

Braintree artist to curate exhibition to promote mental health issues



Toby Brown is hosting a new exhibition in London

2 days ago / **Robbie Bryson**, Trainee Reporter / [@robbiebryson1](#)

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A CONTEMPORARY artist is hosting an exhibition at a prestigious London gallery to help raise awareness of mental health issues.

Toby Brown, who lives in Braintree, is curating the 'Behind The Smile' exhibition at the Debut Contemporary gallery in Notting Hill during mental health week between May 19 and 23.

The exhibition features a series of portraits that aim to expose the hidden side of the invisible illness, all in aid of the charity Mind.

To Mr Brown, it is an issue extremely close to his heart.

He said: "As a sufferer of depression I've had to deal with the stigma attached to this invisible illness for many years.

"Having spoken to many sufferers along this journey, friends, family and people in the public eye, the one thing that keeps coming up is we need to share our stories and feelings to build awareness and that we are not alone.

"Depression and all associated mental health problems can make the world a very lonely place.

"Creativity in all its forms is very important, if a person finds it hard to talk about their feelings a painting, poem or song can express it better more than words sometimes, it becomes more honest and truthful. Nothing is hidden."

The exhibition has been attracting huge attention and stars who have got involved include Jonny Benjamin, a prominent mental health campaigner, singer Sandi Thom and former political aid to Tony Blair, Alastair Campbell.

Some of their portraits are featured and Toby's work also portrays friends and family who suffer from mental health problems as well as a portrait of the late Amy Winehouse from an unseen photo that was found on her computer after her death.

Samir Ceric, Founder of Debut Contemporary and Mr Brown's manager said: "His art is there to touch hearts and souls, help those suffering from depression, raise awareness behind mental illness issues in today's society, support the Mind charity and become a part of art history and an integral part of the art market."

"He's generous, modest, kind and brave at the same time and he deserves all the success that's coming his way."

Mind are the UK's leading charity supporting people who are affected by mental health difficulties.

More information about the exhibition can be found: www.debutcontemporary.com.

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