

HUMBER STREET GALLERY

EXHIBITION GUIDE

I'M SORRY ANNABEL MCCOURT

25 OCTOBER 2024 – 26 JANUARY 2025
SPACE 2

Official Funding Partners



EXHIBITION TEXT

What's in an apology? When was the last time you said sorry... and meant it? What are you sorry, truly sorry about?

Inspired by the artist's own deeply personal experience of loss, this exhibition is centred on the powerful, restorative and healing experience of saying "I'm Sorry".

I'm Sorry is not about flippant apologies, taking the blame or over-apologising in fear of what others think. Instead, it's about unburdening ourselves of guilt, reclaiming control and discovering self-esteem, without fear of conflict. It is a powerful tool for forgiveness and healing. It is introspection for the collective good to create a more compassionate world. Within this exhibition, McCourt invites you to step inside a safe contemplative space, to discover raw moments of private reflection, confessions without guilt, secret ceremonials of power and meditation.

The project stems from McCourt's experience of not being able to say goodbye to her father before he passed away. Holding a private ceremony to offer up an apology was a way for her to move on and heal from this aspect of grief which is shared by many. McCourt recognised that creating this space for others might be a useful and profound tool.

Presented is a series of portraits in which the participants hold a bespoke neon 'I'm Sorry' written in the artist's handwriting. Each person is captured offering their own private apology to the camera. For McCourt the glow of electrified neon gas reacts uniquely with each personality as they offer their "I'm Sorry". The neon is an evocative metaphor for these authentic moments McCourt has captured; fragile, captivating and powerful.

"I feel vulnerable, paired-down and honest by exhibiting this work and I am profoundly grateful to every contributor for 'speaking' truth to power via my camera lens," Annabel McCourt.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Annabel McCourt was born in Grimsby in 1975. She is a diverse artist whose work ranges from lens-based gritty social-realism, through to installation art, moving image and architectural interventions inspired by fact, folklore & legend. For this project McCourt has gone back to her artistic roots in photography, meeting people and forming genuine connections.

Other major works by McCourt include 'Electric Fence', a giant electrified enclosure she assembled in response to an American pastor's hate-fuelled rant about wanting to imprison and electrocute LGBTQIA+ communities. It was commissioned for Hull City of Culture in 2017 and has been touring since; including the Biennale of Contemporary African Art, 'Dak'Art', in Dakar, Senegal. 'MAGA Grabber' (2019), which brought the worst of Donald Trump's 'locker room talk' to life in the form of an interactive arcade grabbing machine. Both explored ideas of complicity by encouraging visitors to participate in the spectacle, to defy their strongest impulses and touch the works.

Annabel has exhibited artwork in the UK, Brazil, Australia, Senegal and China. In 2022 she was artist in residence at Diversa Arte Cultura in São Paulo inviting local people to be participants in an artwork 'campaign' coinciding with the world's biggest Pride parade. She also exhibited at Midsumma Festival in Melbourne, Australia as part of the British Council's UK/AUSTRALIA Season.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'm Sorry by Annabel McCourt is a touring exhibition from Barnsley Civic. We would like to thank all the participants who kindly agreed to be photographed and contribute to the *I'm Sorry* project.

We would also like to thank:

Richard Wheeler and team at Neon Workshops, Fresh Aire Fine Art Printing, David Priestman, and Steve Potter.

RELATED ACTIVITY

SEAN AZZOPARDI: RETURN TO SENDER
WEDNESDAY 30 OCTOBER, THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER,
THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2024
5-7PM
HUMBER STREET GALLERY
DROP-IN, FREE

Who do you owe an apology to? Does someone you know deserve your heartfelt sorries? Should they be apologising to you? Join artist Sean Azzopardi at Humber Street Gallery, write out your apology, thoughts or feelings - anonymously - on a card and post it. In return, take a sealed envelope with you. A small letterpress will be used to print out these texts. Anonymised words will feature on the walls of the gallery.

Sean Azzopardi is a Hull based artist who specialises in painting and graphic media. Inspired by cartoons and politics, Sean publishes comics as **Phatcomics**.

Return To Sender is part of Humber Street Gallery's programme of events surrounding Annabel McCourt's exhibition *I'm Sorry*.

TALES & SCALES PRODUCTIONS: ANNIVERSARY
HALLOWE'EN EVENT
WEDNESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2024
6:30-9PM
HUMBER STREET GALLERY
PAY WHAT YOU CAN, BOOKING REQUIRED

Tales and Scales Productions is a creative platform established by writer and artist Emily Oetegenn that celebrates disabled, neurodivergent and queer artists. Tales and Scales celebrates its second anniversary with an open-mic at Humber Street Gallery in spooky, Halloween style.

**IN CONVERSATION: ANNABEL MCCOURT WITH
MICHELLE DEE
THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2024
7-9PM
HUMBER STREET GALLERY
PAY WHAT YOU CAN, BOOKING REQUIRED**

Michelle Dee is in conversation with I'm Sorry artist Annabel McCourt and premiering her new piece *Who's Sorry Now?* inspired by the exhibition *I'm Sorry*.

We live in times where the apology has become part of everyday speech, a casual throwaway line, 'I'm sorry' which falls from every one of us almost without thinking. We invite the writer and performer Michelle Dee to interrogate 'the apology' in a dramatic spoken word performance where she will put the very idea of apologising on trial.

This new work part poetry, part essay, will shine a light on cultural and gender differences in the apology phenomena; investigate whether the British deserve the title as the most apologetic nation; and, with global headlines dominated by genocide, enslavement, colonialism, not to mention institutional scandal around every corner, Michelle asks whether we have reached saturation, a state of scepticism in the face of the act of apologising.

Later Michelle will host a live Q & A with artist Annabel McCourt offering the audience a chance to learn more about what motivates the prolific artist behind *I'm Sorry*, *Electric Fence*, *REMOTE*, *MAGA Grabber* the list goes on.

**SPOKEN WORD AND ZINE SHOWCASE
THURSDAY 16 JANUARY 2025
7-9PM
HUMBER STREET GALLERY
PAY WHAT YOU CAN, BOOKING REQUIRED**

Young people from The Warren have worked with poet Vicky Foster and printmaker and illustrator Layla Jabbari, creating work in response to Annabel McCourt's exhibition I'm Sorry and exploring the nature of apology. This evening is a celebratory launch of the zine created during Layla's sessions and an opportunity to hear, for the first time, poetry and spoken word created in Vicky's sessions.

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 multifunctional 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.

CONTACT US

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OPENING TIMES

Wednesday: 10:30am - 5pm
Thursday: 12pm - 7pm
Friday: 10:30am - 5pm
Saturday: 10:30am - 5pm
Sunday: 10:30am - 5pm