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Lauren Lysaght: Citizen Cane No. 52025



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*Citizen
Cane*
No 52025

March 30 –
May 5

by Paul Rayner

Citizen Cane No 52025 marks the successful conclusion of Lauren Lysaght's six-month stint as Artist-in-Residence. Though the candy-coloured plastic-coated cane gives the show an up-beat appearance, at its heart is a subject which affects us all – disability in an able-bodied world.

During an interview with Lauren on January 25 we talked at length about the exhibition. Those 'thoughts of *Citizen Cane*' relevant to this exhibition are summarised below:

Able-ism

As a person with a 25% permanent disability I'm viewed differently because the *Able-ists* hold power and anyone who isn't able must therefore be *other* or *unable*. If I had my way I'd take the word 'disabled' out of our vocabulary!

One reason I worked with cane is because the able-bodied think when you're 'disabled' all you're capable of is making baskets. However, I also used it because hobbies like basketry and embroidery are rapidly disappearing. I want these forms of craft to be honoured because they're such an incredible part of our background.

Walking

For me, it's walking that's a problem, so each of these works represents a step forward in terms of making able-bodied people think about mobility. For example, *Thirteen Foot* consists of thirteen basket-like *footprints* placed up a ramp – the ones towards the top get bigger and bigger, implying



that with each step progress becomes increasingly laborious. When voted into office *Citizen Cane* will make everything on the level!

Parking

The car number plates, or *Parkers*, symbolise the able-bodied colonising the space put aside especially for us 'disabled' – which we pay for through buying a 'disability sticker' after certification by a doctor. The most outrageous example I've witnessed is when cars without disability stickers park in 'disabled' parks outside swimming pools. Presumably these able-bodied people are inside doing their 40-odd laps to stay in shape but can't be bothered walking an extra five metres!

¹ No 52025 is Lauren's disability sticker number