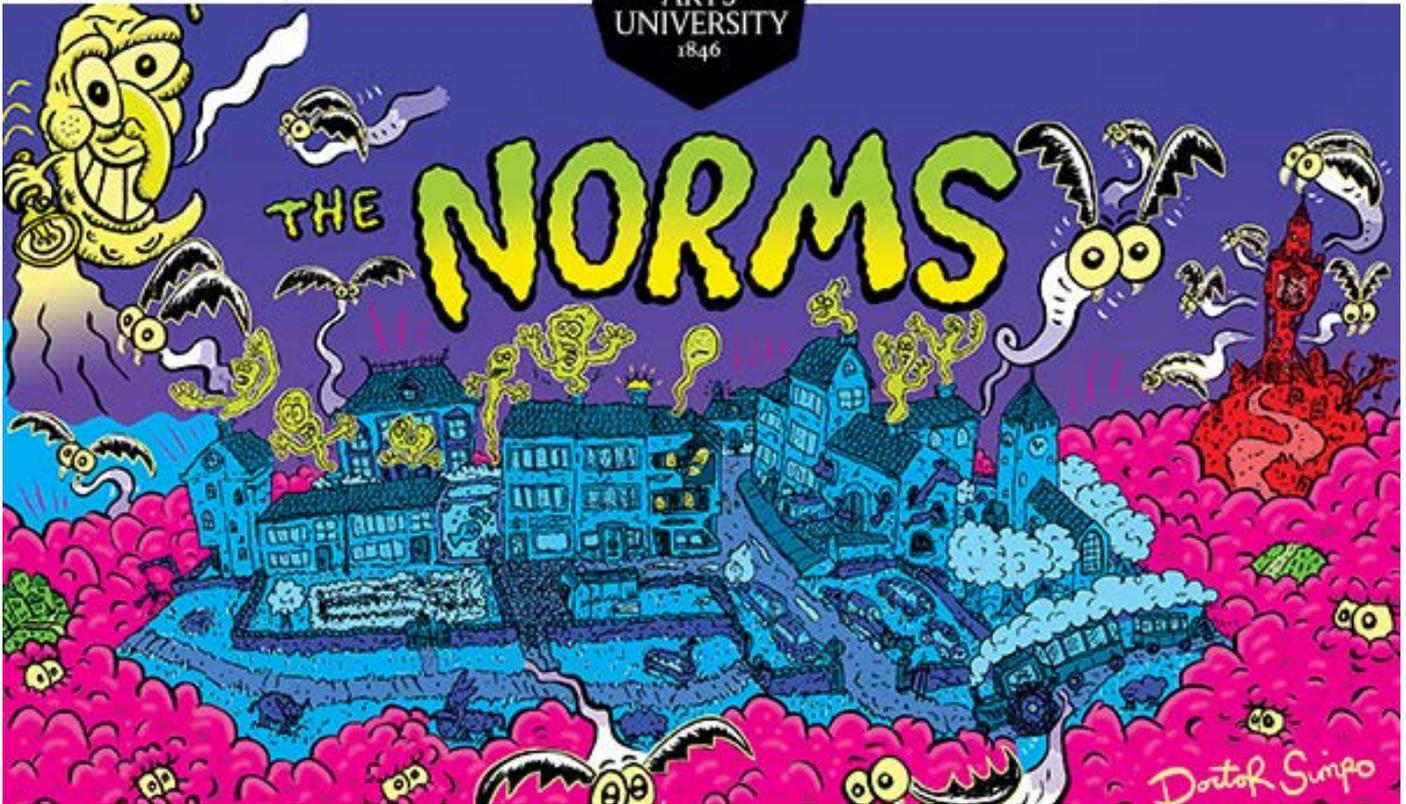


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Press Release

6 September 2018

Cartoonist's work jumps off the page in latest exhibition at Leeds Arts University

Doctor Simpo, *The Norms: Process and Production*
14 September - 31 October 2018

Opening event: Thursday 13 May 2018, 5-7pm

Leeds Arts University is pleased to present *The Norms: Process and Production* a new exhibition exploring the current research practice of Ben Simpson, aka Doctor Simpo. Presented as a three-dimensional realisation of Simpson's glow-in-the-dark comic book, *The Norms* (2017), viewers are invited to step into his narrative world of comic fonts and lurid colours, created using a variety of analogue and digital technologies including Pentel Sign Pens (his favourite felt-tip pen).

As a former Foundation Diploma student at Leeds Arts University, Simpson went on to study at Glasgow School of Art, The Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and the Royal College of Art, recently returning as Senior Lecturer on the BA (Hons) Animation course at the University. His animations, comic books and illustrations have been exhibited on a global scale, with his cartoon films playing at film festivals across the world. This new exhibition sees him come full circle; exhibiting in the same building in which he showcased his Foundation Diploma work some 18 years ago.

Fred Bates, Programme Director of Communication Design at Leeds Arts University, and Simpson's former tutor said:

"The 'Norms' is the latest glimpse into the mind of Doctor Simpo. It is pointed, poignant, funny and barbed. As irreverent as asking the Queen what toilet paper she prefers. The characters hold a mirror up to a world of Trump, Boris Johnson and Brexit and asks 'which side of the door is the asylum on?'"

The Doctor Simpo exhibition is part of a series of Leeds Arts University events linked to, and in partnership with, the Thought Bubble Comic Convention. Leeds Arts University is excited to collaborate with Thought Bubble to present a series of free workshops and activities for 3 - 18 year olds held at Vernon Street on Saturday 22 September. Younger participants are invited to collect a Doctor Simpo Make-a-Monster construction kit for their chance to exhibit their creations in the University gallery. All activities are free to attend but must be pre booked here. More information can be found at www.leeds-art.ac.uk/thoughtbubble2018.

Thought Bubble and Leeds Arts University offer an insight into feminist perspectives on concept art through a free-to-attend research symposium, Women World Builders, featuring talks by Creature Designer and BA (Hons) Comic and Concept Art Course Leader, Rosemary Chalmers, BA (Hons) Animation graduate, Rosie Summers, director-animator, Virpi Kettu, and musician and composer, Louise Curtis. The symposium will be held on Friday 21 September and is free to attend, but booking is required. Find out more at www.leeds-art.ac.uk/doctor-simpo-the-norms.

The University is also pleased to be collaborating with Light Night for a special glow-in-the-dark dimension to Simpson's exhibition, to be launched at two late night openings on Thursday 4 and Friday 5 October.

Doctor Simpo, The Norms: Process and Production will close with a Halloween event for adults featuring an Underground Comix Launch and Talk to be held at the University on 31 October 2018.

The exhibition installation was constructed by Off-Set, a sustainable joinery and event construction workshop committed to an environmentally responsible working practice.

-ENDS-

Editor's Notes

For more information, images or to arrange interviews contact: Sophie Miller Wallace, PR & Communications Officer, 0113 202 8044 or sophie.millerwallace@leeds-art.ac.uk

Press are invited to Blenheim Walk Gallery to preview the exhibition on Refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to sophie.millerwallace@leeds-art.ac.uk or 0113 202 8044. The artist will be to present at the opening to answer questions.

Image credit: Doctor Simpo, The Norms, 2017. Image courtesy of the artist.

Exhibition events:

Women World Builders Symposium (Part of the Thought Bubble Comic Art Festival)

Friday 21 September 2018 1-5pm, Vernon Street Lecture Theatre

Free entry but booking is required. Visit www.leeds-art.ac.uk/doctor-simpo-the-norms

Vernon Street Lecture Theatre, Leeds Arts University, Leeds, LS2 9AQ

Young Creative Workshops (Part of the Thought Bubble Comic Art Festival)

Saturday 22 September, 10am - 12:30pm and 1pm- 3:30pm

Booking required. Please visit leeds-art.ac.uk/thoughtbubble2018

Vernon Street Gallery, Leeds Arts University, Leeds, LS2 9AQ

Light Night

Thursday 4 October 2018, 6-9pm

Friday 5 October 2018, 6-9.30pm

Vernon Street Gallery, Leeds Arts University, Leeds, LS2 9AQ

Halloween Closing Event: Underground Comix Launch and Talk (18+)

Wednesday 31 October 2018, 3-7pm

Vernon Street Lecture Theatre, Leeds Arts University, Leeds, LS2 9AQ

Leeds Arts University

Founded in 1846 as the Leeds Government School of Art and Design, Leeds Arts University (formerly Leeds College of Art) has contributed significantly to the development of art education in Britain and across the world. In 2016 the University was granted Taught Degree Awarding Powers, and in 2017 was awarded full university status, making it the only specialist arts university in the North of England.

Leeds Arts University has been previously recognised for its industry-standard facilities at the Whatuni awards (winners in 2014 and 2016, runner up 2017), is the highest ranked specialist arts university in the UK for student satisfaction in the National Student Survey 2018, and the number one University for Design & Crafts in the Guardian University League Table 2019.

www.leeds-art.ac.uk

Thought Bubble

Thought Bubble is an international comic art festival, taking place across Leeds from 17-23 September 2018. The festival attracts comic arts professionals and fans from across the world, and comprises a wide range of events including free art & writing based workshops for young people & adults, talks & masterclasses lead by industry professionals, free exhibitions and a two-day comic art convention held on 22 and 23 September in Leeds City Centre. Leeds Arts University is a sponsor and partner of Thought Bubble Festival, with staff and students participating in a number of events happening throughout week.

www.thoughtbubblefestival.com.

Light Night

Light Night is an annual free multi-arts and light festival that takes over Leeds city centre for two nights in October. On Thursday 4 and Friday 5 December some of Leeds' most recognisable indoor and outdoor spaces will be transformed with large-scale light projections and interactive artworks

www.whatson.leeds.gov.uk/lightnight