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Head On

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Citation: Dale, N. (2023). *Head On*. [Exhibition]

Abstract

The output is a series of sculptural headpieces by Nicola Dale premiered via a solo exhibition at Bobinska Brownlee, London.

Research Process: 'Head On' focused on sculpture as live experience, with audiences invited to complete the work. Visitors to the exhibition held, wore & moved with the pieces through bespoke artist-led participatory tours. This was done as an exploration of the ways in which sculptural volume can be both implied and mutable. By inhabiting a sculpture, an audience member becomes it, no longer able to see it from a distance. Each becomes the viewed as well as the viewer. Within the collapsed distance, a horizon of touch can be repeatedly established, reached and mediated anew. The tours were tailored to particular groups - including emerging performers (visual art/dance), wider creative communities (art/design), and learning-disabled young people.

Research Insights: By involving the audience directly in the work, 'Head On' provided a way into contemporary performance/sculpture for audiences without specialist knowledge. It fostered an appreciation of touch and shared experience. The audience-driven approach promoted contemporary art as something made with audiences, rather than merely for them. It provided opportunity for experiential learning alongside the traditionally passively viewed solo exhibition model.

Dissemination: The research was shared through the solo exhibition and publication with text by critic Cherry Smyth (edition of 50 and as PDF), as well as through five participatory tours for the public over the duration of the exhibition. Documentation from this was archived on the gallery's and artist's websites, as well as attendees' social media and visual art news websites.

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