

Awkward Bastards

Rethinking Ideas Around Diversity



Programme

TIMETABLE

09.00	Registration and refreshments	
10.00	Craig Ashley introduces the day with Mike Layward and Garry Robson	page 5
10.20	Keynote Speaker; Professor David Turner	page 6
11.15	Break	
11.35	Rethinking Diversity	page 6
12.45	Lunch	
13.30	Institutional Behaviours to Interpretation	page 8
14.40	Break	
14.50	'Why is it so difficult to define yourself as a Disabled artist?'	page 9
15.50	Break	
16.10	'What comes next?' panel discussion	page 11
16.45	Film 'A Conversation with the Past'	page 12
17.30	Close	
18.00	Drinks reception and preview of 'Disrupted'	page 13

Foreword by Mike Layward

Welcome to 'Awkward Bastards'

A key part of 'Awkward Bastards' will be celebrating the differences and the similarities we have as Diverse artists, through exploring the places that we cross over.

We all share a history of growing out of civil rights movements whether a BAME, Disabled or LGBT artist. These histories have taken different routes but are there shared roots?

There is the creative case for Diversity. Is it working? Is it creating a buzz and excitement in the arts world and beyond? Are we celebrating the creative case?

What do I hope will come out of the Symposium? Well I know that it will be an exhilarating day, exploring topics that are challenging and uncomfortable to explore; like why is it so hard to define yourself as a Disabled artist? and does the same question apply to BAME and LGBT artists?

I'm hoping that a lot of new connections will be made. I'm not expecting easy answers, but the beginning of a journey on a road that some of us have been traveling on for years and for others will be a new journey.

DASH would like to say an enormous thank you to mac birmingham and Arts Council England for all their support of 'Awkward Bastards'.

'Awkward Bastards' will be audio described, BSL interpreted and Stagetext will provide speech to text reporting.

This event will be livestreamed and highlights will be available through the DASH website in the future.

10.00

Introduction



Craig Ashley, is a curator and producer based in the West Midlands. As Visual Arts Producer at mac birmingham since 2009, Craig continues to develop, implement and oversee delivery of the visual arts programme following completion of the arts centre's £15m redevelopment.

Garry Robson is one of the most respected directors and innovators in Disability Led performance, working both in the U.K. and Internationally. He was Artistic Director of DaDaFest International 2008 and 2010 and for DaDaFest 2012 and The Cultural Olympiad he co-curated 'Niet Normaal: Difference on Display', a major contemporary arts exhibition.



Mike Layward has worked in the arts for nearly 40 years, as a performer, musician, carnival designer, maker, puppeteer, producer, director and live artist. He has worked across the UK, France, Holland, Spain, Palestine and India. Mike has been Artistic Director for DASH since 1999.

10.20

Exploring Disability in a historical and contemporary context



Dr. David Turner is Professor of History at Swansea University. He is the author of *Disability in Eighteenth-Century England: Imagining Physical Impairment* (Routledge, 2012), which won the Disability History Association Outstanding Publication Prize, and was adviser to the BBC Radio 4 series, *Disability: A New History*. His current research examines the experience of disability in nineteenth-century mining communities.

11.35

Rethinking Diversity

Skindar Hundal introduces three stories from **Marlene Smith, Tony Heaton and Gemma Marmalade**.

Skindar Hundal is CEO of New Art Exchange. He has successfully led the organisation through a significant period of growth and development, achieving a strong reputation for creating and producing high quality art, bringing international standard culturally diverse art to Hyson Green in Nottingham, the UK and globally.



Marlene Smith works under the title *The Room Next To Mine*. She has recently been appointed Research Manager for Black Arts & Modernism, a major AHRC funded collaboration



between University of the Arts, London and Middlesex University, led by Sonia Boyce. She co-founded The Blk Art Group Research Project organising the 2012 'Re-framing the Moment conference' to commemorate 30 years since the first national black arts convention.

Tony Heaton OBE is the CEO of Shape – a disability-led arts organisation – based in London, working with major cultural institutions and disabled people, as artists and audiences. Prior to Shape he was, for over ten years, Director of Holton Lee, Dorset, developing within the 350 acre campus an architectural award winning building, Faith House Gallery and fully accessible artists studios.



Gemma Marmalade is a British artist specialising in video, photography and performance. Her practice draws on themes of history, nature, and sexual politics. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including The Photographers' Gallery, London, Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, The Apulia Film Commission, Bari and State Museum of Gulag, Moscow.

13.30

Institutional Behaviours to Interpretation

'Disabling the Museum' Amanda Cachia USA/AUS and
'Queering the Museum' Matt Smith



Amanda Cachia is an independent curator from Sydney, Australia and is currently completing her PhD on the intersection of disability, phenomenology and contemporary art in the Art History, Theory & Criticism program at the University of California, San Diego. She is the 2014 recipient of the Irving K. Zola Award for Emerging Scholars in Disability Studies, issued by the Society for Disability Studies (SDS).

Matt Smith is an artist and curator. Solo exhibitions include Milk at Aspex (2010) Queering the Museum at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (2010-11) and Other Stories at the University of Leeds (2012). He is currently working on an AHRC-funded, practice-based PhD in Queer Craft at the University of Brighton and co-directs Unravalled Arts.



14.50

Why is it so difficult to define yourself as a Disabled artist?

Four artists discuss their responses

Christine Sun Kim is a New York and Berlin-based artist. She uses the medium of sound through technology, performance, and drawing to investigate and rationalize her relationship with sound and spoken languages.



Gill Nicol trained as an artist and has over twenty-five years experience in the arts. She has worked for numerous organisations including Ikon Gallery, mac, Tate Liverpool, Spike Print Studio and Arnolfini in Bristol. In 2011 she set up lightsgoingon, with a mission to make contemporary art accessible.



sean burn is a writer/performer/outsider artist who is actively involved in disability arts. His third book of poetry 'is that a bruise or a tattoo?' was published by Shearsman Press in 2013. He is currently mentor in residence to a group of disabled artists at celf, mid-wales.



the vacuum cleaner is an art and activism collective of one. Through site-specific performance, street-based intervention and film, the vacuum cleaner empowers his audience to address



socio-political issues including consumerism and mental health discrimination. From one-man shows to large-scale participatory actions, his approach is variously subtle and extreme, but always candid, provocative and playful.

Happening throughout the day

Masters of the Awkward Bastards

Award winning artist Tanya Raabe will capture interactions, physicality and moments of expression in expressive drawings of the faces of the delegates, audience and presenters at the Awkward Bastards Symposium creating an evolving portrait gallery to be bought and sold at the event as 'Masters of the Awkward Bastards 2015'.

Her portrait work has been exhibited nationally including NPG, Tate Modern and SouthBank. She has recently presented her work at the Outsider Art conference Australia and is currently an Associate Artist with Project Ability, Glasgow and a trustee of DASH.



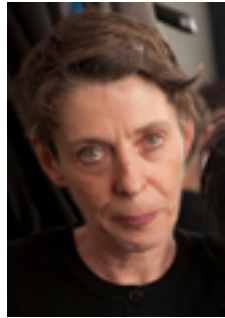
16.10

What comes next

A panel of leading art professionals reflect on the day's issues and debate the way forward.

Mike Layward, Amanda Cachia, Skinder Hundal are joined by Lois Keidan, Abid Hussain and Lara Ratnaraja.

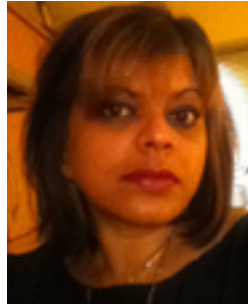
Lois Keidan is the co-Founder and co-Director of the Live Art Development Agency, London. Previously she has been Director of Live Arts at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, responsible for national policy and provision for Performance Art at the Arts Council of England, and worked at Midland Group, Nottingham and Theatre Workshop, Edinburgh.



Abid Hussain is Senior Manager for Diversity at Arts Council England leading on equality and diversity. He has over a decade of experience working in the arts and cultural sector with a particular interest in organisational development, leadership and philanthropy.



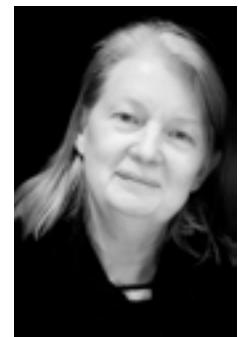
Lara Ratnaraja is a freelance consultant working within the cultural and digital sector. She develops and delivers project and policy on how cultural and digital technology intersect for a number of national partners as well as programmes around business development for the arts including; Hello Culture, CidaCo West Midlands Director, she is also Senior Research Facilitator at the Digital Humanities Hub at the University of Birmingham.



16.45

Film: In Conversation with the Past

Nicola Lane's film reflecting on the life of deaf Romany Bill Lock. Commissioned for the IN project by Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery and DASH.



Born 1949 in San Francisco, Nicola Lane lived in 7 countries before the age of 16. Since 1972 she has worked continuously as a fine artist, her practice evolving from painting into digital media and filmmaking, exploring the creative potential of collaborative practice through residencies and public engagement projects. Nicola lives and works in London.

18.00

Drinks reception and preview of 'Disrupted'

This curatorial commission for the IN project is a group exhibition that has been conceived for mac birmingham to directly respond to, and interact with, the arts centre venue, the building and its audiences.

The artworks and installations exhibited here invite visitors to encounter the 'Other' - that which is different and unfamiliar, often remaining unseen in our day to day lives - and to engage with it in a familiar space.

Curated by Noëmi Lakmaier during her year-long residency at mac, the exhibition explores the sense of awkwardness such encounters can bring, and the unique experiences and unexpected insights that can emerge from them.

'Disrupted' brings together both established and emerging artists working in the realm of Disability Arts, including Noëmi Lakmaier, the Swedish performance artist Anna Berntson, London-based artist and activist the vacuum cleaner, Martin O'Brien and up and coming sculptor Anna Smith from Wolverhampton.

"The opportunity to work with DASH, enabling us to commission work and share learning with peers, is a rare and valuable one. It allows us to go beyond a superficial addressing of disability arts in the mainstream. For mac, the IN commission has been designed to impact upon, inform and shift our working practice around diversity from a longer-term strategic position." Craig Ashley



Above: 'Swing', Anna Smith

Anatomy of a Bite - Martin O'Brien

Performances every 20 minutes from 1pm to 7.40pm during Awkward Bastards at mac birmingham

In 'Anatomy of a Bite', a free performance commissioned especially for 'Disrupted', O'Brien takes the image of the corpse in the anatomy theatre as his starting point. This performance for one audience member at a time develops this image to explore the human orifice of the mouth. The mouth is used for breathing, eating, drinking, screaming, f**king, licking, talking, vomiting, coughing, yawning, blowing. It is a site of tenderness and of potential contamination. It is the home of teeth and of the tongue.



Cultivating spaces for extraordinary artists

DASH is committed to:

- Commissioning Disabled Artists to create new work for arts and cultural venues in England and Wales.
- Training and development of artists and cultural organisations through workshops, mentoring and including transforming notions of disabled arts practice through digital means.
- Providing support for the management and talent development of local, regional and national disabled artists.
- Promoting DASH's ethos which encompasses the Creative Case for Diversity by addressing issues of accessibility (in the widest sense) to arts and cultural organisations.

For further information on DASH's programme 2015-2018 contact:

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