

## News Release

### New programme of family art activities will support young people with complex needs



*States and Spaces* workshop at MK Gallery. Image copyright Project Art Works.

MK Gallery is extending its role in improving access to culture. The Gallery has been successful in securing funding to support a new inclusive programme targeting young people with complex needs and their families. The programme is generously supported by Paul Hamlyn Foundation and MK Community Foundation. *Inclusive Practice in the Arts* will develop the expertise, confidence and capacity of the MK Gallery team and Associate Artists to deliver a stimulating, challenging and enjoyable programme of art explorations and activities, engaging families with a child or children with physical or learning disability.

*Inclusive Practice in the Arts* is being developed in recognition of the unique needs of, and strains experienced by, families with a child or children with complex needs. The three-year programme builds upon MK Gallery's expertise in 'whole family' programming and the Gallery's long-term partnership with Hastings-based organisation, Project Art Works, working to create meaningful arts engagement with individuals with profound disabilities.

From spring 2018, the programme will deliver weekly workshops to enable families to work directly with an artist with specialist training in complex needs, allowing family members to enjoy spending time together in an environment which is creative, accessible, fun and understanding of everyone's needs.

MK Gallery is currently undergoing a major expansion which is due for completion during the second year of the *Inclusive Practice in the Arts* programme. The main gallery building will reopen in early 2019 with state-of-the-art access facilities funded by MK Community Foundation and generous individuals. The expanded MK Gallery will include access routes of a generous width, accessible signage, a hearing loop, portable seating and a Changing Places toilet - a facility for those whose needs mean they are unable to use a standard accessible toilet. These provisions will hugely enhance the experience of visiting MK Gallery and the Changing Places toilet will open up the venue to an entirely new audience that is currently unable to make extended visits to the Gallery.

MK Gallery Director Anthony Spira, speaking about the new programme said: *'Having the support of Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Milton Keynes Community Foundation to deliver this transformative programme is fantastic. Their support enables us to bring in specialist expertise and train artists and other staff to provide a positive experience of the arts for absolutely everyone regardless of their level of need. For families with a family member with complex needs, the opportunity to enjoy high quality creative activities together is very rare, which makes the new Inclusive Practice in the Arts programme all the more important. We are delighted to be delivering this crucial work as part of our commitment to providing the very best arts experiences for all.'*

Moira Sinclair, Chief Executive of Paul Hamlyn Foundation, said *'At Paul Hamlyn Foundation, because we see the difference it makes to people's lives, we believe access to the arts is a right, not a privilege, and we are interested in opening up opportunities to as wide and diverse a group of people as possible. We recognise that disabled people, and especially those with complex needs, often face barriers to taking part in arts activities and that is why we are backing MK Gallery's 'Inclusive Practice in the Arts' programme. The 'whole family' approach should allow the positive impact of creativity to be experienced much more widely, and we are delighted to see it in our portfolio of grants supporting best practice and innovation in the arts.'*

Ian Revell, CEO of the Milton Keynes Community Foundation said *'MK Community Foundation is proud to partner with MK Gallery by co-funding this ambitious and innovative project with Paul Hamlyn Foundation. This project is designed for young people with complex needs and their families to engage with a high-quality arts programme. MK Gallery has a long and impressive track record of delivering quality arts projects and we have every expectation that they will produce a first rate programme that will benefit many local families and leave a positive impact on the cultural life of Milton Keynes.'*

MK Gallery will recruit a Curator of Inclusion to support the delivery of *Inclusive Practice in the Arts*. The Curator of Inclusion will work alongside MK Gallery's award-winning learning team. For more information about the role, please visit [www.mkgallery.org/information/jobs](http://www.mkgallery.org/information/jobs).

## **Notes to Editors**

### **MK Gallery**

MK Gallery presents free, changing exhibitions of world class art. Renowned for its exhibitions of international contemporary art, the gallery's programme is diversifying to include historical shows alongside the contemporary.

MK Gallery was founded in Central Milton Keynes in 1999 as part of a major theatre and gallery complex. While the theatre has become one of the most successful outside of London, the gallery opened with a solo show by Gilbert & George and has presented a very broad range of exhibitions, from Archigram to Gilberto Zorio via Michael Craig-Martin, Nasreen Mohamedi, Piranesi and Andy Warhol. The gallery frequently tours its exhibitions to international partners across the world, is a regular publisher, and producer of a dynamic and diverse public programme, working closely with local schools and community groups.

MK Gallery is part of the Arts Council's National Portfolio and a member of the Plus Tate network.

MK Gallery, 900 Midsummer Boulevard, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3QA. [www.mkgallery.org](http://www.mkgallery.org)

### **MK Gallery Supporters**

MK Gallery receives core funding from Milton Keynes Council and Arts Council England.



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### **MK Gallery Expansion Funders**

Arts Council England, The Anson Charitable Trust, The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation, The Carrington Charitable Trust, Charles Wolfson Charitable Trust, David Lock Associates, Derek Walker Fund supporters, The Finnis Scott Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Headley Trust, J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, Milton Keynes Council, MK Community Foundation, Reuben Foundation, The Sackler Trust, Sir Siegmund Warburg's Voluntary Settlement, South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP), Sylvia Waddilove Foundation UK, The Wolfson Foundation, those that wish to remain anonymous, and with the kind support of Milton Keynes Development Partnership.

### **Paul Hamlyn Foundation**

Paul Hamlyn Foundation was established by Paul Hamlyn in 1987. Upon his death in 2001, he left most of his estate to the Foundation, creating one of the largest independent grant-making foundations in the UK.

Their mission is to help people overcome disadvantage and lack of opportunity, so that they can realise their potential and enjoy fulfilling and creative lives. They have a particular interest in supporting young people and a strong belief in the importance of the arts.



### **Milton Keynes Community Foundation**

Milton Keynes Community Foundation connects people and resources to projects and ideas to create positive change in communities through programmes such as, grants making, working with Localgiving.org and our annual Charity Car Raffle.

They are leaders in developing philanthropy in the community and engaging with people who have the ability to give money – individuals, families and companies so that we can fund a wide range of voluntary and community sector activity.

Over 30 years MK Community Foundation has provided over £20million of support to local charities and community groups through their grants programme and rent subsidies, helping to make Milton Keynes a great place to live and work.



### **Project Art Works**

Project Art Works explores and promotes new practical and philosophical approaches to the meaningful involvement of people who have complex impairments in visual art activity that finds its

way into mainstream programming and is of exceptional quality in its concept, aesthetic and production.

Based in Hastings, UK they collaborate on a wide range of regional and national projects. Their work aspires to excellence in contemporary visual art and is uniquely positioned to bridge the social care and cultural sectors in ways that promote sustainable relationships and bring people with complex needs into the heart of social and cultural life.

## projectart works

### **Press Information**

For interviews, information or images please contact Aimee Holmes, Communications and Marketing Manager, MK Gallery. Tel: 01908 558302 / E: [aholmes@mkgallery.org](mailto:aholmes@mkgallery.org)

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