

Artist celebrates first exhibition's success in raising mental health awareness



CHANGE: Alistair Campbell, Toby Brown and manager Samir Ceric

19 hrs ago / **Robbie Bryson**, Trainee Reporter / [robbiebryson1](#)

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AN ARTIST has curated his first ever exhibition to raise awareness of mental health issues, with the help of a few famous faces.

Toby Brown, 43, of Pygot Place in Braintree, gathered global acclaim for this 'Behind The Smile' exhibition at the Debut Contemporary Gallery in London.

The exhibition was in aid of charity Mind, with 20 percent of takings going to the charity.

It featured portraits of a host of famous stars including mental health campaigner Jonny Benjamin, singer Sandi Thom and Tony Blair's former adviser Alastair Campbell.

There was a private viewing on May 19, which around 125 people attended, before the exhibition opened to the general public between May 20 and May 26.

Mr Brown said: "It was better than I expected - the response has been amazing.

"People congratulated me on capturing the full inward emotion of mental health problems.

"It was very emotional, to think an idea came to life before my very eyes, and so many people attended from everyday life, press, celebrities and psychologists."

The whole of the art world seems to have got behind Mr Brown's message and he has been praised for the honesty with which he deals with a sometimes overlooked issue.

President of the British Psychological Society Professor Peter Kinderman told The Psychologist: "They're amazing portraits. But that, combined with the fact we convey deep and meaningful things through our eyes, and his personal story, means work like this brings us all together in terms of our shared humanity - It's a wonderful story."

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