

## Curator Notes

*'When you're dead, they really fix you up. I hope to hell when I do die somebody has sense enough to just dump me in the river or something. Anything except sticking me in a goddam cemetery. People coming and putting a bunch of flowers on your stomach on Sunday, and all that crap. Who wants flowers when you're dead? Nobody.'*

- *Catcher in the Rye*

When I was 23, I was living alone in a flat in Lincoln. I had just graduated from university and I was trying to figure how to make art my career. I had dreams of moving to Manchester and making it as an artist in the city. I couldn't afford a bed so I slept for almost two years on the floor. I can see myself propped up against the wall, too many cushions surrounding me, a can of cheap beer by my side. The thin curtains are drawn but the sun seeps through the semi-transparent fabric and a shard of bright light tattoos the wall above my head.

I am clutching my scruffy battered copy of *Catcher in the Rye* and reading it for maybe the twelfth time that year.

Escaping into the pages and chuckling at the parts I know off by heart.

*'It isn't very serious; I have this tiny little tumor on the brain.'*

I laugh at the inappropriateness of Holden and relate to his awkward outbursts and emotional irregularity. I am lost, and I am hurting. I am heartbroken and I am angry. I drink too much to take away the pain and I later become reliant on drugs.

I am now 36, I am two years sober and I am semi-successful in my career as artist/curator!

Welcome to the latest Broken Grey Wires exhibition 🌹

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WHO WANTS FLOWERS WHEN THEY ARE DEAD? is an exhibition exploring grief, loss, identity and community. My dad died five years ago, the catalyst for this exhibition. Grief is something that I am confused and frustrated by. I just don't understand it, or what I'm supposed to do or feel.

I hope that this exhibition will offer a space to reflect, to connect, and hopefully allow me to begin processing the heart-breaking experiences of loss. It invites audiences to think openly, share their own stories and engage in honest conversations around grief and healing.

As part of the exhibition, we have a newly designed Comfort Zone space in the gallery, along with fresh toolkits on our access board to support exploration and dialogue.

I wanted to say much more in my curator notes. I wanted to tell you all how magical my dad was and how much I miss him. But instead, I will leave you to take a look around the gallery, sit in the space and maybe remember someone you have lost. Speak to somebody close by if they are open to talking, ask them how they are. Think about community as we try to figure out ways to manage trauma and loss.

Thank you (as always) to my friends, my partner, my mum and my sister.

Dad, this one's for you.

Lizz x