

National Theatre

For immediate release: 21 August 2025

National Theatre announces a new, free exhibition *The Greeks: Radical Reinvention*



Link to the images is available [here](#)

The National Theatre brings a new, free exhibition to the Wolfson Gallery, ***The Greeks: Radical Reinvention*** from 9 September, journeying through past reimaginations of Greek tragedies produced on its stages. The exhibition coincides with the opening of ***Bacchae***, Indhu Rubasingham's inaugural production as Director of the National Theatre. ***Bacchae*** is an exciting retelling of an ancient Greek tragedy by Euripides, brought to life by **Nima Taleghani** through rhythm, music and movement.

From the myths of Medea to the fury of Antigone, ancient Greek theatre continues to resonate with modern audiences because it explores timeless human experiences and universal themes from morality, justice, to the complexities of the human psyche.

Set against the unique architecture of the Olivier Theatre, itself inspired by the open-air theatre of Epidauros, *The Greeks: Radical Reinvention* showcases how the National Theatre has embraced the enduring relevance of Greek tragedy. By exploring four key elements of ancient Greek drama - sound, space, dance, and community - the exhibition highlights the imaginative and authentic ways these timeless plays have been reinterpreted for modern audiences.

Featuring archival objects from the National Theatre Archive, the interactive exhibition offers a behind-the-scenes look at landmark NT productions including *Paradise* (2021); *Medea* (2014); *Antigone* (2012), *Iphigenia at Aulis* (2004); and *The Oresteia* (1981).

The exhibition includes costume designs, rehearsal footage, model boxes (such as Soutra Gilmour's striking *Antigone* design), listening stations, and digital screens. The fascinating stories behind these historic objects are brought to life through artifacts, recitals of ancient Greek verse, as well as witness recordings of music, speeches and dances from these past productions.

Housed in the Wolfson Gallery, found between Lasdun Restaurant and the Olivier Stalls level, the exhibition runs through early 2026, with a press view on Monday 8 September 2025. The exhibition will also be available digitally via the Bloomberg Connects app to enhance your visit. The app also includes built-in accessibility features including voice over, captions and audio transcripts, image zoom, and font size adjustment.

The Greeks: Radical Reinvention is curated by Dr Lucy Jackson (Durham University) in collaboration with the National Theatre Archive and generously supported by Durham University. The National Theatre's Archive holds vast collection of unparalleled resources of the organisation from opening night in 1963 right up to present day.

Dr Lucy Jackson, Associate Professor at Durham University said, "*We might not think that plays written over two and a half thousand years ago can ask really pointed questions about the way we live now. But they do! The politics of music, the rights of refugees, the dirty deals that start and end wars... This exhibition uses the National Theatre Archive to go behind the scenes of the creative process in getting these old plays into shape for modern audiences, and explores aspects of ancient and modern*

theatre-making side by side. We hope people will find out how disruptive and radical you can be in making a new version of a Greek tragedy while staying true to the spirit of the genre.”

Lucy Jackson previously collaborated with the National Theatre Archive on the **In Search on Greek Theatre** educational video series. Through the lens of National Theatre productions, the free collection further explores the practicalities of producing an ancient play for a modern audience, and how much more there is to discover about a production than what we might see and hear in a single performance or digitised version. It can be accessed on the [National Theatre’s website](#).

Located at the National Theatre Studio on The Cut, the National Theatre Archive’s research room can be used by anyone for free by appointment. The Archive also offers tours that allow visitors to get hands-on with history and receive an overview of what its collection holds. Tickets for these Archive Unboxed Tours are £10 per person, and free for select dates in September during the Lambeth Heritage Festival. More information about the National Theatre Archives offering on the [National Theatre website](#).

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About Lucy Jackson

Lucy Jackson is Associate Professor of ancient Greek literature at Durham University. She researches how ancient Greek theatre, and its chorus in particular, has been staged from the fifth century BCE up to the 21st century. She has acted as a consultant for *Odyssey* (National Theatre, 2023), *Glass. Kill. Bluebeard. Imp* (Royal Court Theatre, 2019), *Cymbeline* (Royal Shakespeare Company 2016), *The Oresteia* (Shakespeare’s Globe, 2015), *The Iliad* (British Museum/Almeida Theatre, 2015), and *Medea* (National Theatre, 2014).

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The National Theatre makes theatre that entertains and inspires using its creativity, expertise and unique reach. We tell big stories in bold ways, offering the widest access

to high quality theatre to millions of audience members across the UK and around the world – on our own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home.

We bring the world to the National Theatre and take the National Theatre to the world through reimagined classic stories meeting fresh, contemporary voices. As part of our mission to celebrate and platform bold voices in British theatre, the National Theatre proudly hosts a dynamic group of Resident Companies, offering a platform for collaboration, growth, and innovation.

Through touring our work to local theatres, schools and through our nationwide education and community programmes, we are active in every local authority in the UK. We invest in talent and innovation on stage and off, taking seriously our role as the nation's theatre. We work with hundreds of schools and communities across the UK to fire imagination and inspire creativity. The National Theatre Skills Centre supports thousands of young people every year to develop skills and pathways for careers in theatre.

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