



Press Release 21 January 2020

Portraits of Recovery – Arts Council England Elevate Funding

Portraits of Recovery (PORe), a unique Greater Manchester organisation using the arts to increase understanding of substance use recovery, has secured two years development funding from Arts Council England's Elevate scheme.

PORe is one of only 45 organisations nationally to be accepted onto the two year Elevate programme, which aims to improve the resilience of organisations, making a significant contribution to the Art's Council's Creative Case for Diversity. A £4.3m pot of National Lottery funding will be shared amongst the successful organisations.

As part of the scheme, PORe will receive funding to secure two new staff members, recruit a business consultant to develop a business plan, diversify fundraising and put in place new digital resources. It also builds upon PORe's strategic partnerships.

Manchester-based PORe was founded in 2011 on the lived experience of recovery activist, curator and director Mark Prest.

The organisation commissions artists to develop new work in a range of art forms that give voice, and authenticity to re-frame perceptions of people and their communities in recovery from substance use.

Internationally acclaimed PORe has commissioned a range of award-winning works including:

- *My Recoverist Family*, featuring performance artist David Hoyle (named second best LGBTQ+ film, ReelHeART Film Festival Toronto 2018)
- Sutapa Biswas, *Out of Place and At The Margins*, 2017 for Rochdale Bus Station (artist and participants interviewed by Radio 4 Woman's Hour and BBC Asian Network); The work is now in the Touchstones, Rochdale permanent collection
- The film *Wonderland*, 2016, a PORe partnership with Manchester School of Art and recoverist groups and communities, which won an Arts and Humanities Research Council's Research in Film Award
- Melanie Manchot's video installation *TWELVE*, exhibited across England (2015-16), and highly regarded in critical reviews across a range of international media.

PORe director Mark Prest has written for The Guardian and Drink and Drugs News about the significant role the arts can play within the addiction recovery agenda.

Mark said: *"PORe is an internationally award-winning visual arts commissioning agency, founded on my background in the arts and the resilience of my own lived experience.*

"PORe views recovery as a process of transformation, and visual artists as a critical resource in providing a platform for voice, choice and control over self-representation for people and their communities in recovery.

"Just over a decade ago, my own recovery journey was the impetus behind the work and for founding the organisation.

"PORe aims to use the arts as a cultural platform for the emancipation of those in recovery. PORe views people and communities in recovery as social assets with newly responsible ways of living – free from substance and self-harming behaviours. Recovering people offer society much to be learned.

"Engaging with the arts plays a critical role in supporting people in recovery to reinvent themselves and find a new place in the world.

"I'd like to thank all the artists we have commissioned, and all the participants and their communities who've taken part in our work. They are the most important elements of what we do. None of this would have been possible without the continuing love, support and companionship of my dog, Izzy."

Abid Hussain, director of diversity, Arts Council England, said: *"Supporting and nurturing diverse talent is a crucial priority for the Arts Council; through Elevate we are investing in an exciting pipeline of diverse organisations that make a vital contribution to the country's cultural provision, empowering under-represented voices.*

"I'm particularly pleased to note the increased scale of our Elevate funding, which demonstrates our continued ambition to create a more inclusive cultural sector which produces work relevant to people from all communities and backgrounds."

Alistair Hudson, director of the Whitworth and Manchester Art Gallery said: *"Portraits of Recovery are such an important project that makes visible experiences and processes of care and it has real resonance in our current climate and it's many societal challenges. The project perfectly aligns with the Whitworth's health programmes and our mission to use art in social change processes with very real tangible benefits. Central to this is our shared belief that the culture of curation is ultimately a culture of care, not just about the care and consideration of objects, but more importantly to the care of others and ourselves".*

Dave Moutrey, director and CEO of HOME, Manchester, and cultural lead for Manchester City Council, said: *"Portraits of Recovery is a positive and vital force making exciting work and platforming unheard voices. I am delighted to be helping director Mark Prest on his journey through mentoring and advice."*

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<https://portraitsofrecovery.org.uk>

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding-finder/elevate>