

Gatwa Portrait – Who's on display

As the star of iconic sci-fi series Doctor Who, he is usually seen time travelling around the universe in the Tardis.

Now Ncuti Gatwa has landed in the National Galleries of Scotland after his portrait was acquired for the national art collection.

The “vibrant and captivating” portrait, which went on display for the first time this week, was taken in 2020 by photographer Robert Wilson.

The artwork – one of hundreds of images taken by Wilson on the eve of Covid lockdown – captures Gatwa’s “magnetic personality” as he poses in a colourful yellow suit, mid-laugh.

Gatwa joins other notable Scots in the National Galleries’ permanent collection, including two former Doctor Who actors, Peter Capaldi and David Tennant.

Photographer Wilson, whose previous portraits have included actresses Dames Judi Dench and Joan Collins, sports stars Mo Farah and Venus Williams and Nobel Peace Prize winner Kofi Annan, described Gatwa as “a photographer’s dream to work with; friendly, expressive and giving”.

He added: “Ncuti was an absolute joy to photograph. We were shooting several of the nominated candidates for the BAFTA awards that day, which happened to be the second to last day

before the country went into lockdown due to Covid.

“The atmosphere on set was a little strange due to the various health precautions that were taking place and the impending thought of a lockdown.

“But, despite the slightly surreal atmosphere, Ncuti gave me a complete range of poses and expressions, from humorous, to serious, to melancholic.

“Within 15 minutes I had shot 224 beautiful frames, any one of which could probably have been used for the feature. He is a true professional, and I think we managed to capture his warm personality brought to the shoot that day.”

Gatwa, 31, was born in Rwanda, and arrived in Scotland at just two years old in 1994 with his family as a refugee fleeing a genocide, as Rwanda was embroiled in a civil war.

He grew up in Edinburgh and Dunfermline, in Fife, and went on to graduate from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2013.

Gatwa won a Scottish Bafta for playing Eric Effiong in Netflix series Sex Education before being announced as the 15th incarnation of Doctor Who in May 2022.

Described as “a Doctor Who for the 21st century”, he is the first black actor and the fourth Scot to play the Time Lord in the sci-fi series.

Gatwa’s other roles include Artist Ken in Greta Gerwig’s record-breaking film Barbie.

Anne Lyden, National Galleries of Scotland Director-General, said: “It is exciting to see this dynamic portrait of the hugely talented actor and style icon Ncuti Gatwa enter the national collection.

“Gatwa joins the ranks of previous Doctors already in our collection, and we look forward to welcoming fans of the new

Doctor Who when they visit to see this stunning photograph by Robert Wilson on our Portrait gallery walls.”



Photo Neil Hanna www.neilhannaphotography.co.uk



Photo Neil Hanna www.neilhannaphotography.co.uk



Photo Neil Hanna www.neilhannaphotography.co.uk