

## National Portrait Gallery unveils newly commissioned portraits of leading film directors



Ridley Scott by Nina Mae Fowler, 2018-19.

**LONDON.-** [The National Portrait Gallery](#), London, has unveiled a major new commission of portrait drawings of some of the UK's leading film directors by London-born artist Nina Mae Fowler. The portraits have gone on public display for the first time in a new display *Luminary Drawings: Portraits of Film Directors by Nina Mae Fowler* (12 April – 1 October 2019).

Fowler's work often investigates fame, desire and our relationship with cinema. For the commission, she invited directors Amma Asante, Paul Greengrass, Asif Kapadia, Ken Loach, Sam Mendes, Nick Park, Sally Potter, Sir Ridley Scott and Joe Wright to choose a film of particular significance to them. During the sittings, Fowler projected the film of their choice, and recorded their reactions on camera and through loose sketches, with their faces lit only by the light of the screen in an otherwise darkened space.

Fowler watched the films of the sittings frame by frame to extract stills that would form the basis of the final charcoal drawings. Intriguingly the artist has chosen not to reveal the directors' film choices. The intimate scale of the works draws the viewer into the minds of the people behind the lens, conveying the inspiration felt by the directors when watching great cinema.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery said: "We are delighted to have unveiled this unique commission, which has been a long-term ambition for the Gallery to help strengthen our representation of the talent and diversity within the film industry in the UK today."

Nina Mae Fowler, artist, said: "The beauty of these sittings was twofold; firstly, the Directors lost any sense of being watched or portrayed as they were too engrossed in the film, secondly, we experienced the film together, which created conversation, laughter and an immediate bond between strangers. I want the viewer to wonder what film the directors are watching and to seek the answers in their faces. The only clues the viewer has are their reactions, the exact frame (documented in the titles) and the light thrown on them by the films themselves."