

JUST... AS AN ARTIST

An exhibition of work by artists based at Portugal Prints, a therapeutic artist community.

27 January–13 February 2022

Including artwork by: D. Kongson, GW, Helene Dutranois, JL, Louie Matheou, Melissa Nash, Mirjana, Muru Pillai, Neelam Syngé, R. Cooper, RF, Sandra Manthando, Sikelela Owen, Simona Hartia, ZP



For **Just... As an Artist** Zabludowicz Collection has partnered with therapeutic arts project Portugal Prints and artist in residence Sikelela Owen to curate an exhibition of 14 artists that are part of the Camden-based creative community. The exhibition will include a diverse mix of art work and demonstrate the positive impact that the Portugal Prints methodology has on its members' lives.

Just... As an Artist anchors itself in the generative and communal and will create a space for exchange, acknowledging that accessing an engaged audience is a privilege not available to all artists. By showing a variety of practices and approaches to art making: from collaborative wall drawing to individual works, the exhibition aims to encourage the idea that being an artist is a testament to the variety of human experiences and ways to communicate what it feels like to be alive. Whilst acknowledging that being seen as just as an artist is a freedom not granted to all people equally.

Established in 1979 by occupational therapist Gaynor Reynolds, Portugal Prints holds at its core an innovative hybrid model of offering both ongoing emotional support and meaningful creative work. At the centre of the therapeutic practice at Portugal Prints is the belief that nurturing creativity and meaningful relationships can help people living with mental health difficulties. In 2021, with the support of the Zabludowicz Collection, Portugal Prints collaborated with *Sikelela Owen*, an RA Schools alum, as their first professional artist in residence. With Owen's engagement the exhibition will showcase the breadth and diversity of the lived experiences of artists and their approaches to making images that represent their lives.

Elizabeth Neilson Director of Zabludowicz Collection on the partnership:

"In the second year of the pandemic, the Zabludowicz Collection wanted to support vulnerable local artists who are most affected by Covid and the social isolation that came with it. Portugal Prints is a very special and unique organisation supporting people with complex mental health needs who are some of the most excluded from society. As an artist's community, they are from all different walks of life, brought together by their passion for art, not just their mental health situation. Our aim was to help them find an artist of international repute who would bring out the excellence in an exhibition of works by their artist's community and we have been delighted to bring Sikelela on board."

Patrick Conlon, Manager, Portugal Prints said of the project:

"At its heart, Portugal Prints is a community of artists embracing many different approaches to art practice. In our studio, the artists explore and experiment. They share their different practices to find their own creative voices and identities as artists. With the support of Arts Council England and Zabludowicz Collection, working with Sikelela Owen to present Just... As An Artist has been an important journey in creating new work, learning new skills and sharing new ideas. Just... As An Artist is a statement that addresses how our artists wish to be seen, and how art can shape the way we all see ourselves."

Sikelela Owen, Artist in residence at Portugal Prints on the project:

"This project represented a unique opportunity for an extended and meaningful experience working with artists living with and through complex mental health conditions. It has been an honour to be part of Portugal Prints' 42 year history of providing a supportive environment for their artists. It felt like an act of trust, to be welcomed into their studio, see their practice and be part of their community. Following the isolation, uncertainty and fear we as artists have experienced during Covid, being part of this supportive artist community was something we all needed."

The exhibition is selected and facilitated by Sikelela Owen as a result of her residency with Portugal Prints. Supported by Arts Council England and Zabludowicz Collection

INFORMATION FOR EDITORS

SIKELELA OWEN – artist in residence

Sikelela is a painter working predominantly in oil, her subject matter is personal and she often represents members of her communities: women, Londoners and the African diaspora. She was selected as her approach was one of generous skill sharing and collaborative working. Her proposal was not to differentiate between her work and the Portugal Prints artists but to discuss other artists and approaches and find a mutual space of enjoyment and development. Sikelela has exhibited widely in the UK and was a resident with the British School in Rome in 2019. She graduated from the RA schools in 2012 and has worked previously with Hospital Rooms completing an artwork for Rosewood Ward, an inpatient mental health unit for women at Camden and Islington. She is represented by James Freeman Gallery, London.

www.sikelelaowen.com

PORTUGAL PRINTS

Portugal Prints started out on Portugal Street in Holborn where people living with mental health difficulties engaged in creative commercial work while also having access to ongoing emotional support. Established in 1979 by occupational therapist Gaynor Reynolds, Portugal Prints held at its core an innovative hybrid model of offering both ongoing emotional support and meaningful creative work.

As art therapists joined the team, Portugal Prints later came to focus more on art workshops and art therapy. In its 42 years, Portugal Prints has moved homes, changed management and suffered cuts in mental health funding. Now part of Mind in Brent, Wandsworth and Westminster, Portugal Prints has preserved its hybrid model. At the centre of our therapeutic practice at Portugal Prints is the belief that nurturing creativity and meaningful relationships can help people living with mental health difficulties.

www.bwwmind.org.uk

ZABLUDOWICZ COLLECTION

Zabludowicz Collection is an independent philanthropic organisation that is home to a growing collection of contemporary art, and a programme of exhibitions, events and residencies, in collaboration with leading British and international artists. Since its foundation in 1994 the Collection has been dedicated to fostering new audiences and a sustainable environment for contemporary art by creating developmental opportunities and support for emerging and mid-career artists, curators and organisations.

UK registered charity number 1120067.

For more information, images or any other press enquiries please contact:

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Admission: FREE

Thursday–Sunday,
12–6pm or by appointment

Café, Library and Shop

The **Shop** sells limited edition artworks, 50% of the proceeds go directly to the artist.

shop.zabludowiczcollection.com

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