

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release



'Hope. Despair. Miracles.' Photobook Launch – 5-7pm GMT, Tuesday 3 October 2023

Location: Longsight Library, 519 Stockport Rd, Longsight, Manchester M12
4NE

Google maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/huj4hkJU5HiroTMh9>

Admission free to all. 350 complimentary copies will be available for Longsight residents and all attendees.

Summary

A new photobook by Mexican-British social documentary photographer Roxana Allison will launch on 3 October 2023 in Longsight, Manchester. An evening social gathering celebrating 'Hope. Despair. Miracles.', expect a free copy of the publication, as well as refreshments, performance and conversation. Roxana will be joined by poet Pauline Omoboye, Labour Councillor for Longsight Suzanne

Richards, and Crowcroft Park activist Ghazala Sadiq, to talk about the project and what it says about Longsight's unseen changemakers.

About the 'Hope. Despair. Miracles.' publication and forthcoming exhibition: photography celebrating Longsight's unseen changemakers, by Roxana Allison

Roxana Allison's 'Hope. Despair. Miracles.' is a 64-page, full-colour newsprint including photography portraits and landscapes showcasing Longsight in Manchester: an area rich in ethnic diversity, yet long-associated – sometimes unfairly – with its complex social issues. Allison's singular, insightful portraits show Longsight in a new light.

This new photobook includes full-colour photography as well as written word by participants on what its really like to live and work there; plus Allison's short introductory essay, an afterword by Longsight Librarian Paula Carley, and a poem by Pauline Omoboye. All texts are in English and Urdu, reflecting Longsight's large Urdu speaking communities.

The publication introduces the exceptional people devoted to growing food and improving the area's streets, to providing quality and affordable housing, mutual support, art, music, sport, and safe spaces to learn and grow.

The 'Hope. Despair. Miracles.' photobook launch will be followed by a dedicated solo exhibition in the new year, 'Hope. Despair. Miracles.', opening to the public on Saturday 27 January 2024 (to Saturday 30 March 2024) at Waterside's photography gallery, in Trafford, Manchester.



Making 'Hope. Despair. Miracles

The book and upcoming exhibition 'Hope. Despair. Miracles.' emerged from a firm intention to not despair.

Longsight, a culturally diverse working-class area in southeast Manchester, UK, and known for its large Pakistani community established in the 1960s, has suffered from prevailing issues over the years that have negatively impacted its reputation. Nonetheless, behind its chaotic surface layer live an array of changemakers – people actively making the area a better place.

'Hope. Despair. Miracles.' asks us to focus on a positive view of Longsight by offering acknowledgement to some of its grassroots organisations and individuals. Through a series of considered portraits, landscapes and written word, it invites us to recognise the agents of change genuinely transforming people's lives in multicultural working-class neighbourhoods across the UK – reminding us to never judge a book, or a place, by its cover.

In a post-Brexit UK and post-Covid world that is enduring a cost-of-living crisis, 'Hope. Despair. Miracles.' aims to inspire by showing that people-led change is achievable through the power of togetherness. To remain hopeful, the images also invite us to find beauty in the ordinary and shift our focus on the small wins, those that happen within our own sphere. These wins, in the face of great odds, can seem like miracles.



Notes to Editors

Roxana Allison: biography

Roxana Allison grew up in Mexico City and moved to the UK in 2008. Her photographic work is strongly influenced by her mixed cultural upbringing and focuses on themes of place, belonging and community through portraiture and documentary photography. She continues to develop self-assigned slow-form projects and commissions, alongside working in higher education. She lives in Longsight. <https://www.roxanaallison.co.uk/>

Allison was one of the 24 female photographers selected to take part in the yearlong Trace Mentorship Programme 2022-24, offering support and mentorship from respected photographic industry professionals such as curator Sebah Chaudhry and Financial Times editor Emma Bowkett.

Allison's past projects include the photobook entitled 'Operation Jurassic (2018)', supported financially by the 2018 National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance Bursary, an intimate collaborative photographic series raising awareness on issues connected to graffiti and the criminal justice system.

Her project entitled 'Uncovering the Invisible: A Portrait of Latin Americans in the UK (2013)', commissioned by The University of Nottingham and supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, was an innovative exhibition utilising artcodes technology designed by researchers at the Horizon Digital Economy Research Institute. The touring exhibition was part of The Mayor of London's public Olympiad programme in 2014 attracting marginalised groups and ethnic minority audiences.

Manchester City Council

'Hope. Despair. Miracles.' is published with financial support from the Neighbourhood Investment Fund, a Manchester City Council initiative supporting local communities to make their neighbourhoods better places to live. https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/100003/people_and_communities/202/neighbourhood_investment_funds/2

Waterside

Waterside is a thriving and vibrant arts venue in the heart of Sale in Trafford. Comprising a theatre, art galleries, studios and workspaces, the centre is an important regional hub for both performance and visual art. 'Hope. Despair. Miracles.' opens to the public on Saturday 27 January-Saturday 30 March 2024. 1 Waterside Plaza, Sale, Trafford, M33 7ZF. <https://watersidearts.org/whats-on/3408-hope-despair-miracles-by-roxana-allison/>

Image credits

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Press enquiries

For copies of the photobook, press inquiries, high-resolution images, or interview requests, please contact Roxana Allison, photographer and project author.

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