

The Big Issue marks “25 + 1 birthday” with special edition and exclusive exhibition of founder, Lord Bird’s, artwork

Exhibition of artwork taking place from Monday 25th September- Friday 29th September at The Framers Gallery, London

This week’s edition of The Big Issue, on sale Monday September 25th, has been specially curated by the magazine’s Founder, Lord Bird, to mark the organisation’s ‘25+1’ birthday. The special edition will be sold to coincide with an exhibition of Lord Bird’s own artwork being held in a gallery in central London to mark *The Big Issue’s “25 + 1 birthday”*.

Built around the theme of social trading, the special edition of the magazine features an array of art-related content, including the unique work of the founder himself.

In addition, an exhibition of Lord Bird’s work: *“The Big Issue 25 + 1: A celebration of a life-changing revolution”* will be held at The Framers Gallery, London from Monday 25th September- Friday 29th September.

On display at the gallery will be around 20 printed pieces of Lord Bird’s personal artwork. Amongst the collection of oil, watercolours and drawings, will be a number of pieces featured in the magazine.

The founder’s artwork addresses themes of the human form and nature with an ever-present undertone of the benefit of doing social good through social trading. All prints will be available to purchase from the gallery, with prices starting from £200.

“It felt natural to mark our just over a quarter of a century celebrations with a special issue that nods towards the good that creativity can do in our world today.” said Lord Bird, “Art in particular has meant so much to me over the years. It was a saviour in my troubled youth. I would go to drawing classes rather than hanging around with the lads I grew up with who were knee-deep in wrongdoing. It inspired me and gave me a lot of confidence. The right kind of confidence. The edition looks at how we can all make a difference and leave our social footprint by using our skills to give back to those less lucky than ourselves.”

He continued: “I am also humbled to have my artwork on display in the same week too. I think my art dips across a lot of ideas around nature, humankind and the difference we can all make by welcoming social trading into our lives. I do hope people like it and take something away from it, whatever that may be.”

This special edition, out from Monday, also features the regular Street Art page, which gives talented, marginalised individuals an outlet for creative expression. The prints are all available to buy from [The Big Issue Shop](#), the online shop selling products with a ‘social echo’. At least half the profit from each sale goes to the artist. The remaining profit is used to continue the mission of The Big Issue; to give people in poverty, the opportunity of a hand-up.

The Big Issue shop sells its own branded products as well as those from other social businesses meaning, every item purchased has a positive social outcome. This could be through what the product is made from, who it is made by or where the profits end up.

The Big Issue birthday edition is available to buy from Monday, 25th September from vendors across the UK for £2.50. *The Big Issue* birthday special will also be accompanied by an exhibition featuring artworks from the issue and more at The Framers Gallery, London, running from Monday 25th September- Friday 29th September.

For more information, please contact Ruth Law, Group PR Manager, on 020 7526 3381.

Notes to Editors

- The Big Issue is a social enterprise which exists to dismantle poverty through creating opportunities for people and communities.
- The Big Issue is an award-winning weekly entertainment and current affairs magazine which vendors buy for £1.25 and sell to the public for £2.50, keeping the difference. In this way the magazine provides them with the means to earn a legitimate income.
- Vendors come from a variety of backgrounds and face a range of issues, but all are experiencing the effects of poverty. Upon becoming a Big Issue vendor they receive training, are allocated a fixed pitch from which to vend, and must agree to adhere to a code of conduct whilst selling the magazine.
- Since its launch in 1991, over 200 million copies of The Big Issue magazine have been sold by over 92,000 vulnerable people.
- Paul McNamee, Editor of The Big Issue magazine, currently holds the position of Chair of PPA Scotland. He was named BSME's British Editor of the Year in 2013 and 2016, and PPA Scotland Editor of the Year in 2009, 2011 and 2013.
- The Big Issue Shop offers a platform for social trading that will make social and ethical shopping a truly accessible option for consumers, giving them the opportunity to use their spending power to make a positive difference to the world we live in. The Big Issue shop sells its own branded products as well as those from other social businesses meaning, every item purchased has a positive social outcome. This could be through what the product is made from, who it is made by or where the profits end up. We are calling this 'shopping with a social echo' for the socially-conscious shopper at a time when big issues are at the forefront of people's
- The Big Issue Foundation is the organisation's charitable arm, which exists to link vendors with the vital support which will help them address the issues which have led or contributed to their circumstances. The Foundation works exclusively with vendors, offering support, advice and referrals.
- Founded in 2005, Big Issue Invest (BII) is the social investment arm of The Big Issue which extends the organisation's mission to dismantle poverty through creating opportunity. BII offers loans and investment from £20,000 to £3 million to social enterprises and charities across the UK. The capital raised by BII is from private sources and not from sales of the magazine. Big Issue Invest currently manages or advises on £150 million of social funds.
- For further information please go to www.bigissue.com