

Reynolds 30th Anniversary Exhibition Newcastle Contemporary Art/High Bridge Works, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

This exhibition, in a former printing works, is rather a hidden gem. I hadn't visited High Bridge Works since it was a city centre outpost of the Gateshead Baltic – it's now independent. In its foyer, the contemporary art space hosts a modest exhibition dedicated to the Argentine experimental band Reynolds. It's more modest than the Derek Bailey exhibition in Huddersfield that I reviewed a few months back (*The Wire* 477) – outside the venue, there isn't even a poster advertising it.

The exhibition, curated by artist Craig Stewart Johnson and *TQ* editor Andy Wood, is in Newcastle because Reynolds have a local fanbase – the exhibition presents items from their archive. The connection began in the late 1990s, when the band had releases on Newcastle label Matching Head, though while they had invitations including to the Tusk festival, they've not actually played in the city.

Reynolds features Alan Curtis, Rob Conlazo and Miguel Tomasin. They began in Argentina in 1993, and their trajectory has embraced cosmic free rock, lo-fi drone and electronic music, involving an open-process, DIY philosophy of inclusion. Reynolds have really put that philosophy of inclusion into action, given that their drummer Miguel Tomasin has Down's Syndrome – as Johnson puts it in an email, "Their approach to experimental music is centred around their unapologetic dedication to diversity and inclusion."

The exhibition features posters, magazine articles, photos and audio. There's a sad letter from the band to their UK fans, apologising for the cancellation of a tour. Eagle-eyed immigration officials spotted them as likely touring musicians, and since they didn't have a work permit they were sent back to France. Highpoints of their career, documented here, include collaborations with Pauline Oliveros and Acid Mothers Temple (Courtis wrote a foreword to the first Spanish edition of Oliveros's book *Deep Listening*).

Magazines featured include – of course – *The Wire*, as well as *Music Notes*, *TQ*, *What's Happening*, *The Sound Projector*, *La Nacion* and others. There are discussions and dissections of the band's experimental ethos, connecting it with Fluxus, and their obsession with lo-fi including the cassette tape medium – notably *Blank Tapes*, their most famous, or notorious, release, a composition created from layers of tape hiss. The exhibition also reminded me of the box set *Minecxio Emancipations* on Pica, which features "10,000 Chickens Symphony (Part C)" – at the time, Conlazo was dating a woman whose family owned an enormous chicken farm. I got an electronic version of the catalogue, physical copies of which had sold out – you could try the venue if you want one. The exhibition is a touching reminiscence of an unforgettable band.

Andy Hamilton

Installation view, Reynolds 30th Anniversary Exhibition (2023)



Craig Stewart Johnson (Reynolds)