

In Focus: a new model for Photoworks for commissioning lens based artwork

Presented at Phoenix Art Space / logo

The results of an innovative commissioning model and collaboration with a neurodiverse lens based artist will be exhibited at a gallery in the South East this Autumn.

Photoworks and Project Art Works have co-commissioned Anna Farley for *In Focus*, to make a new work for a solo exhibition. The commission is part of EXPLORERS, a three-year programme led nationally and internationally by Project Art Works. The exhibition opens **in the main gallery** at Phoenix Art Space Brighton, East Sussex, on 19 October and runs until 3 November 2019. A preview takes place on Friday 18 October. **The exhibition is open to the public Wednesday – Sundays 11 am – 5 pm.**



Using photography and sculpture, Anna's commission brings methods of alternative communication to the forefront, by creating a mass of 'infinity fidget cubes'. From hours of footage taken whilst wearing a GoPro camera, Anna extracts stills hinting to where, when and how her autism may be visible. Her work highlights the barriers and her needs in domestic, work or social moments. These then bind the cubes into objects for touching and experiencing the images using repetitive behaviours. The work is a reaction to her problematic experiences of the UK benefit system. The cubes attempt to establish visual responses to questions from forms and applications of her Personal Independence Payment and its impact on her life and those around her.

Photoworks Director, Shoair Mavlian, said: *"Anna's work is tactile and interactive, using photography in both an experimental and practical way. It's been a great process working with Anna to develop this work and we look forward to audiences being able to experience Anna's work at the exhibition"*

For the project, Photoworks approached commissioning a lens-based artist in a completely different way. The organisation made major changes to their commissioning model allowing wider access to the opportunity. They reviewed the standard brief for how to apply and proactively disseminated the opportunity through a network of disability arts organisations and adult social care settings. They also created opportunities for applicants to meet the team and engage in conversation about their plans. Photoworks took away the formal interview procedure and included Project Art Works, the leading artist led organisation working with children, young people and adults who have complex support needs, in the decision making process.

Photography is an important part of Anna's practice, and her life. She said: *" I am used to something like this being an impossibility for me to be able to take part in. The reality of what impact this will have on my development as an artist creatively, technically and professionally is exciting. This commission is a bigger chance for us to create a blueprint for organisations to see how they can proactively tackle inclusivity in the arts today"*.

In Focus included a series of inclusive Photography Clubs developed in partnership with three adult social care providers (Grace Eyre Foundation, Ambito Care, St Nicholas Centre in Lewes), consisting of photography activities for neurodiverse adults. Photoworks paired experienced artist facilitators with social care practitioners, asking them to work collaboratively to devise programmes that encouraged knowledge exchange and skills sharing, with the intention of enabling social care practitioners to continue to deliver photography activities in their settings once the programme ends, and artists to develop their expertise working with neurodiverse adults or children.

The activities featured personalised, supported interactions promoting freedom of choice in the creative process and set up safe, supported environments that enabled everyone to participate. Lead artist facilitators were Alejandra Carles-Tolra, Bill Leslie and Lynn Weddle. The art work made during this element of the project will also go on display at Phoenix Brighton this month.

*****ENDS*****

NOTES TO EDITORS

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IMAGE CREDITS:

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Anna Farley is an autistic artist, advocate and trainer. Anna has worked with organisations including the TATE and is the design lead for their NEU Spaces™. Anna has also founded the 'Autobiography' Project, a fusing of analogue photography and individuals experiences of their autistic identities. Anna graduated from Wimbledon College of Arts UAL: SCULPTURE in 2015. She lives and works in London.

In her practice to date, Anna has made sculpture using radios, books, sound recordings, masking tape, pegboard, paperwork and photography. Mixing concept and craft, she matches aesthetic to subject with changing materials.

@_theAnnaLog

In Focus is the Photoworks project that is part of a wider programme called **EXPLORERS**, comprising awareness-raising activity, commissions, exhibitions, seminars and events developed by Project Art Works in partnership with Photoworks and other cultural partners. The programme is developed with and for neurodiverse communities, placing them at the heart of social, civic and cultural activity.

In addition to this commission opportunity, Photoworks is delivering three artist-led projects with social care providers in Brighton & Hove and East Sussex for adults with additional and complex needs. Each project is tailored for artists and social care practitioners to help support adults who want to work with photography.

For Photoworks, the projects will enable us to test new ways of working, inform our future activity in this area, create a team of appropriately experienced associate artist facilitators, develop social care networks and increase the diversity of our audiences.

EXPLORERS is developed by Project Art Works in partnership with Photoworks and cultural organisations across the UK and Australia for neurodiverse communities, placing them at the heart of social, civic and cultural activity.

The EXPLORERS project is supported by the Arts Council Ambition for Excellence Programme and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Neurodiversity is a concept where neurological differences are to be recognised and respected as any other human variation. 'Neurodiverse' refers to people with autism and other neurological conditions including learning disabilities. Use of the term is part of an approach to recognising neurological differences in line with how we consider gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability status.

Photoworks is a platform for contemporary photography. Photoworks' programme includes commissions, new writing, participation and projects including the **Jerwood/Photoworks Awards**, **Photoworks Annual** and **Brighton Photo Biennial**. Photoworks is a registered charity, based at the University of Brighton and a National Portfolio Organisation supported by Arts Council England.

photoworks.org.uk

@photoworks_uk

Project Art Works is a visual artist-led organisation working with people who have complex needs and the people, systems and services that support them. They run a regular year-round programme from studios in Hastings for adults, young people, children and families. They collaborate with major cultural venues to deliver a programme of awareness raising, exhibitions, film production and inclusive cultural events.

EXPLORERS partners include Tate Liverpool; Fabrica and Photoworks, Brighton; AUTOGRAPH ABP, London; Mk Gallery, Milton Keynes; De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill and in Australia the Experimental Art Faculty, University of NSW and Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

projectartworks.org

@ProjectArtWorks

Phoenix Art Space was established by artists in 1995. Since then it has been providing affordable studio space and presenting a year round programme of contemporary exhibitions, arts courses and events. Today it is the largest visual arts organisation of its kind in the region, managing work space for over 100 artists and serving as a hub for visual arts production, discourse and learning. Based in central Brighton, it brings together professional artists and the wider public in a welcoming and creative environment.

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