

ART AT HMP GRENDON ARTIST IN RESIDENCE, 2024-2025: SIMON HARRIS



Simon Harris at HMP Grendon. Photo by James Latunji-Cockbill. Image courtesy Ikon.

Ikon is pleased to announce the continuation of Art at HMP Grendon, its artist residency at HMP Grendon, Buckinghamshire, for another three years (2024 – 2026). The residency has been generously funded by the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust since 2010 and managed by Ikon since 2014.

Simon Harris, artist and printmaker, commences a new 18-month residency during which he will work with community members to produce new work to be showcased at HMP Grendon and Ikon Gallery.

About Simon Harris, Artist in Residence, HMP Grendon

Simon Harris is an artist, Senior Lecturer and Course Leader for BA (Hons) Fine Art at University of Wolverhampton. He was awarded his practice-based PhD, titled *Deleuze and Painting: Re-thinking the Formal*, in 2016. Harris works across printmaking, photography and painting, pursuing a pictorial plane that references the cinematic surface as an abstracted image. A master printmaker, Harris has been instrumental in setting up the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Studio at HMP Grendon, training community members in the technical processes of printmaking through one-off workshops.

"Having already worked with the prisoners at HMP Grendon I have witnessed the impact that the art studio has on creative practice. I'm excited to continue to engage with the community, and to develop our shared artistic practices within the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Studio. I also plan to create the largest painting ever made in a prison, drawing on my continued research into critical theory of the image." Simon Harris.

About Art at HMP Grendon

"Projects like this, where I've learned the benefits of being part of something bigger than the individual, taking responsibility and being encouraged to be the best version of ourselves, go a long way in challenging a man's core beliefs. Working alongside these professionals has instilled a sense of self-worth I have never previously known within my years of incarceration. No longer the feral individual you wouldn't want as a neighbour, I am now a man with hope in my future." 'B' (C wing community)

In 2022, with a focus on the development of the prisoners' artistic practice, Ikon opened the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Studio at HMP Grendon – a dedicated art school-inspired space used for weekly workshops and exhibitions featuring artwork by prisoners and professional artists. This space was made possible with the support of the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust and the senior team at HMP Grendon.

Ikon has managed three previous residences at HMP Grendon, by Edmund Clark (2014 – 2018), Dean Kelland (2019 – 2023) and James Lomax (2024), resulting in major exhibitions at Ikon Gallery. The residency runs alongside a public programme of research symposia and events at Ikon, allowing a platform for public discourse on the role of art in criminal justice. Simon Harris' residency will be followed by a second 12-month residency (2026), for which the artist will be recruited by a panel including prison community members.

"The residency has been able to produce something special. Not only has a community of artists come into being, but also a collaboration where everyone works together to create a meaningful experience. People become invested in working together to make the most of their time in prison, achieving something they take pride in, and making their time safe and purposeful." Richard Shuker (C Psychol), Head of Clinical Services, HMP Grendon

About HMP Grendon

HMP Grendon opened in 1962 as an all-male experimental psychiatric prison for the treatment of people whose mental health disorders did not qualify them for transfer to a hospital under the Mental Health Act 1959. While its management structure (the prison was incorporated into HMPS in 1984) and practices have transformed over the years, its fundamental purpose has remained the same: the rehabilitation of people who have committed serious crimes.

HMP Grendon is now the only wholly therapeutic prison in Europe and is often considered the most researched prison in the world. It is a Category B prison which offers up to 232 prisoners intensive, daily therapy undertaken on one of its five democratically governed wings (or communities). Each community makes decisions for and by themselves, within a strict code of behaviour and accountability, instilling an ethos of social responsibility. The prison operates a psychodynamic model, which comprises daily group therapy, psychodrama and art therapy, conducted by leading therapists and forensic psychologists.

Grendon's regime is intense for those who make up the prison's communities. Prisoners are only admitted to Grendon on application while serving time, and are gauged for suitability for up to six months on an assessment wing. Prisoners must admit and take responsibility for their crime as well as commit to a regime which forbids violence and drug misuse, while encouraging work and education. Statistically, those who complete at least eighteen months of therapy at Grendon are significantly less likely to reoffend on release.

For more information, press appointments, high-res images and to request interviews please contact Rebecca Small by email r.small@ikon-gallery.org or call Ikon on 0121 248 0708.

Social Media Handles - Instagram, Twitter and Facebook:

@ikongallery #IkonGallery @ace_national @aceagrams @ace_midlands @bhamcitycouncil

Notes to Editors:

1. **Ikon** is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art gallery, situated in Birmingham's city centre. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2024. It is an educational charity with free entry for all, and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Ikon aims to build dynamic relationships with

IKON/60

Ikon Gallery
1 Oozells Square Brindleyplace
Birmingham B1 2HS
0121 248 0708 / ikon-gallery.org
free entry / donations welcome
Registered charity no. 528892

- audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art. ikon-gallery.org
2. **Ikon** is open Wednesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am-5pm. Free entry, donations welcome. Ikon is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, and Birmingham City Council.
 3. **The Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust** was set up in 1992 by the Austrian émigré artist Marie-Louise von Motesiczky (1906-1996) for the promotion of her work, the charitable support of the arts and other charitable objects as stated on the charity's website. www.motesiczky.org
 4. **Arts Council England** is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £440 million of public money from Government and an estimated £93 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. artscouncil.org.uk
Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies responsible for administering the Government's unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund of which we delivered over £1 billion to the sector in grants and loans. Find out more at www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19.
 5. **Birmingham City Council** is the local government body responsible for the governance of the City of Birmingham, UK. It is the most populated local council area in the United Kingdom (excluding counties) with 101 elected councillors representing over one million people, in 69 wards. The council headquarters are at the Council House, Victoria Square in the heart of the city centre. The council is responsible for running nearly all local services, with the exception of those run by joint boards. For more information visit www.birmingham.gov.uk



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