

# Joseph Cotgrave

February 27 - March 15

OUTPUT is excited to welcome Joseph Cotgrave (Wirral, 1993) to the gallery for his first solo exhibition. The artist works to destigmatize HIV, raise awareness and educate people's general misconceptions through exhibitions and workshops; offering something he had wanted when he was diagnosed and found 'there was nobody real and human to talk to.'

For his show at OUTPUT, Cotgrave is reimagining a image of Liverpool's Navy Bar in the gallery. After losing his sister last year, the artist experienced grief similar to how he felt after his HIV diagnosis, 'I felt like I lost the person I was before that moment, I had to relearn something, and the same thing happened with my sister.' The artist aims to build an environment and an atmosphere reminiscent of nights out in Liverpool when he maybe contracted HIV, with the exhibition as a shrine to his past self. Through sculpture, installation and sound, he wants to open up conversation around the culture of the gay scene, chem sex, and the stigma surrounding HIV.

## Ways into thinking about the exhibition:

1. Do you think art can make the world a better place?
2. Do you prefer art that is political or apolitical?
3. What do you think it is like to be an artist in Merseyside?

OUTPUT is a gallery working exclusively with creatives from or based in Merseyside. It is part of Invisible Wind Factory. The programme is supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

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OUTPUT gallery, 32 Seel St, Liverpool, L1 4BE  
OPEN 11-6 DAILY DURING EXHIBITIONS



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# Thoughts from artist Joseph Cotgrave:

QU. Do you think art can make the world a better place?

In a way yes. I think it can provide valuable ways of thinking and navigating difficult subject matter. By using art I've been able to grasp the trauma from being diagnosed and in the process initiate important conversations around HIV and it's stigma, hopefully changing people misconceptions.

QU. Do you prefer art that is political or apolitical?

Political! Art should navigate change or at least propose some ideas to think about. Artists should be reacting to the current times and political climate. It should be for everyone, if it isn't i feel it becomes redundant and difficult to understand. We are in very politically turbulent times at the moment. Art can and should provide mechanism to going against the increasingly right wing world we live in. For me it acts as a lifeline, as we are being constantly marginalised by the 1%.

QU. What do you think it is like to be an artist in Merseyside?

It has its pros and cons. I get frustrated about lack of opportunities here, in comparison to say London. But it's an easier way of living as an artist as studios etc are much cheaper. I feel more can be done though by bigger institutions to enable more realistic and or sustainable ways of living as an artist here. Through more opportunities to exhibit and work with those bigger institutions.

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