A Darker Christmas

EXHIBITION LOOKBOOK

THIS EXHIBITION WILL RUN AT **STUDIO KIND** IN BRAUNTON, DEVON FROM **2-16 DECEMBER**, OPEN WED-SAT, 12:30-5:30PM.

ENTRY IS FREE, AND EVERYONE IS WELCOME.

The Theme

Christmas has always been my favourite time of year, but the last couple of years have taught me how dark a time it can be if your head's not in the right place.

Outside my creative work, I'm training to be a counsellor, and I've recently met some wonderful people doing extraordinary things to help those that need it.

There are countless reasons for people to slip into depression, and so I wanted to combine my passions to raise awareness of people who need help at a time we're led to believe everyone's happy.

We can never be entirely sure what people are going through, and I think A *Darker Christmas* can serve as a timely reminder to take a moment to watch, observe, and engage with our loved ones in a way that really matters.

Jody Medland

Writer, Producer, Events Manager



"Nothing has the ability to fix, heal, and connect people like art."

The concept of A Darker Christmas formed on a stormy November evening when life had thrown a few unwelcome curveballs at me and Jody.

We found solace, empathy, and comfort in each other's pain and confusion. With the onset of Christmas looming, depression and deep sadness engulfed us both, ironic at the most "joyous" time of the year.

So we discussed the idea of an exhibition that dissolved the sugar-coating around Christmas and explored ways to shine a light on the deeper issues for those that needed help navigating these bleaker, darker months.

We wanted to create an atmosphere that opened dialogue and broke down the stigma for those in pain, offering a space for both highly acclaimed and newly emerging artists to collaborate.

Suffering often happens in silence, so we wanted the acts of raising awareness and showing compassion to be the real reason for the season.

Ruth Bateman

Contemporary Visual Artist



"I believe in hope, in unity. I paint intuitively and with expression."

Artwork

- ► Title: Alcohol Now
- **Type:** Oil on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 150 x 120 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £10,900
- Description: Andrew Litten's work explores raw human existence. He is searching the poetry of living, loving, hurting, through depicting the powerful, the vulnerable, and the human.



- ► **Title:** Discredited
- **Type:** Oil on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 70 x 100 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £7,700
- Description: Andrew Litten's work explores raw human existence. He is searching the poetry of living, loving, hurting, through depicting the powerful, the vulnerable, and the human.



- ▶ Title: Father & Child
- ▶ **Type:** Epoxy Clay on Wood Base
- **Dimensions:** 66 x 19 x 37 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £6,300
- Description: Andrew Litten's work explores raw human existence. He is searching the poetry of living, loving, hurting, through depicting the powerful, the vulnerable, and the human.



- ► Title: Nurture
- **Type:** Oil on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 90 x 80 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £7,500
- Description: Andrew Litten's work explores raw human existence. He is searching the poetry of living, loving, hurting, through depicting the powerful, the vulnerable, and the human.



- ▶ Title: Rest 2
- **Type:** Oil on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 58 x 51 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £1,800
- Description: Andrew Litten's work explores raw human existence. He is searching the poetry of living, loving, hurting, through depicting the powerful, the vulnerable, and the human.



- ► Title: Urban Wallpaper
- Type: Acrylic and collage on Dibond Clad in Perspex
- **Dimensions:** 50 x 40 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £1,600
- Description: Symbol of how we try to "wrap" and "package" our own bleak realities, but how frail the facade really is.



- ▶ Title: Country Estate 2
- **Type:** Oil and Collage on Paper
- **Dimensions:** 15 x 20 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £670
- Description: Xmas colours, represents the bitter-sweet emotions we feel about visiting home in the holidays, along with the in-built patriotism we feel about being English.



- Title: Self Portrait
- Type: Acrylic on Canvas, Clad in Frosted Red Perspex
- **Dimensions:** 50 x 40 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £1,600
- Description: Xmas red, a frank and honest view of one's self.
- Note: I love the idea of placing a Santa hat on the top-right corner of the frame.



- ► **Title:** Forgive No One
- Type: Oil, acrylic, Spray Paint on Canvas, Clad in Perspex
- **Dimensions:** 50 x 40 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £1,500
- Description: Xmas red, representation of the dark, despairing thoughts of those who've been wronged at Christmas.



- **Title:** Force No Friend
- Type: Oil, Acrylic, Spray Paint on Canvas, Clad in Perspex
- **Dimensions:** 30 x 25 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £1,500
- Description: A patriotic, "gift-wrapped" representation of someone clearly wounded with the juxtaposition of a moral, motivational message.



Louise Bird @louisebirdartist

- **Title:** Gone, but not Forgotten
- ▶ **Type:** Oil on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 90 x 75 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £4,500
- Description: Painted in response to feelings of loss, but as the acceptance of life's changes evolves. Letting go whilst treasuring memories, particularly ones forged during important family times like Christmas.



Louise Bird @louisebirdartist

- ► Title: Lose Yourself
- Type: Charcoal with Black Glitter Background
- **Dimensions:** 88 x 65 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £1,500
- Description: If, for whatever reason, Christmas comes at the wrong time, you can feel overwhelmed, like losing your footing, like falling in your sleep.



Louise Bird @Iouisebirdartist

- ► Title: Hope
- ▶ **Type:** Oil on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 90 x 60 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £2,200
- Description: A reminder that hopes and dreams don't diminish with age, and that magical things can happen at Christmas.



Louise Bird @Iouisebirdartist

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- **Title:** Flux
- **Type:** Oil on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 120 x 100 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £5,000
- Description: A nod to the feeling of losing yourself at Christmas.



Louise Bird @louisebirdartist

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- ► Title: Void
- ▶ **Type:** Oil on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 120 x 100 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £5,000
- Description: A nod to the feeling of losing yourself at Christmas.



Lisa Stokes @lisastokes_artist

- ► Title: Gathering
- Type: Oil, Oil Pastel, Acrylic, Charcoal on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 61 x 47.5 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £6,500
- Description: One of a series of works where gathering pain creates an armour to shield oneself.



Lisa Stokes @lisastokes_artist

- ▶ Title: The Only Way Out
- Type: Oil, Oil Pastel, Charcoal, Acrylic on Board
- **Dimensions:** 61 x 45.7 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £6,500
- Description: To overcome trauma, one must relive it. The flames engulf the only means of escape, forcing us to confront our torment in order to begin to heal.



Lisa Stokes @lisastokes_artist

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- ► Title: Closet
- ► **Type:** Oil on Canvas
- Dimensions: 210 x 170 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £27,000
- Description: In this large work, painful memories and emotions are stored and kept hidden.



Emma Digerud-White @emmadigerudwhite

- ► **Title:** Everything | See
- ► **Type:** Acrylic on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 50 x 40 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £820
- Description: At a time when we are often surrounded by friends and family putting a certain version of themselves forward or wearing a "mask," this work acts as a reminder to stay tuned to our inner senses and remember we don't need our eyes to see what's really going on.



Emma Digerud-White @emmadigerudwhite

- ▶ Title: Upside Down / Falling
- ► **Type:** Acrylic on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 50 x 50 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £840
- Description: A representation of how we can all get turned upside down, whether in terms of happiness, motivation, or priorities, particularly during busy times like Christmas.



Ruth Bateman @ruthbatemanartist

- ▶ Title: All I Want for Christmas is a Miracle
- Type: Acrylic, Oil, Ink, Charcoal, Pen on Paper
- **Dimensions:** 82 x 57 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £595
- Description: In among the chaos of Christmas, a shaft of light that offers hope of a brighter, happier future. Sometimes, that is the only thing that gets people through the holidays.



Ruth Bateman @ruthbatemanartist

- Title: Walking into the Light of a New Dawn
- ► **Type:** Monoprint
- **Dimensions:** 34.5 x 34.5 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £395
- Description: An ode to the chaotic landscape at Christmas, when overwhelming pressure and uncertainty can be all-consuming... but there is light, and the hope of pulling through to something new.



Ruth Bateman @ruthbatemanartist

- ► Title: Lost
- Type: Ink, Oil, Pen on Newsprint and Cartridge Paper
- **Dimensions:** 31 x 36 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £295
- Description: A representation of how items that we associate with people can act as painful reminders when they're gone – especially items that are meant to be occupied and used.



Max Whetter @maxwhetter

- ▶ Title: Santa Inside
- ► **Type:** Mixed media on Perspex
- **Dimensions:** 28 x 28 cm
- Price: Not for sale
- Description: A juxtaposition of how a traditional Santa might look, along with how he feels inside, reminding us that we never quite know what people think or feel, no matter how jolly they might appear.



Max Whetter

- Title: Away | Go
- **Type:** Mixed media on Perspex
- **Dimensions:** 28 x 28 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £120
- Description: Depiction of a man who is happier to fade into the background and fall into isolation than embrace a seasonal spirit he can't muster.



Scott Cartwright @scottcartwrightartist

- ▶ Title: Mourn
- ▶ **Type:** Acrylic Charcoal Graphite on Canvas
- **Dimensions:** 102 x 82 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £500
- Description: Representation of loss and grief, exploring profound vulnerability and sorrow but with a spectral presence symbolising the enduring connection we have to those we've lost – a glimmer of solace from the figures that watch over us during times of great sadness.



- Title: Mariupol 9
- **Type:** Ink on Paper
- **Dimensions:** 56 x 78 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £585
- Description: The red of the blood that was spilt, fused with colours of Ukraine, this piece was made in response to the shelling of Maternity Hospital 3, in Mariupol, where a happy Christmas may never be the same.



- ► Title: Cut
- **Type:** Oil & Pastel on Paper
- **Dimensions:** 80 x 58 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £475
- Description: The bright red of the holly berry at Yule Tide... but, not always a time for merriment. The gathering of the clans can leave us cut out and cut up, as we find ourselves cut off, silenced when others cut in.



- ► Title: Void
- ► **Type:** Etching
- **Dimensions:** 40 x 33 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £375
- Description: Silenced by emptiness, we become invisible, when at Christmas time, the family's dynamics take over.



- ► Title: Mariupol 10
- **Type:** Ink & Gouache on Paper
- **Dimensions:** 42 x 60 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £475
- Description: Made in response to the bloodshed and mayhem that followed the shelling of Maternity Hospital 3, in Mariupol, where a happy Christmas may never be the same.



Celia Lancaster @celia_lancaster_art

- **Title:** New Beginnings
- **Type:** Resin, Ink and Natural Pigments
- **Dimensions:** 123.5 x 138 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £10,000
- Description: A representation of the abundance of energies required to be able to start something new.
- Notes: This image weighs 20 kilos. Is it possible to display?


©celia_lancaster_art

Prints for Sale

- **Title:** Poppies in the Moonlight
- Type: Limited Edition Giclées Prints From Original Oil Painting
- **Dimensions:** 55 x 77 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £190
- Description: Xmas colours, an artistic reflection of the memories we store for all the special people we've lost.



A. Todd @atodd.art

- ► Title: Augoeides
- Type: Oil Paint, Acrylic, Cedar Oil, and Yacht Varnish on Canvas Wishbone, Wheat, and Glass
- **Dimensions:** 176 x 44 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £1,250
- Description: A representation on how even our personal wishes are not straightforward as the world pulls us in many conflicting directions.
- Note: This piece is different on both sides and is best as a free-standing piece in the middle of the floor, letting people walk around it and saving on wall space.



A. Todd @atodd.art

- **Title:** Rhodopsin
- Type: Oil Paint, Acrylic, Industrial Gloss and Waxed Cotton Cord on Plywood
- **Dimensions:** 43 x 32 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £720
- Description: A creative representation of how even something idyllic, such as the ocean, can be dark and dirty depending on our state of mind.



Benedict Davies @bentwistondavies

- ► Title: Complicated
- ► **Type:** Drawing
- **Dimensions:** 52.5 x 30 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £200
- Description: A depiction of how people with neurodivergent conditions find nothing to be linear or straightforward.



Sophie Dennett @sophiedennettart76

Rotation Piece

- ► Title: Spindrift
- ► **Type:** Mono in Oil on Sommerset Paper
- **Dimensions:** 43.5 x 36 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £495
- Description: Her masterful monoprints reflect Sophie's fascination with what we let go of to survive... where we bend, flex and alter, pulling forms from the inky darkness in an act that speaks of hope and the opening up of possibility.



Target Devon@targetdevon

- ▶ Title: Barnstaple in Gloom
- ► Type: 3D Wooden Model
- **Dimensions:** 60 x 60 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £500
- Description: Depiction of Barnstaple which was made by students with learning disabilities and mental health issues at Target Devon. It placed second in Barnstaple in Bloom, before they updated the piece to fit the theme for A Darker Christmas.
- Note: This model is going to have one of its halves "darkened" to fit with the theme.



Oddasea.artwork

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- Title: Bipolar disorder is not just for Christmas
- **Type:** Graphic Illustration
- **Dimensions:** 59.4 x 42 cm
- ▶ **Price:** £225
- Description: I was diagnosed Bipolar disorder 10 years ago after spending a year in 5 psychological wards. This experience was hard work to deal with, especially as there were no campaigns at the time saying: "It's okay not to be okay." It is a condition to manage, every day, and for me it seems worse at certain times of the year – or maybe even different phases of the moon. There are no Christmas holidays from the condition. Nowadays, I use the diagnoses as an anchor to help separate what is myself and what is the illness. When I was a young man, it was a relentless spiral of euphoric highs and deep depression. Keep going. Do not be defined by your past experiences. Work out a route to your next achievement, or failure, and learn from it. Success is more about how you overcome and deal with the difficult situations in life than anything else.



Video Content

To be Continually Streamed

Programme



Altered Ego

Short film by Stephanie Lamb and Carsten Lund Thomsen.

Images: Stephanie Lamb Animation: Carsten Lund Thomsen Music: Luvuyo Ncapayi



Talk About Suicide Short film by the James Wentworth Stanley Memorial Fund.

Performances & Panels

Friday 1 December | Preview, 5:30 - 7:30pm

Programme



- 5:30pm Welcome
 Drinks available upon entry.
- 6pm Introduction Speech
 Opening words from the organisers.
- 6:10pm Performance Poetry
 Simon Prideaux to read pieces (also on display)
- 6:20pm Performance Poetry
 Simon Millward to read pieces (also on display)

Display Piece & Performance



Turkeys don't vote for Christmas

They have no concept of democracy They can't draw an X The whole thing is just a mockery They don't have ID Or a registered address They don't understand queueing And leave the polling booths a mess They don't follow politics Or keep abreast of local matters They peck at all the signage And leave the ballot slips in tatters In conclusion, turkeys shouldn't vote I hope this is an argument I'm winning Instead, they should be eaten At Christmas, with all the trimmings

Display Piece & Performance

Homeless at Christmas

They dine on memories and pass plates over tables I look on

A pale reflection in a window

Sunken eyes stare back at me blurred by December's rain

They throw heads back in laughter and guzzle wines and pints

I clutch my zip

Tighter with a red, calloused hand

Backlit by blinking lights trailed round a phone shop window

They scurry passed careful to always look away At some invisible object on the floor a few feet to my side Icy winds creep through between my coat's stitches Christmas songs rise and fade as groups tumble out of pubs I long for a home I never had And remember knees clutched to my chest As from downstairs come screams and thuds For hours, and then the silence

FRAMED £15

It's late now

I slump into my spot, bags neatly stacked My heavy blink is interrupted By a pale hand, and a muffled voice

Before I look up the stranger is gone A silhouette in the muddy orange lights Then out of sight behind an inflatable snowman A crumpled fiver rests in my lap

The End

Display Piece & Performance



The Waiting Room

A horseshoe of chairs The room full of pregnant silence Broken only by half coughs and sniffles Staff walk past left and right Trying to look purposeful Signs suffocate the dull walls Above our heads The out of date leaflets look on with indifference

Tinsel has been draped round the clock and noticeboards I notice the difference from when I was last here Shuffling in my seat I tug my sleeve down As I catch someone looking at my wrist The concerned outside world vibrates in my pocket I'm not ready to answer yet The beige floor offers no concern, no anger, no pity And for now that is all I want.

Display Piece & Performance



A Darker Haiku

December isn't All gifts and joy and laughter People die like dad

Display Piece & Performance



Talking with my father

Last night I met with my father chatting as we always do every month or so about work,

how United are doing, changes in the garden, the swifts arriving, difficulties with Mother.

Then he spoke of a decision he'd made about the future,

I was wondering how I was going to remind him he was no longer alive.

Display Piece & Performance



Diagnosis

After all those who failed to uncover your mask in childhood so that it became a permanent and traumatic way of life for almost forty years – of not eating, of losing confidence, of rushing into new projects and then being unable to cope, of crying out and not being heard, after all those times in the darkness -

now, instead of swinging precariously between full moon and new moon, you see out of the void a steady gleam on the horizon.

Display Piece & Performance



• A flower finds its voice

I am thin, so very thin, but the strength of my stalks is in their wiriness stretching up to small yellow flowers and several unopened buds clenched tight as a fist. Unclenching them is my way of greeting the world even if nobody notices me.

I don't apologise for eating so little, I don't feel hungry and the rainwater keeps me fresh:

I'm tall enough, I don't need to reach for the light, I don't need to try hard to impress anyone.

Something inside rumbles in the darkness and I know I won't live long enough to fill it.

Display Piece & Performance



Homecoming

Last time I visited you were chairbound but happy: drawn to the truffles I'd brought you unpicked the wrapping coating your fingers in wet chocolate as you tried to grip and when your carer took me to one side you engaged Brenda in conversation finding some shared perception of the world, puckish smiles covering your face and stretching like a gossamer thread between you.

But today bedbound, a shock of white hair swept sideways you just about recognised me mumbling incoherently, just once summoning enough strength to say 'I love you so much dear': stroking your forelocks, touching your hand made a connection, something you could hold on to, your bones protruding from so little flesh and your veins like swollen streams standing out as if to call home the tide.

Demi Cass Boulton - Poetry

Display Piece



Feels

Try to distance yourself from all the people that you love to slówly back yourself into the dark, dingy corner of your bed. Form a pile of wrappers, worn clothes and scrunched up pieces of paper.

The pieces of paper you had before attempted to describe your feelings on.

The feelings that you don't even understand yourself. Drown yourself in the taste of vodka.

Feel satisfaction in the burning sensation of it.

Feel satisfaction from the feeling of inhaling harsh smoke straight to your lungs.

Find comfort in the idea of never being sober, the idea that you will never have to come to the realisation of your true life. Become emotionally attached to the cold, salty, liquid form of

sadness running down your blotchy face until you are unable to form visible trails of your misery.

Feel invalidated when your sorrow is no longer perceivable from another's point of view be conscious of the fact you sense that no one will care to

help if it doesn't show on your skin.

You deserve the suffering, right?

And no one can adapt your mind on that.

Jody Medland - The First Snow

Display Piece & Performance



The First Snow

The first time I saw you I'll never forget How you fell from the sky like an angel A godsent reminder of the good in the world And a saviour from all that was evil Together, we danced in timeless bliss Free from distractions and fear Entangled lovers, not a care in the world Heaven every time you were near But the tragedy of snow, like all good things comes within its end Seasons pass and feelings don't last and our love we can never defend Now when you fall I can't help but adore the warmness I feel inside And although warmth melts the things that we felt they're forever ingrained in my mind

Saturday 2 December

Programme

SAMARITANS

North Devon & North Cornwall 2pm – DISCUSSION | The Stigma Surrounding Suicide A panel discussion hosted by Jody Medland, with special guest Moses Warburton (The Samaritans), supported by Naomi Jefferies (Families in Grief).



4pm – DISCUSSION | Should "Grief" be Taught in Schools?

A panel discussion hosted by Jody Medland, with special guest Naomi Jefferies of (Families In Grief), supported by Moses Warburton (The Samaritans).

Saturday 9 December

Programme



4pm – Carol Singing

The exhibition will be brought to an emotional end as the Community Rock Choir sings modern songs relating to the theme, A Darker Christmas.

Saturday 16 December

Programme



2pm – Live Theatre

A live reading of a short, one act play, taken from Jody Medland's anthology, Spectrum.

SIGNED £9.99

Arrested Development (30-mins) After leaving a police statement for abuse that took place during his childhood, the survivor believes he has fallen in love with the officer that took his testimony.

Performed by local actors Sam Burns and Anna Platten.