

Oxford
Road
Corridor

PROF. DUNCAN IVISON ASKS WHAT A GREAT
UNIVERSITY LOOKS LIKE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

OXFORD ROAD WELCOMES THE ADIDAS
MANCHESTER MARATHON

KEISHA THOMPSON ON THE SCOTT TRUST'S
LEGACIES OF ENSLAVEMENT PROGRAMME

Spring Edition



Arriving in England

This is how I arrive, without a wave, without a splash, without a ripple

This is英格蘭 England

Shoulders heavy with my father's debt, my sibling's education, and the name of my clan

I carry a light suitcase to make my way to曼策士特 Manchester

As I bid farewell to my fellow Chinese student who is off to威爾斯 Wales

And what of me now

I was born in 1888 in 天津 Tianjin. I had a father a mother

a sister a brother and 34 cows and 26 mou of land

all eaten up by foreign outside tribes

I moved to Soochow to sit for 科举 keju, the imperial examination

Stayed for its gardens and silk

And left to seek machines and chemicals

As the anchor drops down and the steamer makes its deep whistle

I feel my clothes hang loose on me after the 43-day journey

This marks the stone I place my first step with my canvas shoes

(and a small hole in the sole forces me to feel its unevenness)

Here, my future unravels itself one by one

Until it stands naked before the port, the rivers and the ocean

And all the rest reaches out its hand to me and follows

Anita Ngai

Arriving in England is part of a series of poems written by **Anita Ngai**. The full series of poems and associated soundscapes of The First Chinese Students at Manchester Metropolitan University can be found by scanning the QR code . The poems were first performed as part of the It Started with a Seed International Storytelling Festival 2024 as part of Manchester Histories Festival 2024.

Born in Hong Kong and raised in North America, Anita's writing her work has been longlisted for The National Poetry Competition, shortlisted for the Creative Future Writers' Award and commissioned for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.



Spring Edition

Welcome

We're thrilled to welcome two stand out features from our universities with The University of Manchester President and Vice-Chancellor Duncan Ivison setting out the university's 2035 vision, and Manchester Met's Professor Kirsty Fairclough welcomes us to the cutting-edge work of the School of Digital Arts. We get the inside track on the new Oxford Road finishing line for the Manchester Marathon, take a look at the re-imagined Renold Building at Sister, and The Guardian's Keisha Thompson introduces the Legacies of Enslavement Programme.

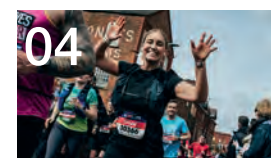
There's loads of culture to explore this Spring, check out our listings for inspiration, but special mention to the Whitworth who celebrate the 250th birthday of influential British artist JMW Turner alongside acclaimed exhibition *Women in Revolt!* This issue also takes us inside SEESAW, a community supporting the next generation of artists and home to a cafe with, arguably, the best view in the city.

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Cover image: Gina Birch 3 *Minute Scream*, 1977 ©Gina Birch part of *Women in Revolt!* at the Whitworth 7 March – 1 June 2025.

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An overnight success 117 years in the making

THE ADIDAS MANCHESTER MARATHON CEO ANDREW SMITH LOOKS AHEAD TO THE LATEST EDITION AND ITS SPECTACULAR NEW FINISH ON OXFORD ROAD.

Greater Manchester can now boast (easily) the UK's second largest marathon, and one of the most significant in Europe, with a sell-out 36,000 people taking part in 2025. Another 120,000+ will make their way around the course to cheer them on - that's treble what it was attracting under a decade ago! With a legacy which spans over a century, this event showcases the region's spirit, and just as importantly, its commitment to community and inclusivity.

Manchester has serious marathon pedigree, first holding a marathon all the way back in 1908, coinciding with the London Olympics that year. Whilst the original annual event was fiercely contested locally, making legends of individuals such as Ron Hill, it eventually took a hiatus until 2012 when a revitalised event was born. That event has transformed over the past decade, building on success and feedback every year, and is now known as the adidas Manchester Marathon. It returns for its largest ever edition on Sunday 27 April.

How did we get to this point? Well in true Mancunian style it's not by pretending to be anything we are

not, or imitating others. We are proud to do things our way. We've built a strong reputation amongst running communities for offering a great experience with a typical Mancunian friendly welcome, whether you're a first timer or a world-class elite. Via hard work, positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and crafting an attractive route through our welcoming local communities, we have built a reputation that it's worth visiting Manchester for the marathon. Over 75% of participants now come from outside the North-West, helping to boost the local economy by millions of pounds.

At its heart, the marathon reflects our community and shared beliefs. There's no qualification required; it's open to participants of all backgrounds and abilities. We go to great efforts to ensure those finishing after six hours get just as much acclaim as those who do it in a little over two. A huge chunk of participants choose to fundraise for charity as part of the challenge, with many millions raised for good causes. For example, local charity The Christie was boosted by over £300,000 from the 2024 marathon alone, and we want to make that

figure even higher this time. It's amazing how much good can be done from just one day of activity in the city.

2025 will see one of the most significant changes to the course in recent times, with the addition of the spectacular new finish line on Oxford Road, right outside The University of Manchester's Whitworth Hall. This change has been in the planning stages for over 2-years, as our team have been working with local stakeholders to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for everybody involved. Oxford Road has long been considered by our team as the ideal location for participants to finish their challenge. Logistically, it combines strong transport options, with the ability to explore local restaurants, bars, and recovery options post-run with friends and family. The finish line itself offers stunning architecture and is steeped in history, truly matching the prestige of other major marathons. The finish line of the marathon is always a feel-good celebration, fuelled by emotional reunions with loved ones; we can't wait for everyone around Oxford Road to experience it!

Of course, whilst the adidas Manchester Marathon takes place one Sunday every spring, its impact goes far beyond a single day. In this way, it is a catalyst for promoting health and wellbeing all year-round. Training for the marathon inspires thousands to adopt healthier lifestyles, fostering a

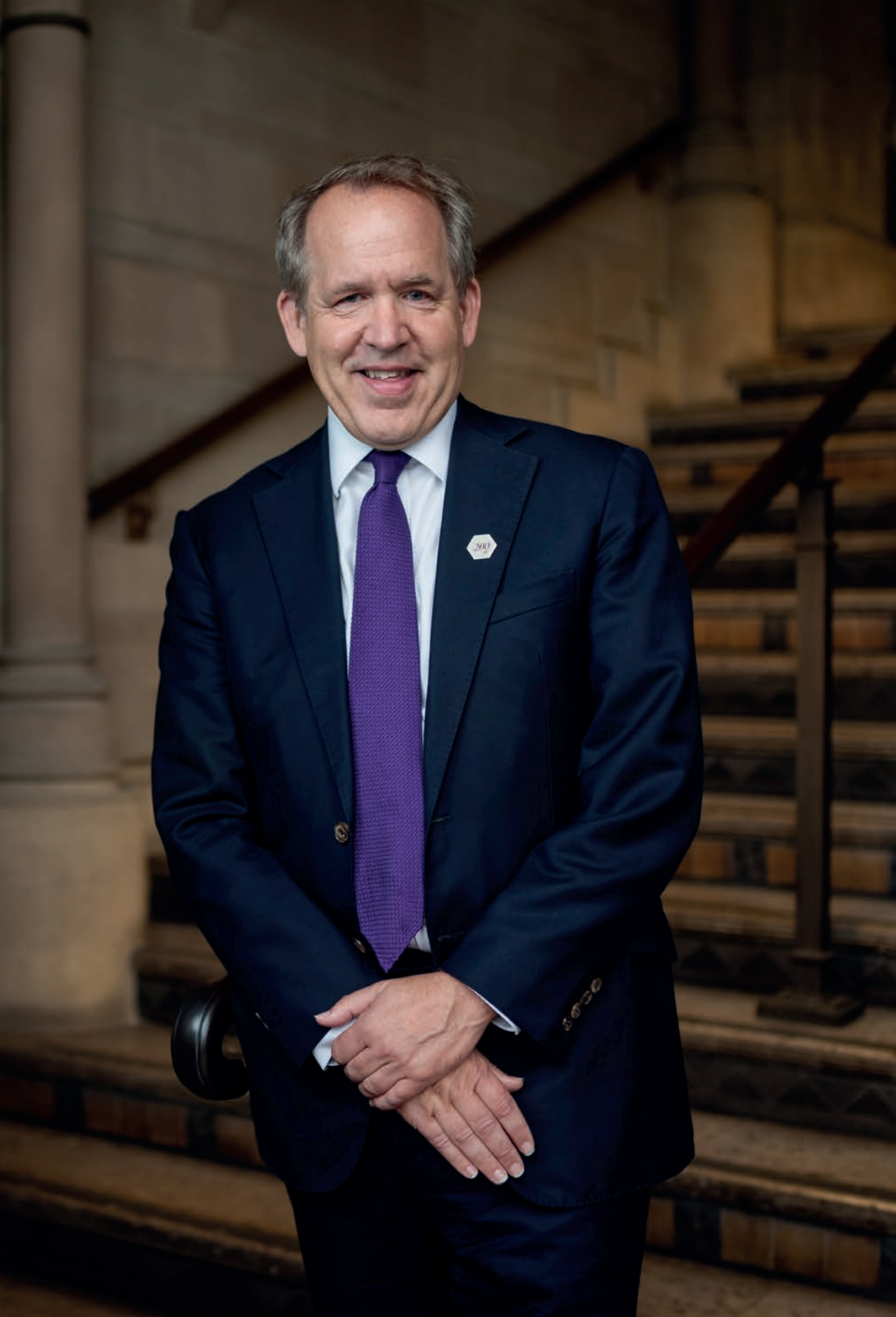
culture of fitness and resilience. Local running clubs and training groups see a surge in participation as the event approaches, strengthening the region's sense of community and encouraging residents to achieve their fitness goals together. We're regularly exploring how we can work closer with clubs and communities through every stage of the journey to help create the most positive impact possible.

As the adidas Manchester Marathon continues to grow, 2025 event promises to be a milestone in its history. The new Oxford Road finish is set to become an iconic feature of the route, joining popular sections such as Altrincham, Old Trafford, and Deansgate. Beyond the logistical enhancements, it's my job to ensure the marathon's commitment to inclusivity, sustainability, and community engagement helps secure its legacy as one of Greater Manchester's most cherished events.

The Marathon stands out as a beacon of what makes Manchester exceptional. It's not just a running event; it's a celebration of resilience, community, and the unwavering belief that sport can unite and inspire people from all walks of life.

The adidas Manchester Marathon takes place on Sunday 27 April. Find out more at: manchestermarathon.co.uk





What does a truly great university look like in the 21st century?

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER'S
PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR
PROFESSOR DUNCAN IVISON
EXAMINES THE QUESTION AT THE
HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY'S
2035 STRATEGY.

Last year, the University of Manchester celebrated its 200th anniversary. It is a remarkable milestone, and the history of the University tracks the extraordinary development of the city in striking ways. The scientific, social, economic, political and cultural discoveries and achievements of University and city are intertwined in so many instances.

Indeed, what makes the University distinctive, I believe, is the combination of the deeply place-based nature of its identity and ethos, alongside its global position and aspiration to be one of the great comprehensive universities in the world.

Along with making social responsibility one of its core goals, this ethos, and the connectivity among the major institutions in the city (including in the Oxford Road Corridor), is one of the main reasons I came to Manchester. There are few universities of this scale and quality in the world that are so embedded in the city that bears its name – and so committed to that civic ethos in everything it does. Moreover, like the great activists, artists, bands, and entrepreneurs it has produced, Manchester has a unique energy and identity.

But what will it require to be one of the great civic and global universities of the 21st Century? This is the question we're asking ourselves as we enter our third century. Not only what kind of university we want to be, but what kind of university we need to be, to succeed and flourish, by 2035? And it's generated a lively set of conversations on our campus about our future.

There are, of course, a whole series of external conditions shaping the higher education sector in the UK and globally at the moment: a very

“We need to organise ourselves around the problems faced by the communities we serve and the wider world, rather than expect them to organise themselves around our disciplines and departments”

challenging funding environment, with limited scope for greater public investment in higher education; a difficult geopolitical environment, in which domestic political concerns about immigration and global tensions are putting pressure on the international education market; and yet increasing expectations that universities must do more for to contribute to the social and economic well-being of the communities they serve.

On top of this, higher education is itself undergoing a series of transformations. We are seeing more university offerings becoming unbundled – more digital, stackable, and modular.

We are seeing higher education institutions become more distributed in nature, forming a greater array of research, innovation, and teaching partnerships locally, regionally, and globally. We are also seeing a greater focus on durable skills, as much as content; giving students the skills that will allow them to keep learning, as opposed to focusing mainly on content – so, a focus, for example, on critical thinking, communication, quantitative and qualitative skills, and social and cultural competence.

And universities are becoming more experiential in provision; giving students more chances to take what they are learning in the classroom and put it into practice in the community, or with a local business, or on exchange, or participate in a field school. And finally, universities need to become engines of social mobility, widening access to our programs for students who have yet to benefit from the growth in higher education – whether because of financial or cultural circumstances, or because they have never felt welcomed or encouraged to attend.

These are all good challenges to have. But it's important that we don't merely react to what is happening but define our future by our own lights.

What will the great 21st century universities look like? Fundamentally, we will need to harness our teaching and research – in new ways – to address the challenges faced by our city, our region and the world. We need to organise ourselves around

making a positive difference in our communities. To do this, we'll need to work more closely with our partners than ever before – other universities, industry, community associations, governments and global organisations. Great universities are great collaborators.

Third, we'll need to be multidisciplinary in everything we do. Solving some of our biggest



the problems faced by the communities we serve and the wider world, rather than expect them to organise themselves around our disciplines and departments.

I think the great universities of the future are going to have at least four characteristics.

First, they won't tolerate any trade-off between research and teaching excellence. To be a great research-intensive university means also being a place where students lives are transformed through the education they have not only in the classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and seminars they attend, but also the opportunities they have with our community, industry, and government partners.

Second, great universities will be engines of inclusive growth and innovation, finding ways to accelerate the point between discovery and impact in a myriad of ways. We need to find ways to get our research and teaching out into the world, faster,

challenges will require bringing our disciplines together in creative ways, and especially the humanities and social sciences alongside the physical and natural sciences. Think about AI, for example: there are exciting scientific questions to explore about the potential for AI to enhance so many aspects of our society, but also great dangers too – and so there are profound moral, political, economic, and social questions that are just as complex and urgent to tackle.

Finally, to return to where we began, great twenty-first century universities will be both deeply place-based and global in aspiration at the same time. In many ways, our credibility as an institution of higher learning and research will depend, in part, on our ability to continue to contribute to and serve Manchester. We are inspired by the city in which our students and staff work and learn. And we hope to inspire the city in turn as we set our course for 2035.



SEESAW

An arts venue and workspace for creatives, for artists, and, for people who like to think more curiously.



SEESAW Cafe & Bar



View from the rooftop terrace

Based in an old textile warehouse formerly known as Manchester House, SEESAW is an arts and workspace venue in 86 Princess Street. It's a space for creatives, for artists, for people who like to think more curiously. The space sells itself, restored respectfully with provoking original features that capture your eye.

The views accentuate the historic skyline and railway line across Oxford Road, which features the Kimpton Clocktower and other architectural gems and stretch toward the Peak District, visible from their rooftop and cafe space. SEESAW is turning its head towards sustainability through its rooftop gardening clubs and beehives.

Serving super tasty specialty coffee, SEESAW's cafe sits in the heart of the building offering a comfy communal space for some R&R. House roaster Red Bank Coffee, based in the Lake District, provides stellar espresso and filter options which are changed up monthly to keep things fresh, with more local roasters on the guest coffee suppliers list. To accompany your beverage, they also sell a range of snacks, pastries and seasonal bakes on the counter; all baked locally by Pomelo Bakes.

The café's partnership with craft beer brewery DEYA, who also work in their co-working space, ensures the freshest brews are on tap or in the fridge to serve with their events offering. Beer not your thing? A selection of natural wines (expertly sourced by Modal Wines), top tier spirits and plenty of alcohol-free options are on offer too.

The workspace houses an array of small businesses, arts organisations and freelancers, providing a better alternative to your spare-room-office space with a creative community to pair. A real sense of belonging is apparent within the people who make up SEESAW, and we're not just talking about the team that makes it what it is. The people in the workspace and studios are collaborative in their fostering of its cultivated community. Want a re-brand? You're sitting next to a graphic designer. Looking for a haircut? Shade hair salon is on-site. Need some advice on a project? Have a chat with someone who's done it before. Need a dose of wellbeing? Try out the Yoga Club. Don't do it by yourself, do it with others.

SEESAW plays host to many arts-adjacent small businesses and concepts. One of them being Catalog - an independent bookshop on a transformed cargo bike. The idea was born through their love for the printed world in 2020. Pete Tzouanos, founder of Catalog, explains: "Having been a bookworm since childhood, I've always had

the desire to create a space where people from all walks of life come together, communicating their ideas, needs, interests, and their quirks. In a world where we're constantly stuck to screens, it's refreshing and comforting to step into a quirky bookshop, to browse through its titles, pick up a piece, sample it and head home with a new discovery in hand." Catalog thrives on the concept of being an Aladdin's Cave of independent magazines and journals; an oasis for lovers of the printed page.

SEESAW's event programme is deliberately curated to showcase what the Manchester art and creative scene is all about; taking form through exhibitions, poetry nights, zine launches, artist socials and talks, and workshops. They have a space to suit every kind of event, all disciplines are accentuated and appreciated here.

They host Other People's Poetry, a spoken word night built on an appreciation for poetry that inspires poets. Hosted by Joseph Conway of The Lemming in collaboration with SEESAW, the main focus of this night is to make literature accessible to all through people who know what they're talking about. "Other People's Poetry tells us that everything is other people's, that poetry is not just written by other people, but in fact belongs to other people. That poetry is not yours but someone else's. We always see great spoken word around the city, but what works actually inspire these artists to write their own?" This is a pay as you feel event, with all the money being distributed between the performers, in support of making the price accessible too. If you want to get into poetry, but don't know where to start, this is a good place to.

SEESAW proudly offers a rotating schedule of exhibitions, all organised by their own team of curators. Displays are refreshed monthly, making sure no two visits are ever the same. They have showcased art across all mediums, whether it be painting, photography, animation or sculpture. Between the beautiful architecture of the building and the abundance of natural light, the venue's gallery space is unconventional and creates a visually stunning backdrop that elevates any piece of work within it.

Firmly believing in the importance of supporting both emerging and established artists, SEESAW aims to provide an affordable space to foster valuable relationships between the people that make up the North West's creative sector.

Follow SEESAW on Instagram @seesawspace.
Contribution from Pete Tzouanos (Catalog) and Joseph Conway (Other People's Poetry).



The School of Digital Arts

Innovation at the Intersection of
Art, Technology, and Industry

By Professor
Kirsty Fairclough

As someone whose career has been dedicated to exploring the intersections of culture, creativity, and education, I am proud to contribute to the growth of the School of Digital Arts (SODA) at Manchester Metropolitan University. SODA represents a unique and forward-thinking approach to digital arts education, combining leading-edge technology with the richness of cultural engagement to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of an ever-evolving creative landscape.

Since its establishment in 2021, SODA has stood as a testament to Manchester Met's commitment to the creative industries. Investing £35 million into a state-of-the-art environment that prepares students for the evolving demands of the digital age, it sits alongside a highly regarded portfolio of art, design, fashion and architecture courses at the university. For me, SODA represents a unique opportunity to integrate my work with Manchester's cultural landscape into a space dedicated to innovation, experimentation, and storytelling.

Throughout my career, my research has focused on popular culture's role as a lens for understanding society, technology, and identity. This perspective has been pivotal in shaping SODA's approach to education, where students are encouraged not only to develop technical skills but also to critically engage with the cultural and societal implications of their work. At SODA, we aim to prepare students who are not only industry-ready but also culturally aware—individuals who can use digital arts to reflect, challenge, and shape the world around them.

For me, popular culture serves as an essential bridge between the arts and the wider public. Whether examining the narratives of music, film, or digital media, I see it as a tool for connection and communication. At SODA, this ethos is embedded into our curriculum, where students explore how digital storytelling, animation, and immersive



experiences can resonate with audiences across diverse platforms.

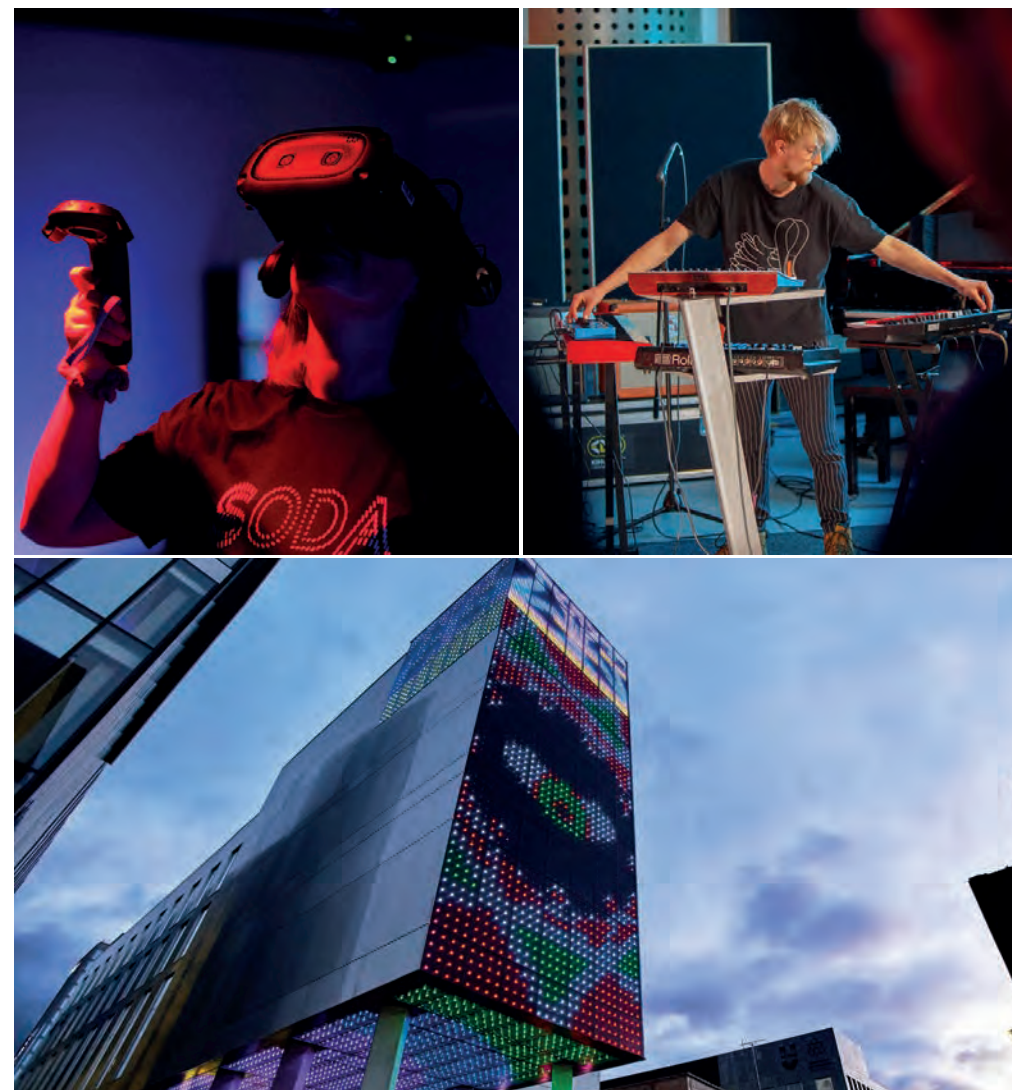
One of the most rewarding aspects of my work at SODA is the opportunity to connect our students with Manchester's thriving cultural sector. Over the years, I have been fortunate to work with some of the city's most innovative organisations, including HOME, Factory International, and the Manchester Jazz Festival. These partnerships have not only informed my own academic practice but also allowed me to create pathways for our students to engage directly with the cultural life of the city.

A key example of this is our collaboration with Abandon Normal Devices (AND) through SODA's digital gallery, Modal. Together, we've launched *Critical Acts: Performance Lectures*, a series that examines how power operates in the digital age. This programme is a perfect reflection of what SODA stands for: challenging conventions, exploring new models of digital engagement, and fostering dialogue between technology, art, and society. It is deeply rewarding to see students, researchers, and the public engage with this work, blurring the lines between learning and

cultural production.

Our work at SODA has also been about ensuring that students are embedded in Manchester's cultural ecosystem. Through partnerships with organisations like Factory International, we've enabled students to contribute to high-profile cultural projects, giving them practical experience that complements their studies. Whether it's participating in immersive installations, supporting live performances, or contributing to digital storytelling projects, these opportunities prepare students for creative careers that are both impactful and socially engaged.

At the heart of SODA's work is a commitment to empowering students. I believe that the most impactful education equips students with both



the technical skills and the cultural knowledge they need to thrive in the creative industries. Through our partnerships with organisations like Factory International, SODA students have had opportunities to contribute to major cultural projects—gaining practical experience, building networks, and learning how to navigate the complex relationships between art, technology, and audiences.

These experiences are invaluable, not only for professional development but also for fostering a deeper understanding of how their work fits into a broader cultural context. Whether it's exploring the ethics of AI, creating immersive VR experiences, or producing interactive digital narratives, our students are encouraged to push boundaries and embrace the possibilities of digital arts as a medium for cultural expression.

For me, SODA is a living laboratory where education, culture, and technology intersect. My goal has always been to amplify the voices of our students and connect them to the wider world through meaningful collaborations. By weaving SODA into Manchester's cultural fabric, we are not only equipping the next generation of creative professionals but also enriching the city's cultural vibrancy.

It is a privilege to work alongside such talented colleagues, students, and cultural partners to shape SODA into a hub of creativity and innovation. Together, we are redefining what it means to create and engage in the digital arts, ensuring that SODA remains a vital part of Manchester's creative future.

Find out more at schoolofdigitalarts.mmu.ac.uk

Sister

IN THE FIRST STEPS OF A MASSIVE DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL TRANSFORM THE FORMER UMIST CAMPUS, THE ICONIC **RENOLD BUILDING** HAS BEEN RE-IMAGINED AS A NEW HUB FOR COMMUNITY, BUSINESS AND INNOVATION.

Manchester is a place where world-changing ideas are born. From the beginning of the First Industrial Revolution to the discovery of one of the 21st century's most valuable materials, Graphene, the city holds a historic legacy of innovation.

Today, as a leader in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Manchester is growing as a hub of innovation. With an economic output rate set to outpace growth in London, the city is home to a vibrant start-up ecosystem, with more than 1,600 start-ups employing over 60,000 people, and has one of the highest graduate student retention rates of all UK cities, providing a vast pool of talent to draw upon.

As the city continues to transform itself into a destination for leading science and technology businesses, a new city centre district is emerging that will play a key role in Manchester's ongoing evolution:

Sister. A joint venture between The University of Manchester and Bruntwood SciTech, Sister will see the University's former North Campus transformed into a world-leading innovation district over the next 15 years, with new workspaces, homes and public amenities delivered. Building on the city's heritage of science and technology innovation, Sister aims to bring together industry, academia and local communities, to drive collaboration, spark new ideas and develop disruptive technologies that will help tackle some of the world's greatest challenges.

While Sister's ambitious vision will bring long-term impact to the city over the coming decades – including over 10,000 new jobs, over 2 million sq feet of commercial, retail and leisure space, 1,500 new homes and a new civic square – the foundations of the innovation district are being built now.

Autumn 2024 saw the opening of Sister's first building, the Renold Innovation Hub. Designed by architect W.A.Gibbon, The Renold Building first opened on 23 November 1962 for the then Manchester College of Science and Technology (which later became UMIST) and took its name from the college's Vice President, Sir Charles Renold. The building hosted a concentration of lecture theatres, and its unique folded exterior was designed to generate light and acoustics. Renold was used by The University of Manchester until 2021 and will be remembered fondly by former students and staff as a bustling teaching facility. The building's striking architecture has attracted many fans, and its new lease of life will be welcomed, only a few years ago, The Guardian listed the Renold Building as one of Britain's Brutalist buildings most at risk of demolition.

Today, it's been reopened following a light-touch refurbishment and will act as a new home for visionary entrepreneurs, start-ups, and spin-



outs. Renold offers no and low-cost workspaces and access to business support to a variety of early-stage science and tech businesses, with a particular focus on those within digital tech, health innovation, biotechnology and advanced materials and manufacturing.

Aiming to create an inclusive, purpose-driven community of innovators, Renold is already home to several organisations playing a key role in progressing the North West's innovation economy, including Sustainable Ventures (specialising in climate tech), the Turing Innovation Catalyst Manchester (AI and deep tech), the Christabel Pankhurst Institute (health tech), and the Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Catalyst. It also neighbours the Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre (advanced materials) and other innovation assets throughout the Oxford Road Corridor.

Early stage businesses joining the Renold Innovation Hub will benefit from streamlined access to these key innovation initiatives, a network of ecosystem partners and a tailored programme of events and activities.

But beyond being a place for innovation to thrive and businesses to grow, Renold is also a community space. Since opening, Renold has already been host to a number of community

events and provides free access to a community cafe space for anyone to drop in and work from. In the coming year, Sister will introduce various community initiatives that offer free and discounted access to event space bookings for local groups and organisations, along with a series of free events aimed at promoting wellbeing, fostering connections, and enhancing skills development.

Sister aims to be a driver of positive social change for local communities in Greater Manchester and beyond. Its long-term plans to deliver social value will focus on establishing connections with local schools, opening funding for local community groups and third-sector organisations and creating new partnerships to support Greater Manchester residents.

Through building relationships, creating new partnerships and collaborating with a wide network of science and technology businesses and industry partners, Sister will be an inclusive, purpose-driven community, hosting the UK's next wave of innovators right here within the heart of Manchester.

To find out more about the spaces available for early-stage businesses and events, potential partnerships, and support for community and social organisations, visit sistermanchester.com.

ATONING IN THE PRESENT FOR THE INJUSTICES OF THE PAST

The Scott Trust Legacies of Enslavement programme is a 10-year restorative justice initiative launched in response to the Guardian founders' links to transatlantic slavery.

KEISHA THOMPSON
PROGRAMME MANAGER
INTRODUCES US
TO THE PROJECT

context then? Where were the pivot points? How did this word get to its current meaning? This process feels similar to what the researchers at the University of Nottingham and the University of Hull would have done four years ago as they looked into the history of the Guardian newspaper for The Scott Trust. That research led to the creation of my role as the Programme Manager for the Legacies of Enslavement project.

In 2021, it was revealed that nine of the eleven financial backers for The Guardian paper were cotton merchants. The paper was founded in Manchester and was originally called The Manchester Guardian. In response to this, the Scott Trust set up the Legacies of Enslavement project which seeks to enact restorative justice over a 10-year period.

My role was created to figure out what restorative justice means in the Greater Manchester context. I knew that one of my first actions would be to reach out to the Oxford Road Corridor's institutions. Why? Well let's go back to my research. The word "corridor" derives from corridoio, Italian for 'running place', which came from correre, Latin for 'to run'. The distinction between a corridor and hallway is that it is connecting public spaces.

A major part of my work is about raising consciousness. We often refer to Manchester as Cottonopolis. We roam up and down Oxford Road without really understanding the history of the buildings towering over us. There is no better place for me to pick to start telling the full story of Manchester. The place where money, business, knowledge, culture, people, heritage, power run through this city.

Countless historical moments have happened on this glorious corridor. This year it will be the 80th anniversary of the 5th Pan African Congress



Held in Manchester in 1945, the 5th Pan-African Congress was part of a series of seven meetings, intended to address the decolonisation of Africa from Western imperial powers. Image provided by Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE Centre and Education Trust.

being held in Manchester. This was a seminal event that attracted pioneering Black leaders from across the world as well as locally such as W.E.B Dubois, Kwame Nkrumah, Kath Locke and Len Johnson. For one of the key hosts, Ras T Makkonen, Oxford Road was a vital resource. He owned restaurants on this road and had links to shops and accommodation on the road and nearby which allowed him to host many of the delegates. The main events for the conference were held in Chorlton Medlock Town Hall now replaced by the Manchester Metropolitan University's School of Art.

There is a plaque to mark this but I reckon we should do more. A major part of my role this year will be acknowledging this seminal history in association with Oxford Road Corridor and its partners.

Now my research into corridors was not solely restricted to language. It has been interesting to look at other corridor models - from the Gullah Geechee Cultural Corridor to the Royal Society of the Arts' Northern Creative Corridor.

The Guardian is explicitly linked to the Gullah Geechee community as the research has shown that our founders traded with cotton from the Sea Islands in the US. So building partnerships in that region, to atone for the newspaper's history, is another key element of the programme. The context of the cultural corridor here is extremely

different to what Oxford Road Corridor represents but nonetheless relevant. It is still useful to see how the word is being used and what orchestrated action means universally.

Slightly closer to home, the Northern Creative Corridor is an attempt to link creative industries across the north of the country. One of the more unique and exciting things about the Oxford Road Corridor is the cross-sector representation: academia, business, health, tech, culture.

Manchester has made a name for itself as one of the first industrial cities in the world. And we have continued to build on that legacy across various sectors.

I know that in 80 years' time, people will be putting us in a search engine (or some futuristic equivalent). I hope that the way we act now means they will not feel uncomfortable with what they find. But in order for us to do that, we must confront and learn from what has happened in the past.

Another word for corridor is passageway. Now is the perfect time to let this unique corridor be a passageway for dialogue. We could easily run away from this conversation or let it pass us by. But I am confident that we can come together and allow our joint efforts, knowledge and pride to create a new passage for Manchester.

Let me show you the way.

What is a "corridor"? Whenever I am working on a new project I like to investigate the history of the key words I will be using. When I thought about this article, I realised that I had never looked into the history of the word "corridor".

Etymology time!

As often happens when we do historical digging, we find information that feels uncomfortable. The first thing that came up in my search was a link to a French military term from the 16th century. It could have been worse but still I felt disappointed with this semantic link. I decided to keep searching.

It is always useful to see how a word has been stretched and folded over time. What was the

Spring 2025

We only have space to list just a handful of the best things to see and do this Spring. There are thousands of gigs and concerts across the Corridor each year, including free lunchtime performances at The Martin Harris Centre and RNCM, countless cinema screenings at HOME, and loads of literary happenings in this designated UNESCO City of Literature.

Follow us on socials and visit oxfordroadcorridor.com for more inspiration.

Please double-check listings before making a journey. All events are subject to change.

Exhibitions

JAKKAI SIRIBUTR: THERE'S NO PLACE

The Whitworth
Until 16 Mar
Acclaimed Thai artist Jakkai Siributr builds on the Whitworth's long history of radical global textile exhibitions.

40 YEARS OF THE FUTURE: DEGREES OF DUALITY

Castlefield Gallery
Until 13 Apr
Kay Shah's immersive installation transforms the gallery into a multifunctional, large-scale art experience.

40 YEARS OF THE FUTURE: WINDOWS

Castlefield Gallery
Until 13 Apr
Matthew Wood creates a series of large-scale monochrome drawings, realised in his bold, distinctive and fluid style.

SHIRLEY CRAVEN

The Whitworth
Until 11 May
An exhibition of vivid, colour-filled textiles by post-war designer Shirley Craven.

WILD

Manchester Museum
Until 1 Jun
Manchester Museum's bold exhibition looks at how we can go 'wild' to tackle the climate and biodiversity crisis.

FROM DERELICTION TO DELIGHT

Elizabeth Gaskell's House
Until 6 Jul
Marking its 10-year anniversary of being open to the public, this exhibition tells the story of the restoration of Elizabeth Gaskell's House.

TURNER: IN LIGHT AND SHADE

The Whitworth
Until 2 Nov
Celebrating the 250th anniversary of his birth, this exhibition explores the work of the legendary English landscape artist J.M.W. Turner.

IMRAN PERRETTA: A RIOT IN THREE ACTS

HOME
22 Feb–8 Jun
Imran Perretta combines sound, sculpture and performance to reflect on the narratives of our urban spaces and the social inequality and racial violence that shape them.

WOMEN IN REVOLT!

The Whitworth
7 Mar–1 Jun
Landmark exhibition with over 100 women artists and collectives whose radical ideas and rebellious methods helped fuel the women's liberation.

MAŁGORZATA MIRGA-TAS

The Whitworth
11 Apr–7 Sep
Mirga-Tas creates narrative-rich works using textiles and fabric, producing vibrant large-scale panels that transform perceptions of Romany culture and history.

Stage

THIS KIND OF BLACK

HOME
18–22 Feb
It's about growing up in 1990s Moss Side, a stone's throw from conflict and violence. It celebrates a community held together by prayers, warmth and humour.

DEAR EVAN HANSEN

Palace Theatre
18–22 Feb
Tony Award-winning musical about a high schooler with social anxiety disorder.

SPOTLIGHT

Contact
20–21 Feb
Step into a world where ambition ignites, secrets simmer, and the pursuit of greatness pushes the limits of courage and self discovery.

BAT OUT OF HELL

Palace Theatre
24 Feb–8 Mar
Brace yourself for a legendary night of rock 'n' roll as *Bat Out of Hell: The Musical* explodes back onto the stage, promising a spectacle that will leave you breathless!

FAMEHUNGRY

HOME
27 Feb
Famehungry is a helter-skelter nose-dive into the TikTok universe and the attention economy, asking what it means to be an artist.

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG

Palace Theatre
11–16 Mar
A brand-new production of much-loved family favourite *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* rolls its way to The Palace in March.

KELLIE COLBERT: DEDICATED TO THE ONE I LOVE

Contact
13 Mar
A performance that aims to create a safe space as Kellie confronts the fears of being alone, and falls for an artificial connection.

CRUEL INTENTIONS

Palace Theatre
25–29 Mar
Following sell-out seasons in London and New York, the brand-new smash hit musical comes to Manchester.

THE HOUSE PARTY

HOME
25–29 Mar
Directed by Headlong's Artistic Director Holly Race Roughan with movement from the formidable Frantic Assembly, Laura Lomas' *The House Party* spins Strindberg's Miss Julie into intense, fizzing life for today's generation.

UNFORGETTABLE SONGS TO CELEBRATE THE NATURAL WORLD

Manchester Museum
26 Mar
Streetwise Opera draws inspiration from their music to create a powerful new piece that confronts the urgent need to fight for our planet.

IT'S THE ECONOMY, STUPID!

HOME
27–28 Mar
Based on a true story of a family caught up in the 90s recession, *It's the Economy, Stupid!* reveals the humanity behind economics.

TAMBO & BONES

HOME
1–5 Apr
Tambo & Bones laughs through our past, blows the roof off our present and imagines an explosive future for our world and for theatre

TURN 2025

Contact
4 Apr
Fluidly lyrical, effervescently acrobatic, or eccentrically innovative, let Turn 2025 transport you into a frenzy of dance.

KIM'S CONVENIENCE

HOME
8–12 Apr
A hilarious and heart-warming drama about a family-run Korean store that inspired the Netflix phenomenon.

MARY POPPINS

Palace Theatre
9 Apr–17 May
Disney's spectacular production of the classic multi award-winning musical *Mary Poppins* is flying to Palace Theatre for 5 weeks only.

CORALINE

HOME
15 May–7 Jun
A new musical about acceptance and finding yourself, adapted by acclaimed writer Zinnie Harris (101 Dalmatians, Regent's Park).

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW

HOME
15 May–7 Jun
Jason Donovan returns to Manchester in Richard O'Brien's legendary rock 'n' roll musical, *The Rocky Horror Show*.

Classical

THE HALLÉ PRESENTS PHILIP GLASS: GLASSWORKS
RNCM 14 Feb
THE HALLÉ - A CELEBRATION OF VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
Bridgewater Hall 20–23 Feb
THE HALLÉ - PROKOFIEV'S TRIUMPHANT FIFTH
Bridgewater Hall 27 Feb
RNCM SESSION ORCHESTRA WITH TIM BURGESS & HELEN O'HARA
RNCM 28 Feb–1 Mar
HALLÉ RUSH HOUR - RACHMANINOV'S THIRD SYMPHONY
Bridgewater Hall 6 Mar
RNCM: PROKOFIEV'S ROMEO AND JULIET
RNCM 6 Mar
BBC PHILHARMONIC A CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
Bridgewater Hall 8 Mar
MANCHESTER COLLECTIVE: SERENITY 2.0
RNCM 14 Mar
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Bridgewater Hall 17 Mar

RNCM COMMUNITY CHORUS AND THE SUNDAY BOYS
RNCM 22 Mar
JONATHAN BISS
RNCM 25 Mar
RNCM STRING ORCHESTRA WITH HENNING KRAGGERUD
RNCM 28 Mar
BRITTEN: OWEN WINGRAVE
RNCM 30 Mar–5 Apr
THE HALLÉ - SHOSTAKOVICH'S SYMPHONY NO.5
Bridgewater Hall 10 Apr
BBC PHILHARMONIC - MAHLER SYMPHONY NO. 9
Bridgewater Hall 12–13 Apr
HALLÉ RUSH HOUR - BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH
Bridgewater Hall 17 Apr
MANCHESTER COLLECTIVE - REFRACTIONS
Bridgewater Hall 25 Apr
BBC PHILHARMONIC - LET ME TELL YOU
Bridgewater Hall 17 May
THE HALLÉ - HONEY DIJON
Bridgewater Hall 22 May
THE HALLÉ - ODE TO JOY
Bridgewater Hall 29 May

Gigs

CORY WONG
Manchester Academy 15 Feb
SQUID
O2 Ritz 18 Feb
MARY IN THE JUNKYARD
YES 18 Feb
MAN / WOMAN / CHAINSAW
YES 19 Feb
SHE DREW THE GUN
FAC251 20 Feb
ALISON MOYET
Bridgewater Hall 21 Feb
THE BUG CLUB
Gorilla 22 Feb
MOOD SWINGS
YES 22 Feb
JAKOB
YES 25 Feb
BEING DEAD
YES 26 Feb
FAT DOG
Manchester Academy 1 Mar
MIKE
Gorilla 3 Mar
WHITE DENIM
O2 Ritz 6 Mar

MACHINE GIRL
Gorilla 9 Mar
BDRMM
Gorilla 11 Mar
BEAR'S DEN
Bridgewater Hall 11 Mar
LUCIA & THE BEST BOYS
Gorilla 14 Mar
DERYA YILDRIM & GRUP ŞİMŞEK
Deaf Institute 18 Mar
RIZZLE KICKS
O2 Ritz 19 Mar
HOCKEY DAD
Manchester Academy 20 Mar
HOT 8 BRASS BAND
O2 Ritz 20 Mar
INIKO
Gorilla 20 Mar
FAUX REAL
YES 21 Mar
POPPY AJUDHA
YES 22 Mar
DAYGLOW
O2 Ritz 26 Mar

JAMES ZABIELA
Joshua Brooks 29 Mar
DEHD
YES 31 Mar
LYNDA DAWN
Deaf Institute 31 Mar
WHY?
YES 1 Apr
HOLLY MACVE
YES 2 Apr
DIVORCE
Gorilla 4 Mar
OKGIORGIO
YES 4 Apr
DAVID MORALES
Joshua Brooks 5 Apr
SOFY
YES 6 Apr
M HUNCHO
O2 Ritz 6 Mar
ROSIE LOWE
YES 8 Apr
PEACH PIT
Manchester Academy 10 Apr
LAMBRINI GIRLS
Gorilla 10 Apr

OCEAN WISDOM
Manchester Academy 11 Apr
BROOKE COMBE
O2 Ritz 12 Apr
ALT BLK ERA
Deaf Institute 15 Apr
MANCHESTER PUNK FESTIVAL
Various Venues 20 Apr
SWISS PORTAIT
Deaf Institute 28 Apr
FLOORPLAN
Joshua Brooks 2 May
LAWNS
Retro Bar 4 May
VUNDABAR
Deaf Institute 5 May
HAWKWIND
Bridgewater Hall 11 May
JESÚS AGUAJE RAMOS & THE BUENA VISTA ORCHESTRA
Bridgewater Hall 14 May
HOLY HOLY
O2 Ritz 18 May
FREAK SLUG
Deaf Institute 23 May

SAT 30TH AUG 2025 • VARIOUS VENUES

MANCHESTER
PSYCH **FEST**

GOAT
NADINE
SHAH

W. H. LUNG - GONG
DEADLETTER - GEORGE CLANTON
TROPICAL FUCK STORM
DU BLONDE - ANNA ERHARD
HONEYGLAZE - CHASTITY BELT
+ MORE

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