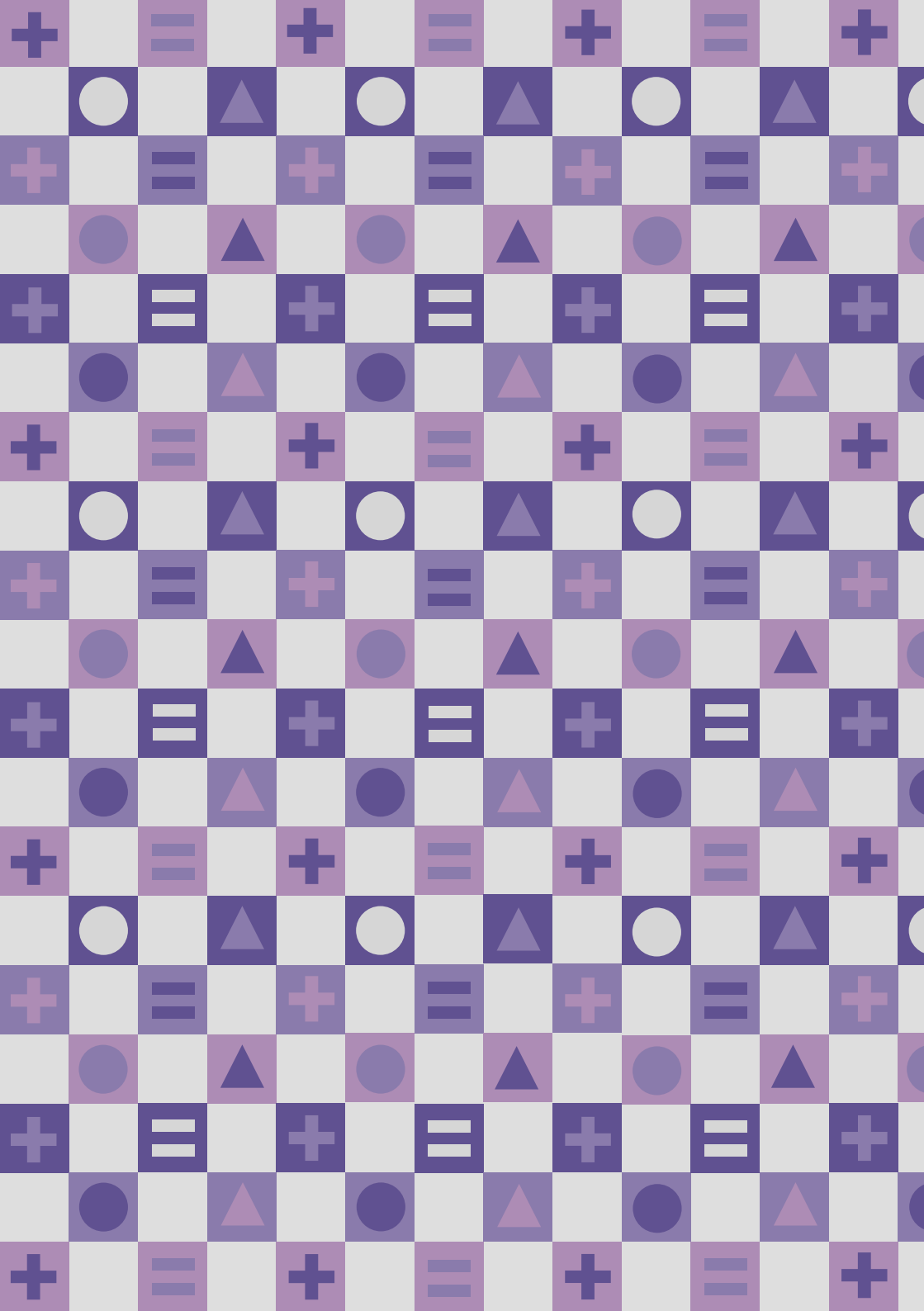


EQUAL + ABLE = LABEL

**EQUAL
+ ABLE**

8 JUNE 2024 – 18 MAY 2025
TEMPORARY EXHIBITION GUIDE



EQUAL + ABLE = LABEL

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Exploring Ableism through
The New Art Gallery Walsall Collections

8 JUNE 2024 – 18 MAY 2025

This is the third project in our embedding diversity series. These projects are co-produced with a *Collections Community Panel*.

It was first established in 2021 and has now grown to encompass a variety of lived experiences; different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, fluidity in gender and sexuality and diverse neurotypes and abilities.

In 2022, we explored LGBTQIA+ stories in *Here & Queer* and in 2023 we looked at the topics of class and identity, in *Pride & Privilege*.

For our 2024 project we have taken the concept of Ableism as our starting point for *Equal+Able=Label*.

What does Ableism mean to you?

- Ableism is discrimination against those with disabilities.
- We may have all been affected by ableism at some point, either directly or indirectly.
- Perhaps when a person acts superior, assumes they know better and decides what's best for others.
- Ableism creates a world in which people will never feel good enough, causes shame and perpetuates stigma and prejudice.
- Around 1:5 people in the UK have a disability, 1:4 experience poor mental health or live with a mental health condition, and 1:7 is neurodivergent.

Disability and Neurodiversity are a normal part of everyday life.



Our Collections Community Panel is very intersectional, and we come together to use our lived experiences to explore *The New Art Gallery Walsall Collections*. We bring our own unique frames of reference and outlooks on the world, and we all learn from one another in a mutually respectful way.

In this project we have explored living with disability, maternal mental health and the impact of caring responsibilities, othering, loneliness and isolation, inaccessibility, being pigeonholed, defying expectations, adult diagnoses of neurodivergence, and having mental or physical breakdowns.

This project aims to shine a light on different perspectives and to see people and artworks differently.

Our coding for symbols

- ≡ Disability
- ▲ Hidden Disability
- ⊕ Neurodiversity
- Mental Health



LABEL

While 'labels' can be helpful in terms of diagnoses and enable individuals to be protected by law, it is a personal choice whether someone wishes to disclose this to others.

Unfortunately, labels can cause stigma and so our chosen title reflects that we don't feel people should be unfairly defined by one particular characteristic. People are more than their diagnoses. They should be valued for their abilities and positive qualities, prioritising strengths over weaknesses.

It also references the traditional system of 'labelling' artworks and we have incorporated different symbols/shapes in the exhibition space to show we all come in different shapes and sizes, there is no one shape we should conform to.

We have used symbols as a more visual language, which carry through in the design of the guide and in the exhibition space. We have chosen the colour purple for the design scheme as it is the recognised colour for promoting inclusivity and equality for disabled people.

We have explored these topics from the perspectives of those with lived experience. But these views do not purport to be the views of all disabled and neurodivergent people.

It however recognises the value and importance of involving those with lived experience for the purpose of advocacy and strengthening understanding, rather than needs and experiences being assumed.

This continues with the work to ensure our collections represent the diversity of our population.

For more information and resources please visit our microsite:



REFLECTIONS ON THE EXHIBITION

What is the one thing you will take away from this exhibition?

What are your own experiences of ableism?

Can you find an object that represents something about you?

What artwork can you find that sparks joy?

#EqualAndAble

Resources

Autism West Midlands offers support to autistic people living in the region autismwestmidlands.org.uk

Royal National Institute for Deaf People is a charity supporting those living with deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus rnid.org.uk

Royal National Institute for the Blind is a sight loss charity offering practical and emotional support to blind and partially sighted people rnib.org.uk

Disability Rights UK works to improve the rights of disabled people across the country <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/>

Maternal Mental Health Alliance provide mental health support before, during and after pregnancy maternalmentalhealthalliance.org

Mind is a charity which works to support mental health in the UK mind.org.uk

Rethink Mental Illness works to improve the lives of those living with mental illnesses such as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder and BPD rethink.org

Sense works with people who have deafblindness or complex disabilities sense.org.uk

Young Minds supports young people with their mental health youngminds.org.uk





Yinka Shonibare (b.1962)

Diary of a Victorian Dandy 19.00hrs, 1998
 Colour photograph
 > Main Hall, Floor 1

This photograph is from a series in which the artist centres himself, a Black British Nigerian, in the role of a Victorian dandy (an upper class British white man). In the image the artist poses proudly with a cane in hand, however rather than denoting his nobility it references the artist's disability. Yinka caught a virus in his late teens which caused inflammation of his spinal cord resulting in permanent paralysis of one side of his body. The condition has worsened over time, and now Yinka permanently uses an electric wheelchair, and works with a team of assistants who he directs to create his artwork.

Bob&Roberta Smith (b.1963)

**+
 Theodore Garman: The sculpture of his son that Jacob Epstein never made, 2009**
 Assemblage sculpture
 > Main Hall, Floor 1

While the artist was on residency at the Gallery he explored our archives and became interested in Theo and his relationship with his father (Epstein). While there is a drawing of Theo by Epstein, Theo is the only one of his children that he did not sculpt. The two were said to have had a difficult relationship. Bob created the sculpture mimicking the process Epstein used: building an armature and building out the clay piece by piece. Bob used blocks of reclaimed wood, adding quotes from Theo's letters, photographs and found objects, some of which came from Walsall canal (eg an umbrella, a beer can). The resulting sculpture is large, awkward and fragmented. Theo was diagnosed with the thought disorder schizophrenia and died aged 29, from heart failure during an attempt to forcibly admit him into hospital in 1954.



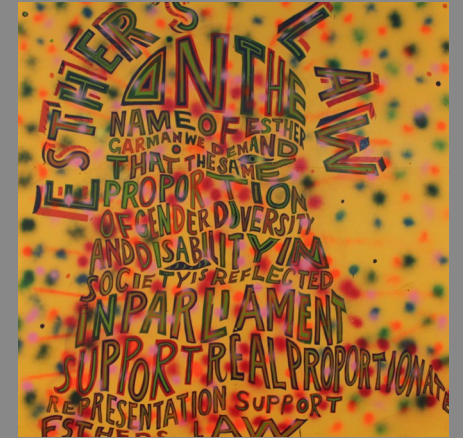
Bob&Roberta Smith (b.1963)

**=
 Esther's Law, 2010**
 Painting on wooden board
 > Floor 1, Top of stairs

Esther was the daughter of Kathleen Garman and Jacob Epstein, and sister of Theo Garman. *Esther's Law* takes the form of a 'call to action' – in keeping with the type of political slogans that appear in a lot of the artist's work.

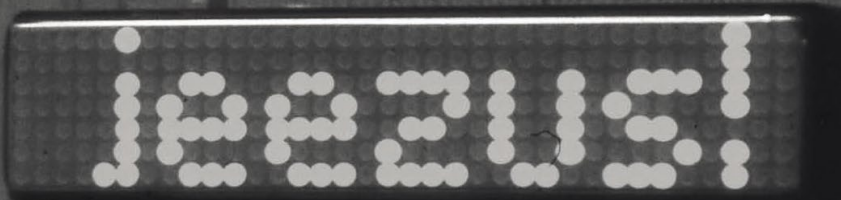
The words form the shape of *The First Portrait of Esther* (1973.363. GR) by Epstein. In this portrait Esther appears to be resisting her father's gaze, which for Bob became a metaphor for the feminist struggle and Esther became the figurehead for a political campaign supporting the rights of women and those with disabilities.

Esther's mental health deteriorated after her beloved brother passed away, and she died by suicide later that same year (1954) aged 25.



'I was drawn to the colours and size of this artwork and when I read the text I was so happy someone chose to use those words about how society needs to be more reflective of diversity and inclusivity.'

FYNN O'CONNOR
 Collections Community
 Panel Member



Rose Finn-Kelcey (1945-2014)

It / House Rules, 2001
LED message Display
> Floor 2, Lift space

Rose's moving messages are placed as subtle interventions in direct view of passers-by, in order to subvert existing social communication conventions to convey an entirely different message.

These works question the way in which we behave and think we should behave in different contexts, poking fun at society rules and orders.

In the context of *Equal+Able* they represent the confusing bombardment we face daily in a world of scrolling social media, with expectations to conform to ableist and neurotypical standards, and the effect this has on an individual's mental health.

A shift in approach to a social model of disability and neurodiversity, would allow more flexibility and acceptance so people no longer need to mask their true identities.



Jane and Louise Wilson (b.1967)

+
False Positive,
False Negative, 2012
Screenprint on mirrored acrylic
> Floor 2, Lift Space

This work references surveillance society, and the fact we are being watched 24:7 via CCTV. Intended to keep us safe, there are instances when people may be observed to be acting 'abnormally' (for example in the case of George Floyd) when in fact there is a logical explanation for their non-conforming behaviour, which is deemed socially unacceptable.

In a neuro-typical world how we look, what we say and how we act can be stereotyped, leading to miscommunication. Feeling constantly under scrutiny and being judged, can have a serious effect on our mental health, and lead to paranoia.

The artists appear with patterns on their faces, dazzle camouflage, which is used to scramble facial recognition technology. Printed onto mirrored acrylic, the work is activated by the viewer's movement, subtly shifting our perception of what is visible and revealing CCTV footage beneath. This shows we are all multi-layered and should not be judged on how we initially appear.



'I was immediately drawn to this artwork as I see it highlighting our senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and I felt it posed the question: are we really fully connecting with each other? I also like the unusual choice of media; the photo and the metal surface.'

FYNN O'CONNOR
Collections Community
Panel Member



Georgia Nelson

Mummy You Don't Wear Make Up, 2019

Film, 18 minutes duration, with a mix of English and French audio and subtitles
 > Floor 2, Temporary Exhibition Space

In this film, Georgia Nelson (whose father is a cousin of Kathleen Garman) explores the experiences of her mother, Jane, who is blind and deaf. Jane lost her sight at eight years old and her hearing gradually in her twenties.

A formidable character, Jane refuses to be underestimated because of her disabilities, and has constantly challenged the preconceptions of others throughout her life.

This film is a powerful and poetic ode to the artist's parents, the power of love, and resisting societal ableism.

The film is bi-lingual, as Georgia has lived in Nantes, France, for over 25 years.



Laura Ford (b.1961)

Beast, 1998
Sculpture

'I've been in The New Art Gallery Walsall collections store a few times and was always drawn to this soft blue bulk in the corner. Hiding in visibility. Its simple presence being enough to draw you in. Reminding me of every duvet day when my body is simply too broken to go on.'

ALEX BILLINGHAM
Collections Community Panel Member



Rachel Goodyear (b.1978)

Crystals, 2015
Pencil and watercolour on paper

'I loved this work from the first second I saw it. How being disabled is often to be viewed as if we're alien not natural not allowed. Why is wanting the health care I need to survive so terrifying for people?'

ALEX BILLINGHAM
Collections Community Panel Member



Ian McLean
(1973–2000)

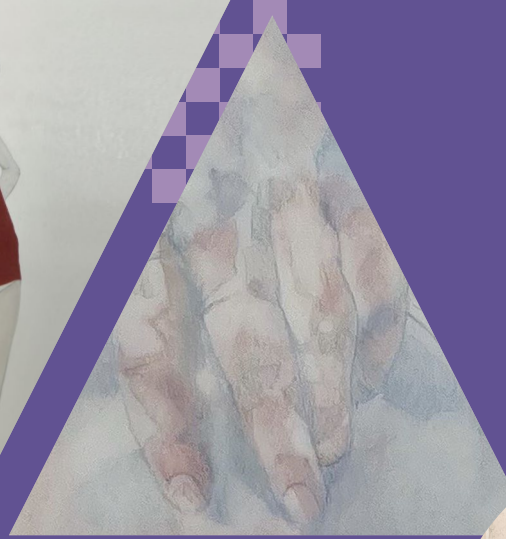
▲
Sans Amour, 1996
Oil painting

'This painting moved me as soon as I saw its depiction of a distorted young woman's body occupying a space on the right of the canvas. The figure jumps out at us straight away: clothed in red, very thin, with large eyes and the strange angle of her shoulders. We immediately perceive her feelings of loneliness, awkwardness, pain.'

This work is one of a series painted by the artist, which all share this feeling of loneliness, of a small subject lost in a large white space.

Although the model's beauty, her averted gaze and the title, suggests a romanticised vision of pain, I am moved by the minimalist and masterly depiction of the loneliness and body awkwardness of illness. I have often felt the same way in my own experience of chronic illness, the feeling of being disconnected due to having an invisible disability.'

CRISTINA CELESTINI
Collections Community
Panel Member



Cristina Celestini

▲
Response to
Sans Amour, 2024
Drawing on drafting paper

'I decided to make a response to this work. A composite drawing on drafting paper of the body of a woman in pain. The body I have chosen to depict is what I would consider the opposite of an idealised, gamine figure. Here is a woman's body with all its imperfections, peculiarities and a growing feeling of pain which is symbolised by the colour red. I wanted the works to reflect and 'talk' to each other, and I hoped to retain the feeling of isolation and solitude I found so compelling with 'Sans Amour.'



Isabel Rawsthorne
(1912–1992)

●
Untitled, circa 1950s
Chalk and pencil drawing with watercolour wash

'The artist is known for her drawings and paintings of ballerinas; with the body in movement being a key feature. This particular work shows a different side. Rather than focussing on elegance, poise,

physical strength and skill, this work can be seen as depicting inner turmoil and mental anguish. It made me think of issues around body image and the societal pressure to push ourselves to the max both physically and mentally as a display of commitment, effort, and talent.

The ambiguity of place and blurred facial features gives the work an unsettling aura – a mood of tension is created by the liminal space and bright merging colours. This uncomfortable feeling is reflected in their recoiling body which implies fragility and torment. It is a stark reminder of the immense pressures placed upon the body and mind, but also a glimmer of the freedom that comes from rejecting these expectations of what we should endure in the misguided search for 'perfection'.

ELIZABETH PARDOE
University Of Birmingham
Work Placement Student



Tracey Emin (b.1963)

Tracey x Tracey, 2005
Screenprint and collage on linen

'Tracey x Tracey' is inspired by Frida Kahlo's painting 'The Two Fridas'. Frida often used an alter-ego in her work. As a child she had an imaginary friend, who kept her company during times of ill-health, and with whom she would construct daydreams of laughing, playing and dancing.

When I was little, I created an imaginary friend for myself, called Daisy. Daisy has been a continuous part of me. It feels like there is two people living inside me, each with our own unique personality, likes and dislikes.

I can relate to the work of both Frida and Tracey, as like them I am disabled.

Tracey has a stoma, following survival from aggressive bladder cancer, while Frida had spina bifida, contracted polio, and spent long periods confined to bed following a traffic accident.

I am a wheelchair user and have borderline personality disorder which is a mental illness that severely impacts a person's ability to manage their emotions.'

CORINNE
Collections Community
Panel Member

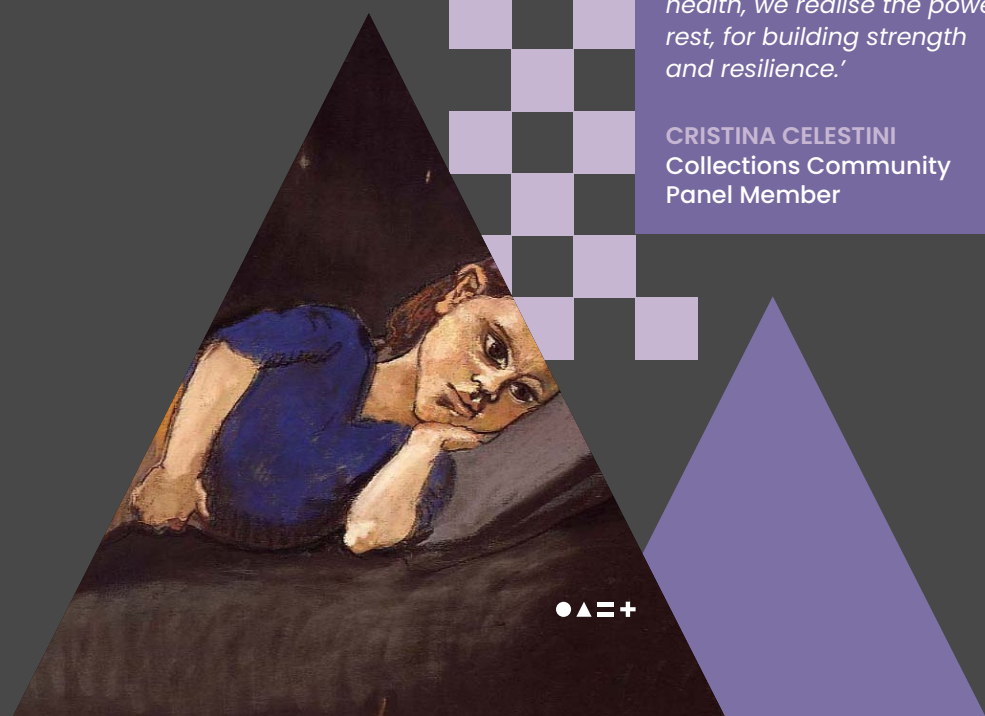


Paula Rego (1935-2022)

Christmas Card, 1994
Multiple

'This work reminds me of the calmness rest can give us, as the figure lies on her side cradling her stomach and just feels at peace. During pregnancy, or episodes of ill health, we realise the power of rest, for building strength and resilience.'

CRISTINA CELESTINI
Collections Community
Panel Member



Shanti Panchal (b.1951)

Mother and Baby, 1992
Watercolour

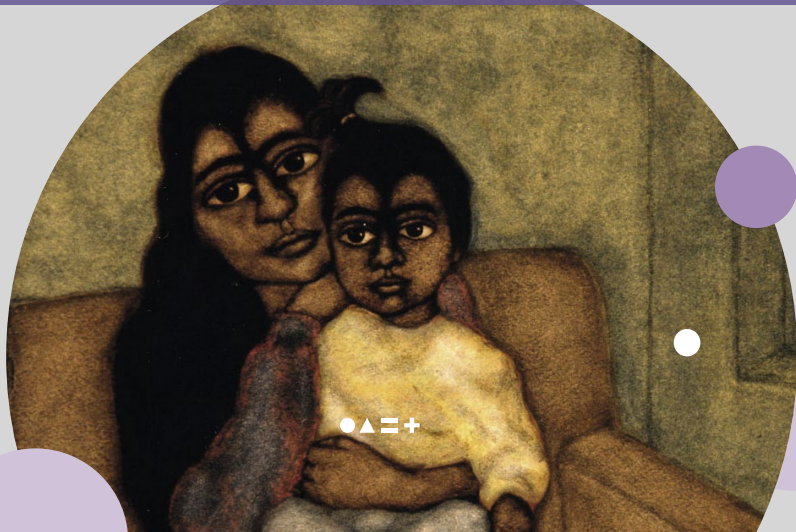
'Being of Indian origin, this work really resonates with me, in representing the theme of motherhood. Motherhood is the best thing to have happened to me. However, my first pregnancy was not a happy time, and its impact on my mental health was something I had not expected.'

From the moment I discovered I was pregnant my mind went into overdrive. I was anxious about everything, from what I could eat and drink, to being around certain smells. The more I read about what could impact a pregnancy as a preventative measure, the more anxious I became, to the point I

convinced myself I had caught toxoplasmosis from my rose plant.

At 28 weeks, I was diagnosed with gestational diabetes, and my mental health really deteriorated. I had to be scanned regularly and take sugar readings 4 times a day. Using a needle meant I worried about catching blood borne diseases. I felt such relief when my daughter was born; my mood shifted almost immediately. Having lived experience of pre-natal anxiety completely changed my outlook, and I now recognise how important maternal mental health is.'

KIRAN BILLING
Embedding Diversity
Project Assistant

**Sally Butcher**

Lockdown Hair, Who Cares? (triptych) 2020-21
Archival photographic prints

'Similar to the artist, I had a new baby to care for during lockdown, as well as an older son, about to start school. I completely related to this artwork and its metaphor of 'hair' and 'care' – not being able to have haircuts during lockdown (or homemade ones; we shaved my older son's head!), having hair loss as a new mum, and a baby with cradle cap. This work speaks to the additional pressures on mothers during lockdown, and having additional caring responsibilities 24/7, with no respite. What should have been a happy family time and getting to know our newborn, became isolating, with no baby groups or social interactions, and lots of uncertainty. It definitely has had an ongoing affect on many people's mental health and we are still feeling the repercussions even now.'

JULIE BROWN
Collections Curator



Polly Morgan (b.1980)

Myocardial Infarction, 2013
Sculpture

'A heart attack hits a family out of nowhere, like a bolt of lightning on a sunny day. Everything changed for us when it happened to my mother-in-law.

At first, she would not admit there was anything wrong, continuing with day-to-day tasks as normal. As often is the case, women put on a brave face and get on with things.

One of my children called an ambulance – the hospital said she was lucky to get there when she did.

The stoic matriarch of our family, who could always be relied upon, was now the one who needed help. The carer became the cared for.



This work reminded me of the day our lives changed forever, and our family rallied together with unconditional love. It speaks of the fragility of life, and the importance of taking care of ourselves and our loved ones, and how necessary support systems are when there is a health crisis to boost our resilience and mental health. It reminds us that we should not be afraid to ask for help when we need it.'

ZARIDA KAYANI
Collections Community
Panel member



Joe Tilson (1928–2023)

Untitled, 1967
Screenprint

'I was attracted to the birds, which connect with the Polly Morgan sculpture. Then I saw the airmail envelope. Before the era of emails or instant messaging, writing letters was the norm and a beautiful way to connect with loved ones when you couldn't be together physically. This was my way to connect with my own mother, thousands of miles away in Pakistan. My mother missed me terribly and felt isolated and anxious with me being so far away. Her mental health deteriorated, but my letters helped.

I remember sitting down with pen and paper, each sentence carefully constructed. The anticipation of her receiving my words and feeling my love from miles away, gave me relief.

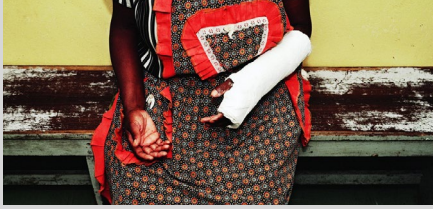


The joy of receiving a letter in return, her words also gave me comfort and support in my new environment.

The written word captures emotions in away that spoken words sometimes can't. It allows us to express ourselves fully, to share our thoughts and feelings, and is now recognised as an important tool for wellbeing.'

ZARIDA KAYANI
Collections Community
Panel Member



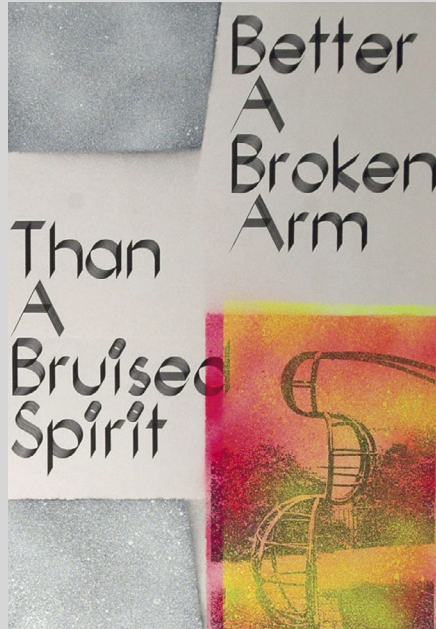


Andrew Jackson

Black Woman, Khayelitsha, 2006
Colour photograph

'My attention was caught by 'Black Woman, Khayelitsha', a photograph of a woman in colourful clothing with a white plaster cast on her left arm, but with her face cropped out of the picture. We can see her body and injury, but we have no other clues about who she is, or what sort of expression she has on her face. Is she in pain? Is she relieved to have got treatment? We have no way of knowing if this is a permanent or a temporary disability. She is literally a faceless person. Is that how she wanted to be depicted, I wonder? The photographer usually employs a sensitive approach to his subjects – is he trying to protect her by not showing her face, could she be the victim of domestic abuse, fleeing from danger? It makes me want to find out more about the woman and if she's ok.'

CROW DILLON-PARKIN
Collections Community
Panel Member



Simon & Tom Bloor (b.1973)

As Long As It Lasts, 2009
Poster

'Having a disability does not make you any less of a person. It's what's inside that counts.'

I feel this work connects well with the photograph of the woman with the broken arm.'

CROW DILLON-PARKIN
Collections Community
Panel Member



Christian Marclay (b.1955)

My Bad Ear, 2004
Bronze

'I was intrigued by 'My Bad Ear', an actual cast of the artist's ear, which represents his struggle with tinnitus. I liked the title and think a lot of us may relate to having a 'good ear' and a 'bad ear'. My own ear duality and tinnitus is the result of having measles as a child. Two of my brothers are completely deaf in one ear due to repeated ear infections. The expression can be used as a sort of joke when people are pretending not to have heard

something, but one in five people in the UK are deaf or have some hearing loss or tinnitus. It's an invisible disability that can be felt as embarrassing or even a character flaw. Hearing aids are seen as being 'worse' than glasses, even though they are doing the same job, just for a different sense. The lack of BSL teaching in schools has been another exclusion point for deaf people from the wider community.'

CROW DILLON-PARKIN
Collections Community
Panel Member



Mo Wilson

Graham Tottey with his Collection of Lledo Models, from the People's Show, 1992
Colour photograph

'What I like about this photograph is its duality – on the surface it shows a man with obvious physical challenges, evidenced by the use of mobility sticks. However, rather than his disability being the subject of the photograph and what defines him, it is from a series about people and their collections. What communicates to me is the man's pride in his vehicle and collection of toy cars. (Lledo vehicles were made famous by the sitcom 'Only Fools and Horses' as the Trotters' mode of transport.) There is great joy in this picture with sitter offering no apologies to orthodoxies about who he is or what is 'cool'. He is comfortable in his own skin, and therefore offers a positive view of disability.'

NEIL MCNAUGHT
Collections Community
Panel Member



Dorothy Cross (b.1956)

Eye Camera, 2004
Bronze

'I think there are again two stories running in parallel here. The closed eye suggests both the subconscious nature of art and photography, whilst also being an obvious obstacle to the camera's function. Thus, the camera can be seen as being a visually impaired, and alluding to the internalisation and inward looking nature of having a disability.'

NEIL MCNAUGHT
Collections Community
Panel Member



Unknown photographer

Jacob Epstein's Lazarus (1947-48)
in a park with a startled observer
Black and white archive photograph

'The look of shock on the woman's face in the photograph demonstrates an adverse reaction to the sculpture. Epstein's interpretation presents Lazarus in a disfigured state with a revolved head and her reaction here tells a story of how classical notions of aesthetics can be tyrannical – whether that is how art looks, or people. The contrast is further emphasised by the conservative nature of clothing the well to do woman is wearing.'

NEIL MCNAUGHT
Collections Community
Panel Member



EQUAL + ABLE = LABEL



Lynn Chadwick

Untitled, 1972
Screenprint

'Seeing this work in the store has always made me smile. I love the acidic green colour, and there is something positive and uplifting about it for me. I see it as a metaphor of the joy of not fitting in, of being a 'square peg in a round hold', and it reminds us that we are all unique, and neurodiversity in society should be celebrated.'

JULIE BROWN,
Collections Curator

Kenneth Martin (1905–1984)

+
Untitled, 1976
Screenprint

'Although seemingly completely abstract, this work is part of a series the artist made combining chance and order. Strict rules are applied. Lines are plotted out on a numbered grid, but where the lines go is determined by numbers drawn in pairs by lot. It can be seen as creating order out of chaos. In the context of Equal+Able it helps us understand that we all think differently, and what makes sense to one person, might not to another.'

As soon as I saw this I felt it could represent a person's intersectionality that may include mixed abilities. Also the phrase: 'not broken but whole' came to my mind.'

FYNN O'CONNOR
Collections Community
Panel Member



EQUAL + ABLE = LABEL

Paul Bartlett (b.1955)

•
Knowledge Versus Ignorance (confined by his own maze), 1979
Breakdown, 1981–82
Prints

'The artist was in his early twenties when he made 'Knowledge Versus Ignorance'. I can empathise with him, as when I was at the same age, I had left university and was trying to work out my place in the world. I was always searching for a direction in my life, and, as a consequence, suffered twice from clinical depression, firstly before leaving university, and then twenty years later. The fact that the artist has placed himself in the centre, drawing the maze, questions whether he is trying to get out of the maze or placing himself further in it. Paul, who I know well, made several prints, all in the same four years, also including 'Breakdown'.



He is part of a movement in the 20th and 21st centuries, of self-referential work by artists, which although goes back at least as far as Goya, superseded the religiosity and classical symbolism of previous centuries.'

CLIVE BEARDSMORE
Collections Donor
and Supporter





EQUAL + ABLE = LABEL

Yoshihiro Suda (b.1969)

Fleming Parrot, 2002
Wooden sculpture

'At first glance it looks like a real flower, however it is a painstakingly created sculpture using traditional Japanese woodcarving techniques. It is the only object I have broken during my professional career! (literally touching wood....) In trying to carefully return the sculpture to its (old) box I accidentally snapped off a petal. I was distraught. It was fixed by an amazing conservator, who also ensured it was repackaged safely and securely in a bigger box. It was not the end of the world. Things break but can be repaired. Humans too breakdown from time to time, either physically or mentally, but we too can heal. This work reminds me that often things aren't as bad as they seem and is a reminder of endurance and resilience. Nature too can flourish in seemingly inhospitable environments.'

JULIE BROWN
Collections Curator

Anya Gallaccio (b.1963)

Untitled, 1998
Lithograph

'I have long admired Anya Gallaccio's work, since I first saw it at the inaugural exhibition 'Prime' at Dundee Contemporary Arts in 1999. Her sculptural installations of perishing flowers spoke to me of transformation and beauty in nature, the cycle of life, and seeing things differently.'

This print is very beautiful, presenting flowers in a non-typical way, frozen in ice. For me it speaks of difference, and although the flowers are disabled in ice they still convey a powerful dual strength and fragility. Although we may experience differences, either physically or mentally, there is a lot of strength and beauty which comes from diversity, as emphasised in this work.'

JULIE BROWN
Collections Curator



Tim Mara (1948-1997)

Handgrip, 1979
Photo etching and screenprint

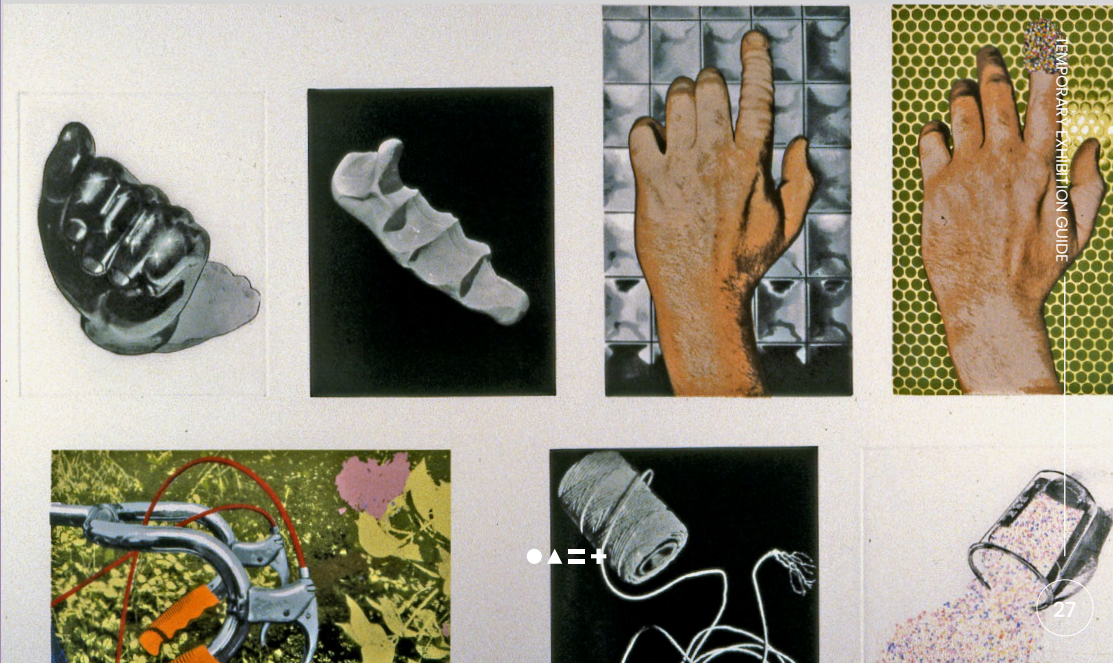
'I recently noticed this work in the store. Although I've worked here for a decade, with thousands of artworks in our collections I still find works which are new to me, that I spend time looking at and seeing properly for the first time.'

Perhaps because I have recently been exploring my autistic traits in more detail this struck a chord – I hadn't realised that hypermobility and joint issues are a common trait of autism. My teenage years were blighted by unexplained wrist and knee problems, which led to

me having to give up the sport I loved (tennis) and required me to have a scribe for exams. I still feel guilty for rejecting the referral to the disability office of my University as I didn't want to be considered 'disabled' and felt ashamed, like I wasn't disabled enough to require the support, which would have created a more even playing field for me.

The idea of grip also gives allusions to mental health, with ableist language such as 'losing grip' or 'get a grip' still common, which creates a culture of not showing any signs of weakness.'

JULIE BROWN,
Collections Curator

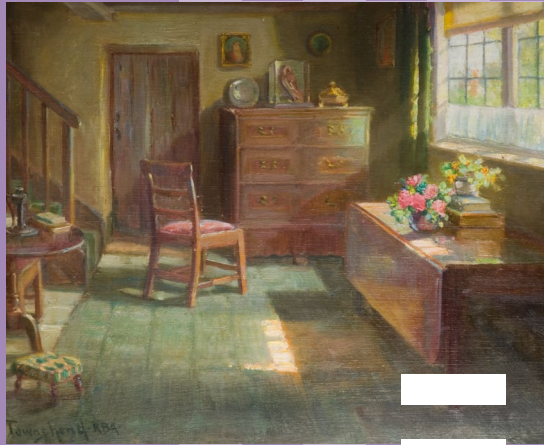


TEMPORARY EXHIBITION GUIDE

James Townshend (1869–1949)

Interior
Oil painting

'The architecture in this painting spoke to me, that middle ground between middle and working class, the painting is part of my heritage. And yet it's not. I would find the stairs difficult. How do I be loyal to my history when the first thing I see is making me tired just thinking about accessing it?'



JAYNE-EDGAR
Collections Community
Panel Member

Glossary of Terms

This list is not exhaustive, but explains some of the terms and topics discussed in the exhibition.

Disabilities are conditions which have a negative impact on day-to-day life. They can be physical or mental. Not all disabilities are visible.

Hidden Disabilities are those which may not be noticeable by sight.

Ableism is discrimination against disabled people. This could be in the form of prejudice against someone with a disability and treating them as inferior, or negative stereotyping and assumption making.

Disablism is preferred by some activists, to show that it is a form of discrimination, in the same way as sexism or racism, and be used to call out conscious acts of discrimination.

Deaf/deaf with a capital D often refers to the culture of being deaf and used by those who have been deaf from birth and have sign language as their first language. Lower case deaf is often used by those who were hearing but have become deaf and for whom sign language is not their first language.

Neurodiversity is the word used to describe the diversity of human brains and differences in the way they function. Society is naturally

neurodiverse. People experience and interact with the world around them in different ways. There is no one 'right' way of thinking and behaving, and differences don't mean deficits.

Neurodivergent is the term used to describe having a brain that works differently from an average or 'neurotypical' person. It has been estimated that 1/7 people are neurodivergent. These are the **neurominority**. **Neurotypical** people have a brain functioning that is in the **neuromajority**.

Neurodivergence refers to a wide range of different conditions.

It is important to recognise that neurodivergence shouldn't be viewed as something negative. These conditions can bring with them particular strengths, as well as weaknesses, for example:

Those with **ADHD** may experience hyperactivity, impulsivity and have difficulty concentrating on mundane tasks because of their condition. They may also be incredibly creative, intelligent, energetic and able to hyperfocus intensely on specialist tasks.

Autism has a wide spectrum. It is also common for it to be linked to other conditions. People with autism may have difficulty expressing themselves, have strong emotional reactions and follow

repetitive behaviours.

They also may be good at problem solving, are precise, reliable and outcome driven.

Dyslexia affects the processing and organising of information. Those with dyslexia may find organisational tasks more difficult, find it hard to concentrate, prioritise and follow written instructions. They may also have enhanced verbal communication skills and be able to see the bigger picture and think outside the box.

Neurodivergent people won't necessarily all have the same symptoms for the same condition. (Therefore, you can't assume what their individual needs are.)

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is a mood disorder that severely impacts a person's ability to manage their emotions and how they interact with others. It can also be referred to as Emotionally unstable personality disorder (EUPD), Emotional intensity disorder (EID), or Borderline pattern personality disorder (borderline pattern PD).

Schizophrenia is a mental illness which affects how people may think, feel and behave and may cause hallucinations, delusions and disorganised thinking.

Mental Health

We all have mental health, and it is just as important as physical health. However there has often

been stigma associated with seeking help for mental health. If someone had a broken arm, they wouldn't think twice about getting help.

We all experience poor mental health from time to time, during periods of stress and as part of life's regular ups and downs. Mental illness however is a long-term condition requiring treatment.

Perinatal Mental Health conditions are those experienced anytime during pregnancy and up to one year post birth. Antenatal means before birth, and postnatal refers to after birth.

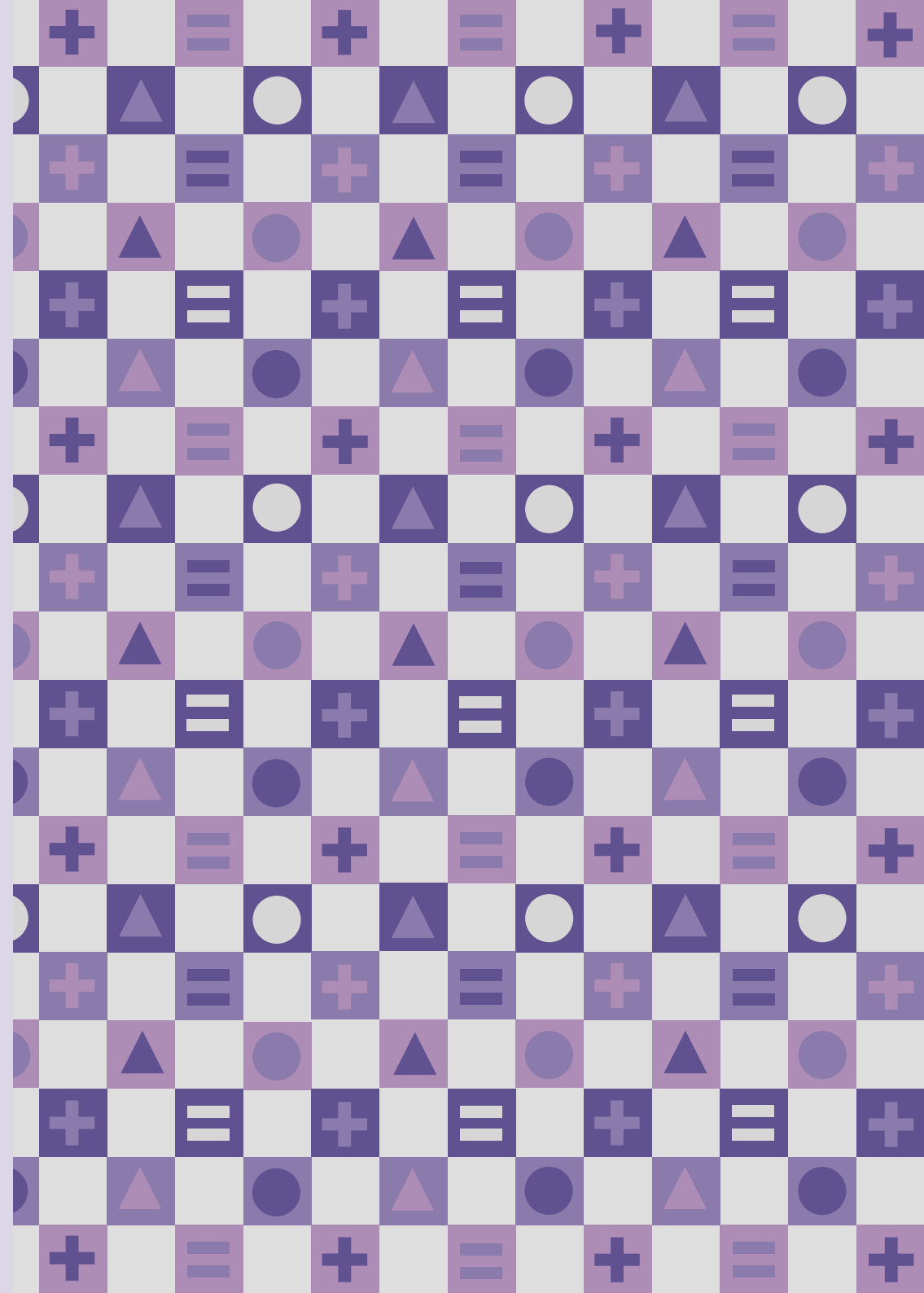
Masking

Disabled or neurodiverse people may feel that they have to mask to fit in with society's expectations, which can be exhausting and detrimental to long term mental health, causing stress and burnout.

Social Model of Disability/ Neurodiversity

This is a change in emphasis from a medical model of disability (which centres what is 'wrong' with the person and how they can be fixed or adapt)

It reframes the situation to consider society's barriers are what are disabling to people, rather than their impairment. So, it is about changing societal systems, rather than people, and removing systemic barriers.



The 2024-25 Embedding Diversity project is using our Collections to explore the concept of Ableism.

Our Collections Community Panel have used their own lived experiences to look at this topic in relation to **Disability, Hidden Disabilities, Mental Health and Neurodiversity**.

Please note some of the topics explored may be triggering.

The symbols in this guide denote the general topics explored.

Please refer to the resources section for suggestions of further reading and support links.

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