**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Abstract Artist Explores Asperger’s Syndrome in a Thought-Provoking Exhibit**

(Maidenhead, Berkshire, January 26th, 2018) – Mahlia Amatina will be showcasing her touring art exhibition, *On a Spectrum – an exploration of Asperger’s syndrome,* at St Mark’s hospital in Maidenhead, Berkshire (UK) with a special launch taking place on Tuesday 30th January 12-2pm.

Known for her desire to immerse herself fully in her subject matter, Mahlia’s intimate relationship with her exhibit evolved from her personal experience as an adult who was diagnosed with Asperger’s in 2015. This ‘late’ diagnosis has added a special authenticity to this enlightening and ambitious project.

After learning of her condition, Mahlia studied current research related to Asperger’s and began to attend a support group for adults who had been diagnosed with the condition as an adult.

Per Mahlia, *“I was keen to hear more from others and how they experience their Asperger’s. I decided to create a questionnaire that would then lead on to an art exhibition. I wanted to be able to tell our story.”*

Her approach was to inspire respondents to complete her questionnaire by hand and to use ‘mark-making’ as a way to illustrate their primary Asperger traits. ‘Mark-making’ in this context means using any type of line, dash, shape or symbol – anything non-literal – to describe how someone experiences their Asperger’s condition. They were also encouraged to include any colours that represented their experiences. Completed surveys were returned to her from the UK, Europe, Asia, and the United States.

In developing the exhibition, Mahlia compiled their responses, along with her personal introspection, to create paintings, videos and creative writings. Per Mahlia, *“The narrative came to life, as an Asperger’s community from around the world came together to help inform the art.”*

Mahlia’s brand new collection *‘Autismo 25’*, a series of mixed media works on paper will also be previewed (select pieces) at the exhibition in Maidenhead, and highlights Mahlia’s continued reflections and journaling of her Asperger’s diagnosis and perceptions around this.

# MORE

The National Autistic Society estimates that there are currently around 700,000 people living with autism in the UK. Autism is more evident in a child than in an adult. As an adult, those with Asperger’s are often perceived as being only ‘quirky’ and having difficulty connecting with others in social interactions. Many are also preoccupied with a particular interest that borders on obsessive. Yet most of them are exceptionally intelligent with special gifts. In some cases, the reaction they experience as someone who is different than the norm leads to anxiety and depression and a diminished opportunity to fit in community.

***On a Spectrum – an Exploration of Asperger’s Syndrome* is a creative, thought-provoking and inspiring exhibit that calls awareness to the challenges and opportunities that an adult with Asperger’s faces.**

Mahlia interviews Dr Trevor Powell:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAoZCvbhyQY>

Mahlia talks about the exhibition and its background: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzFSoExiB1U>

Participants of the study talk through their mark-making experiences:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1DOvI8tneo>