

# Hope. Despair. Miracles.

اميد، مايوسي، معجزات.

A Photography Exhibition by Roxana Allison

WATERSIDE MEDIA RELEASE 2024

## MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

12 Feb '24

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# **Waterside presents new exhibition celebrating Longsight's unseen changemakers**

***Hope. Despair. Miracles.* is a photographic project that celebrates the grassroots organisations and individuals that contribute towards positive change, especially in working-class multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. The exhibition is now open at Waterside and runs until Sat 13 April.**

Mexican-British social documentary photographer Roxana Allison was born in Manchester, grew up in Mexico City, and returned to live in 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.

Roxana Allison's **Hope. Despair. Miracles.** features portraits, landscapes and written word and showcases Longsight, in southeast Manchester: a working-class neighbourhood rich in ethnic diversity, yet long-associated – sometimes unfairly – with its complex social issues. Allison's singular, insightful visual narrative shows Longsight in a new light.

The exhibition introduces the exceptional people devoted to growing food and improving the area's streets, those providing quality and affordable housing, mutual support, art, music, sport, and safe spaces to learn and grow. It invites audiences to recognise the agents of change genuinely

transforming people's lives in multicultural working-class neighbourhoods across the UK – reminding people to never judge a book, or a place, by its front cover.

In a post-Brexit UK and post-Covid world that is enduring a cost-of-living crisis, **Hope. Despair. Miracles.** explores the idea of hope through action and that people-led change is attainable through the power of togetherness.

The two portraits below, included in the exhibition, are winners of The British Journal of Photography Portrait of Britain Vol. 6 Award 2023 and will also be part of the public outdoor exhibition sponsored by JCDecaux across the country.



**Nasima Begum, Shireen Sobhani and Safina Islam, Ananna, Manchester Bangladeshi Women's Organisation, Manchester** - a Longsight-based independent organisation empowering and supporting vulnerable women from ethnic minorities for over 30 years. *[image to left]*

**Nadia Siddiqui, Director of Women's Voices, Manchester** - advocates and inspires women from ethnic minorities to become confident and independent. They offer a range of services and encourage the organisation to be led by the women they support. *[image to right]*



Photographer Roxana Allison says: *'This exhibition aims to inspire hope - the images 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. If you take a deeper look beyond the surface layer, there's so much hope there, but you can't see it straight away.'*

Running alongside the exhibition will be a series of workshops at Waterside, led by Lebanese theatre-maker and arts facilitator Nour Sabounh, which will help people of all backgrounds and

skill levels to use simple creative techniques to develop communication skills via friendly and fun shared group activities.

There will also be a chance to hear Roxana Allison discuss her work and inspirations in a special talk in March (see listings for full details).

**Hope. Despair. Miracles. runs from Sat 27 Jan – Sat 13 Apr '24**

**Free entry | Open Mon – Sat 10:00 – 17:00**

**Lauriston Gallery, Waterside, Sale M33 7ZF**

**[watersidearts.org/hope](https://watersidearts.org/hope)**

**- ENDS -**

**For interviews/further information please contact: Claire Saville/Emily Lyons**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**Images: Hope. Despair. Miracles. by Roxana Allison - Google Drive**

**Images: Gallery and Preview evening – Please credit © Mai Hem Photography | @creatingmaihem**

## **LISTINGS**

**HOPE. DESPAIR. MIRACLES.**

**By Roxana Allison**

**Sat 27 Jan – Sat 13 Apr**

**Free entry**

*Hope. Despair. Miracles.* is a photographic project that celebrates the grassroots organisations and individuals that contribute towards positive change, especially in working-class multi-ethnic neighbourhoods.

Photographer Roxana Allison grew up in Mexico City. Her photographic work is strongly influenced by her mixed cultural upbringing focusing on themes of place, belonging and community.

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### **Roxana Allison - In Conversation**

**Sat 02 Mar 19:00 – 21:00**

**£7 / £5**

Join photographer Roxana Allison (*Hope. Despair. Miracles.*) in this discussion with critic, writer and editor Laura Robertson (*The Double Negative*) as she reveals insights into her work and inspirations in this discussion session. There will be a chance to put your own questions to the artist during the conversation. This event is part of a mini-season of creative activities celebrating International Women's Day.

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### **Creative Skills for Communication**

**Fridays 01, 08, 15, 22 Mar, 11:00 - 13:00**

**Free but booking required**

This workshop series, led by Lebanese theatre-maker and arts facilitator Nour Sabouneh, will help people of all backgrounds and skill levels to use simple creative techniques to develop communication skills via friendly and fun shared group activities. These events are part of a mini-season of creative activities celebrating International Women's Day.

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### **ROXANA ALLISON**

#### **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, home and community through portraiture and documentary photography. She is particularly interested in working with underrepresented communities and revealing stories that often go unseen. Allison continues to develop self-assigned slow-form projects and commissions, alongside working in higher education. She lives in Longsight.

Allison is one of the winning artists of [The British Journal of Photography Portrait of Britain Vol. 6 \(2023\)](#) award and was one of the 24 female photographers selected to take part in the yearlong [Trace Mentorship Programme 2022-23](#), offering support and mentorship from respected photographic industry professionals such as curator Sebah Chaudhry, photographers Sian Bonnell and Haley Morris-Cafiero, and Financial Times editor Emma Bowkett, amongst others.

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.

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## **WATERSIDE**

Waterside is an award-winning, vibrant destination for performance, culture and events in the heart of Sale in Trafford, Greater Manchester.

Waterside opened in 2004 and has built a strong reputation for delivering high quality and engaging work, ranging from family theatre, interactive arts activity, performance, live music and regular comedy as well as high profile visual arts exhibitions.

With an important role to play in the local community, the venue welcomes over 100,000 visitors per year, stages the annual ten-day Refract Festival and the cultural LGBTQ+ celebration Pride in Trafford; and engages with over 7000 residents through the established participation programme.

The space houses a main auditorium (the Robert Bolt Theatre), a versatile conference and studio performance space (the Chambers), three exhibition spaces and a number of studios, meeting and workshop spaces, all used by a variety of different groups.

The Lauriston Gallery is open to the public six days a week and is free to visit. The venue is funded by Trafford Council and supported by Arts Council England, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.





# Hope. Despair. Miracles.

Roxana Allison

27 Jan - 13 April 2024

Preview 25 Jan 2024 | 6 - 8 pm

The Lauriston Gallery

Waterside Arts

1 Waterside Plaza, Sale, M33 7ZF

Free



**IWD  
2024**

**International  
Women's Day**



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by ROXANA ALLISON**

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**A SERIES OF EVENTS  
AND EXHIBITIONS  
AT WATERSIDE**