

Stephen Friedman Gallery

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Will you be creating art work for the UK's biggest ever exhibition?

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Image: The first theme of the initiative is animals, a suggestion by Sir Anthony Gormley. Credit: David Parry/PA

A Colchester arts venue has launched what could be the country's largest ever art exhibition as it encourages people to display their creative designs in their front windows.

Visual arts organisation Firstsite has created The Great Big Art Exhibition in conjunction with museums and galleries throughout the country. The scheme is urging people to create artwork - such as drawings, paintings or sculptures - "to counter the gloom of the pandemic" and showcase their designs on their streets.



Image: The theme will change each fortnight. Credit: David Parry/PA

It will be similar to the 'rainbow trail' from the first coronavirus lockdown - created by Ipswich mum Crystal Stanley - as participants will be asked to display their creations through their front windows.

The organisers have said "people can work as individuals or as a community, by joining up 'virtually' with their street, school, temple, church, shopping centre or football team to produce a memorable and exciting artwork". The exhibition was launched today and the theme for the first two weeks will be animals - a suggestion by Angel of the North creator Sir Anthony Gormley.

A different theme will be chosen by an artist each fortnight. Other artists supporting the project include Etel Adnan, Simone Fattal, Anish Kapoor, Tai Shani, Jeremy Deller, David Shrigley, Ai Weiwei and Ryan Gander. The National Gallery, Victoria & Albert Museum, Tate and the National Galleries of Scotland have also lent their support to the initiative. It is set to run until the end of April and a patchwork of some of the best designs will be created in the summer to commemorate the exhibition.

Sally Shaw, director of Firstsite, said she hoped the initiative would be "an incredible expression of people's creativity".



Image: Sally Shaw, director of Firstsite, encouraged people to take part in the scheme. Credit: Su Anderson

She said: "The doors to our collections and galleries might be shut but our imaginations are forever open."

"Making, showing and experiencing art has created so much joy, connection and solace for many thousands of people. "I can't wait to see a brand new nationwide art gallery appearing before our eyes in coming days, weeks and months. This is sure to be an incredible expression of people's creativity."