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# YES LAD

Sat 8 - Sun 9 July 2023 and Thur 13 - Sat 15 July 2023

The National Festival of Making  
Blackburn Cathedral Annex



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MODEST  
SHOW

Venture  
Arts

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After a critically acclaimed run during Frieze London 2022, this summer **YESS LAD** tours to The National Festival of Making, a unique celebration of UK making, from the kitchen table to the factory floor.

*YESS LAD* is a Venture Arts group exhibition of eight learning disabled and neurodiverse artists, first shown last autumn at TJ Boulting in Fitzrovia, London, in partnership with A Modest Show. Showcasing new, contemporary visual art, each of the eight Manchester based artists has a unique identity and visual language which, when brought together, demonstrates the rich and diverse practices that are integral to our national arts ecology.

The exhibition presents inspiring, humorous and vibrant work in a variety of mediums, from ceramics and drawing, to painting and photography. These artists have distilled their ideas from inspiration originating in landscapes and places around them, or drawn on personal memories and histories. Popular culture is also a strong theme, especially television programmes, famous personalities and fictional characters.

*YESS LAD* takes its name from artist Barry Finan's continuous train of thought expressed in his text-based work and is a phrase often repeated throughout, nostalgically recalling his childhood in Moss Side, Manchester.

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**The National Festival of Making**  
8 – 9 July 2023, 11am-5pm  
13 – 15 July 2023, 12 – 4pm  
Blackburn Cathedral Annex (next to the Crypt). Access to the Annex is from Cathedral Square.

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All work is for sale. For more information please contact Katherine Long at [katherine@venturearts.org](mailto:katherine@venturearts.org)

# Barry Anthony Finan

Barry Anthony Finan defines himself as a writer, actor and artist, producing bold, text based drawings and ceramics. His unique style of 'WRRIGHHTINNGSERRSS' incorporates repetitive letters and phrases that speak of personal histories, reflections, and ambitions. The title of the show, *YESS LAD*, is a repeated refrain in his work and comes partly from his father telling him, 'Yes lad, you can do it.'

During lockdown, Venture Arts sent Barry unfired porcelain postcards to write on to keep his communications flowing to the outside world. Often addressed to people he missed, such as the Venture Arts volunteers, he also wrote about programmes like Coronation Street and actresses such as Maureen Lipman.

**Credit:**

Barry Anthony Finan,  
*POSTCARRDSS*, ceramics, 2020.



# Horace Lindezey

Much of Horace Lindezey's work depicts the people and world around him. On show are his wonderfully irreverent series of ceramic blue plaques, emblazoned with figures important and famous in his life, both real and fictional, from actors and characters, like Dot Cotton and Stan Butler to Jamaican trumpet player, John Dizzy Moore.

Horace has a passion for dates and music, and combining this with a nostalgia for watching programmes from his childhood, his blue plaques are a unique insight into how he remembers people and what he sees as historic moments.

**Credit:**

Horace Lindezey, *Dot Cotton* and *Stan Butler*, ceramics, 2021.





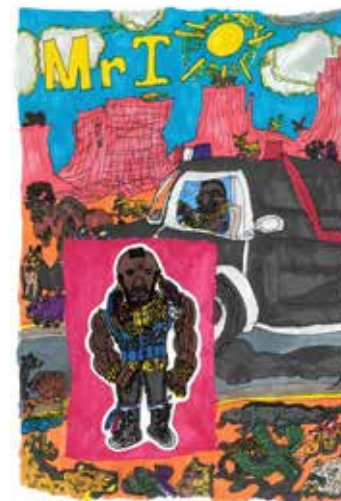
# Leslie Thompson

When Leslie Thompson was a child his mother would take him to Afflecks Palace in Manchester where there was a model shop where he loved to buy wrestling figures from. Leslie here has created *My New Favourite Shop* in the gallery, with his own small action figure heroes, including one of himself, presented in limited edition packs accompanied by his drawings and writings about each character.

Some are tributes to real people, his mother, father and brothers, and people he admires, such as an old teacher, whilst some are wild animals and others are famous stars such as Donna Summer, Mr T, Hulk Hogan and Burt Reynolds.

**Credit:**

Leslie Thompson, *My New Favourite Shop*, installation, 2022.



Ever since 1984 the team  
came on that got Mr T  
to a car on the  
fastest man in the  
world and drove  
the team truck  
Jack Black and Red  
and BA Parag was  
soldier in the team  
Joining soldiers  
he worked with the  
Howling mad maddock  
face it arrival and  
made people laugh.  
The hardest man in  
was a fighter a wrestler  
a boxer in the show that  
1984 and 1985 had Hulk Hogan  
Hulk Hogan the show that  
1984 and 1985 had Hulk Hogan

# Jennie Franklin

Jennie Franklin's drawings appear like an energetic stream of consciousness. She picks and chooses imagery and text from various sources, which she combines to create her own intuitive compositions. Leaflets, flyers, posters and other printed material serve as source material.

Familiar children's characters often appear as her pen drawings on small wooden tiles, including Mr Blobby, Winnie the Pooh and Rupert the Bear. She also sometimes includes self portraits, depicting her own emotions.

**Credit:**

Jennie Franklin, untitled, illustration on wood, 2022.



# Dominic Bennett

The inimitable Dominic Bennett used lockdown as a call to arms to increase the size of his *Weasel Army*, inspired by Anthony Gormley's terracotta figures and his own obsession with the weasels in *The Wind In The Willows*. Since 2018 Dominic has amassed 189 terracotta weasels, made both by himself and by people of all ages who he delivered workshops to and who were sent weasel-making packages during lockdown.

He is the self-styled 'Chief Weasel' and has developed his own story with the weasels as the focus, hoping to cause an intervention against leaders like Boris Johnson and Donald Trump. A form of protest art, he has also produced porcelain and glazed Blood Milk cartons emblazoned with Audrey 2 from *The Little Shop of Horrors*.

**Credit:**

Dominic Bennett, *Blood Milk*, ceramics, 2022.

Dominic Bennett, *Army of Weasels*, ceramics, 2018.



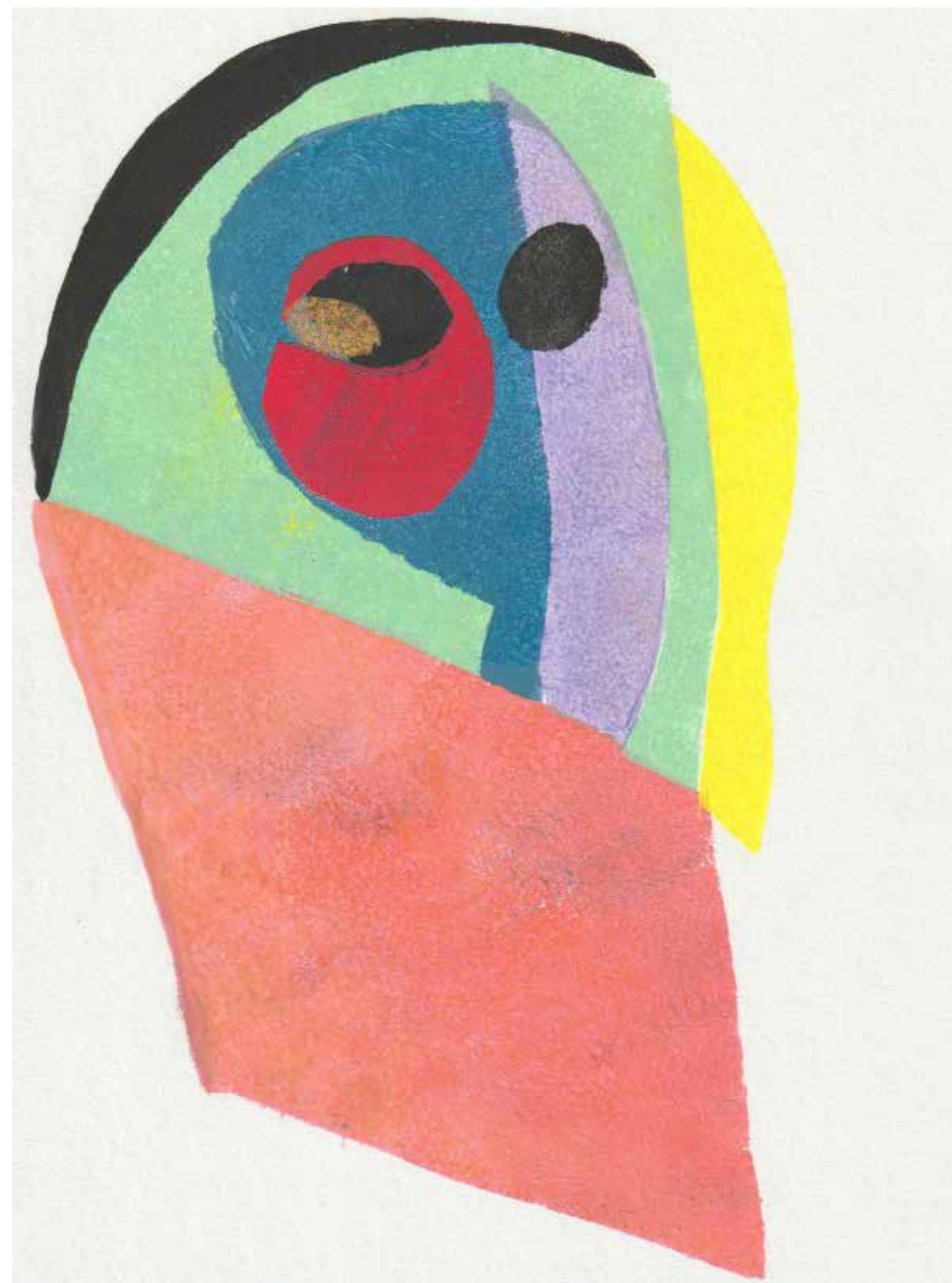


# Ahmed Mohammed

Ahmed Mohammed has a compulsion to draw which involves a cyclical gestural drawing process. Since attending Venture Arts he has discovered his artistic identity and developed a creative practice which spans textile art, printing, ceramics, drawing, photography and multimedia.

Working in a purely abstract way, in his large scale works he has used oil sticks to intuitively create expressive expanses of colour and form. In his printmaking pieces he creates bright blocks of colours that he gives titles such as *Chicken Drumstick*, *Chicken Burger* or *Ice Cream and Spoon*. All of his work incorporates bold and assertive mark-making in a spectrum of colours.

**Credit:**  
Ahmed Mohammed,  
*Ice Cream and Spoon*,  
stencil print, 2018.





# Violet Emsley

At 79 years old, Violet is the oldest artist working with Venture Arts and this is the second presentation of her abstract painting works.

She has historically worked more in textiles, with a piece being exhibited at The Whitworth in 2022 as part of *A Modest Show* (the collateral programme to *British Art Show 9*). As her eyesight has deteriorated, she prefers to work more intuitively with paint and colour. The development of her work has resulted in this freely expressive style that uses layering of colour and texture to great effect.

**Credit:**  
Violet Emsley, untitled,  
paint on canvas, 2021.



# Terry Williams

Terry Williams has been creating artwork about his life and the world around him since 1990. Working in ceramics, photography, drawing and painting, his work often represents everyday life in and around Manchester. Chance observations from daily outings, Terry's direct environment and the objects and people around him are documented in his photographs and paintings with an element of quirky humour, but they give a real sense of his time and place in the world.

During lockdown Venture Arts sent Terry disposable cameras to take photographs of his home environment and converted them to iPad drawings, which are accompanied by his hand-written observations.

**Credits:**

Terry Williams, *Front Room*, analogue photography, 2020.

Terry Williams, *Oh that's the tele over there*, analogue photography, 2020.





YESS LAD,  
TJ Boulting,  
London 2022



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YESS LAD,  
TJ Boulting,  
London 2022





Venture Arts has played a pivotal role in the North West for many years, instigating a huge range of art projects that are aimed at supporting learning disabled people to take their rightful place within our visual culture and to be included within our culture as artists, arts workers, audiences, critics and self-advocates as well.

Learning disabled artists across the UK are now achieving critical success on the art scene and we're delighted to have worked consistently to ensure that our studio artists are part of this upward trajectory too. Following on from showing YESS LAD at TJ Boulting at the end of 2022, to brilliant acclaim, we are so pleased to be showing this work back in the north at the National Festival of Making.

Expect a delight for the eyes, ranging from ceramic work, abstract paintings and action models, to photos of everyday Manchester life.

I feel so proud of the achievements of northern neurodiverse artists in the current arts landscape, where they are en route to establishing their rightful place in the art world. Thanks to the National Festival of Making, this show will really help to further pave that way.

**Amanda Sutton,**  
Director, Venture Arts





# Venture Arts

The National Festival of Making is a unique celebration of UK making, from the kitchen table to the factory floor. Presenting a programme of work that combines Art, Manufacturing, Making and Communities, they commission international and national artists to create world class works, a year round programme and a participatory free family festival for all to enjoy.

**The National Festival of Making**  
Blackburn Cathedral Annex

info@festivalofmaking.co.uk  
festivalofmaking.co.uk

Venture Arts is an award-winning visual arts organisation working with learning disabled artists. Through our studio programmes, exhibitions and collaborative projects, we remove barriers to the arts. We put artists in the lead; we champion neurodiversity and provide pathways for every individual to develop their creative identity.

**Venture Arts**  
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Hulme, Manchester,  
M15 5RF

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info@venturearts.org  
venturearts.org

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FOUNDATION

**Front cover image:**

Barry Anthony Finan,  
*YESS LAD*, 2019.

**Design:**

Boy Oh Boy Designs.

Venture Arts is a Registered Charity, number 1176385  
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Registered office: 43 Old Birley Street, Hulme, Manchester.

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