner Prize winning conceptual artist Gillian Wearing OBE.

With our partners, over £1m has been invested in UK immersive production, across co-productions with BBC3, and Production Booster and Kickstart development funding. The award-winning VR Documentary Common Ground was the first-ever funded co-production, premiering at the Tribeca Film Festival in early 2019. Violence, an artistic collaboration between film director Shola Amoo (The Last Tree) and producer Eleanor Whitley (Marshmallow Laser Feast), had its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival, as part of the Cannes XR Virtual at the Marché du film de Cannes, in June 2020. Laika, commissioned by

StoryFutures Academy and directed by BAFTA and Academy Award winning Asif Kapadia, made its world premiere in VR at BFI London Film Festival 2021 as part of their Expanded programme.

**About Royal Holloway, University of London – [royalholloway.ac.uk](http://royalholloway.ac.uk)**

Royal Holloway, University of London, is ranked in the top 25 universities in the UK. Through world class research that expands minds and changes lives, the dedication of our teachers and the feel of the Royal Holloway experience, ours is a community that inspires individuals to succeed academically, socially and personally.

The university was founded by two social reformers who pioneered the ideal of education and knowledge for all who could benefit. Their vision lives on today. As one of the UK’s leading research-intensive universities we are home to some of the world’s foremost authorities in the sciences, arts, business, economics and law. We are strengthened by diversity, and welcome students and academics who travel from all over the world to study and work here, ensuring an international and multi-cultural perspective within a close knit and historic campus.

**About UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK - [unboxed2022.uk](http://unboxed2022.uk)**

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is a celebration of creativity taking place across the UK in 2022, designed to reach millions and bring people together. It features free large-scale events, installations and globally accessible digital experiences in the UK’s most ambitious showcase of creative collaboration. Produced by some of the brightest minds in science, technology, engineering, arts and maths, UNBOXED features ten major multi-site and digital creative projects that share new ideas and possibilities for the future. Events and activities take place from 1 March to 2 October 2022 – from the Outer Hebrides to Luton and from Omagh to Swansea, and across traditional and online media. UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is funded and supported by the four governments of the UK and is commissioned and delivered in partnership with Belfast City Council, Creative Wales and EventScotland.



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