

Being Benedict Phillips or How to be Dyslexic

Gallery Oldham

35 Greaves St, Oldham OL1 1AL

6 July - 18 September 2021



Benedict Phillips, *The DIV in Black (the Anarchist)*, 2020, photographic exhibition print on archival photo-rag paper, 89 x 110cm

Gallery Oldham presents 'Being *Benedict Phillips or How to be Dyslexic*', the first large scale exhibition of contemporary art and performance featuring new art works and performances by Leeds based artist Benedict Phillips.

Since 1995, when his '*Agenda of the Aggressive Dyslexic*' was published, Benedict has been exploring social and political ideas of difference through video, photography, sculpture and performance revealing the alternative perspectives that being "very good at being disleksick" can bring. His art, films, writing and actions demonstrate that through a polarised dark neurodiverse experience he shines a light on the way that we all think and navigate the world around us.

Artworks in the exhibition includes the bookwork '*A Benedictionary*', the world's only dictionary with over 2500 dyslexic spellings; Benedict's persona, *The DIV*, represented in the exhibition, through new photographic and sculptural works will make regular and biweekly online video presentations and a new performance featuring the *DIV in Black will make itself present through sculpture, perform and sculpture through the program*.

These artworks may at first appear to be about dyslexia exclusively but as you engage and explore the works further common threads and experiences that unite us as humans come to the surface.

Benedict says "*Exploring and communicating through doing and making images is fundamental to human nature despite the text heavy society that we live in. My work is deadly serious about some*



flippant attitudes within society and deliberately provocative and humorous about the harsh experiences of this life”.

A series of events and performances will also take place including:

Twenty-seven short films will be released online: <https://twitter.com/galleryoldham> over the duration of the exhibition starting on the week of 28 June 2021.

A Performance event and Artists Talk at Gallery Oldham (2pm on Saturday 4 September 2021): A last chance to see the exhibition and an opportunity to gain further insight into the exhibition *Being Benedict Phillips*. It will also be a celebration of ‘Agender of the Agresiv Dislecsick’ which was first published in *Disability Arts in London* magazine in September 1995 and formed the foundation for the following 25 years of dyslexic projects by Benedict Phillips.

A **video tour** of the exhibition will be available on the Gallery Oldham website: <https://galleryoldham.org.uk/>

A podcast from 2020 provides useful context and history for Benedict’s work: [Disability Arts Online and Graeae present The Disability and...Podcast | 17. Disability and...Dyslexia with Benedict Phillips \(transistor.fm\)](#)

Being Benedict Phillips or How to be Dyslexic is financially supported by Gallery Oldham and Oldham Council, Leeds Inspired, Access Space, Leeds Environmental Design Associates and public money from the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Further support has been provided by Disability Arts Online, The Tetley, Aby Watson, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and theartistsagency.

Benedict Phillips is available for interview by request.

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Useful links:

Artist Website: [Benedict Phillips](#)

Disability Arts Online: [Benedict Phillips](#)

Disability Arts Online: [How to be a Dyslexic Artist](#)

Tetley: [Print Perform Present](#)

Henry Moore Institute: [A Not Unruffled Surface: Contemporary Sculpture and Dress](#)

The DIV (2005). Film, 32 minutes: [Benedict Phillips \(vimeo.com\)](#)

Artist panel discussion: [Benedict Phillips and the agender of the agresiv dislecsick - Disability Arts Online](#)

Review (2019): [How to be a Dyslexic Artist & Other Stories — Corridor8](#)

Editors Notes:

Benedict Philips:

Benedict Phillips is an established artist, mentor and consultant. His practice is eclectic, encompassing a broad range of methodologies, generating work as diverse as public art, performance, photography, and media art. He is particularly concerned with the on-going interrelationship and shifting hierarchy between photography, sculpture and performance within his practice, and the aesthetics of each approach. Exploiting historical production processes as well as more recent digitally driven approaches informs the making of much of his work. Dependent upon the geography of the project, Benedict’s responses have been floated, buried, placed, flown and exhibited.

Benedict has worked with curators and galleries in the UK, Europe and the US. His photography, artist books and limited editions have been collected and displayed in collections including the Victoria and

Albert, London where he was included in the exhibition *Field Study International: Emanations of a Collective Spirit in Art* (V&A, 2011).

In 2021 Benedict Phillips contributed to *A Not Unruffled Surface: Contemporary Sculpture and Dress*, the first online conference organised by the Henry Moore Institute in collaboration with the artist Jessica Akerman.

A continuing interest of Phillips' has been Dyslexia, focusing upon his and others experience of this 'specific learning difficulty' (www.nhs.uk). This has included the performance of *Agender of the Aggressive Dislecksick* (Speakers Corner, London, 1995) through to *The White DIV* (dyslexic intelligent vision) performance and *My Misspelt Youth* project (Yorkshire Art Space, 2005); *Invisible Conversations* (UK and USA, 2005 – 2009); *The Red DIV* (Cheltenham, 2011); *The DIV: 3D thinkers in a 2D World* (ISEA, 2009) and *A Benedictionary* the world's first and only Lecksick to Dislecksick translation dictionary (www.popublishing.co.uk).

Gallery Oldham:

Gallery Oldham is open Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 5pm

Admission is Free

Gallery Oldham provides a wide range of exhibitions and activities targeted at different audiences of all ages within Oldham and the surrounding area. Current and forthcoming exhibitions feature artworks and items from Oldham's diverse collections alongside newly commissioned art, international work, touring exhibitions and work produced with local communities. Talks and tours, art and craft workshops, work with schools and artist residencies are all part of the gallery's regular activities programme. <https://www.galleryoldham.org.uk>