

# HUMBER STREET GALLERY

EXHIBITION  
GUIDE

## WINNER BREAKS FIRST

LUKE BEECH  
12.04 - 2.07.23

### INTRODUCTION

Winner Breaks First is the first institutional solo exhibition by Hull-based artist Luke Beech. He takes a journey through love, grief and acceptance by showing a mixture of performance film, sculpture, audio and installation.

# INTRODUCTION

The newly commissioned body of work reimagines the gallery space into a snooker room pocket realm. Beech explores everything the game ever was, isn't, always will and was never supposed to be. Using absurdist frameworks he plays in the tender space between vulnerability and familiarity and explores ideas of belonging. The surface of the snooker table becomes a metaphor for outdoor greenspaces. This exhibition just as much imagines a reclaiming & rewilding of these spaces, as it takes a moment to pause and appreciate the hidden beauty of life on the edge.

As you enter the space, a lo-fi video of the artist holding customised antlers repeats itself, looping on a suspended projection screen. The extremities of the headpiece each end in ferruled snooker cue tips, bound with red wool. The film starts with slow-motion shots of the artist chalking and teasing each tip in blue, before beginning to itch and scratch the antlers against the corner of a wall, leaving traces of blue-scratch drawings. The piece was performed in the early hours, before the sun rose on a January morning. As the performance progresses, the film cuts to alternate shots and contributes to a climactic sense of chaos before finishing, to fade out and loop again. The subtle ambient sounds captured during this performance-to-camera accompany the piece, listenable by headphone. Characteristic of Beech's video work, he takes a low-tech approach to this piece capturing the performance using mobile devices and with minimal editing.

Progressing through the space, you move into the light amongst kneeling legs and a clay-slip glyph. Named Baulk, this piece translates the 'D-line' from the surface of the gaming table straight onto the floor. This marker was intentionally developed and brought into gaming to arbitrarily make the rules harder and more complex, something Beech felt held resonance with the exhibition's namesake. The show's title, Winner Breaks First, alludes to the game itself, the rules of play and the relationships between players. It also references the pressures and failings of success and the damages done to us when we break down. In the space, the Baulk piece becomes a border, a spatial indicator or floor sign. Removed from its origin and seemingly unreadable without prior knowledge, does it direct, warn or prohibit you? Lit nearby is Beech's Foul Kiss. Not quite your ordinary bowl of nuts, Pool-chalk fingertips sit inside the shallow dish atop ceramic balls.

On a bright day, you may notice sun-bursts being forced through the windows and down onto the open floor. The light might dance across The Waiting Room installation where you are welcome to take a seat and glean through the publications and artefacts included. Altered table stands at the furthest end of the space, with the potential to become a site for Happening with or without players and voyeurs engaging with it. The piece invites you to become a part of the art and participate in a game yourself, amongst the other works on show. A nearby picnic basket sits on the floor, an artefact of a Happening that took place at CLAY (Contemporary Live Arts Yorkshire) in March. Inside the basket are photographs collected from attendees of the event, and a headset immerses you into the atmosphere of the occasion.

Stretching deeper into the space, Carte Gastronomique climbs across the wall like a fungal growth or musical notes on a score. Meaning 'food map', this piece summarises our periphery spaces not by their physical geography but by the foragable flora and fauna found in them. Continuing the metaphor of the snooker table as green space, the hidden strata of the table is revealed through slate platters adorned with luxurious green flocking. An activated piece, this installation invites Hull's local Queer Foraging Group to present their finds and rotate them in line with the season from spring through to summer. In the public programme there are opportunities to be involved with these foraging tours and for your finds to become a part of this piece.

Beckoning you through the space, a small circular hole frames a video with accompanying audio. The mouth of a figure lip-syncs to an original operatic aria, the sound permeating the entire room and intensifying as you come closer. The drawn notations making the score for this piece are abstracted from marks made on the wall following the Crucible performance, shown as you enter the space. Some of the gestures in the score are realistically unsingable, however are interpreted and expressed by the singer within and at the edges of their voice - ranging from deep, low and croaky vocal fries through to a sharp piercing falsetto which goes beyond the singer's usual pitch. The lyrics encapsulate and punctuate themes from across the exhibition, referencing everything from gregorian chants, polari and poetry through to the personal messages and ruminating thoughts of the artist himself.

# PRODUCTION CREDITS

## **CRUCIBLE**, 2023

Performance film by Luke Beech

Camera: Luke Beech

Performer: Luke Beech

Editing: Luke Beech

## **SINGING HOLE**, 2023

Audio with video by Luke Beech, ft voice of Niki Zhodi

Camera: Luke Beech

Voice: Niki Zhodi

Audio recording: Niki Zhodi & Ed Cooper

Performer (lip-sync): Luke Beech

Editing: Luke Beech

## **Postcards from FIELD**, 2022

Commissioned by: Two Destination Language

Written by: Luke Beech

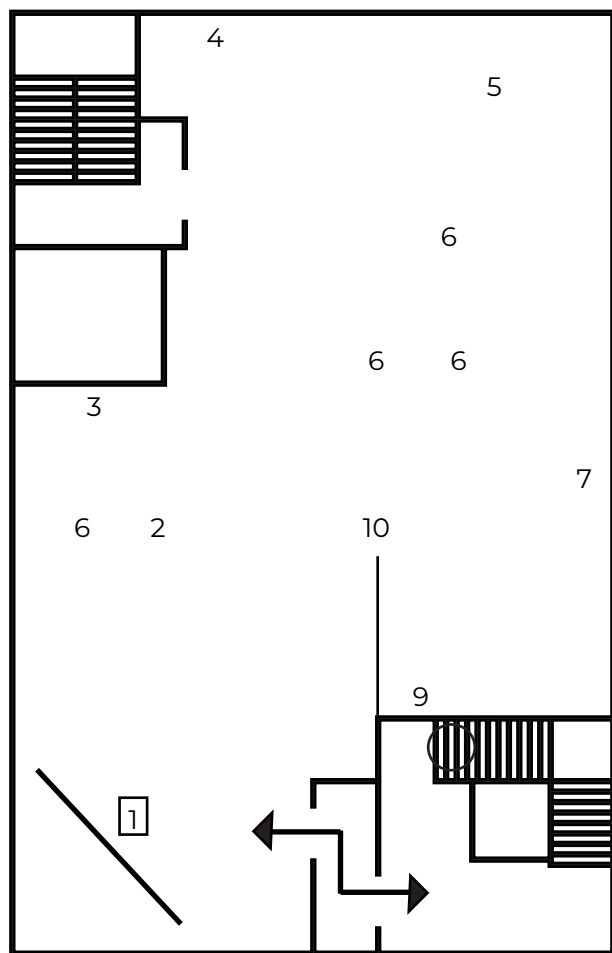
# ABOUT THE ARTIST

Luke Beech is an Artist and Educator using performance and visual art techniques to explore madness, queerness and the body. Drawing on his own experience he relates to wider social issues in creating subtle and sensitive performative statements that provide a visceral engagement for audiences. His practice is characterised by a typically Beuysian approach that connects education and social practice with a highly personal and perceptive body of work.

Beech has recently worked with Scarborough's Cross Lane Hospital, Crescent Arts and Scarborough Museums as Lead Artist on an arts and wellbeing research project. Career highlights have included a public sculpture for Associated British Ports and a public engagement project for the 2017 Turner Prize. He has also recently been commissioned by The Barbican, London as part of their creative learning artists development programme and has just completed a solo take-over at Contemporary Live Art Yorkshire as part of their CLAYground test-bed programme.

Beech is invested in alternative education with substantial experience working alongside both mental health service users and individuals within the justice system.

# WORK DETAILS



## SECOND FLOOR

- 1.CRUCIBLE, 2023. Performance film.
- 2.BAULK, 2023. Clay-slip.
- 3.FOUL KISS, 2023. Cue chalk, plaster, ceramic, found object.
- 4.WAITING ROOM, 2023. Green curtain, seating, soft furnishings, production artefacts.
- 5.ALTERED TABLE, 2023. Baize felt, table skirt, pearlescent purfling, white clay, found object, players, voyeurs or absence of aforementioned players and voyeurs.
- 6.KNEELING LEGS (MAHOGANY. ENGLISH OAK), 2023. Found object, Miter joint.
- 7.LA FORTUNE / LA GLUT, 2023. Artefacts from Live Happening. Supported by Contemporary Live Arts Yorkshire.
- 8.CARTE GASTRONOMIQUE, 2023. Slate, flock, seasonally rotating foraged finds and preserves. With thanks to Queer Foraging Hull group..
- 9.SINGING HOLE, 2023 ft voice of Niki Zhodi. Audio with video, hole in wall.
- 10.YARD BOMBS, 2023. Found objects.

## ASSOCIATED EVENTS

### **Thursday Lates: BAIZE MOI**

Thursday 20 April 2023

7-9pm

Humber Street Gallery

Booking required

A response to Winner Breaks First, BAIZE MOI is a dance solo by Gareth Chambers that explores the sexual personae of masculine working class archetypes prominent in pop culture.

Gareth Chambers (aka Popperface) transgresses traditional choreographic making methodologies to create performances based heavily in working class experience, queer masculinity and libertarianism. He was a Jerwood Fellow 2022 and is currently a Horizon 2023 artist. Gareth's work has been showcased in Australia, Berlin, London and Vienna and he currently resides in his hometown of Hull.

### **Winner Breaks First: A queer foraging tour**

Sunday 7 May 2023

11am-1pm

Meet at Humber Street Gallery

Booking required

Join artist Luke Beech and experienced forager Isaac Marsh for an outdoor exploration with Hull's Queer Foraging Club. Meet, make friends and share knowledge about the uses of our local flora and funga and investigate how this feeds into our current Gallery 2 exhibition, Winner breaks first. Sign up below to participate in this workshop and you will be sent locations, meeting points and any further updates ahead of the event date.

### **An Evening with Critical Fish**

Wednesday 10 May 2023

6:30-9pm

Humber Street Gallery

Booking required

Join us for evening at Humber Street Gallery hosted by Critical Fish to reflect and unpick themes present in our current exhibition programme. The evening will have a focus on looking/experiencing, exploring/sharing, questions, conversation, and writing.

### **Winner Breaks First: In Conversation with Luke Beech, Dom Heffer and Simon-Mary**

Vincent

Thursday 11 May 2023

6-7:30pm

Humber Street Gallery

Booking required

Artist Luke Beech is joined by fellow artist Dom Heffer and composer Simon-Mary Vincent, to discuss emergent themes from his current exhibition Winner breaks first.

### **Winner Breaks First: A queer foraging tour**

Sunday 4 June 2023

11am-1pm

Meet at Humber Street Gallery

Booking required

Join artist Luke Beech and experienced forager Isaac Marsh for an outdoor exploration with Hull's Queer Foraging Club. Meet, make friends and share knowledge about the uses of our local flora and funga and investigate how this feeds into our current Gallery 2 exhibition, Winner breaks first. Sign up below to participate in this workshop and you will be sent locations, meeting points and any further updates ahead of the event date.

Access our in person and online public programme to learn more about the artists and the exhibition. You can book access all of the related activity by following the links on the [exhibition page](#).

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## ABOUT US

Humber Street Gallery is an Absolutely Cultured project. Originally established in 2017 as part of the City of Culture programme, it has developed into a vibrant, high-quality contemporary visual art space for Hull. It is now a significant contributor to the contemporary visual arts offer in the north.

Our ambition for Humber Street Gallery is to further develop the venue into a multi-artform and multi-functional creative centre, showcasing a wide range of art and activities providing something for everyone from visual art, dance, music to spoken word. Increasingly the space will be used to showcase more work by local as well as national and international practitioners.

We also aim to develop more visual art programming that happens outside of the gallery in the city's public spaces, in underused buildings and in local neighbourhoods.

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## OPENING TIMES

### GALLERY

WED - SUN: 10:00 – 17:00

### GALLERY CAFÉ

Wed – Sun: 10:00 – LATE

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## CONTACT US

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Absolutely Cultured is a registered charity. If you would like to support our work, you can do so at [absolutelycultured.co.uk](http://absolutelycultured.co.uk).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Official Funding Partners

