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For Immediate Release

New exhibition by Plymouth artist Jason Brownlee goes on display at TRP after theatre helped him build confidence

This week, Theatre Royal Plymouth hosts a brand new exhibition in the theatre's gallery space, featuring the work of Plymouth-based artist Jason Brownlee.

Jason came to Plymouth in 2015, suffering from chronic depression among other things. After spending some time in the city he began to be inspired by drama and art, thanks to TRP.

Jason explains: *"I was signposted to the theatre's Our Space drama group. I had no prior experience of theatre so this was completely out of my comfort zone, but I decided to go as I had nothing to lose. After attending a few sessions I realised it was actually fun and it helped me build self esteem and confidence.*

"The theatre opened up my eyes to new experiences. This unlocked a hidden passion that I didn't even know I had and I began to paint and write poetry."

After attending Our Space for around a year, Jason was given the opportunity to join Project X, the next step on from Our Space where participants collaborate with a professional director to develop and devise work that is presented in theatre spaces.

Jason said: *"This is something that I never thought I was capable of, standing up in front of an audience and bearing my soul.*

"During this time, I wrote a series of epic poems that resulted in a 20 minute pilot play that was shown in the Lab at the theatre."

In 2019, Jason was awarded Lab Associate, where he teamed up with Lee Hart, the lead practitioner from Project X, and together, the pair formed the production company, Voodoo Monkeys.

"We have gone on to turn the pilot play into a full production called 'Today I Killed My Very First Bird' which will be shown on the The Drum stage in February and July 2022 and then, God willing, later in the year at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival."

Jason's journey through the theatre inspired him to apply to Plymouth City College for an Art and Design course, where he achieved a Diploma with distinctions.

Jason explains: *"My tutor then encouraged me to apply to Plymouth University for a Fine Arts Degree and I said she was having a laugh, but she was adamant that I could*



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achieve it, so I applied and was accepted unconditionally. I passed and graduated this year with a Fine Arts Honours Degree as well as winning the Fine Arts prize for Excellence.

“Through Our Space I have now become part of the Co-Creating Change Network, a national platform hosted by the Battersea Arts Centre to share best practice.

“I am currently working as a lead practitioner delivering art and drama workshops in Plymouth in collaboration with the Theatre Royal Plymouth. If it wasn’t for the theatre’s belief in me and giving me these amazing opportunities I would never have imagined that I would be a part of the creative arts world.”

You can find Jason’s exhibition in Theatre Royal Plymouth’s gallery space, on the first floor. Find out more about Jason’s work: [instagram.com/voodooommonkey](https://www.instagram.com/voodooommonkey)

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For further information please contact the Media and Communications team on mediaandcommunications@theatreroyal.com / 01752 230439

Theatre Royal Plymouth (TRP) is a registered charity providing art, education and community engagement in Plymouth and across the region. It engages and inspires with the aim of touching lives as the South West’s principal centre for performing arts. Theatre Royal Plymouth presents a year-round programme of world class productions on all scales.

Theatre Royal Plymouth works with partners to understand the challenges people face accessing the arts, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged people. It creates pathways that are genuinely accessible to those who might otherwise never get to engage with the arts and collaborates to co-create and co-author work that represents the community, creating the space needed for people to tell their story in their own way.

Theatre Royal Plymouth is the UK’s largest regional producing theatre with a focus on embracing the vitality of new talent and supporting emerging and established artists. It collaborates with a range of partners to provide dynamic cultural leadership for the city of Plymouth.



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