

NEWS



'Toll' is an artwork created by artist Andrew Brooks where he creates a single mark for each of the first year's reported Covid-19 deaths in the UK

# Covid remembrance artwork to go on display

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An artwork that has been created as an act of protest and remembrance for those who lost their lives to Covid will go on display at the Concrete Block Gallery from May 15-16.

'Toll' is an artwork created by Edinburgh based artist Andrew Brooks where he creates a single mark for each of the first year's reported Covid-19 deaths in the UK.

The total reported deaths involving Covid-19 for the first year in the UK was 145,652 and this is the number of marks made over 52 recorded performances by Andrew - with each performance representing a single week's statistics.

Andrew began the project online earlier this year in March, publishing the first performance video on the one-year anniversary of the first reported deaths in the UK, and is set to complete his work of protest and remembrance by May 13.

Each mark is made with a single brush dab and is 4cm high and made on rolls of paper 1.5m wide and 10m long. The marks fill 53 metres of pa-

per and he has used over a litre of black ink.

Each week's statistics is filmed separately, and the longest film is 3 hours 6 minutes, representing the sixth week of Covid related deaths in the UK which was the highest toll for the year at 9,510.

On the method of making the work Andrew commented: "The act of remembrance is very important in the way that I have gone about constructing this, attempting to recognise each one of those deaths. Understanding what one hundred and forty-five thousand marks looks like and how much time it takes to make those. I try and be as considered as possible when I make a mark because that is somebody - that is somebody's family member, somebody's friend and it's somebody's life that's ended.

"When you think about the statistics it easily gets abstracted away but I'm doing this to make it physical and make it so that it can't be avoided. It's a visualization that really makes you understand what's happened, over a hundred and forty-five thousand deaths, you have to realise that this is something to get angry about.

"The impetus for this was anger and that's what's fed it.



'Toll' was created as an act of protest and remembrance

It's anger at Westminster and at central government. I've felt that they haven't been decisive, they haven't made strong decisions, there has been a lot of waste, that has resulted in over a hundred thousand deaths. This is a protest piece, this is my version of holding up a placard and standing out in the street - this is my concerted silent protest.

"Art can have many roles in society, and one of those is definitely protest and this is my protest".

Seeing Andrew's endeavour on Instagram, documentary filmmaker, Dave MacFarlane, approached him to document

the process.

Dave MacFarlane commented: "This recent filming project is one of those that come along and you can't help but take notice. The subject matter, the artistic concept and the wider social impact were all key factors in wanting to produce this short documentary".

"Toll" will be exhibited for viewings at Concrete Block Gallery during May 15-16 between 11am and 5pm.

Viewings can be booked through Eventbrite here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/toll-exhibition-tickets-153275995629>

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