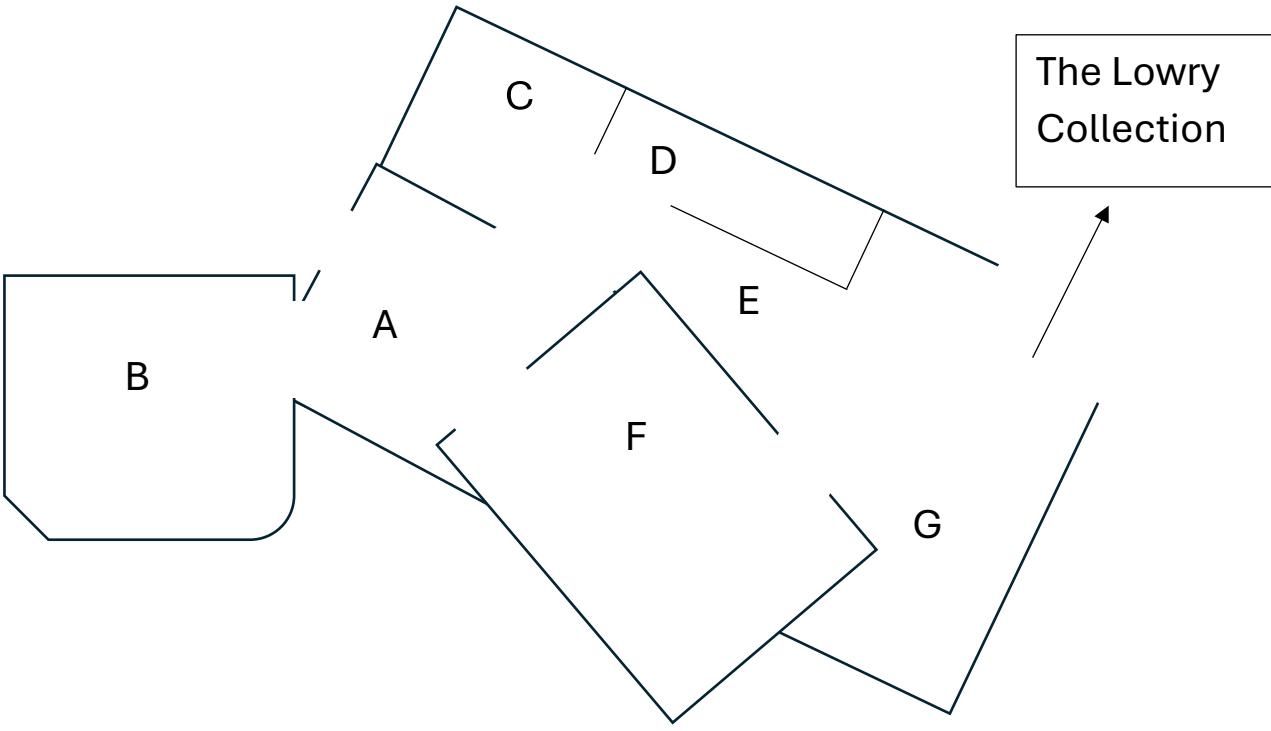




**Queens: The
Exhibition
Large Print Guide**

Exhibition Map



Welcome to Queens: The Exhibition

The first idea for Six The Musical was described by the writers Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss as: ‘The six wives of Henry VIII, but – like – a pop group’.

Often the stories of Henry VIII’s wives have been told by men. Toby and Lucy wanted the six queens to have their own voices and to tell their own stories.

Not long ago, the word ‘queen’ was often used to put someone down or insult them, but today it has become a positive term of self-reference.

Singers and musicians have led the way, assuming titles that emphasise their talent and influence. In the 1930s there was Count Basie, Duke Ellington and Lady Day; today we have Queen Latifah and Queen Bey herself, Beyoncé. They all wear their titles as a badge of honour.

When Lorde co-wrote ‘Royals’ aged 17, she made it clear that anyone can be royalty: “We’re bigger than we ever dreamed / I’m in love with being queen ... “. Now the word has become a way we can praise each other - and ourselves.

Marlow and Moss captured that attitude in Six the Musical, finding parallels between the six wives, and the experiences of young people today.

Queens the Exhibition celebrates Six, and it celebrates being a queen.

Gallery B

Disco Room

Attention all Queens

Have a good time but remember:

Children **must** be supervised at all times.

Be aware there are flashing and moving lights in this exhibition.

Speak to a member of staff if you have photosensitivity.

Please do not run inside this exhibition.

Please do not eat or drink in the Galleries.

Have Fun!

Gallery A

Six The Musical costumes

Designed by Gabriella Slade, the costumes for Six have won several awards including a Tony Award for Best Costume Design in a Musical in 2022. Gabriella studied Theatre Design at the Royal Welsh College of Music and her other work includes costume designs for Starlight Express, The Cher Show and the Spice Girls 2019 world tour.

The Six costumes combine Tudor influences with pop culture to tell a story for each Queen:

“We went with historic-based necklines, doublets, and sleeves, and then used contemporary fabric. I thought it was important that each queen had a defining, empowering silhouette. You can identify Catherine of Aragon, for example, even from the back. Having their own colours makes each queen an individual but using similar materials and studded trim across all the designs means they also read as a pop group.”

The details and trim hint at the intricate jewellery and embellished dresses that the historical queens wear in their portraits. Mixing black with colours and mesh fabrics suggests stained glass windows and Tudor architecture.

The costumes on display are for Catherine of Aragon (on the left) and Katherine Howard

About the Queens

Catherine of Aragon wears gold - a nod to her Spanish heritage and representing power and prestige. The higher neckline on her costume suggests her faith and modesty. She wears the only tiara-style headdress, giving her special status as Henry's only 'true' wife and his longest serving Queen.

Anne Boleyn wears green as Henry was said to have written the song 'Greensleeves' for her. She wears a choker to represent her beheading. Green is often the colour of ambition or greed but can also mean health or good luck. She has hoop earrings instead of a crown, hinting that she was only Queen for a short period.

Jane Seymour wears black and white and has the most modest costume with a longer skirt. White is often a symbol of purity and black may hint at her early death. Together they also reference Tudor half-timbered houses, perhaps because she persuaded Henry to treat her, and his children, as a family.

Anna of Cleves wears red, a colour which often means passion, strength and determination. Like Catherine Parr, she doesn't wear a skirt. Both women outlived Henry and had independent lives. Like Catherine of Aragon, she has spikes on her headpiece representing her uncomfortable divorce.

Katherine Howard wears bright pink, associated with young girls. Like Anne she wears a choker and hoop earrings, rather than a crown, representing her beheading and short reign. Her costume is the most

revealing but her sleeves are long as though she is trying to protect her modesty.

Catherine Parr wears royal blue, associated with wisdom, intelligence and calm. Catherine's level head and quiet personality, kept her alive. Like Anna of Cleves, who wears shorts, her jumpsuit reflects her independence and her unique position as survivor, peacemaker and a bold Queen.

Display Case 1

Set model for Six The Musical

Designed by Emma Bailey

Made by Fraser Lappin

The Lowry has specially commissioned this 1:25 model of the

Six stage set. This means that the actual set is 25 times bigger than this model.

Behind Display Case 1

Trailer of SIX the Musical

SIX the Musical Wall

“Listen up, let me tell you a story

A story that you think you’ve heard before”

Six The Musical is about the women who married Henry VIII - powerful individual Queens with their own stories to tell. It is written by Lucy Moss and Toby Marlow, who met at Cambridge University.

In their final year, they started working together on an idea for a show that could be taken to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The first version of Six was performed in Edinburgh in 2017. By 2019 it had transferred to London’s West End, been nominated for five Olivier awards and was playing in Chicago.

More like a concert than a musical, the Tudor Queens are reimagined as popstars. Lucy remembers thinking: “That sounds like it could be so bad!” They wanted to make it work, “as a feminist thing ... a different take on the wives, and a historical wrong to be redressed.” She and Toby also wanted to create something with a cast predominantly female or nonbinary.

When it came to a title, Lucy says “Six felt too easy and obvious ... but we knew that in the Fringe you get a very small slot in the brochure, and you want to tell people what it is.”

The soundtrack album has been streamed more than 100 million times, with fans discovering the songs online, adding to Six’s huge audience, or ‘Queendom’.

Today, you can see Six in the UK, the Far East, America and Australia. The Lowry was proud to be part of its first national tour in 2018 and it has been back many times since, including this August.

Notes on names!

Tudor spelling wasn't very consistent. Catherine could be spelt with a 'C', a 'K' or as 'Kateryn'. Even the same person could write their name differently at different times. We've followed the spellings used in Six for each of the Queens.

Aragon – divorced

Boleyn – beheaded

Seymour - died

Cleves - divorced

Howard - beheaded

Parr - died

Display Case 2

Lucy's annotated script from the Broadway production of Six in 2021

Cast and crew photograph from the opening night, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, 22 May 2019

Programmes from productions at the Arts Theatre, London 2018, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre 2019 and the Brooks Atkinson Theatre on Broadway 2021

Backstage passes, and tickets for Chicago Shakespeare Theatre 2019 and the Lyric Theatre, London 2020

Behind Display Case 2

Interview with Lucy Moss with subtitles.

Bimini Bon-Boulash as Anne Boleyn

by Ray Burmiston, 2021

Drag queen Bimini Bon-Boulash, or Bimini, found fame competing on the second series of RuPaul's Drag Race UK. They were heavily inspired by the spirit of their fashion heroes, such as Alexander McQueen and Queen of Punk, Vivienne Westwood. Their drag name derives from what they would be called if they were assigned female at birth, and the name of their first cat, Bonnie Boulash.

“We’re like square pegs in a circle ... and how we want to self-identify isn’t up to anyone else, it’s not up to anyone else to have a debate about it, but how we feel inside.”

Gallery C

Karaoke Booths

These karaoke booths are your chance to sing like a popstar!

When Toby and Lucy started writing *Six The Musical*, each queen had their own pop star 'queenspirations', sometimes more than one.

Catherine of Aragon, for instance, is modeled after Beyoncé, while Nicki Minaj and Rihanna inspired their thinking behind the fiery character of Anna of Cleves.

The stage queens themselves often make special playlists and channel artists they admire into their performances. Olivia Donalson, who played Anna of Cleves in *Chicago*, said: "I think it was written to be Nicki Minaj ... but I'm giving Lizzo vibes one hundred percent."

Have a go yourself in one of these booths. There are simple instructions inside, or feel free to ask one of our team to help.

Using the karaoke booths

If you are sensitive to noise, or have any auditory perception issues, please talk to a member of the Galleries team who will assist you.

Enter the booth and close the door behind you.

Place the headphones comfortably over your ears.

Use the iPad to select the track you want by swiping left or right. There are four tracks to choose from!

Position yourself in front of the microphone. It will automatically pick up your voice.

Follow the lyrics on the iPad to hear yourself sing like a star!

If anything isn't working or you need help let us know.

Queenspirations

Catherine of Aragon (1485-1536)

Queen 1509-33

My name's Catherine of Aragon

Was married 24 years, I'm a paragon

Of royalty, my loyalty is to the Vatican

So if you try to dump me ... you won't try that again

Catherine's parents were the Spanish King and Queen. She originally married Henry's older brother, Arthur, when she was 15 but after Arthur died and Henry became King, he and Catherine married. They were together for 24 years. Catherine was intelligent and well educated and Henry left her in charge of the country as Regent when he fought in France.

They had six children but only Mary (later Mary I) survived. Henry decided he wanted to marry Anne Boleyn but the Pope – head of the Catholic Church – refused to end his marriage. Henry broke all ties with the Catholic Church, declared himself the Supreme Head of the Church of England and gave himself the power to decide the rules about divorce.

Before his marriage to Catherine formally ended, Henry had already married the pregnant Anne Boleyn.

Beyoncé

As a child, Beyoncé won 35 talent shows in a row, before appearing, aged 12, on the American talent show, Star Search, as part of a singing group called

Girls Tyme. They lost out to another group, but Beyoncé called the experience a defining moment, and even included a soundbite from the show in her song 'Flawless.'

Her career has since been a series of firsts, records and achievements. Here are a few: she was the first Black woman to headline the Coachella Festival; she performed at both of President Barack Obama's inauguration events; she has posted some iconic social-media content - her 2017 pregnancy announcement broke an Instagram record, receiving over 6.3 million likes; she revolutionized the music industry by releasing her album, 'Beyoncé' on digital platforms without any prior warning; she has had 88 Grammy Award nominations, winning 32 awards, making her the most-awarded person in Grammy history; and 'Renaissance' became Spotify's most-streamed album in a day by a female artist in 2022.

Anne Boleyn (about 1500-1536)

Queen 1533-36

I'm that Boleyn girl and I'm up next

See, I broke England from the Church – yeah I'm that sexy

Why did I lose my head?

Well, my sleeves may be green, but my lipstick's red

Anne, and her sister Mary, were both ladies-in-waiting to Catherine of Aragon. After seven years in France, Anne stood out at the English court - she sang, played musical instruments, danced and wore new French fashions.

When Henry declared he loved her, she wanted to be his wife, not his mistress. Their wedding took place seven years later when Anne was six months pregnant. Her daughter became Elizabeth I, but no further children were born.

Henry still wanted a son and was already attracted to one of Anne's own ladies-in-waiting - Jane Seymour. He also knew Anne had enemies at court.

In 1536 she was arrested, accused of adultery and plotting against the King. Eleven days after her beheading, Henry married Jane Seymour.

Avril Lavigne

Avril Lavigne is a landmark musician in the development of pop-punk music, paving the way for female-driven, punk-influenced pop music. She released her first album when she was 17. Called 'Let's Go', it is still one of the

20 bestselling albums of the 21st century. Born in 1984, she grew up in a small town in Ontario, Canada, and at first made her name in country music - performing on stage with Shania Twain after winning a radio contest in her early teens.

“I remember being at home and being 14 and thinking like: ‘I need to hurry up and get this music thing going ... I want to be doing this while I’m YOUNG!’”

She moved to California and began a career that has seen her sell over 40 million albums worldwide. At the same time, the Avril Lavigne Foundation supports people with Lyme Disease, a bacterial infection spread to humans by infected ticks that Lavigne herself contracted in 2014.

Jane Seymour (1508/09-1537)

Queen 1536-7

Jane Seymour, 'the only one he truly loved'

When my son was newly born

I died, but I'm not what I seem,

Or am I? Stick around and you'll suddenly see more...

Henry's courtship of Jane may have begun two years before Anne Boleyn's death. Married in 1536, she never had a formal coronation.

Jane helped reunite Henry with his eldest daughter, Mary, who had been banished from court. Jane's own child was a boy, providing Henry with the son he wanted. Edward, born two weeks before his mother died, became Edward VI.

Perhaps the birth of a son made Jane Henry's 'favourite wife'. He was grief-stricken at her death, and was later buried alongside her at Windsor Castle. Despite his mourning, discussion about future marriage plans began less than a month after her funeral.

The Seymour family became more powerful after Jane's marriage but both of her brothers were later executed for treason. Perhaps she managed her courtship to increase her family's influence or perhaps she truly did love Henry.

Adele

One of the most popular singers of all time, Adele was first spotted when a friend shared her performing her

own songs online. Each of her albums is titled to reflect the age she was when she recorded them – 19, 21, 25 and 30.

Over the years, she has received numerous accolades – the more unusual including being the most-requested music in karaoke bars, the most played at funerals, and being voted “the best for nervous flyers” and “the most popular to fall asleep to.”

“It’s very easy to give in to being famous,” she has said, “because it’s charming. It’s powerful. Really, it’s harder work resisting it ... Like becoming OK with having things done for you. I’ve had a few moments like that. And it frightened me ... Something simple like running out of clean clothes. I was annoyed that my clothes weren’t clean so I told myself I’d better abseil down. And go and do my own ... laundry.”

Anna of Cleves (1515-1557)

Queen 1540 (for six months)

Ich bin Anna of Cleves

When he saw my portrait, he was like "Jal"

But I "didn't look as good as I did in my pic"

Born in Germany, Anna (often anglicised to Anne) spoke no English and became engaged to Henry before they even met.

When he heard that Anna had arrived in England, Henry decided to surprise her in disguise – a French romantic custom – but she didn't recognise him. This bad start was followed by Henry's complaint that Anna was not as attractive as she appeared in her portrait by Holbein.

Six months after their wedding, Anna and Henry's marriage was declared invalid. Anna was given the title 'the King's Sister', as well as numerous properties including Richmond Palace, an annual income and all her dresses and jewels. She was able to live independently.

She stayed on good terms with Henry and accepted Katherine Howard, her former lady-in-waiting, as Queen. Close to Henry's daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, she is the only one of Henry's wives buried in Westminster Abbey, at Mary's insistence when she became Mary I.

Rihanna

Robyn Rihanna Fenty, better known by her stage name Rihanna, is a Barbadian singer, actress and

businesswoman, the best-selling female recording artist of the 21st century and the highest-certified female digital single artist of all time. Her childhood was deeply affected by her parents' marital problems and her dad's battles with drug, alcohol addictions and violent behaviour.

As a teenager she would turn to music to escape her home troubles and formed a musical trio with two of her classmates. A record producer heard them while he was on holiday in Barbados, and helped Rihanna record a demo. Soon after, she auditioned for legendary rapper Jay-Z, who was so impressed he signed her almost immediately. Her first two albums were encouraging successes, but her third album, 'Good Girl Gone Bad' featured the hit single 'Umbrella', transforming her into a worldwide superstar.

"Women want freedom," she has said, "They want to be empowered. They want hope. They want love. I'm not afraid to say those things and act on them, and I think that's why they identify with me."

Katherine Howard (about 1523-1542)

Queen 1540-41

Prick up your ears, I'm the Katherine who lost her head

For my promiscuity outside of wed-

Lock up your husbands, lock up your sons

K-Howard is here and the fun's begun

Katherine Howard was a maid of honour to Anna of Cleves, Anne Boleyn's cousin and Jane Seymour's second cousin. She married Henry less than a month after his marriage to Anna ended.

The following year, Katherine was arrested, accused of failing to disclose relationships she had before marriage and for having an affair. A special act of Parliament was passed, making this treason, and allowing Henry to have her executed.

Although she admitted to other relationships, Katherine may have fallen prey to manipulative men - from her music teacher when she was around 12 to her lover, Thomas Culpeper, who had previously been accused of rape and murder.

Katherine was beheaded on 13 February 1542. She may have been as young as 18.

Britney Spears

When she was 11, Britney Spears joined Disney's 'All-New Mickey Mouse Club', alongside Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera, Ryan Gosling, and others. Later, after briefly joining a female pop group called Innosense,

she released her first album, ‘...Baby One More Time’ which became the biggest-selling album ever by a teenage artist.

Her subsequent career saw huge success, and profound personal struggles. In 2008, she was hospitalised and then committed to a psychiatric ward against her wishes. Although she returned to her home and career, the court placed her under a conservatorship led by her father, giving him and others complete control of everything she owned and earned. After years of bitter struggle, and with immense support from her fans, the conservatorship was finally ended in 2021.

Although there is still speculation about what she might do next, she remains one of pop music’s defining voices. “For me,” she says, “success is a state of mind. I feel like success isn’t about conquering something; it’s being happy with who you are.”

Catherine Parr (1512 -1548)

Queen 1543-7

Five down, I'm the final wife

I saw him to the end of his life

I'm the survivor: Catherine Parr

I bet you wanna know how I got this far?

Fluent in French and Italian, Catherine Parr also studied Latin and Spanish, was interested in medicine, supported the English Reformation and was the first woman to publish books in English under her own name.

Widowed twice, she fell in love with Jane Seymour's brother, Thomas, before attracting Henry's attention. Henry, now 52, proposed. Catherine decided it was God's will to accept.

They married on 12 July 1543. While she was Queen, Catherine served as Regent, taking charge of the King's business while he fought abroad, showing that Henry trusted her. She also reconciled Henry with his two daughters, restoring them to the line of succession, and outwitted an attempt to have her arrested as a heretic because she discussed religious reform so passionately.

Henry VIII died on 28 January 1547. Catherine reconnected with Thomas Seymour and they married in secret in May but she died the following year after giving birth to a daughter.

Emeli Sandé

Emeli Sandé – whose first name is Adele – has said that hearing legendary singer-songwriter and pianist, Nina Simone changed her whole musical life. “I would have been about 11 or 12 and we were waiting to pick my mum up from work in Aberdeen ... My dad was playing music in the car. I didn’t even realise this was a woman’s voice ... You couldn’t put anything that she did in a box, it was just Nina Simone – pure and strong.”

Simone inspired Sandé to see her own voice as an instrument and she began to sing as a way to overcome her shyness. She released her first single in 2011 and the following year she sang at both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies at the London Olympics. As one newspaper said, she was a reminder that “... a person could come from nowhere and become the biggest thing in the world, just by being brilliant.”

Gallery D

Construct Your Royal Portrait!

Step 1

Check yourself out in the mirror and grab some regal accessories

Step 2

Select your spot, either on your own or with your royal court

Step 3

Pop your phone in the ring light, set a timer on your camera, and strike an iconic pose

Step 4

Remember to post your royal portrait online with the hashtag #queenstheexhibition

Gallery E

The Mancorialist

The Mancorialist, who remain anonymous, have been making vibrant portraits of characters on the streets of Manchester since 2012. We asked them to share some of their favourite images of 'queens' and to make new ones of young people in Salford.

The overriding feeling of their work is one of celebrating the diversity, attitude and magnificence of everyday people, living their lives.

Visit them @themancorialist

Their archive is at themancorialist.tumblr.com/archive

Thanks to everyone who has agreed to feature in this selection, and special thanks to:

Callum

Finlay

Galufshah

Hannah

Kameron

Kashif

Miles

Nia

The Disciples: Lady Gaga

by James Mollison, 2011

In 2005 James Mollison started attending concerts across Europe and the United States with a mobile photography studio, inviting fans of each music star or band to pose for a portrait on their way into the concert. The result was 'The Disciples', a series of fifty-seven panoramic images, each featuring eight to ten music fans mimicking the manners and dress of their particular heroes - from Dolly Parton and Madonna to Bob Dylan and Motorhead.

This photograph shows Lady Gaga fans at Boardwalk Hall, Atlantic City, on 19th February 2011.

Flash mob performance of Six

Performed by students from Pendleton School of Theatre, as part of *We Invented the Weekend*, Sunday 16 June 2024

Music: 'Six', from Six The Musical (Studio Cast Recording), written by Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss.

Gallery F

Fanny and Stella by Johnny Humes, 2024

Oil on canvas, 1.3 x 1.3m

1870s day dresses, 2024

Pink cotton, purple taffeta

Frederick Park and Ernest Boulton, or 'Fanny and Stella', as they were more commonly known, became infamous in London during the 1870s. On 28th April 1870, they were arrested outside the Strand Theatre for taking to the streets as 'men dressing as women', and subjected to a scandalous show trial that shook Victorian London. If found guilty they faced life imprisonment, however the trial eventually fell apart due to lack of evidence.

With a love of the stage and theatre, Fanny and Stella frequented the London music halls in their finest attire. Though their very existence was offensive to the British public, they remained bold, brave and authentic to themselves. There is evidence to suggest that Stella (left) was a transgender woman, though at the time the language for queer identification was largely underdeveloped. Despite this, she and Fanny lived freely and fabulously.

In this painting, Manchester queens Banksie (right) and Vil (left) embody the camp, crazy lives of these two icons of British LGBTQ+ history, 155 years later.



Fanny and Stella, about 1869



Scan the QR Code to learn more about Johnny Humes.

Queenagers

Simone Biles

The most decorated gymnast in history

Simone is a role model for young women gymnasts and an inspiration for looked-after children, and for those struggling with their mental health.

Simone spent time in foster care before discovering a passion for gymnastics, quickly excelling in all the events—vault, floor exercise, balance beam, and uneven bars.

She began competing at the top level of gymnastics when she was 14 and had huge success at her first Olympics in 2016, but she insisted: “I’m not the next [sprinter] Usain Bolt or [swimmer] Michael Phelps. I’m the first Simone Biles.”

At the 2021 Olympic Games, Simone withdrew from many events to focus on her mental health. By putting her mental health first, she inspired others.

“I thought I could figure it out on my own, but that’s sometimes not the case. And that’s not something you should feel guilty or ashamed of.”

Claudette Colvin

American pioneer in the struggle for racial equality

Nine months before Rosa Parks' famous arrest, 15-year-old Claudette stood up against segregation in Alabama, one of the southern states of the United States. Under segregation laws at the time, white people had separate, and better housing, education and other services than black people.

In 1915, when Claudette's white bus driver told her to give up her seat for a white passenger standing nearby, she refused.

She was dragged from the bus and put in jail and then charged with violating segregation laws, disturbing the peace and assaulting a police officer. She pleaded not guilty but was still convicted.

Her unplanned act of bravery was repeated nine months later by Rosa Parks, which was followed by protests that ultimately led to the end of segregation and discriminatory practices.

"I knew then and I know now that, when it comes to justice, there is no easy way to get it. You have to take a stand and say, "That is not right." And I did."

Greta Thunberg

The world's best-known young climate change campaigner

When she was 15, she sat outside the parliament building in Stockholm with a handmade sign saying “school strike for climate”.

On the first day she was on her own, but more young people joined her as her strike continued. Even after she returned to school, she continued to strike for climate change on Fridays, inspiring hundreds of thousands of students around the world to do the same.

Since leaving school she continues to speak about climate change: “[World leaders] have had decades of blah, blah, blah - and where has that got us?”

Her speeches were collected in a book and published in 2019 as *No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference*.

“I have Asperger’s and that means I’m sometimes a bit different from the norm,” she once tweeted. “And — given the right circumstances — being different is a superpower.”

Frida Kahlo

One of the world's most recognisable painters

During her short life, Frida Kahlo was largely ignored as an artist, but today she is one of the world's most recognisable painters.

“I paint because I am so often alone and because I am the subject I know best.”

As a child, she caught polio, causing her right leg to become thinner and shorter than her left. And then, at 18, she was in a bus crash that broke numerous bones in her body.

In her long recovery she sat in her bed with an easel, painting self-portraits by looking at herself in a mirror across the room.

After her death in 1954, her work became more widely known, but Frida was celebrated for many other things. In her self-portraits, she painted her natural monobrow and upper-lip hair which speaks to many about body-positivity, and she was open about her sexuality - she was attracted to men and women and would often wear loose-fitting suits with a short, cropped haircut, making her an LGBTQ+ icon.

Malala Yousafzai

Campaigner for female education around the world

In 2014, Malala became the youngest person ever to win a Nobel Peace Prize.

When she was a young girl, the Taliban, a militant movement, took control of the area of Pakistan where she lived. Their strict religious views banned girls from going to school.

After speaking out against this Malala became a target. In 2012, travelling home on a bus with her friends, she was shot in the head. Ten days later, she woke up in hospital in Birmingham where she recovered.

On her sixteenth birthday, 12 July 2013 - now known as 'Malala Day' - she gave a speech at the United Nations highlighting the need for education and women's rights across the world.

Artemisia Gentileschi

Became famous when nearly all successful painters were men

Artemisia was an Italian artist, born in 1593. Her pictures often take a female perspective on classical stories.

She began her art training in her father's studio in Rome when she was about 15. Her earliest known painting is dated 1610, when she was 17.

By 1613, she had moved to Florence after winning a long and difficult rape trial in Rome. She became the first woman member of Florence's Art Academy whose previous members had included Michelangelo. She went on to work in Rome, Venice, Naples and London, helping her father complete the ceiling paintings for Queen's House, Greenwich.

Despite constant financial difficulties, Artemisia worked as an artist for over forty years, and painted for some of the greatest international patrons of the age including the Spanish Royal family and Charles I. She died in 1654.

Melanie Brown

‘Girl Power’ advocate, pop music icon and domestic abuse campaigner

Melanie Brown, often known as Mel B, is a singer, songwriter, and actress. She advocated ‘Girl Power’ and enjoyed huge success as Scary Spice in the Spice Girls. Today she speaks out about domestic abuse as an ambassador for Women's Aid.

“I try to live by the Girl Power motto. It’s about believing in yourself, no matter how bad a day you’re having, and lending your support to other women.”

This was often hard in an industry dominated by sexism, but the Spice Girls’ hard work and ambition saw them become the best-selling female group of all time.

Now an anti-domestic abuse campaigner, Mel B was diagnosed with anxiety, dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD. “I’ve always been able to juggle 50,000 things but also be almost too involved and too focused [but] there’s no limit to what you can achieve”.

Mary Shelley

Writer of one of the world's first sci-fi novels

Mary Shelley began writing 'Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus' when she was 18. It is the story of scientist Victor Frankenstein, who brings to life an artificial man.

Born in 1797, Mary and her boyfriend, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, spent a summer in a villa in Switzerland with Lord Byron and others. The weather was cold and stormy. Stuck indoors they read ghost stories together until Byron suggested they write their own.

Mary, whose first baby had died the previous year, remembered dreaming that she had managed to save the child and bring her back from death. This became the initial idea for her story.

Frankenstein was published anonymously in 1818 and many people assumed it was written by a man. After a stage version became popular it was reissued under Mary's own name. It has now been adapted hundreds of times and become part of popular culture. Mary died in 1851.

Haus of Holbein

Welcome to our Haus of Holbein.

Holbein was an important court painter who made portraits of some of the six Queens.

Have a go at drawing a portrait of someone (or yourself) and then hang it on our display walls.

Or you can ask a member of our team to hang it for you.

Hans Holbein the Younger 1497/8 – 1543

Hans Holbein goes around the world

Painting all the beautiful girls

From Spain to France and Germany

The king chooses one

But which one will it be?

(from 'Haus of Holbein', by Lucy Moss and Toby Marlow)

The painter Hans Holbein was born in Germany and trained as an artist with his father. He settled in England in 1532 and by 1536 was King's Painter to Henry VIII.

Exceptionally talented, Holbein was also discreet. He stayed close to the inner workings of the court, as people came in and out of favour, and was given privileged access to key figures. When he first arrived, the King was attempting to divorce Catherine of Aragon to marry Anne Boleyn. Holbein's portrait of Anne was

made in her private rooms while she wore a satin bedgown.

Holbein's portraits were detailed and the sitters were immediately recognisable. When he was sent back to Germany to paint Anna of Cleves, however, a proposed future bride for Henry, it was rumoured that the King believed his painting had been too flattering when he finally met Anna in person. Henry's chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, not Holbein, was blamed for his part in arranging their short marriage and he was executed in 1540.

Of Henry's six wives, Holbein made portraits of Anne Boleyn, Anna of Cleves, Jane Seymour and probably Katherine Howard.

He died in London of the plague in 1543.

Gallery G

Interactives

Which Queen Are You?

Take the quiz to find out

Who is Your Queen?

Perhaps it's a friend, or someone in your family?

Maybe it's someone from the past, or today, who has changed things or someone you admire?

It could even be you!

Let us know!

Write about them, or draw a picture, and add it to our notice boards.

Lily O'Farrell

This is a specially commissioned new work by Lily O'Farrell, who has been uploading cartoons onto her Instagram page @vulgadrawings since 2018. Lily's cartoons cover prejudice against women, dating and internet culture in a funny and educational way. In 2021 her first book 'Kyle Theory' was published, and last year she made two series of a documentary podcast series called 'No Worries If Not!'

"Social media is free," she says, "I've learned more about humanity, empathy and other people's experiences on social media than any higher education could have given me...Anyone can share their experience and opinions at any time, without barriers."

Her work reflects what happens in her everyday life, and in the everyday lives of most girls and women. After every cartoon someone will comment 'THIS HAPPENS TO ME TOO!'

"I want to make women feel less alone, and to give them the confidence to answer back."

Want to have a go yourself? Lily says: "anger is energy, so turn your experiences into something that others can relate to. Maybe you've been on a bad date or someone says something that doesn't quite sit right with you – write it down. Now you've noticed it, you'll start to see it everywhere – so turn it into something! Stand up comedy, a cartoon, a poem, a short article – I guarantee so many other women have noticed it too, and they'll be grateful you've put it out into the world."