



Venture Arts x Whitworth Print Editions Launch

Fresh from the hugely successful ['YESS LAD'](#) exhibition in **London**, [Venture Arts](#) are proud to launch a series of limited edition prints on Thursday 27 October at **The Whitworth, part of The University of Manchester**

This stunning collection of artwork has been created by Venture Arts artists, **Darren Bates**, [Michael Beard](#), [Amy Ellison](#), [Barry Finan](#), [Andrew Johnstone](#), [Ahmed Mohammed](#) and [Leslie Thompson](#).

The print series marks a longstanding partnership and collaboration between Venture Arts, and The Whitworth. Artists Andrew Johnstone and Amy Ellison were part of *Other Transmissions* ~ a collaborative project by Venture Arts, [Castlefield Gallery](#) and The Whitworth, which was shown at the Whitworth Art Gallery in February 2020.

Each print comes in a limited edition of 50 on Giclée 300gsm Monte Carlo mould-made cotton rag paper. In addition, the whole series is available as a special box set in an edition of 10. Postcards of the artworks will also be available.

Venture Arts Director, **Amanda Sutton**: 'We are so pleased that we are expanding our partnership with the Whitworth, who have supported us in championing the work of learning disabled and neurodiverse artists from the north of England over many years: through supported residencies, to acquiring one of these works for their fine art collection. We're thrilled to see seven of our artists' work will be produced into 10 limited edition prints – they are all wonderful and I'd love to see each and every one of them on my own walls!'

Alistair Hudson, Director at the Whitworth, The University of Manchester: 'This is the latest project in the longstanding collaborative relationship between Venture Arts and The Whitworth. Our partnership is driven by a shared understanding of the importance of creativity for all, working with the broadest range of artists in the most innovative ways,

to ensure life is as gloriously rich and complex as it can be. We're proud to be able to publish and share work of such quality and joy.'

The launch event for these beautiful prints is part of the Whitworth's successful [Thursday Lates](#) events and will take place from 5.30pm-8.30pm.

Free entry and open to everyone. Refreshments will be provided. The series of prints will also be available to purchase at [The Manchester Contemporary](#) (Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 November).

All profits from the prints are split equally between the artists and organisations.

For more information, interviews, or high-res images, please contact:

Alison Bell (07818 256 434) or **Liam Walsh** (07976 258 577)

The Whitworth: Oxford Rd, Manchester M15 6ER [0161 275 7450](tel:01612757450)

Notes:

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester

The Whitworth is proudly part of The University of Manchester, operating as a convening space between the University and the people of the city. It was founded in 1889 as the Whitworth Institute and Park in memory of the industrialist Sir Joseph Whitworth for "the perpetual gratification of the people of Manchester" and continues this mission today in new contexts. In 2015 the gallery undertook a £17 million redevelopment by architects MUMA, which doubled the public space, creating new facilities to house the collection of over 55,000 works of art, textiles, and wallpaper.

Along with expanded gallery spaces, a study centre, learning studio, and collections care centre, the gallery reconnected with its park, with communal gardens and outdoor programmes. The gallery is driven by a mission to work with communities to use art for positive social change, and actively address what matters most in people's lives. This new vision has been developed as part of an international dialogue about how to evolve and adapt museums to a constantly changing world.

This work is underpinned by three key concepts: learning together, through making and doing; creating a place of care, consideration, and community; taking action.

Gallery opening times: Tuesday to Sunday 10am-5pm, Thursday late opening until 9pm

Venture Arts

Venture Arts is an award-winning charity based in Hulme, Manchester. The organisation supports people with learning disabilities to reach their full potential through visual arts and culture. Its vision is a world in which people with learning disabilities are empowered, celebrated, included, and valued in the arts, culture and society. Venture Arts' mission is to shape a new cultural landscape where people with learning disabilities reach their potential as artists, curators, critics, audiences, participants, and advocates.

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Artists exhibiting the limited-edition prints:

Darren Bates

Darren Bates has been a Venture Arts studio artist for over 10 years. He is a painter, ceramicist, musician, and printer and is inspired by birds. Flamingo is part of a series of bird prints drawn from Manchester Museums collection.

Michael Beard

Michael Beard works across various disciplines including painting, drawing and ceramics. His artwork enables him to articulate his immense passion for travel. Compulsive writings of names of cities, famous towers and graphical signage and symbols that he identifies in each location, are strong themes in his work. The repetitive overlapping and fluidity of his handwriting conveys Michael's vigorous energy and speed in which he creates his work.

Amy Ellison

Amy Ellison has been a Venture Arts artist since 2010. Amy works in a wide range of media including photography, digital illustration, textiles and printmaking. In 2018-19, she was one of three Venture Arts artists selected for *Other Transmissions*, a collaborative residency project with emerging contemporary artists. Work by Amy and five collaborators toured to venues including Tate Liverpool, Artlink Hull and The Whitworth. In 2020 Amy had her work *Cocktails* acquired by The Grundy, Blackpool.

Barry Finan

Barry Finan is an artist born in Manchester. Defining himself as a writer, actor and artist, he produces bold, text based visual art he calls 'WRRIGHHTINNGSERRSS'. He uses repetitive letters to elongate his words, which can become scripts, personal messages and hopes for the future.

Andrew Johnstone

Andrew Johnstone works in a careful, precise and deliberate way – a style that shines through in any medium he chooses. He works in textiles, ceramics, printing and drawn media, often-depicting animals, transport and portraits, with a specific reference to 80s and 90s television shows and idents.

Ahmed Mohammed

Ahmed used to draw at home all day, producing reams of repetitious, semi-abstract work on his family's kitchen table. Since coming to Venture Arts he has discovered his artistic identity and developed a creative practice which spans textile art, printing, ceramics, drawing, photography and multimedia.

Leslie Thompson

Leslie has been attending Venture Arts studios for over twenty years. He has a highly developed drawing style, drawing both from memory and through live observational drawings. Leslie depicts scenes from popular culture, mostly from the seventies and eighties, and his drawings are often punctuated with memories from film, music, and TV.

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Press release date: October 2022