

THE ART OF LIVING

MARIANKA SWAIN SHARES HER CAPITAL CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

EXHIBITION MICHAEL JACKSON: ON THE WALL

Moonwalk over to the National Portrait Gallery, which, in a new show curated by Dr Nicholas Cullinan, is exploring how the King of Pop influenced contemporary artists.

Featuring 48 artists across several generations and media, it coincides with what would have been Michael Jackson's 60th birthday on August 29.

The variety reflects Jackson's complexity as a public figure – at once so familiar and eternally enigmatic. Kehinde Wiley gives him the stature of Rubens's *Philip II on Horseback*, while Andy Warhol's portrait is pop culture writ large.

There's abundant religious iconography, including a messiah in David LaChapelle's rendering, while

footage of Jackson and Candice Breitz's super-fan video installation illustrates why he's such an indelible force.

Throughout, the show throws up fascinating ideas about celebrity, race, power, and how art interprets life.

Until October 21
National Portrait Gallery,
Charing Cross WC2H
Adults £18, under-12s free
www.npg.org.uk



'An illuminating path', 1998, David LaChapelle



'Michael Jackson', 1984, Andy Warhol



'Equestrian Portrait of King Philip II (Michael Jackson)', 2010, Kehinde Wiley

COMMUTER CORNER

Searching for a great holiday read, but left cold by the usual airport paperbacks? Try the invaluable podcast *Backlisted*, which gives "new life to old books". Co-presenters John Mitchinson and Andy Miller hunt out forgotten gems, and invite in guests to discuss them; authors range from Muriel Spark, JG Ballard and Raymond Chandler to Martin Amis, Nancy Mitford and Angela Carter. You might just discover a new favourite.

How are you living up your commute?
Let us know via Twitter @Move_To



FILM INCREDIBLES 2

Brad Bird's 2004 Pixar film was a surprising blend of superhero thrills, period-pastiche animation, and thoughtful reflection on family dynamics and socially enforced mediocrity.

Now Bird brings us the long-awaited sequel, picking up where the last film left off. Once again the super family faces obsolescence, before a new opportunity arises for them to use their extra-special skills.

And once again there are some meaty ideas here, like the morality of breaking unjust laws, gendered parenting roles and screen addiction, alongside

daredevil action sequences and joyful slapstick, jazzily scored by Michael Giacchino.

Helen Hunter, Craig T. Nelson, Sarah Vowell and Huck Milner make a welcome return as the titular family – both otherworldly and exceedingly relatable – and they're joined by a fleet of familiar voices: Catherine Keener, Bob Odenkirk, Samuel L. Jackson and Jonathan Banks.

Plus, of course, Bird himself as the first film's breakout character: arch stylist Edna Mode. The *Incredibles* are definitely back in fashion.



THEATRE THE KING AND I

Bartlett Sher's Tony-winning revival of Rodgers and Hammerstein's classic musical makes a grand London visit, along with Broadway leads Kelli O'Hara and Ken Watanabe.

Though featuring a golden score, here gorgeously played by a full orchestra, the show can be problematic, with the colonial overtones of a Western woman educating the King of Siam.

However, Sher's nuanced reading instead suggests a cultural exchange. "Western People Funny" – an oft-excised number – lampoons Victorian women forced into hooped skirts and heels.

O'Hara is simply sublime as the wry, proto-feminist governess; her Julie Andrews-esque crystalline soprano voice is miraculous. Watanabe is witty and agile, wrestling believably with leadership, but his diction is too variable.

Na-Young Jeon and Naoko Mori offer strong support, while Ena Yamaguchi leads the ballet – Christopher Gattelli building on Jerome Robbins' East-meets-West choreography – with beguiling grace.

It's a spectacular production (design and costumes by Michael Yeargan and Catherine Zuber respectively), but spectacle serves story, showing the palace's scale and traditions. There's also shiver-inducing intimacy in the iconic "Shall We Dance?" – a tune that enchanted audiences will leave humming. 🏠

Until September 29
London Palladium, Soho W1F
Tickets from £29.50
www.kingandimusal.co.uk



National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Time, Olbricht Collection, Stephen Friedman Gallery, Sean Kelly Gallery, Matthew Murphy