

Graduates 2023: Markus Taylor: MA Fine Art

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Yes, the works are challenging, cancer is a huge challenge that drives my practice on, but cancer really challenges all of us to talk about it and we have to.

Please tell us a bit about your work and your influences

Shortly before joining the MA Fine Art course, I was diagnosed as having an incurable blood cancer, Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia.

Being told this was traumatic.

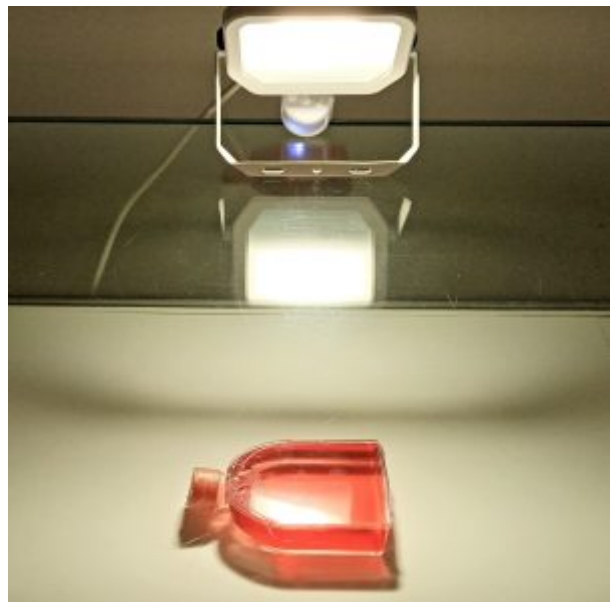
I was thrown into a whirling world of tests and scans and biopsies. I began documenting all of this, using my phone camera, as a way to understand what was happening; this became my 'Disease Diary'. This archive of documentation I use as the starting point for projects.

As the amazing NHS medical teams constructed the story of my disease, its pathology, I realized that there was a lot missing from this narrative; I needed to put my whole self in the picture. I began to create an autopathography, presenting it in visual/performative form.

The works are;

1. large scale wall assemblages and room installations,
2. actions (both live action in gallery spaces and on location for film,)
3. artist's multiples.

Yes, the works are challenging, cancer is a huge challenge that drives my practice on, but cancer really challenges all of us to talk about it and we have to. Having a voice as a person with cancer is empowering, I am not a passive victim. Disease is very able to silence us, but I have gained influence, guidance and strength from the works of Jo Spence, Hannah Wilke and Tracey Emin, who have produced powerful works whilst having cancer.



After diagnosis I volunteered as a Patient Educator at Brighton and Sussex Medical School, working with students to give them a person centered understanding of disease by sharing my thoughts and experiences.

Through this role I was introduced to Prof. Chris Pepper (RM Philips Chair in Experimental Medicine) and his team whose research focuses upon leukaemia. This has led to an ongoing collaboration resulting in presentations to staff and students at BSMS and at the University of Brighton. The team take a keen interest in my practice through discussions and by visiting exhibitions. They assist me in the making of works by processing some of my cancer cells for display in exhibitions.

Giving presentations about my art and cancer has become an integral part of my practice, most recently at the Institute of Cancer Research, London and as part of events organized by the Centre for Arts and Wellbeing based at the University of Brighton.



Can you tell us a bit about your journey to you course and made you choose it?

I studied BA(Hons) Visual and Performing Arts as an undergraduate in Brighton and returned having moved back to Sussex after supporting both my children through their higher education at UAL, the University of Groningen (Netherlands) and UCL. After my wife completed her Masters at the University of Cambridge I decided it was my turn.

Where better than Brighton, with its exciting creative arts scene and the Sussex coast with its galleries, museums and inspiring landscape.

Can you tell us a bit about your journey to you course and made you choose it?

The MA Fine Art course at the University of Brighton supports and guides you as an artist in sharpening and strengthening your practice. With their expansive knowledge and experience as practicing artists the tutors skilfully assist in the development of your research, presentation and practical skills, empowering you to expand your practice with confidence.

What are your plans after graduation? What's next for you?

I plan to continue my research and practice through a PhD, hopefully, at the university. The decision to study further at Brighton is because of the tutors, technical staff and fellow students who have been overwhelmingly supportive during the past two years. I will continue to give presentations alongside scientists and medical clinicians in order to advance our understanding of cancer and its effects.

[Follow Markus on Instagram](#)

Vimeo; <https://vimeo.com/markustaylorgallery>

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