



MK Gallery has recruited a team of twenty-six Associate Artists. Some are from Milton Keynes. For others, the city is a new and exciting playground. Here **Wright & Vandame** talk about their perceptions of Milton Keynes and what they hope to bring to City Club.



ArtGym, 2015, fig-2, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Photo: Sylvain Deleu

Tell me a bit about yourselves and your work?

GV: We met by chance at an art opening at White Cube in Bermondsey and kept on bumping into each other and started making art from there! Our practice has primarily been site-specific, collaborative, and playful. We like working across a range of media, for example, creating the series of readymade tools hand-stitched with Lycra, which we showed in MK Calling 2017.

JW: We have been making work together for coming up to two years now. One of the things I really like about working collaboratively with Guillaume is the continuous discussion. At times I think it can be quite isolating making work as an individual artist confined to the studio, so working with

another person gives you the opportunity to really bounce ideas off each other.

What are your first impressions of Milton Keynes?

JW: I grew up on the other side of Buckinghamshire so was never far from Milton Keynes really. As a child, Milton Keynes was synonymous with leisure. Shopping, skiing and indoor skydiving, it was a great place to visit! Equally, I feel I've got a whole new appreciation for Milton Keynes in recent months as Guillaume and I have spent more time here. It's a truly unique city.

GV: The first time I visited Milton Keynes was in mid-December, a couple days after my birthday with Josh. I remember feeling a sense of excitement and uncertainty as we were interviewing to be part of City Club, which could give us a chance to work with new audiences and challenge ourselves in new ways. Afterwards, we spent the afternoon walking around the city and I was especially struck by this immense sense of space and the modern public sculptures in the most unexpected places.

What do you hope to bring to City Club?

GV: Now that we can officially say that we are part of City Club, we are finding our feet and getting to know some of the other artists. We are adventurous, ambitious, and creative artists and we hope to work with both the area and residents in fun and engaging ways.

JW: I can only echo what Guillaume has said, City Club offers such an invigorating opportunity for us to engage with new audiences, an acknowledgment of Milton Keynes visionary past and a bold step towards redefining its future.

What interests you about connecting with people as part of your work?

JW: One of the core ambitions within our practice is to create as inclusive an experience as possible. More than anything else I hope that our work can offer the opportunity for people from all walks of life to engage with art. There's no greater feeling than hearing our exhibition or project was the first time someone has stepped inside an art gallery or enjoyed an experience of an artwork.

GV: I am blessed because I grew up in a creative family. I loved visiting museums and galleries such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art (in New York) and really learned there is something for everyone. As I grew older and started making art with Josh, we shared this common goal and desire to make these connections with people and explore the different identities

anyone can inhabit and the difference an individual can make within a collective.

What's your favourite place in Milton Keynes?

GV: I am still getting to know the city and one of the places I found memorable is the Liliane Lijn sculpture, Light Pyramid (2012) in Campbell Park. It has this timeless quality, almost like a portal to another universe, and you can really feel like you are part of something bigger than yourself, looking out onto the wider landscape of Milton Keynes.

JW: As an artist, I always am attracted to galleries so naturally MK Gallery has my vote. The team do invaluable work and contribute to an exceptional programme of exhibitions and events. I think this redevelopment will only further emphasise what an important contribution this gallery offers, both within the local community and as a shining example to all public galleries as to what's possible.

If you had a super power what would it be?

JW: I used to watch this TV show growing up called Bernard's Watch. It was all about this boy called Bernard who had a magical pocket watch that could stop time. That would be pretty handy, having the ability to stop time.

GV: Funnily enough, this question isn't as easy I thought it would be! I love swimming and grew up with lakes and oceans so I think it could be fun to breathe underwater. I would be able to stay as long as I like and I might even discover a sunken ship or Atlantis along the way.

City Club is a programme of new art, performances, family activities, happenings and talks inspired by the original vision for Milton Keynes.

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