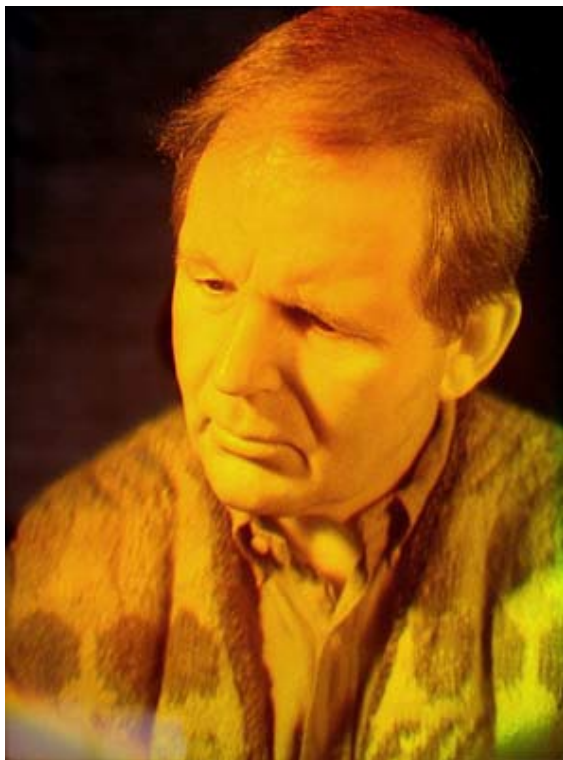


Portraits of the
Children's Laureates, 2007



Rob Munday



3D holographic portraits of the first four Children's Laureates by Rob Munday with Lisa Barnard.

In 2007, I was approached by the Unicorn Theatre's photographer in residence, Lisa Barnard, and asked if I would be interested in shooting and creating 'true' holographic portraits of the first four Children's Laureates for the Unicorn Theatre charity as a creative collaboration. I happily agreed. The first four Children's Laureates were:

1999 - 2001 Sir Quentin Blake, CBE, FCSD, FRSL, RDI
2001 - 2003 Anne Fine OBE, FRSL
2003 - 2005 Sir Michael Morpurgo, OBE, FRSL, FKC, DL
2005 - 2007 Dame Jacqueline Wilson, DBE, FRSL

The Unicorn Theatre was founded in 1949 by Caryl Jenner as a purpose-built theatre for children and is a registered charity. An RIBA award-winning building was designed for the theatre and opened in 2005 on Tooley Street in the London Borough of Southwark.

Children's Laureate, now known as the Waterstones Children's Laureate, is a position awarded in the United Kingdom once every two years to a "writer or illustrator of children's books to celebrate outstanding achievement in their field". The role promotes the importance of children's literature, reading, creativity, and storytelling while promoting the right of every child to enjoy a lifetime of books and stories. Each Laureate uses their tenure to focus on an aspect of children's books – these have included poetry, storytelling, readers with disabilities, and illustration. The idea for the Children's Laureate originated from a conversation between (the then) Poet Laureate Ted Hughes and children's writer Michael Morpurgo.



invite

Join the four Children's Laureates

Quentin Blake
Anne Fine
Michael Morpurgo
Jacqueline Wilson

at the Unicorn Theatre for an unveiling of their holograms

These innovative holographic portraits are a collaboration between Unicorn's Photographic Artist in Residence, Lisa Barnard, and Holographer, Rob Munday.

The unveiling will take place at 12.30pm, with a buffet lunch afterwards.

RSVP: by Friday 1 June
dorcasmorgan@unicorntheatre.com
020 7645 0524



**Unicorn Theatre,
147 Tooley Street,
London SE1 2HZ**

Nearest Tube:
London Bridge

12.30pm TUESDAY 5 JUNE 2007



www.unicorntheatre.com

Holograms funded by:





Left to right: Sir Quentin Blake CBE, Anne Fine OBE, Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE, and Sir Michael Morpurgo OBE.

I conducted the portrait shoot at my private creative holography studio in Richmond-upon-Thames, using my 10-joule ruby pulsed laser. The sitters were recorded on different days, one at a time.

Each laureate was asked to bring their preferred book, one that they had written themselves, and was asked to quietly read their favourite passage whilst being recorded. This unusual composition meant that the sitters were recorded looking down, rather than, as is more traditionally the case, looking straight ahead towards the viewer. I believe that the unusual composition, pose, and the expressions on their faces added much vitality and interest to the portraits.

The portraits were unveiled at the Unicorn Theatre on the 5th June 2007 in the presence of all four laureates. All four holographic portraits were donated by me to the Unicorn Theatre children's charity, along with framing and lighting equipment.





Above: The four children's laureates, Sir Quentin Blake, Anne Fine, Sir Michael Morpurgo, and Dame Jacqueline Wilson see their holographic portraits for the first time.



Top, Dame Jacqueline Wilson, and bottom, Sir Quentin Blake, are interviewed about their portraits.

Spooky view of children's laureates in new portraits

Julia Eccleshare
Friday June 8, 2007
[Guardian Unlimited](#)

Appointed as "ambassadors" of that most wholesome of sanctuaries - children's books - the four children's laureates have now been penetratingly transformed in holographic portraits unveiled this week at the Unicorn Theatre for Children in south London.

As Quentin Blake, Anne Fine, Michael Morpurgo and the current children's laureate Jacqueline Wilson swished the covers off their respective holographs their reactions were as characteristic as their new portraits were revealing. For Michael Morpurgo there was relief that "it hides my double chin" and delight that it "highlights my best feature - my nose". Though she laughed as she said it, Anne Fine was "seriously scared by the way she looked like the wicked stepmother in Snow White".



'Wicked stepmother' ... Anne Fine and holographic portrait.

And many members of the audience agreed. The ever-urbane Quentin Blake responded quietly to his portrait which, like him, was calm and reflective and the least sinister of the lot. Jacqueline Wilson, already everyone's favourite granny, thought she'd enjoy coming to look at this younger version of herself when she was an old, old lady.

Put on the spot, it's hard for anyone to respond to their own portrait; the laureates were right to be both mildly alarmed and seriously delighted by these. Photographer Lisa Barnard and holographic artist Rob Munday have created brilliant, if disturbing images. Apparently gently floating in perspex, all four have a distinctly spooky presence, reminiscent of halls of shame showing famous renegades such as Dr Crippen awaiting the gallows. Even from a distance they all look interesting and thoughtful but far from benign - or especially child-friendly.

Moving closer, the experience becomes even more disturbing as they feel distinctly "alive" and the technology of the process enables to look at you as you approach. And all this while each harmlessly - and suitably - reads a book of their own.

But who ever said that you had to be either benign and child-friendly to write for children? What you can say is, each of these has a story to tell...

- The Holographic portraits are now a permanent exhibition in the foyer of the Unicorn Theatre, Tooley Street, London SE1



Anne Fine's News

Hologram

On 5th June, holograms of all four Children's Laureates were unveiled at the Unicorn Theatre in London. Here is the [**Guardian's report of the event**](#) (complete with photo), though Anne says that she was misquoted: "What I actually said was that I thought I looked like a sixty year old Snow White in her glass coffin, creepily neither quite dead nor quite alive." The holographic portraits are now a permanent exhibition in the foyer of the Unicorn Theatre, Tooley Street, London SE1

Anne writes:

"On the 5th of June, I went to London to the unveiling of something quite extraordinary. My own hologram. I'm not the only one. All four of us Laureates – Quentin Blake, myself, Michael Morpurgo and Jacqueline Wilson – went down to a special studio in Richmond in London a while ago to have our holograms taken in this special way.

Holograms are seriously weird. They are a sort of three dimensional photo. Think of them this way: no matter how you twist or turn a photograph about, all you will see is the exact same picture. A hologram is totally different. It's like a real head floating in space. If you go round to the side, you'll see me from the side. If you bend your knees and peep up at me from underneath, you'll see under my chin – maybe even the words of the book that I'm reading.

Holograms are rare because they need a special photographic plate, and there aren't many of those left in the world. So it's a rare thing to have your hologram done. (The Queen's had hers done. So have lots of really famous pop stars.) You have to sit very still in a totally dark room. Then there's a huge flash and the hologram's 'taken', just like a photo. It has to be developed in some fancy way. Look up holograms (if you're interested) on the web.

And suddenly there I am, like a floating head framed in a box. So odd. So real it looks as if I am actually there, a ghost of myself, so real you feel I could lift my eyes from the book I'm reading and wink at you.

I honestly think they are the creepiest and the weirdest things I've ever seen. Most strange things move. These are so still and yet so alive. You think you could stand there watching us all day and – sooner or later – one of us Laureates would crack and have to blink."

UNICORN

6 June 2007

Robert Munday
Spatial Imaging Ltd
Managing Director
6 Malborough Road
RICHMOND
Surrey
TW10 6JR

Dear Rob

I am writing on behalf of everyone at the Unicorn to say the most enormous thank you to you for donating your time and expertise to produce these amazing holograms for us. It is the most tremendous donation and we are all extremely grateful for your enthusiasm and support.

It was a fantastic to have all four Children's Laureates here for the unveiling and for the holograms to have provoked such an interesting reaction from them all. Jacqueline Wilson and Anne Fine's comments have already been uploaded onto the web and you can see them yourself by going to:

<http://www.booktrusted.co.uk/childrenslaureate/diary.php4>
<http://www.annefine.co.uk/news.php>

They really make a most striking and intriguing addition to the foyer and everyone is fascinated about how they work. I'm sure you are used to the endless questions they provoke and I really appreciate you taking the time to try and explain (in words of a maximum of 2 syllables) how they work. It is therefore wonderfully appropriate to have these here at the Unicorn which is all about introducing the arts to children in a way that is challenging and exciting.

We will be in touch re: inviting you to another lunch. Dates are not yet confirmed for later in the year, but I hope we can find a date in your diary sometime from September onwards.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely



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Lord Moser KCB CBE FBA
Jeremy Paxman
Philip Pullman CBE
Emma Thompson
Robbie Williams
Jacqueline Wilson OBE

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The Royal Society for the Arts

In 2023, Rob was invited to show his portraits for only the second time at the world-famous Royal Society for the Arts, John Adam Street, London, to coincide with a lecture by Sir Michael Morpurgo. The works were shown for one month, from the 16th September to the 14th October 2023, firstly, in the RSA's foyer, and later in the Mary Moser Room.

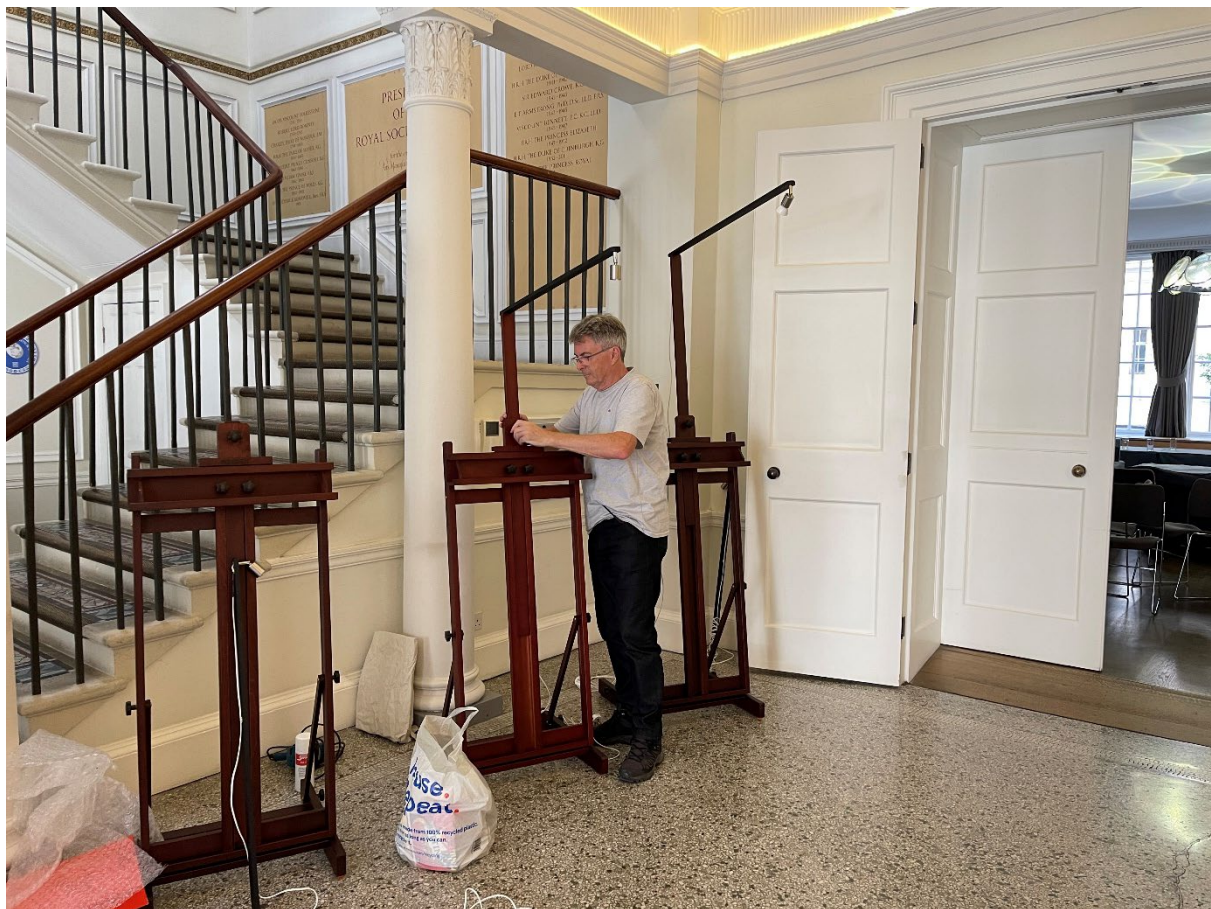
The Royal Society for the Arts (RSA) was founded in 1754 and is one of the oldest organizations in the world that is dedicated to the encouragement of the arts. The society held Britain's first dedicated exhibition of contemporary art in 1760, which later inspired the Royal Academy's annual summer exhibitions. Its members have included Charles Dickens, Benjamin Franklin, Marie Curie, Nelson Mandela, Tim Berners-Lee, and David Attenborough, and it currently has Fellows in over eighty countries.

Richard Hayle of the RSA wrote:

Rob's stunning holograms of our first four Children's Laureates have now been moved to the Mary Moser Room in RSA House, just along the corridor from the foyer pictured here.

Mary was a preeminent floral artist of the 18th Century, and her work was first recognised by the RSA when she submitted paintings at the age of just 14. These original submissions are now on display in the Benjamin Franklin Room of the House.

Meanwhile, back in the Mary Moser Room, contemporary works by our Fellow Nour Saleh sit alongside Rob's holograms - as does the roll-call of our Royal Designers for Industry ... one of whom is the unique Quentin Blake, whose hologram features too.



Rob Munday erects his hologram display units at the Royal Society of the Arts, 8 John Adam Street, London.



All four children's laureates are shown in the foyer of the Royal Society of the Arts.



An RSA Fellow takes an interest in Rob Munday's holographic portraits.



The final display.