

## **UGO Project Space, British Art Show 8, Southampton, 2016-2017**

UGO Project Space was a public art programme of large format site-specific artworks presented on an underused billboard as part of the British Art Show 8's Associate Programme (2016-17) in Southampton, UK. Three curated commissions were shown in a high exposure context, challenging local artists to consider key themes including: notions of the multi-site, parallels in regional industrial decline, and the Southampton celebrity. The project invited curators and commissioned artists to work in new territories and to generate new learning.

UGO commissioned a series of new works to be presented on an unused 16-sheet billboard located on a main city-centre road, the A335 in Bevois Valley. The public, overt format provided its originality, responding to frustrations with the lack of visibility in the established artist-led art scene by utilising advertisement space.

The project challenged the regional artist-led approach, with its often inadequately published and conventional modes of display, by adopting a format conventionally used almost exclusively for profitable/lucrative advertising; it questioned the extent to which overt artworks can contribute to the development of an emerging regional art scene by increasing the accessibility of local artworks and thus generating a new audience.

Dialogue between the selected artists formed the evolving temporary output. The artists had been selected to provide different curatorial opportunities and engagement for a varied audience of commuters, pensioners, workers in the adjacent industrial units, and school children.

The following works were commissioned:

### ***Free For All Forever* by S. Mark Gubb (24 October – 6 November 2016)**

Gubb's subjects are drawn from the social and political culture, and an equal fascination with things he finds so great and so terrible about the world we live in. *Free For All Forever* contributed to a bigger project, *Revelations* which took place at SYSON Gallery and g39 Gallery. *Free For All Forever* was simultaneously displayed at *i70 Sign Show* (Missouri, US).

### ***Poor Old Tax Payer [1979] (2016)* by Stuart Whipps (21 November – 4 December 2016)**

Whipps's investigation into the decline of British car manufacturing in Birmingham mirrored the closure of Southampton's FORD Factory. *Poor Old Tax Payer (1979)* referenced British Layland, with parts from a 1979 Mini which, with the help of ex-workers from Longbridge, Whipps is restoring. This partially restored Mini was exhibited at BAS8.

### ***A Starry Night in Southampton* by Team Beswick & Pye (Gordon Beswick and Harry Pye) (5 - 18 December 2016)**

In discussion with Southampton poster-boy Chris Packham, the artists painted Packham surrounded by his favourite animals.