Climbing the Double Helix

Friday 9 September, 2016

Climbing the Double Helix

17 September–29 October 2016
Artists: Louise Clarke, Liz Collini & Heather Dewey-Hagborg
Opening night: Friday 16 September 2016, 6–8pm

To celebrate the centenary of the birth of Northampton-born Francis Crick, NN Contemporary Art presents Climbing the Double Helix, an exhibition of commissions from artists Louise Clarke and Liz Collini and existing work by Heather Dewey-Hagborg.

Francis Crick discovered the DNA molecule with James Watson and won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1962. Deoxyribonucleic acid, known as DNA, is the genetic blueprint for making all living things. Shaped like a double helix, a twisting ladder-like structure, DNA is contained in almost every cell in the human body.

DNA holds the instructions that determine every physical trait; eye colour, which hand you write with, your propensity for certain conditions and more. Since its discovery, applications have led to major innovation in many fields such as healthcare, genealogy and forensic science. With these developments, however, come ethical questions and nefarious opportunities.

This exhibition brings together three artists working across media including installation, drawing, film and publishing. Liz Collini has been commissioned to create a new text-based wall work for the exhibition based on her research into the topic. Liz's method for drawing texts reveal the geometry of each letter and serif; her words emanate from their exposed building blocks.

Louise Clarke's new site-specific commission uses hair, electronics, motherboards and fibre optics to create an immersive experience threading across the space. Hair carries DNA and historically and culturally in the UK we have carried hair as keepsakes, such as in a locket. This leads to the second part of Louise's work, an interactive piece visible 24 hours a day from Guildhall Road. The oval of a locket provides the shape for a series of backdrops Louise is creating in the windows of NN. Along Guildhall Road, individuals, groups, anyone and everyone passing by are invited to use the backdrops to take photos and selfies, using the hashtag #NorthamptonDNA to create a cumulative portrait of Northampton.

Climbing the Double Helix also features video work and documentation from Heather Dewey-Hagborg's various projects both using and questioning the use of technology and DNA. Stranger Visions (2012–14) saw Heather recovering DNA from the every day environment such as discarded chewing gum and cigarette butts. After sequencing the DNA at the Brooklyn open biotechnology laboratory 'Genspace', Heather 3D printed portraits of the people based on the extracted genetic information. DNA Spoofing (2013) finds ways to protect anonymity in a world where humans constantly shed genetic material in public space. As well as the videos, the exhibition features The Official Bionymous Guildbook (2015) by Heather, completed with Jared Solomon. These booklets are a DIY guide to erase and replace your DNA.

A series of events will accompany the exhibition including a talk from Ancestry about DNA testing and genealogy, a creative workshop responding to the themes with Tamsyn Payne and NN regulars Crit Group and Bumps & Babes.

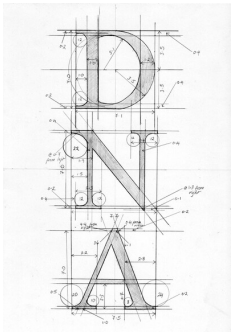
More information on the project and information about NN are atwww.nncontemporaryart.org

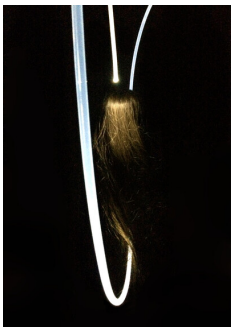
Ends

Notes to editors:
For more information about the artists please visit:
Liz Collini: http://lizcollini.com/
Louise Clarke: http://louise-clarke.co.uk/
Heather Dewey-Hagborg: http://deweyhagborg.com/

Climbing the Double Helix is part of The Medium Project, a year-long programme of exhibitions and

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events exploring the idea of mediums. Supported by Arts Council England.

NN is a contemporary art space in the centre of Northampton.

Opening hours:
Wednesday–Saturday 11am-–6pm

Free admission

NN is supported by:
Arts Council England
Northampton Borough Council
Northampton County Council
Northampton Community Foundation
The University of Northampton

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