

What's Behind the Mask?

New Exhibition for Autumn / Winter

Ipswich Art School

Opening Saturday 8th October 2011 until 4th March 2012

FREE Admission

October sees Ipswich Art School launch a collection of exciting exhibitions, showing the work of 2 Suffolk-based artists alongside an interactive responsive installation. These multi-voiced displays take their inspiration from Colchester & Ipswich Museum Service's world collection and the wider world of 'collecting'.

The exhibitions by featured artists Chinwe Chukwuogo-Roy and Gareth Bayliss present two distinctive approaches to art and image making, contrasting traditional methods and treatment of subject matter with contemporary graphic concepts and processes.

In the downstairs galleries and main atrium space Nigerian-born Chinwe Chukwuogo-Roy's shows '*Behind the Mask*', a body of new work made as a direct response to the Charles Partridge Collection, on show in Ipswich Museum. Charles Partridge was an Edwardian Suffolk Colonial Officer in Nigeria and his collection of the Ibibio is close to Chinwe's own traditional cultural heritage as an Igbo. Chinwe has taken particular inspiration from one of the Ekpo masks Partridge collected from the Ibibio people to explore the theme of masks and 'masking'.

Through her new paintings, drawings and 3D work Chinwe invites the audience to contemplate the notions of disguise and façade. Devices through which people have sought to articulate the complexities of everyday life, the African Colonial experience, and the contemporary conflicts over cultural identity that face the African Diaspora.

Upstairs former Ipswich Art School student Gareth Bayliss shows retrospective and new work in '*Gareth Bayliss - The Return to Ipswich Art School*'. Bayliss is a compulsive graphic artist with a broad interest in ritual display in contemporary youth culture, entertainment and social activity. He presents workings and ephemera from his commercial publication and packaging design for musical artists and record labels (including Mo'Wax, Dizzee Rascal, Honest Jon's), alongside his prolific personal outputs – drawings, print and zines.

His drawing-based work has evolved a signatory visual and conceptual repertoire "sampled" and "mixed" from a passion for the world of record collecting. Funk, Soul, Reggae, Afro-Beat, Folk, Country, Rock, Hip Hop, Electronic Dance and Urban music provide an eclectic resource for his meticulous, handcrafted (drawn and digested) compositions. Work results as

“visual trademarks” and logotypes, recurring insignia and surface patterns, graphic language familiar in global branding but used here to communicate more intimate “tribal” association.

Both artists present well-defined thematic displays, yet there are common contextual roots to be found in their (visual and material) dialogue with cross-cultural exchange. African and African diasporic traditions and ritual being played out in popular culture through contemporary music and style.

Councillor Bryony Rudkin, Ipswich Borough Council's Culture portfolio-holder, said: "These are two very important exhibitions by two prominent artists and ones that use the latest techniques to bring the works alive for visitors. Gareth is a former Art School student, while Chinwe has gained international recognition, especially for her portrait of The Queen."

Then explore ‘here after this... OBJECT EXCHANGE’, a public participation installation which celebrates the phenomenon of cultural exchange and the complexity and diversity of cultural traditions. On view will be ‘curators’ selection’ of relevant objects from the Museum’s collection providing a material and visual meeting-point between the two featured exhibitors. Parallel to this is an interactive element that follows the ethos of ‘letter-boxing’ or geocaching. Here visitors are invited to remove and donate their own ephemeral objects to an evolving and shifting display in response to their own ideas about cultural exchange, communication and display.

A ‘Common Room’ has also been set up as a visitor resource. Here it will be possible to make broad responses to the exhibitions either by dropping-in and using the art materials provided or scheduling audience-led, informal time-based activity - performance, readings to demonstrations. (This space is available until January 2012).

So don’t miss these rich and varied exhibitions; make sure you visit today!

Ipswich Art School

1 Upper High Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 3QH

Tuesday – Sunday, 10am to 5pm

FREE Admission