

Winter 2021

Dyslexia Voice

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Dyslexia-friendly Scotland dreams



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Carving a space for dyslexia

by Katie Carmichael, Career Coach,
Dyslexia Scotland



When Angus Hepburn got the opportunity to collaborate with a renowned sculptor, he just knew he had to create a symbol for dyslexia.

The two Scottish artists had the privilege of unveiling their dyslexia-inspired sculpture in the Scottish Parliament during Dyslexia Awareness Week Scotland 2021.

The prestigious event was the culmination of a year-long mentoring partnership between Dyslexia Scotland Ambassador Mark Stoddart and emerging artist Angus Hepburn, both dyslexic.

The bronze and gold artwork, 'A Desirable Disadvantage', was inspired by author Malcolm Gladwell who compares people with dyslexia to David, the champion underdog in the ancient story 'David and Goliath'.

David, cast in extremely rare Scottish gold, stands victorious on the larger-than-life bronze head of Goliath, representing the immense value of dyslexic strengths.

Reflecting on what a dyslexia-friendly Scotland means to him, Angus said: "Being dyslexic shouldn't necessarily be viewed as being a disadvantage. Dyslexics are often agile, able to adapt and heighten their abilities to compensate for areas where they feel they may be lacking."

Mark, who has been a mentor to Angus throughout the process, said: "The parallels between my own experience of dyslexia and Angus's experiences are perfectly captured in this piece."



Dyslexia Scotland career coach Katie said: “Art can deliver important messages in a powerful way. Angus has captured the essence of many people’s experiences of dyslexia. We are thrilled that the sculpture made its debut in the Scottish Parliament during our national Dyslexia Awareness Week and hope that the piece starts some conversations about perceptions of dyslexia, and the value of dyslexic thinking skills in modern Scotland.”

The two artists have both experienced significant struggles in learning and work, yet share a strong belief that being dyslexic has given them a ‘creative force’ which they have used to their advantage.

The sculpture is certainly carving out a name for itself, having appeared in BBC Scotland’s news feed, and a handful of national newspapers.

So what’s next for Angus and his much-admired artwork?

“‘A Desirable Disadvantage’ is set to tour other venues in 2022 and there will be a limited edition of copies cast in bronze and silver available for sale in the near future. One ambition I have is to let the author Malcolm Gladwell know about the sculpture; after all, his writings on dyslexia inspired it.”

Watch out for the next edition of Dyslexia Voice, which will feature Mark Stoddart’s inspiring work as an Ambassador for Dyslexia Scotland and other charities. Follow Dyslexia Scotland’s social media channels for news and updates about A Desirable Disadvantage. linktr.ee/DyslexiaScotland