

- TESTIMONIALS for Matt Smart's regional and community projects -

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“a very strong commitment and ethos on the value and impact of his art.”

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“The finish of his installations was also excellent with close attention to detail.”

“Matt has great clarity of thought and process for his sculptures which are well considered and add great visual and artistic value.”

“We were impressed the way the installation can connect with a wide variety of locations and interests. ...It can provide views of spaces and locations which would otherwise be inaccessible to some visitors”

“At a time when public arts events are under increasing economic pressure, Matt's art works are socially and visually more crucial than ever.”

“We have consistently found him easy to liaise with, keen to minimise costs, and dedicated to engaging with local and regional bodies to ensure that his work has public relevance”

“He has networked well here to get it going, and has a lot of interest in the right places.”

“Matt works hard, and has strong, fun, and oddly popular vision.”

“His energy and commitment made him valuable to the Society, as well as having a modern take on art and the public importance of art.”

Sources of these testimonials

- + Carole Sleight, Warwick District Council, County Arts Officer. Former Director, Leamington Spa Art in the Park Festival.
- + Tom Crowe, Vice Chairperson, Ludlow Art Society. Chairman 2006-2010 et 2019-2021 ; Digital artist and sculptor.
- + Peter Reed, Co, Director, Compass Festival, UK

Full Testimonials

Carole Sleight

Warwick District Council Arts Officer, UK

Former Director, Leamington Spa Art in the Park Festival (2014-2019)

Art in the Park Festival is Warwickshire’s largest free arts festival which attracts over 45,000 during the first weekend of August. Each festival is themed and 2019 focused on ‘Water’ and the broader context of the environment and climate change. I approached Matt in November 2018 as I wanted bold, questioning and humorous sculptures to feature at the festival. Matt’s work fitted this brief as it has both depth and entertainment value. From our initial conversation through to delivery, it was very clear that Matt had a very strong commitment and ethos on the value and impact of his art.

During the process of costing and applying for Arts Council England funding, Matt has always been professional, dedicated and clearly understands all the aspects of a festival’s needs and proposition. Matt has the ability to adjust his demeanour and attire to accommodate a range of situations whether it be installing art works in the grounds of the park or meeting stakeholders and networking at formal receptions.

The work which Matt delivered for Art in the Park was of excellent quality and very engaging for the visitors. His works are engaging and humorous and attracted a lot of attention and interaction, with people constantly posing for photographs with them. I have rarely seen a sculpture attract so much interest as the legs sticking out of the ground, as if someone has fallen into the earth. This piece ended up to be a key focal point during the weekend and I'm sure contributed to the public's incredible 5 star rating of their festival experience.

Matt is easy to work with because he has clear objectives, gets on with what needs to be done and does not seek help. We agreed installation sites and schedules and he made it happen. The finish of his installations was also excellent with close attention to detail.

The festival was voted Leamington's 'most outstanding event' for 2019 at the recent business awards. This has been a wonderful end to my directing of the festival which is now under the direction of Kate Livingston. Such was the success of Matt's work that we have asked him to contribute some landscape and thematic large sculptural pieces for the 2020 festival.

Matt has great clarity of thought and process for his sculptures which are well considered and add great visual and artistic value. At a time when public arts events are under increasing economic pressure, Matt's art works are socially and visually more crucial than ever.

Carole Sleight

Warwick District Council Arts Officer, UK

Former Director, Leamington Spa Art in the Park Festival (2014-2019)

Peter Reed

Co-Director Compass Festival, UK

Matt presented his idea to us as part of the Festival's open call, and was shortlisted from over 300 applications. We were impressed the way the installation can connect with a wide variety of locations and interests. The ambition of the installation would benefit from testing and liaison with local interest groups, so are working with Matt, and covering costs and his time for a development visit to Leeds in February 2020.

We are interested in pursuing and hosting the project for several reasons. It can provide views of spaces and locations which would otherwise be inaccessible to some festival visitors. It shows good potential to appeal to children and families.

We began liaising with Matt in December 2019, and have consistently found him easy to liaise with, keen to minimise costs, and dedicated to engaging with local and regional bodies to ensure that his work has public relevance. I hope that the aims and artistic aspects can be developed, and that Leeds will be able to support and host Matt's work.

Peter Reed

Co-Director Compass Festival, UK

February 2020

Tom Crowe, Chairperson of the Ludlow Art Society 2019-2021, Treasurer 2011-2018, Chairperson 2006-2010, Sculptor and digital artist.

I have known Matt and his work since 2015 when he first exhibited in Ludlow. Matt is among the most active members of the Ludlow Art Society. Matt was soon made a committee member. He is the only committee member from outside Shropshire, but his energy and commitment made him valuable to the Society, as well as having a modern take on art and the public importance of art.

Matt Smart's sculpture work gets to the public. It brings humour, which is really important in art. He is very dedicated to helping others get their work seen.

The expansion of his public work will develop his work for sales through galleries. It will also help him network more, to get more exhibitions and to curate some, which is sort of like what he is starting to do with this year's Ludlow Art Trail, taking a leading role now in the small team running it.

Matt works hard, and has strong, fun, and oddly popular vision.

He has told me about his new project involving viewing sights. He has networked well here to get it going, and has a lot of interest in the right places.

Tom Crowe, Chairperson of the Ludlow Art Society 2019-2021, Treasurer 2011-2018, Chairman 2006-2010, Sculptor and digital artist.

February 2020