

Portsmouth's own Clarke Reynolds opens new exhibition at Aspex



Journey by Dots (8 April – 26 June 2022) will present Reynolds' most ambitious collection of work to date in the artist's first solo exhibition at a major gallery.

As a child in the 1980s Reynolds remembers first visiting Aspex at its original location in Art Space Portsmouth on Brougham Road, for a school trip with Cottage Grove School. In the years that followed he would return to Aspex on a number of occasions, whilst his brother played in the neighbouring playground, and it's these visits that Reynolds says changed his life.

'Aspex saved my life. It truly has. I don't think people realise, in my estate, 80% of people who grew up there are addicts, in jail or dead. I am not one of them. What more can you say? Art is my light as my world is getting darker.'

Now coming full circle the visually impaired artist has created a body of work, which takes us on a journey through his life so far and shares his hopes and dreams for the future.

Reynolds lost the sight in his right eye at six years old and was later diagnosed with the degenerative condition Retinitis Pigmentosa. Navigating the world with deteriorating vision, he left his job as a professional model maker and made the surprising choice to pursue a career as a visual artist. He has since become one of the most prolific artists in the city, working with schools, community groups and partners across Portsmouth including Victorious Festival and Portsmouth Creates.

Reynolds aims for his work to be educational and tactile - actively encouraging people to touch his art. In *Journey by Dots* Reynolds uses his distinctive style of colourful braille lettering to map out three significant routes on his journey to becoming an artist - visiting Aspex as a child, travelling to University to train in model making, and returning to the gallery on the bus from Leigh Park as an adult. The show also reveals Reynolds' infectious energy and ambition through a collection of prophesying tactile paving slabs; predicting Clarke's future achievements winning the Turner Prize and appearing on Strictly Come Dancing!

The opening of *Journey by Dots* marks a new programme of events and exhibitions at Aspex. The spring season also includes *I Read the Wind* (6 April - 3 July 2022), an exhibition of ceramic poems in the gallery's Craft Space by Kaori Miyachi Sogabe and Hidekazu A-wa Sogabe of Studio Potapota. Both Reynolds and Studio Potapota have benefitted from the support of charity Outside In, who provide platforms for artists facing significant barriers to the art world due to health, disability, social circumstance or isolation, and whose vital work Aspex wishes to highlight this season.

Journey by Dots has been kindly supported by Colas.

Ends

For further information please contact Sophie Almond at sophie@aspex.org.uk

Events

Exhibition Preview and Season Launch Thursday 7 April, 6 – 8pm

Join Aspex to celebrate the launch of our new season of exhibitions.

Artist Talk and Tour Thursday 16 June, 5:30–6:30pm

Clarke Reynolds leads a tour through *Journey by Dots* and tells his story so far.

Artist Talk: Clarke Reynolds Sunday 3 July, 2–3:30pm

For this year's Port Fest, Clarke reflects on his experience of producing *Journey by Dots*.

Notes

Clarke Reynolds www.seeingwithoutseeing.com

Clarke Reynolds b. 1981 lives and works in Portsmouth. Previous exhibitions include The Base, Greenham 2022; OXO Tower, London 2021; Yellow Edge, Gosport 2021; The Crypt Gallery, London 2021; The Cove Gallery, Weymouth. Recent commissions include BENCH with Solent Showcase, Southampton; Braille Trail for Victorious Festival; and We Believe for Portsmouth Creates. Reynolds has recently launched the Art in Sight podcast with Steve Baker, available from anchor.fm/artinsight. Reynolds also works with Seekers Create and is an Ambassador for Outside In.

Aspex www.aspex.org.uk

Aspex has a 41-year track record of supporting emerging artists and engaging audiences, through the delivery of a programme of exhibitions, off-site projects and participatory opportunities. Artists such as Mona Hatoum, Richard Wilson and Susan Collis, all internationally acclaimed, received support from Aspex at an early point in their careers. This work has continued with projects offering key opportunities for artist exposure and professional development; and the annual Platform Graduate Award, a CVAN South East regional initiative which since 2012 has been awarded to four artists nominated by Aspex (Joella Wheatley, 2012; Josephine Rock, 2018; Imogen Marooney, 2019; and Louise Hall, 2020).

Outside In www.outsidein.org.uk

Outside In is a catalyst for change. The charity provides platforms for artists who face significant barriers to the art world due to health, disability, social circumstance or isolation. Through artist development, exhibitions and professional training it works to create a fairer art world by supporting artists, creating opportunities and influencing organisations. Founded in 2006 at Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, it has gone on to become an independent charity gaining National Portfolio Organisation status with Arts Council England. Outside In hosts the National, its own landmark exhibition, every two years, as well as an inspiring rolling programme of events, support, opportunities and training. A lot of the charity's work is also achieved by working with brilliant partners and from its regional hubs, currently based in the Midlands and Manchester. There are now more than 4,000 artists with their own galleries on the charity's website which also hosts all the latest news, interviews, videos and a virtual gallery as well as the new Outside In magazine and podcasts.