



MANCHESTER
OPEN
EXHIBITION
2022
HOME



MAKE PACK by Chester Tenneson





Chester Tenneson

I'm a visual artist, curator and educator. I've exhibited nationally and internationally. Projects include collaborations with Bluecoat, Castlefield Gallery, Trans Creative, Becks Fusions and Galerie Nivet-Carzon.

My practice utilises commonplace objects and gestures to explore the absurdity of institutional, normative everyday experience, from a trans masculine perspective. I make sculpture, text, print and performance based works.

Educational roles include lecturing in Fine Art and performing talks which promote queer and trans representation in the arts.

My creative process

All of my work involves play in the form of spontaneous arrangements, writing or actions.

My artist studio is a place of freedom - where it's okay to play with a balloon or a pack of fake cigarettes all day.

If I don't allow myself to be free I can't make anything. As soon as I sit down to make lists in the studio it is a mistake unless, it's for what I'm going to have for my lunch or tea... which requires good attention.

I glue a lot of objects together, pull lots apart and often place others on my head for large period of times. There are many half-made sculptures in the studio that I'll keep returning to until they are 'right' *.

* I generally know that something is 'right' in the work when my gut tells me. Or, I laugh - which could be a laugh of enjoyment or, more often, awkwardness.

My inspiration

Everyday, banal things inspire me. Or, these things certainly provoke me to make something in response to them.

These inspirations could be a badly made object I see in a shop, a slight crease in a piece of paper or an oversized plunger.

I'm also recently looking at a lot of bad, embarrassing promotional photographs of famous cis men. They mostly consist of a lot of famous male artists, trying to look really important in odd ways.



Quick, prompts for immediate making in your home

MAIL ART:

Find a pencil. Find an envelope. Turn the envelope to the back and draw an image of the person who sent the post to you. If the envelope is from a utility provider, imagine the person who has billed you. You could then pop this in another envelope and send it back to them. Or, keep the drawing on display, near your letterbox.

PRINT:

Open a book on page 11. Find the 11th word on the page and write an email to the 11th person in your contacts list, using the found word 11 times to describe what kind of day you've had. Then print off the email and any responses you get and turn that into a zine.

SCULPTURE:

Go to your kitchen and grab two food items from the fridge. Put the items into a pair of shoes. These could then stay in the kitchen for a while.

DURATIONAL PERFORMANCE:

Go to your wardrobe and pick out a piece of clothing you don't really like. Wear this for as long as you can until, you can't stand it anymore. Make a note of how long you managed to wear it. If you photograph this process, you could upload to Instagram immediately.

DRAWING:

Find a pencil and piece of paper. Attach the paper to a wall. Place the pen in your mouth (being careful) and draw an image of the pencil in your mouth with the pencil in your mouth, on the paper. Once completed, remove pencil from mouth and compare drawing and object for accuracy.

VIDEO/PERFORMANCE:

Buy a pack of balloons. Set up a video camera and press 'record'. Blow up all of the balloons from the pack and tie them. After a minute has passed, pop them all. Put the balloons back in their original packaging. Place the packaging on a shelf and eat cake. Press 'stop record' on camera. The video could be uploaded to Instagram.

My advice

Be authentic. You are you and that's enough.

Try not to be the person that's 'more than enough' though. Be well-measured.

Question authority. You can make the rules within your own art.

Push yourself to work in new ways by learning new skills. These skills don't have to be considered as 'Fine Art' in the first instance. A course in advanced cheese-making could lead to an interesting socially-engaged, durational performance.

Reach out to collaborate with other creative people. Especially, if they make work which is different to yours. Interdisciplinary making is very insightful and rewarding.

Make sure that you are paid. All artists should be paid. It's hard work.



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