



N National Centre
for Writing

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Two iconic Norwich statues 'speak' for the first time following huge county-wide competition

Date/embargoed: Friday 24th January

Hundreds of people across Norfolk entered a writing competition to join the likes of Stephen Fry and Olivia Colman in providing a 'voice' for a Norwich statue. Talking Statues is year-long project which brings Norwich UNESCO City of Literature to life through its most iconic statues.

Creative Nation and the Norwich based National Centre for Writing launched an open competition for children and adults to write a short monologue for Snap the Dragon at the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell and for the 'Missing statue' at the Church of St John Maddermarket.

The winners of the county-wide competition are 16-year-old Amelia Platt, from Litcham School and Tom Carver an actor and member of the Crude Apache Theatre Company. The public competition provided the opportunity for everyone to get involved in telling the stories of our city and have their work appear alongside the likes of Stephen Fry, who wrote and voiced the statue of Lord Nelson and Olivia Colman who provided the voice for Julian of Norwich, based on text from Sarah Perry.

Amelia says:

"I hope people enjoy listening to Snap's story as much as I enjoyed writing it. I am so excited to have won this competition and can't wait for people to hear my monologue for Snap."

Tom says:

“It was certainly an interesting challenge to write for a woman's voice though I wanted essentially to make her both human and local, while perhaps representing women anywhere.”

The statues will ‘speak’ for the first time at **two special launch events on Saturday 16 February**. We would love you to attend!

Both events will be attended by the competition winners, who will receive their prizes on the day. The actors who voiced their entries, Joe Darbyshire of Moco Theatre and broadcaster Helen McDermott will also be in attendance, alongside representatives from Creative Nation, National Centre for Writing, The Museum of Norwich and The Churches Conservation Trust. There will be lots of photo opportunities alongside the newly installed plaques.

11am to 11.45am- PRESS.

12-4pm. FREE Discover Arts Award Club.

Museum of Norwich, Bridewell Alley, Norwich, NR2 1AD.

Snap the Dragon- Under 16s Public Writing Competition Statue.

Find out what Snap has to say for himself.

His plaque will be inside the museum alongside Snap himself. You may visit Snap for free if you tell staff at the desk you are visiting for Talking Statues.

We will also be running a FREE Arts Award Discover workshop from 12-4pm, to kick off a week of Snap related activities taking place at the Museum of Norwich throughout

half term. Come and join us to complete pick up or complete your Talking Statues Discover Arts Award trail pack. We will be making dragons!

Midday to 12.45pm- Press call.

Church of St John Maddermarket- Pottergate, Norwich, NR2 1DS.

The Missing Statue- Over 16's public writing competition statue.

(The Missing Statue is on an empty plinth located above the North porch of the Church. Access is via the side alley which leads to the Maddermarket Theatre and the graveyard).

Who is our Missing Statue and what does she have to tell us about her life in the city and her vantage point above the north porch of the Church? Volunteers from the Churches Conservation Trust will be on hand to show visitors around the Church.

Jenny Caynes from The Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell says:

"This was a stand-out story for me, and cleverly wove the preoccupations of the past in Norwich, with a very modern fable. Snap represents all that's good about our fine city; it's beauty, heritage, and welcoming vibe!"

Kate Roma from The Churches Conservation Trust says:

"The Churches Conservation Trust are delighted to be working in partnership with the Talking Statues project with Creative Nation. St John Maddermarket is a remarkable church in the heart of Norwich Lanes which dates back to Anglo-Saxon times and is associated with the actor William Kemp who in 1599 danced from London to Norwich in nine days! The voice of the missing statue will bring aspects of the social history of this church alive, hopefully to a new audience, and we look forward to welcoming visitors to share this and the many other fascinating stories associated with this church."

The voice for Snap the Dragon has been read and recorded by actor Joe Darybshire from Norwich's Moco Theatre, and the 'Missing' statue is voiced by television presenter Helen McDermott.

Joe Darbyshire says:

"I am extremely excited to be involved in such an inspiring project on behalf of MOCO. Norwich has such a diverse and rich cultural history, it's brilliant that Creative Nation is bringing it to life so vividly".

Alice Whitney, Creative Nation, Project Director says:

"We were delighted with the number and quality of the responses we received. It's clear these competitions really captured resident's imaginations and we cannot wait to share our final two statues with the city. "

Chris Gribble, Executive Director of the National Centre for Writing says:

"Huge congratulations to the winners. Talking Statues is a brilliant way to explore England's first UNESCO City of Literature. Connecting the heritage of our city - its writers, historical figures, social campaigners – with outstanding current writers and performers linked to Norwich, it's a chance to enjoy and learn about Norwich in a fun and social way!"

The new additions to the trail are the result of a county-wide competition organised by Creative Nation and the National Centre for Writing, with support from Arts Council England. It encouraged budding writers, both young and old, to submit their best monologues written from the perspective of Snap and the Missing Statues.

The writing competitions were supported by a series of free creative writing workshops which were held in situ at each of the statue locations. These enabled members of the public to explore how to get started on their entries whilst also developing skills and learning more about how to write a monologue.

The project will be live until September 2019.

The full list of the Norwich talking statues are -

- Lord Nelson: written and voiced by Stephen Fry
- Mother Julian: written by Sarah Perry, voiced by Olivia Colman
- Amelia Opie: written by Megan Bradbury, voiced by Zoe Telford
- Thomas Browne: written by George Szirtes, voiced by Adam Buxton
- Peter the Wild Boy: written by Alexander Gordon Smith, voiced by Keith Skipper
- Will Kemp: written and voiced by Luke Wright
- City Hall Lions: written by Karl Minns, voiced by the Nimmo Twins
- Peace Statues: written and voiced by Molly Naylor
- Snap the Norwich Dragon: written by Amelia Platt voiced by Joe Darybshire
- Missing Statue at St John's Church at Maddermarket: written by Tom Carver, voiced by Helen McDermott

Initially created by Sing London, Talking Statues Norwich has been produced by Creative Nation and the National Centre for Writing with financial support from The Forum, Norwich Business Improvement District (BID), Festival Bridge, The Freemen of Norwich, Historic England, The National Lottery through Arts Council England and the Norwich Heritage Fund.

For more information visit <http://www.talkingstatuesnorwich.co.uk/>

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Notes to Editors:

1. For additional materials and photographs please access our Dropbox here-
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/x6twu2zi25c73g2/AAAxjAlbhYxXltkcO9VN2W6La?dl=0>
2. For comment and interviews contact Alice Whitney at Creative Nation at Alice@creative-nation.co.uk or on 07879448870.
3. **Talking Statues Norwich** has been produced by Creative Nation and the National Centre for Writing, with financial support from The Forum, Norwich Business Improvement District (BID), Festival Bridge, The Freemen of Norwich, Historic England, The National Lottery through Arts Council England and The Norwich Heritage Fund. www.talkingstatuesnorwich.co.uk
4. **Creative Nation** delivers content production and creative project management. We combine imaginative ideas with practical approaches, honed across a vast range of commercial, broadcast, arts and corporate experience. Established in 2008, we are an independent production agency with access to a diverse, international network of creative and technical professionals. www.creative-nation.co.uk
5. The **National Centre for Writing** (NCW) is a place of discovery, exchange, ideas and learning for writers, literary translators and readers. Based in the restored and extended 15th century Dragon Hall in the heart of England's first UNESCO City of Literature, it explores how writing can inspire and change the world we live in. Its year round programme of events, festivals and courses reaches over 14,000 people a year with an additional 110,000 engaged online. Through its learning and participation programme it supports 20,000 young people a year and has a commitment to working with those in the most disadvantaged areas. NCW's patrons include Margaret Atwood, JM Coetzee, Kei Miller and Elif Shafak. www.nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk