

Title: Recently Cov Screening Programme

Artists: Ryan Christopher, Paul Daly, sirencrossing and Duncan Whitley

Curated by: Ryan Hughes

Coventry is a small, complex and often ignored but important city.

It was very briefly the capital of the UK in the 15th century. It played an important role in the industrial revolution in the 18th century. It was largely destroyed by Nazis in the 20th century and, when reflecting on the continental-styled modernist post-war rebuild, local residents like to self-mockingly say that *"our city planners destroyed what Hitler didn't"*.

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It has outstanding networks. It is at the centre of the UK making travel by train and road easy, but is also at the centre of a network of 26 international twin cities creating opportunities for sharing with friends, family and colleagues in China, Jamaica, Australia.

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Artist group *Art & Language* formed in the city; they were among the first artists in the world to use the term "Conceptual Art". The first Covid-19 vaccination in the world was administered here. The UK's Green Party has its roots here. The modern bicycle was invented here. In 2020, Coventry residents voted themselves the ugliest people in the UK.

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The artists I have brought together for this screening programme all have really close relationships to Coventry. Some live here. All have worked here. Several make work about here. Several make work about other places, but somehow, Coventry seeps in.

You can take the artist out of Coventry, but you can't take Coventry out of the art.

This screening programme includes documentary practices, performance documentation, video haikus. The artists have used 16mm film, HD, digital animation and low-res mobile phone footage. The artists have explored faith, nature, redevelopment, celebration, society and fungi. These artists have very different concerns and approaches, but somehow, this collection of works feels like the new Coventry. Still complex. Still important. Not so small. Impossible to ignore.

The works that are included in this screening programme have all been produced since 2021 and so provide an insight into recent practice and the programme attempts to provide a kind of snapshot of contemporary life in Coventry and the UK and an introduction to Coventry's art scene (via London and Amsterdam).

Enjoy.