

ABOUT YOUNG ARNOLFINI

Collaborative, ambitious, experimental, individual, involved, driven. We are Young Arnolfini; a collective of local artists and writers aged from 16 – 25 working, learning and living in Bristol.

We aim to provide a cultural forum through our workshops, blogging and live events to bridge the gap between young people and Bristol's thriving art scene.

Photography Policy

Please feel free to take photographs of the exhibition for your own private use. Commercial reproduction is not permitted. Please share your impressions of the exhibition via Facebook, Instagram or Twitter: #YoungArnolfini @ArnolfiniArts



Bookshop

In the shop you can find a selection of publications for sale that relate to the current exhibitions.

Access

We aim to make all visitors welcome. There are parking spaces for people with disabilities outside our main entrance, access via Farr's Lane. Our galleries are wheelchair accessible.

Stay in Touch

To join our free mailing list send us an email to boxoffice@arnolfini.org.uk or visit arnolfini.org.uk. You can also follow Arnolfini on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter: @ArnolfiniArts.

Portable seating is available on request.

Large print versions of this guide are available at Box Office

Exhibition spaces open: Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holidays, 11am–6pm
Admission to exhibition spaces is free.

Arnolfini, 16 Narrow Quay,
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Supported using public funding by
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Arnolfini is a registered charity no. 311504.
(Cover image) *Flag series #1*, Young Arnolfini, 2015

EXHIBITION GUIDE

And then we pulled the words apart

Young Arnolfini, Black Kettle Collective (Glynn Vivian Gallery, Swansea)
and Ikon Youth Programme (Ikon Gallery, Birmingham)

Thursday 2 July 11am–8pm, Friday 3–Sunday 5 July, 11am–6pm

This exhibition was made by

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ARNOLFINI

INTRODUCTION

On first meeting, the three groups of artists began discussing what they share. Language and communication emerged, along with an interest in how these themes function in overlooked and invisible ways. Playing games with these ideas, they have pulled stories and symbols apart, asking what it means to both act and speak collectively.

The resulting exhibition addresses the boundaries of meaning, collaboration and space. The continual evolution of language through digital communication seeps into the work, whilst elsewhere the audience is invited to play an active part. The gallery is turned upside down as the groups find their own voice within the space.

A SERIES OF FLAGS

Flags weren't always pieces of hoisted material blown by the wind, initially it was the carvings in the wood of the pole that mattered. The ease and simplicity of a language of blocks of colour won through however and the modern flag is one of the most efficient and loaded symbols in our collective culture. Take away the physical structure and the boundaries of meaning slip away. All you are left with is unassembled colours and shapes, and an infinite amount of meaning to ascribe to them.

In contemporary culture, an equivalent to the flag is the emoji, used in online communication to represent a simplified, surface version of our deep feelings. Both emojis and flags act as ways of conveying a generalised message to the receiver over distances, when words won't do the same. – Joshua Keeling

LLYWELYN, GELERT AND THE MISTRANSLATION OF FOLK STORIES

In Wales long ago when the trees were still young, in a palace of stone on the banks of the Conwy, lived Llywelyn ap Iorwerth with his magnificent wolf-hound Gelert. It was no ordinary dog, but a dog which terrified the wild wolves for miles around and gently teased the stately palace cat. Llywelyn and Gelert were inseparable companions. One day when Llywelyn was out hunting with Gelert, the dog went missing. Llywelyn returned to the lodge alone. He found Gelert there: limping, his jaws dripping, his black coat clotted and matted with blood. In the far corner of the room the cradle of Llywelyn's baby son was overturned and empty; the baby's fur coverings shredded and torn; the worn flagstones smeared with fresh blood. He withdrew his sword from its scabbard and held the sword high, his eyes tightly closed. The blade flashed down plunging deeply into the treacherous hound who had killed his small boy. But Gelert's dying cry was answered by the cry of a child. He found his son, alive and unharmed, hidden by the cradle. At the side, slain by Gelert in a fierce struggle to protect the baby, slumped the body of a mighty wolf. Prince Llywelyn buried Gelert with honour by the River Glaslyn. It was said he never smiled again.

A simple phone call would turn into a game for my new friends. "Shwd mae Mam, fi'n iawn, shwd wyt ti?" "What does that sound like?" "Shoe wheat tea?" "What's she saying now?" A conversation in Welsh would be a game of translation for those around.

Through passing the story of Gelert between us, we created translations and mistranslations, first as individuals, then as a whole and finally through using online translation services.

We talked about group identity, how to speak collectively, and what happens to our own subjectivity when technology plays a role in this process. – Laura Gabe

LISTENING

The listening table presents a collection of recorded voices, binding together the eclectic chaos of overheard words into one physical structure. The intention is to look at how we interact with each other, whilst exploring how this can be experienced in a new way. The overheard conversations include a series of confessions, and the resonating echo of digital feedback. Each vessel emerging out from the table establishes a certain avenue of communication of the sort that we are so often surrounded by when we are out in public spaces, but rarely focus in on.

Black and white photographs overlook the listening table. One image is of GCHQ Bude, a government facility focused on monitoring technologically distributed communication. The other is of Oxwich Bay, on the Gower Peninsular, one point in a vast global network of submarine cable landing points. These sites, much like digital information itself, remain mostly invisible to the general populace. The abundance of digital information often overshadows the physical acts of storing, distributing and filtering it. These images attempt to deal with these often imperceptible processes. – Harry Gammer-Flitcroft

CAPES

We wanted to make a space. A space to define ourselves, to learn in and to question the boundaries around us.

Flags hoisted into the sky, a tree's canopy, an umbrella, a cape – these are all things we've encountered on our journey here. Whether sheltering from the rain or placing a picnic rug in a park, we often mark out the space around us, both as groups and as individuals.

By putting on a cape you become a part of the work and join in the space we have created to learn together. – Nicola Pearce

IKONISH

When working together we experience the crossing of gallery and youth culture. With this comes a collision of different values, aesthetics and linguistic forms.

The dense text presented mimics the language sometimes encountered in art writing. Some persistence is needed, but the passage eventually reveals itself as a short anthropological description of young people, discussing them as an unsophisticated tribe with curious characteristics. The text takes the perspective of the 'educated institution', aimed at the equally educated visitor.

The film is an extension of the way youth culture is presented so frequently as an 'other', by acting as if they are a remote civilisation with their own language. The viewer is invited to engage with the group, by translating the symbols painted on to the film. – Carys Wall

ALLOTMENTS

We began by discussing the boundaries of the gallery and how they could be dissolved. Through this discussion we developed the idea of an allotment with the concept of handing out seed packets as a way to spread stories through the city.

What does it mean to treat stories physically in an increasingly virtual world? Stories about plants are grafted from the internet, as nature and youtube collide. Further references are made to the history of allotments as radical spaces, as well as ideas about how plants, language and stories continue to evolve over time. – Charlie Crosley-Thorne