



# AMPLIFY

Mental health and wellbeing

## Exhibition Guide

# Welcome to Amplify

One in four adults experience mental illness. This statistic extends to impact one in ten children, yet the topic is considered taboo by many.

The 60 artists showcased at Amplify were selected as part of a UK wide competition to celebrate talent making works based on the theme of mental health.

Although the works are on the walls of our digital exhibition, this guide adds depth to their practice and shares the stories behind the works.

Sharing our stories and creating dialogue around mental health allows us to remove the stigmas around a topic which touches all of our lives. We hope this exhibition will do just that.

- Thank you to all who submitted their work for sharing their stories.
- Thank you to the judges for giving us their time to choose the winners.
- Thank you to the Zealous team, who have also shared their mental health stories and poured their hearts and souls into this exhibition.
- And, finally, **thank you for being here today**. We hope your experience of the works makes you think, creates conversation and inspires you to **share the works and amplify the discourses around mental health**.



Guy Armitage

Founder (Zealous)



## Sharing

Creating meaningful dialogue is one of the most powerful ways of creating societal change. If a piece you experience in the space moves you or makes you think. Please share it with others (social media, chat groups, face-to-face...).

Where available, we've put the artists social media channels in this guide so you can let them know the impact they have had on you; and if you want to include us in the conversation use **#zealousamplify**, @zealousco (facebook, insta) / @zealous\_co (twitter).

If you want to contact us privately, please refer to the contact us section at the bottom of this guide.

## Supporting



As part of running Amplify we have been raising funds for UK based charity Create

**Create** is a multi-award-winning charity **empowering lives, reducing isolation, and enhancing wellbeing** through the creative arts.

Their artists run creative projects with children and adults facing challenges in their lives. They are given a chance to express themselves, build skills, meet other people and boost their wellbeing through music, dance, painting, photography, drama and other artforms.

If you wish to **have a real impact on people's lives**, and you are able, **please donate** what you can to bring creativity to those who need it the most.

[Support Create](#)

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## Meet the Judges

The overall winner of Amplify will take home £1,000 with £250 for the runner up and £150 for the third place. We want to thank the wonderful panel of judges who gave us their time to help us pick the winners.



Photo by Jillian Edelstein

### **Esther Freud** Novelist

[Esther Freud](#) trained as an actress before writing her first novel, *Hideous Kinky*, which was made into a film starring Kate Winslett. After publishing her second book she was chosen as one of *Granta's* Best Young British Novelists.

Her other novels include *The Sea House*, *Lucky Break* and *Mr. Mac and Me*, and most recently, *I Couldn't Love You More*. Her first full-length play *Stitchers* was produced at The Jermyn St Theater in 2018 and in 2019 she was made a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. She is a patron of the charity Create.



### **Abdul Abdullah** Artist

[Abdul Abdullah](#) is an Australian multi-disciplinary artist. As a self-described 'outsider amongst outsiders' with a post-9/11 mindset, his practice is primarily concerned with the experience of the 'other'.

Abdullah's projects have engaged with different marginalized minority groups and he is particularly interested in the disjuncture between perception/projection of identity and the reality of lived experience.



### **Emma Chetcuti** Director at Multistory

Emma Chetcuti has 30 years of experience working in and leading innovative community and participatory arts.

In 2006 Emma founded [Multistory](#), a community art charity, located in Sandwell, in the Black Country. Multistory makes art with and by people in Sandwell and collaborates with photographers, writers, visual artists and film makers to produce stories that demand to be heard..



Photo by Hydar Dewachi

### **Jon Opie** Deputy Director of Jerwood Arts

Jon Opie has worked on [Jerwood Arts](#) grant-making since 2011. Having started out as a fundraiser at Hampstead Theatre and administrator for the Independent Theatre Council, he has a particular interest in the performing arts.

For Jerwood Arts, he has also been Jerwood Arts' lead on initiatives in dance and literature, and has played a supporting act to his colleagues delivering exhibitions at Jerwood Space and nationally on tour. He has been a Trustee of Cardboard Citizens Theatre Company since 2016.



### **Guy Winch** Licensed Psychologist

Guy Winch is a leading advocate for integrating the science of emotional health into our daily lives, workplaces, and education systems.

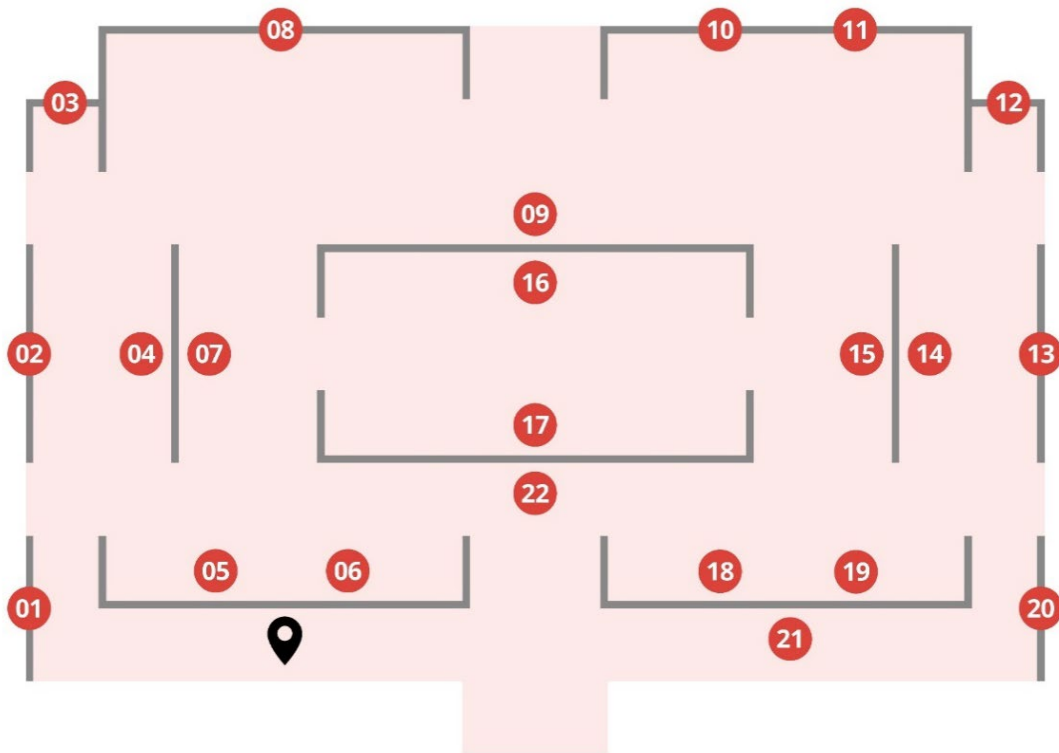
Guy's books have been translated into 28 languages and his three TED Talks have garnered over 30 million views. He writes Dear Guy for TED.com, the Squeaky Wheel Blog for PsychologyToday.com and is the co-host with Lori Gottlieb, of the Dear Therapists podcast from iHeartRadio.

His advisory work includes Lipton's #Unlonely campaign, Apellis Pharmaceuticals, and startups Alma and Circles. He maintains a private practice in New York City and is a member of the American Psychological Association. Learn more at [guywinch.com](http://guywinch.com).

## Room 1 Map

Themes

**Control, Isolation and Identity**



### 01. **Yellow Colette** by Catherine Levey

'This was inspired by a mental health patient called Colette, whose biography I read. A work colleague had known her and put me in touch with her family. I am fascinated by the unconscious gaze of the artist behind the portraits of others. Immersing myself in the stories of mental health sufferers, especially two artists who lived with significant mental health issues. Both Bryan Charnley and Colette McCulloch left a significant legacy of artwork and journals to help the viewer understand how they felt. By exploring their lives, I want to keep their stories alive through my portraits of them. As my work develops, I investigate drawing the viewer into the emotional state of my figures, using a state of intrigue.

I choose to work on acetate sheet for its slipperiness and wrestle for control. Layering with thin layers of paint mirrors the fragility of the human emotional state.



Gestural movement and shifting edges in the paint explores the changing vulnerability in us all and brings these figures back to life for a fragment of time.'

## 02. **Just Do It** by [Adri São Bento](#)

'I connected two TENS units to my dominant arm and proceeded to write columns of the phrase "Just Do It" on a sheet of paper. The shocks cause my arm and hand to move involuntarily, and as I gradually increase the intensity of the voltage, my writing becomes illegible.'

Adri (Portugal, 1997) is an interdisciplinary artist working with a variety of media including video, performance and sculpture. Their practice comes from their experiences, especially as a queer and disabled person, and it aims to contribute to a more inclusive and healthier environment for those considered 'outside the norm', by critically reflecting on the structures shaping the contemporary world. To raise awareness about the impossibility to be totally inside the norm, about we all being the surplus, Adri resorts to empathy-building strategies and interactivity between the audience and the work.

## 03. **Rumour Has It** by **Laura Green**

'In March 2021 I suffered a nervous breakdown after a difficult period in my professional life. As a result of that I have been left with a rare, chronic, life altering disability called FND. My symptoms are worsened by any form of stress. My mental health is of paramount importance for my wellbeing and quality of life.

"Rumour has it" reflects my experience of being an artist in my hometown. The words on the piece are names that I have heard people say about me or had said to me in the last ten years as I have tried to build a career for myself. I spoke out about an injustice I experienced at the hands of an art organisation I was working with as a socially engaged practitioner and the mistreatment of the participants in the project due to mismanagement by the organisation. By speaking out I ended my professional career, something to this day I do not regret even though it has cost my health and career. This particular piece helped me process the situation and by reclaiming the words I have had had thrown at me and presenting them to an audience I am now able to move on from that painful period.'

#### 04. **Traveller** by [Oliver Bliss](#)

'The person is encased in the deep-water suit and detached from their surroundings; unable to connect. The person is not submerged, but they cannot breathe freely. The piece uses visual prompts for the viewer to interpret the work on their own terms. Is the traveller a Nomad or explorer? Are they aimless or pursuing a direction of their choice?

I originally created the piece in response to my own feelings of isolation and loneliness. I was travelling a lot for work and realised I didn't have many personal relationships as I was working during the day, travelling for events and evening meetings with clients and I had at some point, got lost in my head. I was missing a sense of community, and of being close and intimacy with people I trusted and wanted to spend time with. I was missing meaningful relationships and I was in burn out whilst knowing it and still continuing.'

#### 05. **Undone and redone then undone again** by [Esther Eirianedd Munro](#)

A figurative painting depicting the complexity of the modern relationship between body and mind. Inspired by body dysmorphia and low self-esteem caused by print and social media. The woman is picked apart and broken yet still forced to be beautiful.

Esther Eirianedd Munro is a black, female artist. Her art reflects a struggle that is common amongst all people: mental health. Through figurative paintings she depicts the modern relationships between body and mind. Inspired by overly edited images in print and social media, she crops and cuts, dissects and destroys, then forces it together again. It is palatable, but it's not right. It is a commentary on the ugly underbelly of the beauty industry that is aggressively, yet so subconsciously, forced onto society. The mirrored images, a reoccurring theme in her work, is a call to look inwards. A call to see more than the body, but what matters most: the mind.

#### 06. **In the bell** by [Kate Steenhauer](#)

Emma describes the existential sadness she felt when her voice broke in puberty. Whereupon she abandoned her passion for singing, and avoided social interaction as even speaking caused her immense emotional pain. Now she is undergoing her transition and starting to sing again.

'I am a visual artist and filmmaker based in the northeast of Scotland. My practice explores the dynamic and interactive capacity of drawing in dialogue with other artforms, technology, and their relationship with its audience. This moves visual art as a traditionally static experience into a dynamic interactive artform that is temporal, transient, and transformational. My focus on process as practice is towards transparency in the act of collaborative creation, and above all the focus of my work is in elevating the voices of real people, raising under-represented voices while also encouraging intimate dialogue on subject matter which is often not given space in contemporary conversation.'

## 07. **Darkest Time** by [Kathleen McVey](#)

'This piece is reformation of my childhood trauma. On the right a demon creeps under the bedsheets whilst the figure on the left turns away. Covered in crosses she is seen as a holy entity by the viewer, but is connected to the other figure by the blanket. I think it's important to open a dialogue around how mental illness can be triggered - through sexual abuse as a child. I draw from my experience of this here.'

I am a multimedia artist working in Edinburgh, Scotland. My work encapsulates my own experience with bipolar disorder and mood dysregulation. I communicate and interrogate the complexities and extremes through a personal language of jarring mark-making and representational forms. My research explores the challenges of severe mental illness, creating a visual narrative of experiences with the intent to interact with and create a necessary dialogue around mental health to society at large. Exposing mental illness is a vital part in gaining public recognition, and addressing a vastly misunderstood community.'

## 08. **Bell-Jar (series)** by [Charles Inge](#)

'The bell-jar series, begun in lockdown, came out of the claustrophobia and anxiety of the time. As restrictions lifted I thought that I would find a new freedom, to escape the bell-jar as it were. But now I think that there's always something holding us back. This is either internal, external or both. I don't see the bell jar as a negative image, but rather an accurate description of the human condition.'

I studied painting at the Ruskin School of Fine Art in Oxford, and most recently at the Turps Studio Programme in London. When my studio in London was demolished during the pandemic I moved to the Isle of Wight where I have painted since. In 2021 I won the Ashurst Emerging Artist prize.'

## 09. **Stained Triptych** by [Alice Wisden](#)

'I abruptly break the dimensional boundaries of painting by attacking the idea of canvas and frame with loaded oil bars and available materials. My studio is my ever changing loaded space filled with iconography that exhumes my thoughts and physical identity. I work tirelessly on backgrounds only to be left with an ever loading anticipation about awkward faces planted amongst intense settings. I paint paused static images loaded in colour that allow my hectic linear eyes and chattering teeth to narrate a scene. By juxtaposing masked characters in a conflicting realm I portray a yearning I both detest and desire to painterly please.

I developed severe epilepsy 5 years ago and now I am identified as disabled. This is a very new place to what i can remember before being diagnosed as epileptic and told that I am disabled. I feel conflicted by the sudden use of the term disabled featuring daily in my life. I do not feel disabled yet my body disagrees. I like to avoid identifying as disabled but have unfortunately learnt this can actually turn out to be very selfish and although i find others react differently when told, I now have a new identity that i will always be conflicted by. I am still an artist.'

## 10. **Quotidian Creative** by [Nadia Armouti](#)

Video game installation and interactive performance utilizing the video game format as a tool for self-reflection and highlighting alternative paths to personal fulfillment and greater wellbeing.

Nadia Armouti is an artist researcher creating experiences to bring visibility to self-imposed limitations and alternative pathways to personal fulfilment, ultimately working to empower audiences to prioritize their unique wellbeing and mental health needs. By forcing her audience to make choices and then reflect on them, she invites a level of cognizance to decision-making. Interested in provable outcomes, Armouti believes this heightened awareness is a tool to make widespread material improvements to wellbeing. Pushing her audience to reflect on their own lives, she sees her practice as a first step toward making alternative futures a reality.

**11. Human Baggage**  
by Vic

'I endeavor to express the human experience through tangible forms. My work is interdisciplinary and I often use whichever medium I feel expresses the topic best at the time. My work often contains a figurative element, representing the body as metaphorical entities. I am drawn to themes around body, identity, obsession and society. Creating works which reflect the theatrical, often surreal environments of a world which force us into costumes and discomfort. My work human baggage is a fusion of sculpture and costume which plays with the aesthetic boundary of the beautifully grotesque. The work comments on the representation of the body, isolation and identity, issues which I feel are becoming ever increasing concerns within a world of deception & perfection.'

**12. Held**  
by [Judy Clarkson](#)

'Looking at the themes of vulnerability, body consciousness and need for affection, this painting depicts a woman through her monumental form, lost in herself, wrapping herself protectively in her own arms. The shapes of her body are sculptural and substantial, reminiscent of ancient carvings of women, yet her lowered head and closed eyes, her arms enclosing her within herself, shielding her from harm or intrusion, belie this strength. The folds of the curtain behind her evoke bars of a cage. In this painting, I wanted to convey feelings of fragility and loneliness. The subject's size leaves her open to abuse and discrimination. She seems to want to hide and retreat from the world. Such fears and distress can affect any of us, regardless of gender or physique.'

**13. Immobiliser**  
by [Niko Kappa](#)

Architectural elements reformed to body parts point connection to place and isolation constraints, becoming holy relics of degeneration and decay while describing how depression neutralizes body.

'Treating art creation as a formative process, I reflect on it personal experience and efforts to understand the world and define my place in it, examining intimate psychological states of fear, anxiety and depression unfolded as occurrences in space. Considering culture as an expression of human condition, I investigate how artworks operate as representation means charged with introspective qualities,

integrating character refractions while being particularly focused in concept of transformation.'

#### 14. **Totally Wired (Self-Portrait with Insomnia Posy)**

by [Pinkie Maclure](#)

'Engraved, painted and layered stained glass light box, made during lockdown, when my lifelong insomnia reached a crisis point. I clutch a posy of herbs supposed to aid sleep, but all I do is stare, wide awake, while the hands of my friend's wave like tiny stars in my mind's eye.

I'm a self-taught stained-glass artist inspired by medieval church windows, but I tell my own stories, in light boxes like glowing paintings, in the hope that I can reach out to other people who may have the same anxieties as me. I'm a lifelong insomniac. Stained glass is very slow. It takes many weeks or months. It can't be rushed. This is why it works for me. The time required to cut, paint, engrave and fire each piece allows my mind to drift; like in a trance, ideas emerge unexpectedly. I can transform bad experiences into something beautiful and sometimes funny.'

#### 15. **Silent Judging**

by [Sophy Lewis](#)

'My paranoia surrounding being watched and observed by people is illustrated in this painting, specifically focusing on being watched whilst eating as I have suffered from anorexia/bulimia for years and conveys the judgement I used to feel at the dinner table.

During the first lockdown at a time where I was desperate for my life to slow down, to have space from my hectic and jam-packed social schedule which preventing me from processing events that had led to a diagnosis of PTSD; I began to paint. Painting became an outlet for my bubbling emotions and helped me not only understand myself but help family members and friends understand me. By painting pictorial responses to my feelings through self-portraiture, the results are deeply personal and almost invasive (from the viewers perspective), encouraging the viewer to look behind the facial facade and into my mind.'

#### 16. **I love it when the images, when the images wash over me**

by [Sam Stewart](#)

'The film discusses growing up with the meme account I've been posting to from the age of 13 looking at how I've used it in the 5 years and how it's been an outlet for my

mental health. It's told using the images posted to the account and narrated by a deepfake modelled on myself'

Sam Stewart (b.2003) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice engages with how physical and virtual spaces affect their occupants. This ranges from exploring the relationship between private and public space as mediated by hostile design, and his own experience as a young artist growing up online.

## 17. **My Body is My Home** by [Tallulah Self](#)

'A short film about body image, based on my lived experience with an eating disorder and how through self-compassion and gratitude I was able to re-connect to my body and once again, come 'home' to myself. Spoken and danced by Margi Barbieri.

I'm Tallulah. I'm a film-maker and believer in magic. Oh, and I've worn sparkly socks every single day since 2016. 2016, just as I was turning 17 years old, I began to really struggle with my mental health. I was diagnosed with acute anxiety and anorexia nervosa and very soon after, was hospitalised for a long period of time. Back then, none of this made sense to me, it was as if some external force had taken over my mind, stripped me from my truth and the girl I knew, faded away. It was then, that my film-making transformed. I used my creative work to give voice to what I was experiencing. I made several short films in this time, using spoken word poetry and shared these on YouTube. By surprise, my story and my work seemed to resonate with other people and brought huge connection to my life. For the first time, I realised, I'm not alone.'

## 18. **Life Takes Guts** by [Eve Travers](#)

'Life Takes Guts is an animated to raise awareness and tackle the stigma of Inflammatory Bowel Diseases, specifically in the South Asian communities within the UK. To create this film, I interviewed Aleesha Verma, a young South Asian women dealing with IBD.

My name is Eve Travers and I'm an artist who is inspired by real peoples' stories. I often make animations using real peoples recorded interviews to try and communicate hard to talk about issues such as mental health. I myself am a queer, neuro divergent person who has struggled to communicate by verbal interactions my whole life and it can be very frustrating and lonely. I hope my art can make people feel heard and understood and allow a wider audience to connect and learn about things they may never have encountered or thought about before.'

**19. Poem Called Mental Health**  
by Jay Joshi

'A personal poem about struggling with my mental health

My name is Jay, I am young man with Cerebral Palsy, I love writing own experiences into my own poetry'

**20. Isolation**  
By [Fanny Beckman](#)

'This is a self-portrait taken in the midst of the pandemic. I was isolated in a flat on my own for several months. Lack of human interaction, creativity and exercise took a toll on me, and I struggled severely with my mental health. I hope we never have to go through it again.

I have previously used photography to explore different mental health conditions. I have mainly focused on questioning beauty standards, as well as highlighting women's and non-binary people's (un)safety in the public sphere. Art is not just something to put out into the world for me, it is a tool to process what is going on in society and a way for me to understand my surroundings.'

**21. Lockdown Diaries**  
by [Helen Shaddock](#)

769 diary pages that chronical my experiences of Lockdown life & record the changes & events of the pandemic. They are accompanied by illustrations & include categories such as activities, podcasts, films/television programmes, audiobooks, observations, reflections & football.

'I am a multidisciplinary artist based in Newcastle working with, for example, installation, performance, sound, video, writing & printmaking to explore the human condition. My lived experience of eating distress & obsessive-compulsive disorder informs the work I create & the way I work. Some of the consequences of living with these conditions are that rigour, routine & attention to detail are fundamental to my way of life, all of which are integral to my creative practice; using the constraints of systems, I allow chance & playful elements to create unexpected results.'



**22. Some Of Us**  
by [Charlotte Thomson-Morley](#)

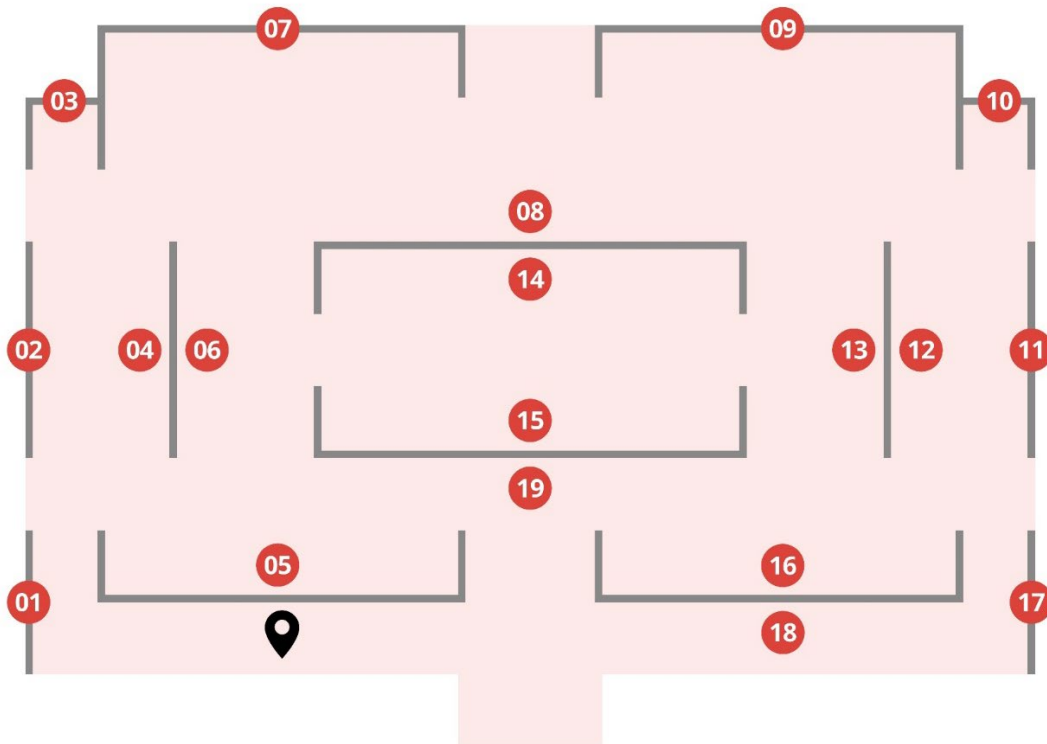
'This piece is a response to being a queer person living in a fat body with chronic health issues (PCOS and eating disorder recovery). These things effect the way you are seen by society and I wanted to capture a feeling of pain and release.'

Charlotte Thomson-Morley is an artist based in Nottingham whose work centres on feminist depictions fat bodies. Her artwork is created in response to the marginalization of fat and chronically ill bodies, leading to eating disorders and other mental health issues. She aims to raise awareness of these issues, challenge peoples ideas of what bodies in art 'should' look like and normalise images and discussion around bodies that don't fit societies norm. Her work is based on her own personal experiences, and she combines her experience as a digital illustrator with practical painting and printmaking.

## Room 2 Map

Themes

**Loss, Society & Ailments**



### 01. Mum's Marbles by [Sam Haynes](#)

'My mother has been living with Parkinson's disease for a number of years and in April was moved from residential accommodation to a nursing home, following a sudden deterioration in her physical and mental well being. We used to enjoy playing marbles on mum's kitchen floor...'

Sam Haynes started her practice over twenty-five years ago creating site specific public art installations, engaging local communities with the belief that art has the power to bridge divides within society. The creative process is still all about making connections, within her practice as an artist facilitator, as well as a collaborator and sculptor. Accessibility lies at the heart of Haynes' work, incorporating found objects and materials, using low tech methods of construction to create abstract assemblages that reference architectural space. Her choice of domestic, utilitarian

objects reflect Haynes' focus on physicality of form, with a dynamic functionality placed within a framework of containment and control.

## 02. **The shortest of moments**

by **Andy Simpson**

'A short video project combined with a light and sculptural installation. Made up of a split-second moment that my brain relives of the very short life of my son who died at 22 months old in 2015. Visuals are created with what remains of my son, a collection of light and sound.'

A combination of video, light installation, sound and sculpture, the work looks at the things that are left behind after the loss of a loved one in my case my 22-month-old baby Edward. Over time the memory of a loved one becomes more and more abstract, and I found myself obsessing over single moments in time and reliving minute memories both good and bad an intense desperation to not forget my child. I found myself haunted by how little I have left of them and all that remained were photos, videos and sound clips. Everything I had was merely light and sound.'

## 03. **Held in Grief**

by **Anita Clipston**

'There have always been threads, whether conscious or subconscious, that have woven through the fabric of my life. For me these threads have been Cocoons of Love and Cages of Trauma. The rooms in my paintings are imagined spaces that hold within them the traumas I tried to escape and yet became part of, told within the meta-narrative of time. My paintings reveal, and yet leave hidden, parts of me through sexuality, costume and characters. The characters are both connected and disconnected in the knitting together of these stories. The rooms are inviting, dangerous, beautiful and yet lived in. In these spaces, I inhabit and escape my reality and at the same time show that I am not my trauma but set apart from it by the very act of creating these spaces. I do not disown my trauma; however, I do not let it be the foundation of who I am.'

## 04. **Forever and Two Years**

by **Dandy-Day Heffernan**

Recorded over a second-hand Pavarotti cassette tape, 'Forever and Two Years' relays a daughter's retelling of the morning her mother died. Presented as an audio immersive experience to embrace ones personal and intermate understanding of grief.

'My name is Dandy-Day, I studied Fine Art at Central Saint Martins and graduated with a First-Class Honours degree. From this, I was awarded the 2021 Sid Motion Gallery award and a place on the Associates Studio Program, with Acme Studios, where I continue my practice. I am a multidisciplinary artist, whose practice was subjected to an unforeseen shift after the sudden loss of my mother in 2019. Forced to discover the multi-faceted powers of grief and loss, my practice has evolved into an autobiographical glimpse of childhood and identity pre- and post- my mother's passing. My practice is not only my devotion to my mum, but it is a kindness to myself. I used to say I make work for my mum, but what I have realised is that I am making work for myself. To help grieve, grow, question, understand, feel closer to, love, cry...'

## 05. **It is never too late to love you**

by **Katerina Fitzova**

'I suffered from a long COVID. My mental health changed. I visited briefly the neuro-diverse spectrum experience, a different perception of the mind: an unfiltered processing of information by the brain. The casual tasks of daily life became suddenly an uphill. Overwhelm was my daily companion. A gift that I received during the period of recovery was the realisation that the neuro-diverse spectrum runs in my family in three generations, undiagnosed (besides one young family member), unacknowledged and how much pain and misunderstanding this caused. I had a profound breakthrough in relationship with my 80 years old father. Writing became my healing tool, writing defines who I am. Writing allows me to be as I am and allows me to celebrate the diversity in an open way. Art became my rescue. Art became my meditation and my cure. Writing brought relief and liberation. And I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to feel that I belong, by submitting my poem, that speaks from my life experience.'

## 06. **Disruption**

by **Anthony Shintai Amao**

'A short film I created with friends in response to the Black Lives Matter Protests that shook the nation (June 2020). The film explores Mental Health, Social Action, Community, Identity and Culture.'

Anthony Shintai is a Birmingham based visual artist (Born and Raised in Nigeira), with a foundation in documenting street culture. Anthony's first introduction into the digital arts was when he purchased his first dslr camera at the age of 15. Anthony was motivated to document/showcase his local inspiring community of creatives on social media but this has now blossomed into Anthony earning opportunities to learn

and work with brands, campaigns, event organisers across the world - delivering original pieces of art that engages with the viewer and sheds new light into our perception/definition of community, understanding of heritage and an overall celebration of street culture and the people who shape it.

## 07. **Homebody** by [Sarah Byrne](#)

'Homebody explores the connections between grief, healing and craft. On becoming fixated with crochet in the same period I processed the grief around the loss of my dad, it took me a while before I saw the connection in those two things. Once realising however, I discovered a wealth of research detailing a long history of craft's tactile comfort and its intrinsic connection to loss and wellbeing, and I began to introduce crochet to my practice for the first time. I began to notice a relationship between my simple crocheted yarn creations and Dad's photographs, realising that I had subconsciously been selecting colours of yarn which mirror those in the colour pallets of dad's photographs. I have since been spending time furthering the connection between the yarn and the photographs and learning new skills of dyeing and spinning my own yarn to create bespoke bobbins of yarn created in direct response to Dad's photography.'

## 08. **Idle Hands** by [Joanne Tiffany](#)

Textile art incorporating cyanotypes, knitting, crochet, embroidery photography and heat transfer. Idle Hands was created after research was undertaken into the Mental Health Museum Wakefield's collection.

Joanne Tiffany's work is a multi-disciplinary practice that explores the hidden within society in respect of the social contract and is informed by her own lived experiences of disability and chronic illness. Works include the digitally created pieces 'Disabled Enough' and 'Blood, Sweat and Tears' that employ a strong graphic aesthetic in their use of text and photography. Her recent work 'Untitled: Fit to Work' is a replicated 50 pence piece illustrated on one side with the disabled symbol and on the flip side, in red and white, is the phrase, fit to work. This participatory work is intended to be flipped, reflecting the often-inconsistent life changing decisions of the U.K. Benefits assessment process.

## 09. **Support Bubble & Mindfulness** by [Jenny Chan](#)

Support Bubble & Mindfulness series Multi-tasking women carry responsibilities on different parts of the body, trying round peg in a square, an air-vent on their head is a must. Their bodies share a living experience, spider webs of colours & connections with opened/shut doors.

Hong Kong born Warwick based ceramicist. Jenny started out in 2017, a person completely unsure of her capabilities after being a housewife for 16 years. Despite being confidence zero, she started to learn from YouTube and created ceramics from mugs to ceramics sculptures, which she found peaceful and fulfilling, the ideal distraction for relieving anxiety from difficult family life and isolation as a new immigrant in the UK.

## 10. **Life Balance** by [Helen Grundy](#)

'I have created a digital collage/illustration showing how wellbeing is about finding balance in our lives and to be mentally well we need to feel safe, be able to take risks, connect with others, appreciate nature and be able to laugh.

I am an object maker and collage artist. I am also a support worker in a homeless hostel in Birmingham. I am a front-line worker and I worked through the pandemic and saw, firsthand, how people struggled with their mental health and wellbeing during that time. In my job I support people to prepare to live independently and wellbeing is always important. I support people to find accommodation and turn a flat into a home. Wellbeing comes from having multiple needs met in terms of housing, food, employment and social contact but its also about knowing how to look after yourself and how to manage the stress of modern life. In all of this, balance is key. Without balance we struggle to cope. Achieving balance is a skill and its something we need to practice continually.'

## 11. **I Am My Own Deity** by [Grace Ballinger](#)

'I made this painting in a time of extremely heavy grief, it reminds me of my goals and intentions, and is an extremely powerful symbol of my own strength in adversity, and how colour can flourish even in dark times.

The painting is mixed media, including materials such as acrylic paint, alcohol ink, and even nail polish remover in parts! It consists of over 200 affirmations and

positive statements, written and layered and abstracted over and over again. It explores the effects of positive affirmations on my negative mental state, and the things I tell myself in order to try and heal my wounds.'

## 12. Sick and Tired

by [Laura Greenway](#)

A durational performance that explores living life with depression and the common way in which this illness can leave you literally unable to get out of bed. For 6 hours the artist lay in a bed covered in the intrusive thoughts she often experiences when she is unable to get up.

Laura Greenway is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice is based around her own experiences of mental health problems and disability. She often engages in performance art or use mediums that she deems as performative, utilising her body as a tool of expression. Her work aims to communicate themes such as vulnerability and fragility as well as focusing on the theme of repetition, making links between the ritualistic nature of illnesses such as Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, and repetition as part of art. Laura's practice encompasses performance, print and text work to create unique art pieces often using live art to put an emphasis on the process of making and allowing her audience to witness the development of the work. Laura regularly employs the use of durational performance, as she believes it helps to capture the relentless nature of living with mental illness and disability.

## 13. The Fog

by [Ziyoo Hwang](#)

Visualised nebulous fog based on Mark Fisher's idea about widespread anxiety and depression in our society caused by capitalism.

'I observed more and more people, especially those in my age group of Millennials and Gen Z, getting affected by mental health issues - even before the pandemic, in a world ruled by numbers. Now I see more of them in a world of uncertainty and isolation. Numbers are ruling the world, not only in our bank accounts, but also in time, height, weight, likes, followers and grades. Virginia Woolf described her depression as a 'nebulous fog'. I saw this nebulous fog covering us, working as the filter, altering our perception of our lives, making us more anxious and depressed.'

**14. Elephant in the Room**  
by [Lanre Malaolu](#)

A spoken word-dance film exploring mental illness within the black community and beyond.

‘Black men, specifically young working-class black men, have been somewhat left out of global conversations surrounding mental health and their challenges and needs.

The Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS) found that Black men are estimated to be nearly eight times more likely than their white counterparts to experience mental health issues. Yet for various reasons, these men are forced to keep their thoughts and feelings locked up inside themselves, which over time creates an inner turmoil and eventually boils over in different ways. I was born and raised in Hackney (back when it was pretty rough) and have seen and experienced how the effects of racism, discrimination, social and economic inequalities, the criminal justice system and the stigma of mental health contribute to mental health issues these men experience on a day-to-day basis and continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. This film is also a semi-autobiographical snapshot of my own challenges and experiences with my mental health.’

**15. Zen For Likes**  
by [Francesco Coppola](#)

A young person turns toward a fictional meditation app as relief from the anxieties and claustrophobia of lockdown. We are sucked into a visual representation of what these apps lead you toward. The contradiction between meditation apps as profit seeking products versus legitimate.

Francesco Coppola is an Italian Chinese animation artist based in London. His films employ a variety of techniques from 3D, to dark room photography. His work has been featured on the BBC, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts and at the Smithsonian. Currently he is exploring different ways to digitally animate spaces and urban architectures. While adding analog techniques to introduce human elements of memory and history.

**16. Unborn**  
by [Lucy Cross](#)

‘Artistic poetry recital. As a chronically ill person, I address the physical & psychological battles that disabled people face, highlighting areas which are often



stigmatised: menstrual health infertility miscarriage unemployment suicide mental health invisible disability.

I want to tell my story of living with endometriosis because it has affected every day of my life, in every capacity, since I was 11 years old. I am now 33. As a result, it has severely impacted my mental health and wellbeing. Most importantly, my experience is not a rare one and is representative of many people living with endometriosis, as well as disabilities generally. This piece was inspired by the fact that invisible disabilities generally are too often misunderstood because they cannot be seen; I want to generate more awareness surrounding this invisibility. Hopefully, my words have conjured up a reality which is more tangible to an onlooker, but which many patients might not feel comfortable sharing themselves.'

### **Slow down, Birungi**

by [Birungi Kawooya](#)

'Slow down, Birungi reminds me to prioritise my rest, imagination and dreamspace to reclaim my humanity and work towards a more equitable society. Slow down, Birungi is part of the The Sisters Need Sleep collection which celebrates Black women receiving loving care.

2020 was emotionally draining for many reasons, and specifically for Black women; seeing so many dead Black men on the news and all over our social feeds was incredibly distressing. Many women and transwomen die everyday and don't make it onto the news, which is a different kind of pain and despair altogether. I found myself disconnecting from the news cycle and disassociating to protect myself from effects of witnessing so much violence. It took a monumental year like 2020 to make it clear the loop was not working. So, I've created the Sisters Need Sleep series to turn attention inwards and celebrate Black womxn at rest. With Sisters Need Sleep, I am reminding myself that I can be honoured for just breathing. When my friends cancel plans with me I congratulate them for listening to their bodies and creating space to restore themselves. And more likely than not, them cancelling helps me to slow down too.'

### **18. Gorgeous**

by [Oli Court](#)

'Gorgeous' is a response to the loneliness and ostracisation that pervades modern Britain. It's a surreal comedy because it's easier to deal with depressing subject matter through humour, and I want the audience to really feel how the homeless narrator sees the world. There's emphasis on his hunger, his temperature, his hope

for connection with others, and I've tried to measure everything in idiosyncratic ways - this man evaluates the world around him very differently, but I hope it all has a kind of internal logic.'

## 19. **Mind Matters** by Minna Chang

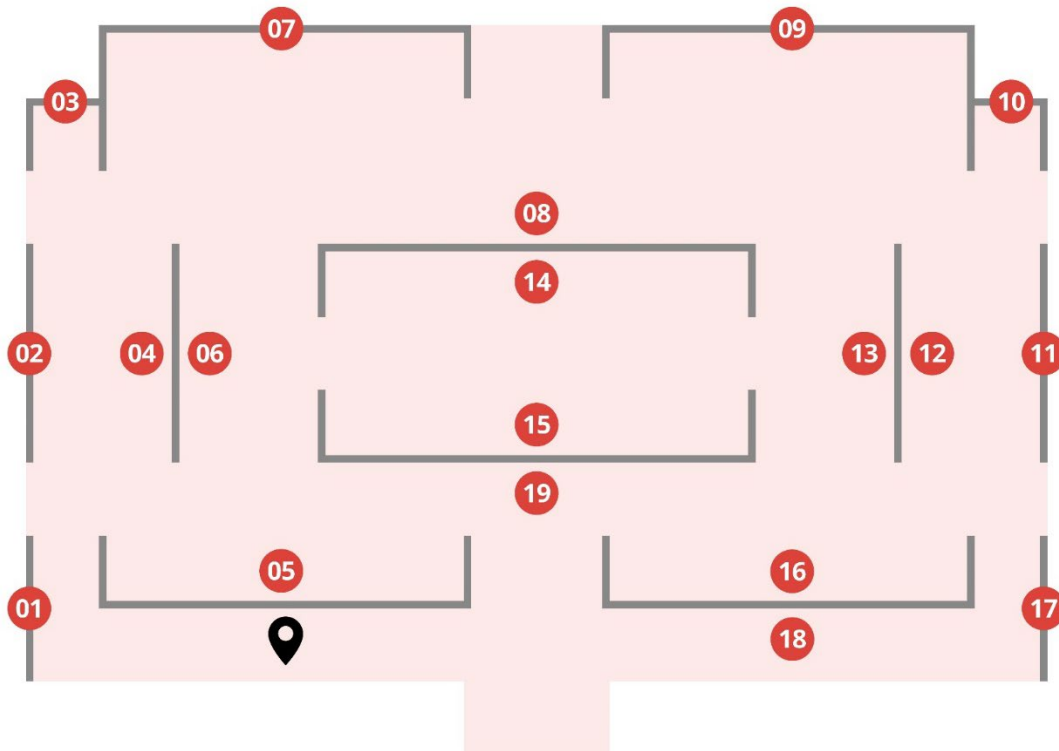
An acrylic-based painting, combining flow art, blow art, swipe art and tissue painting. In the same way that this painting combines various techniques, styles, colours & mediums, our psyche and mental wellbeing are an amalgamation of our experiences, values, thoughts and more.

'I am a full-time doctor working in London. I was diagnosed with severe suicidal depression 4 years ago and underwent electroconvulsive-therapy treatment. Thanks to this, the incredible treating teams and the most loyal, patient and compassionate loved ones, I reached remission. Everyday within and outside of my work, I see how mental wellness and illness affect people's lives. Having experienced the severe end of the spectrum myself, I can empathise and sympathise with others in a way that I would never have been able to, had I not been through the hell that depression trapped me in. I have combined several techniques/styles/mediums in this piece, as each individual feature allowed me to express and communicate something unique. These included blow art/swipe art/tissue painting/flow art. After the ECT, my thinking was scattered, and I struggled to think/analyse/remember anything. My brain felt like a spilt liquid with no structural integrity. Using fluid art technique in this painting allowed me to symbolise this.'

## Room 3 Map

Themes

**Trauma & Solace**



### 01. **My Mind** by Leila Mertz

'A piece representing the mind of someone suffering from depression and anxiety. Made with: Acrylic, oil pastels and graphic illustration. Depicts a figure in turmoil and despair, morphing into different parts, including pain and self harm and addiction to prescribed drugs.

My name is Leila Mertz, I live in Cambridge, I am 17 years old and am currently studying Art and Design in College. For the last few years I have unfortunately suffered at the hands of mental illness. These difficult times, left me broken, however through art I was able to help myself, and grow my skills to exceed what I once loved. Art has been a great outlet for me to be able to focus my thoughts and express them. Many suffering people choose to hide, (myself included) but art is a fantastic escape from reality, and helps people show what they're really going through. I hope to excel in finishing my studies next year, and then plan to go to university. As I grow I am

understanding more and more, just how important support is, and that talking isn't the scariest thing in the world. I hope that by sharing my artwork I may be able to reach someone and inspire them to get in touch with their creative side.'

## 02. **The Bed Maayan**

by [Maayan Sophia Weisstub](#)

'The Bed. A place of rest and security, of warmth and protection. At once a symbol of "home" and the portal to another world, the world of dreams. A bed can be a place of pain; or a space for respite from pain. This work replaces the crisp, clean linen of the archetypal bed with bruised and battered skin - signs of abuse and trauma. The bruises and blemishes are the outcome of a scenario that unfolds in the safety of the home, hidden by the privacy of the bedroom. The concrete signs of hurt expressed in The Bed depict the different forms of abuse that occur behind closed doors: the physical, the mental, the emotional. My hope is that this installation will engage the audience with experiences of hidden abuse and trauma, and with their aftermath; the shame, hurt, and damage, invisible to the world but nevertheless present even after the bruises fade away.'

## 03. **Sun chasers**

by [Anastassia Zamaraeva](#)

A series of ceramic sculptures finished with gouache. The sun chasers are a representation of coming out of a dark time and feeling the warmth of the sun on your face. Wanting to stretch your face as far towards the warmth as you can and take it all in.

'For me, the draw of clay is its innate ability to connect us to our unconscious and past experiences of touch. I'm grateful that it gives me the ability to externalise deeply held feelings and make them into something tangible. Working intuitively with clay allows me to explore my inner world as well as our collective unconscious, making the resulting work both personal and relatable. I am currently training to become an art therapist. Learning about art therapy has transformed my relationship with art and has allowed me to be open in my expression, trusting my intuition and allowing it to lead the way.'

## 04. **Hear My Cry**

by [Jennifer Louise Martin](#)

'Hear My Cry' is Jennifer Louise Martin's first film which tells the story of her experience having post-natal depression. She has more recently explored the

narrative in her paintings, this is the first time she is manifesting her story and its psychological dimensions on film.

Jennifer Louise Martin is a visual multi-disciplinary artist from London. Martin creates collages using magazine cuttings and her own photography as her source material to inform her large-scale mixed media paintings. which are charged with an underlying psychological process depicted through the materiality and language of paint. Martin is influenced by fashion photography and is an avid collector of vintage patterns and textiles, exploring hand embroidery, knitting and the manipulation of fabrics in her work.

## 05. **Requiem** by [Ioana Baltan](#)

“Requiem” is a triptych painting inspired from the lives of institutionalized people with severe mental diseases. The exaggerated faces and the use of tenebrous colors with powerful brush strokes aim to highlight the intense trauma of these hospitalized characters.

Ioana Baltan (b. 1993) is an energetic full-time visual artist whose oeuvre revolves around mental disabilities, poverty, and homelessness. She completed a Master in Contemporary Techniques in Painting cum laude at the National University of Arts in Bucharest (Romania) in 2017 and a scholarship at Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan. After experiencing the artistic vibrancy of the Beaconsfield Contemporary Art in London where she worked, she decides to leave her family and her Romanian home country and elect the English capital as her home in 2018. Currently, the artist is enriching her understanding of the human psyche, creating works inspired by dreams, hypnotic trance, and stories regarding our human origins, in which she mixes elements from her own life as an expat young woman.

## 06. **A brief respite from the sandstorm** by [Stevexoh](#)

‘Painted in a brief moment of calm in between the perpetual storm that stings the eyes, clouds the mind and makes me want to seek shelter from the world. Acrylics on canvas.’

Steve is a self-taught “outsider” artist known for his distinctive black and white drawings, his colourful paintings, his 3D wooden cut-outs and his unusual conceptual art projects such as the globally viral “(Not a) Lost Cat” project and “Sound of Silence”, the world’s first silent podcast featuring special guests. Steve finds the World a fascinatingly bizarre place and creates art to give his hyperactive imagination an

outlet. He makes art to make sense of his mental health, his neurodiversity and his perpetual bewilderment as to what this is all about. He has sold his work across 5 continents, exhibited alongside the likes of Pablo Picasso and David Shrigley and hosted two successful solo art exhibitions in the UK in 2021. In addition to exhibiting in galleries Steve is often commissioned to paint murals and street art.

## 07. **Trauma 2**

by [Martin Vallis](#)

A selection of works from the series 'Trauma 2'.

'My life up to and around 2009 had been incredibly chaotic, self-destructive and abusive to myself and I had no understanding of this behaviour. I had made several attempts on my life, spent time in Psychiatric Hospitals under Section been addicted to Alcohol and Drugs, spent time in a Detox Hospital followed by Rehab and eventually a Personality Disorder Service, where 12 years ago I was diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder with traits of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and with that diagnosis came clarity.

Today I also work part time as a 'Lived Experience Practitioner' co delivering awareness training in Personality Disorder, these programmes are aimed at staff who work in that particular field with a view to improving their practise because the diagnosis is a very much maligned and contentious one. I love the work, it has taught me a lot about myself and the people who work in this field.

## 08. **SYMBIOSIS**

by [Hal Mayer](#)

Hal's project SYMBIOSIS is a Body Horror dance theatre work, delving into a world of contractable depression. Finger tutting is used to construct the movement, taking a niche art form to create a movement language.

'I'm a movement artist living in Nottingham. I've been striving to create my own lane as an artist, utilising my skills in Hip-Hop dance to create harrowing , Horror Theatre. The techniques behind the Hip-Hop disciplines, most notably Popping and Tutting are used as a tool set for Body Horror creation. An overlooked avenue for this art form. I'm obsessed with the cathartic aspect of Horror media. Having struggled with my mental health since 13, I was diagnosed with Bipolar disorder in my teens. Before this diagnosis I found dark media a great comfort for my low moods. Seeing a reality worse than mine is truly cathartic and through my Masters degree I studied the healing effect Horror media has on those afflicted with Depressive disorders. From

this I have strived to create Horror works that dramatise the dark underbelly of our human condition.'

## 09. **Mental Health Toys**

by [Annemarieke Kloosterhof](#)

This series explores various aspect of Mental Health, disorders, and other neurodiversity, in an inviting way that is colourful, accessible and most of all: kid friendly. Each image is made by hand and is created out of paper. Photography by collaborator Nick Dunne.

The aim of this project was to create a series of still life photo-illustrations targeted to young children, in a way to help explain these sometimes complicated medical terms through a medium they are familiar with: Toys.

## 10. **Whatever The Outcome We're Going To Grow A Little**

by [Estelle Ronald](#)

'Digitally Designed Poster. Inspired by something I say to calm myself down in anxious/new situations, this design features a white orchid on a green background with the message 'Whatever the outcome we're going to grow a little' underneath.

In 2020, lockdown and the Covid-19 pandemic abruptly slowed our natural pace and gave us the time to sit and be with ourselves. Whilst going through something collectively, we all went through something individually – a period of simultaneous pain and healing. Inspired by my own reflection through lockdown and the music that guided me through, this body of work contains a collection of digitally designed posters, greeting cards and stickers – all acting as a reminder that we can move forward and heal when we are patient, gentle and kinder to one another. A life such as this one should be experienced together.'

**11. Home**  
by [Benjamin Rostance](#)

'The house slabs chart my lived experience of growing up in the many houses my mother rented in order to escape bailiffs. On face value they look to be standard, working-class tiles with carefully etched representations of the faces of each of the houses we occupied from my birth.'

Benjamin Rostance is a working class artist, born and based in Nottingham, England. His context is currently concerned with themes of mental health, coping mechanisms and recovery. Rostance uses his lived experience to create art that investigates the complicated and often unspoken effects surviving an abusive childhood can take on the body and mind. His themes touch on the experience of growing up in a large, poor, and working-class family in England and of living with decades of mental illness, anxiety, and depression. Though his work can express the toxic aspects of surviving an abusive childhood, Rostance also makes art that reflects on healing, coping mechanisms and positivity.'

**12. A Tic Called Trevor**  
by **Nicola Meekin**

'My Daughter is currently experiencing Tic's (possible Tic Syndrome, or possible Tourettes). We are currently awaiting a neurologist appointment and a secondary mental health referral. My daughter explained to me how the Tic's make her feel. This is my poem, to help her explain.

I have always had a love of writing poetry, I believe that writing it has provided such a cathartic process to me. I tend to write in a very casual and straight to the point way. I'm Hull born and bred, and being a typical Yorkshire lass, we tend to call a spade a spade. I love to write explanatory pieces, that open minds, educate and raise awareness. I think it is so important in this day and age, that we try to understand things, and appreciate individuality. Everyone has their own obstacles and stresses to contend with, and we all have different ways in which we choose to deal with these. As a self-proclaimed invisible illness warrior, who suffers with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome; I believe that the skill of being able to explain things, matter of fact in rhyme, to be my super power.'



**13. First Light**  
by [Nadia Day](#)

In a world of struggles with mental health and uncertainty, the sun still rises each morning striking a chord of hope. Acrylic on canvas painting.

This painting was inspired during lockdown. It shows the sun rising in a misty winters park. The light streams through the silhouettes landscape. I have used thick flat brushstrokes to energetically build up the sky, and later a pallet knife to strike fluorescent pinks and warm colours through the trees.

**14. The World Through Their Eyes**  
by [Betsy Smith](#)

'As an ex-policewoman people often ask me about the excitement of cases and interviews of which I had to deal with. I tell them the usual stories of police chases and great arrests but hold one story very dear to my heart. The story of a young girl of which died in front of me. After dealing with the impact of a serious incident like that, I struggled. I felt as though I had no control and no way of helping the girl or the family. All I could do was comfort them after fate took its place. I took some time off of work and eventually left. I had to deal with why something like that happened and what had she done to deserve that. I had PTSD and still struggle with my memory of that day.

I made this Collage after having time to process that day and channel my energy into something in memory of her. This Collage illustrates a mental portrait of the PTSD I experienced and a reflection of my memory of the girl and was a way to reflect and embrace my memories of that awful day. The Collage itself represents my reflection of the girl and her innocent youth. It shows how her face is in every child I saw and how scarred I was from that experience.'

**15. Run For It**  
by [Sam Sherborne](#)

Made in mild steel using blacksmithing techniques. It explores the childhood drama of growing up in a dysfunctional family and the escape into adulthood.

'I make my sculptures to process difficult memories and concerns and clarify my ideas as well as to generate 'flow'. Making the sculptures is not just catharsis, but a way I can understand the subject matter, see it in detail, know its extent and boundaries, compartmentalise it, often forgive, and move on. I choose subjects that engender strong emotions and these, combined with the experience of 'flow', drive

me through many hours of what can be exhausting work. I enjoy applying my hard one blacksmithing expertise to improve my mental health rather than to the making of utilitarian objects. It has been a very rewarding repurposing of my skill and I have been able to focus on sculpture alone for the last seven years. Each sculpture is a like songs, or track on a record and I am enjoying touring the 'album' round the country exhibiting them at the moment.

My work has themes which can be categorised into either 'family' (memories, emotions, dysfunction and dynamics) or 'everyday', including the scourge of modern technology, work, impoverished modern-day ritual, climate change and worry.'

## 16. **The Black Experience** by [Chanakira](#)

'This collection is inspired by my experience as a black/ Zimbabwean, immigrant woman living in the UK. It explores mental health, racism, sexism and aims to challenge the society we live in.

I am a Zimbabwean-born, London-raised Afro Expressionist. I moved around a lot growing up, so navigating my identity had always been an issue for me but at the tender age of 27 I discovered that I'm not just one thing, I am all and none. I am self-taught, with no formal education in art or illustration and my artwork is generally generated by impulse and emotion. My collections are inspired by my experience as a black/ Zimbabwean woman living in the UK. Coming from a Zimbabwean background, I have always found it difficult to open up and talk about my feelings and experiences. The idea of therapy and seeking help for mental health and social issues was very taboo in my community which made it very hard for people like me to get any help and support. Having felt like this for most of my life, I want to challenge the perception of the black experience and mental health by creating a collection that opens up a dialogue about being black in the UK.'

## 17. **Untitled** by [Edd Rose](#)

'This work conveys some of the things my autism and mental illness make me imagine. There are some uplifting things, some bizarre things, but the end result is a kind of colourful confusion.

I like to try and create artwork that is different. I like creating small, intricate pieces that encourage people to get up close to the artwork and feel a sense of intimacy. I use art to reflect how I perceive the world.'

**18. Mad Again**  
by [One Inky Queer](#)

'This poem about mental health is very close to my heart. It's a reflection on the nature of diagnosis and wellbeing, in the light of having been diagnosed recently with two mental health conditions that I'd known I'd had for years. Isn't it strange how we expect sense from each other, even when we're in mental health crisis? Society often requires us to explain our pain, difficult experiences and mental health in a calm and ordered way to qualify for help, but people don't really communicate in neat narratives, especially when we're struggling. So, I wrote this poem to be multi-directional - try reading it vertically, jumping around to different chunks or missing bits out.

Trauma poet keeping it light. Serving you queer cripple realness, honey. Big stylistic range, or possibly just quite confused. Insistently and unstopably intimate and inappropriate, but not in the fun way. Also does children's poems (no, really).'

**19. Speechless**  
by [Zi Ling](#)

'Acrylic & Ink on paper. Inspired by my own experiencing of borderline personality disorder and the difficulty of communication.'

Zi Ling is a visual artist based in Bristol. She was born to the Chinese painter HuiTao Lin, a pioneer of the 85 New Wave Movement. Since the age of four, she received formal training from him in drawings. She is a member of Royal Institute (Watercolours) and a candidate of Royal Academy of West England. She is specialising in water-based medium experimenting with Portraiture, surrealism figurative paintings, and dance theatre project. Inspired by photography, surrealism, human anatomy and dreams. She is trying to combine figures, colour and marks with a different vision. In her works, paintings are portrait or figurative within a surreal setting, containing strong concepts of dreams, Asian tradition, fantasy and diversities.

## Contact us

If you would like to get in touch with us about Amplify or any of our other projects

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If you organise competitions, awards, residencies of your own and want to simplify your process.

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