



# The Big Draw Press Release

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## The Big Draw and Russell Walker take over Coningsby Gallery this June

The Big Draw and award winning illustrator, designer and educator Russell Walker are set to take over The Coningsby Gallery, in Fitzrovia, London.

Russell Walker's exhibition, 'Oh Yeah' opens to the public from Monday 6 June, and can be enjoyed over a full two weeks until 18 June. Alongside the exhibition, national visual literacy charity, The Big Draw will take a week's residency of the space from 13 June.

First working together in 2000, Russell Walker and The Big Draw have a longstanding relationship and their mutual focus on drawing and image making is evidenced in the 'Oh Yeah' exhibition. Over the week residency, The Big Draw will host a series of talks, masterclasses and workshops sharing industry insights and family friendly events.

Kate Mason, Director of The Big Draw said: "The Big Draw is delighted to be collaborating with such ideal partners. The Big Draw, Russell Walker and The Coningsby Gallery share aligned beliefs and core values around the importance of the role of artists and illustrators across education, industry, communication and, also of increasing importance, health and wellbeing. These interests align around this year's Big Draw Festival 2022 theme, 'Come Back to Colour' and the focus for Russell Walker's exhibition, 'Oh Yeah'.

'Come Back to Colour' encapsulates what we all hope will be a rediscovery of the vitality, health, care and vibrancy in everyone's lives after what has been a challenging few years. It is not about trying to recapture a time that has been lost, but about capturing, celebrating and finding joy with all the beautiful and wondrous things that remain. This ethos is mirrored perfectly in 'Oh Yeah' with its recurring motifs around reflecting and looking forward to happier, and more colourful times."

A leading light in the visual arts industry, Russell Walker has worked with many of the creative industry's leading advertising, design and publishing agencies both nationally and internationally. His work is immediately distinctive, bold, elegant and with a confident economy of line and unity, all underpinned with a genuine passion for drawing that began from an early age.

'Oh Yeah' started from a space of wellbeing, growing from a time in 2020 after several pandemic lock-downs and many days of Covid-19 isolation. Russell decided it was essential to reconnect with the creative world, as well as old friends using his latest body of work as the vehicle to do so. The resulting collection of large vibrant images explores a range of themes from Christmas to Kubrick, Spectacles to Space Ships, Animals to Androgyny. Each work is drawn with style, wit and a graphic positivity for our time.

Commenting on this time, Russell Walker said, "Cocooned away from the world during this time, I started to graphically reminisce, relive and reflect upon happier episodes from my youth. Consequently, I was able to re-imagine a time of hazy cosmic jive...on paper."

Andrew Coningsby of Coningsby Gallery said: “I’m thrilled to be hosting The Big Draw and Russell Walker and supporting their valuable mission to enhance lives by nurturing and promoting the many benefits of drawing. The two-week exhibition, packed with Russell’s art and The Big Draw events, will be great fun for all who visit.”

On the Coningsby Gallery, Kate Mason commented: “The Coningsby Gallery has carved out a unique role in London’s busy art gallery scene. Its continued championing of outstanding contemporary illustration and graphic art from around the world is a brilliant commitment to showcasing emerging talent as well as established artists.”

The Big Draw events are set to include an evening talk on exhibiting artwork, live drawing sessions and a range of drop-in and bookable creative workshops. The Big Draw events at The Coningsby Gallery are sponsored and supported by Derwent, the Official art material partner to The Big Draw Festival 2022, ‘Come Back to Colour’.

Spaces will be bookable on Eventbrite, and via The Big Draw website.

## ENDS

### CONTACT

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### NOTES TO EDITORS:

#### **The Big Draw**

The Big Draw is a visual literacy charity promoting the universal language of drawing as a tool for thought, creativity, social and cultural engagement. The Big Draw (formerly The Campaign for Drawing) was launched in 2000 with support from and spearheaded by The Guild of St George, the charity founded by John Ruskin in 1871 - becoming an independent arts education charity in 2006.

The charity leads a diverse programme of advocacy, empowerment and engagement, and is the founder and driving force behind The Big Draw Festival – the world’s biggest celebration of drawing. The Big Draw manages collaborative research projects, campaigns and educational conferences on visual literacy, digital technology and STEAM. The charity supports professional and emerging artists through its national contemporary art prize, The John Ruskin Prize and exhibition, and through events, awards, and competitions, creates platforms for anyone who wants to draw.

[www.thebigdraw.org](http://www.thebigdraw.org) | Charity no. 1114811

#### **The Big Draw Festival**

Launched in October 2000, The Big Draw Festival has encouraged over five million people back to the drawing board. It has notched up two world records – for the longest drawing in the world (one kilometre) and the greatest number of people drawing simultaneously (over 7,000). The first Big Draw Festival in 2000 attracted 180 partner organisations. Since then, the number has risen to over 1,000, with over 500,000 people participating each year.

What began as a one-day celebration of drawing in October 2000 in the UK, is now an annual month-long festival of drawing across the world.

#### **Russell Walker**

Russell Walker has been making images for brands and clients from all over the world, for more than 4 decades. From shopping to sex, pasta to poodles, no topic or theme has avoided his visual interrogation. His lateral image-making approach and strong distinctive style has assured his popularity with advertising, design and publishing agencies across the globe. A Pentagram award winner for Illustration, an elected

member of the Chartered Society of Designers, 'Oh Yeah' is Russell's second One-Man exhibition at the Coningsby Gallery. His work has previously been exhibited in London at the Royal College of Art, The Royal Exchange and Seven Dials Gallery.

**[www.fetchaset.com](http://www.fetchaset.com)**

### **The Coningsby Gallery**

Established in 1994, The Coningsby Gallery is located at 30 Tottenham Street, London W1, in the thriving area of Fitzrovia (West Bloomsbury) in the heart of London's cultural West End. The area is renowned for its visual and performing arts, literary connections and museums. The Coningsby Gallery is also home to the illustration agency Début Art which represents over 160 illustrators, many of whom draw extensively as part of their practice.

**[www.coningsbygallery.com](http://www.coningsbygallery.com)**

### **Derwent Art**

With over 100 years of know-how packed into every pencil and art tool, for generations, artists have chosen and trusted the Derwent® brand for art materials. Derwent® still makes art materials in England's Lake District, where graphite was first discovered in 1832 and hasn't stopped pushing boundaries and innovating since The Cumberland Pencil Company was founded there in 1916. Derwent® is owned by ACCO UK Ltd, an ACCO Brands Company.

**[www.DerwentArt.com](http://www.DerwentArt.com)**

### **The John Ruskin Prize**

The John Ruskin Prize was initiated in 2012 by The Big Draw in partnership with the Guild of St George. The Prize is the fastest growing multi-disciplinary arts and crafts prize in the UK. With the values of the radical polymath John Ruskin at its core, the #RuskinPrize has a growing representation for supporting and promoting artists, designers and makers whose work defies easy categorisation.

**[www.ruskinprize.co.uk](http://www.ruskinprize.co.uk)**

### **The Guild of St George**

The Guild of St George is an educational charity, founded in 1871 by the Victorian art and social critic, John Ruskin, devoted to the arts, crafts and the rural economy. The Guild is based in England but has a worldwide membership of Companions, which seeks to uphold the values and put into practice the ideas of its founder, John Ruskin (1819-1900). The Guild of St George founded "Campaign for Drawing" in 2000 which is now, The Big Draw.

**[www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk](http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk)**