Audio description:

**The artist invites you to touch the artwork.**

**To follow is an audio description of the artwork followed by an artist commentary. The recording will play in a continuous loop.**

This mixed media work, made in 2022 by artist Clarke Reynolds, is titled FAB too Touch.

It uses braille to create a multi-sensory work, arranged in the form of a large FAB ice lolly measuring the size of a door.

The braille letters which make up the design are made of painted wood and affixed to a plywood board. The arrangement of the wooden discs creates both the ice lolly shape as well as peripheral dots in the same blue as the background, resembling computer code.

The lolly itself is composed in three horizontal bands atop a stick. The braille discs in the upper band, whose shape is slightly rounded at the top corners, represent the ‘hundreds and thousands’ confectionery with which the FAB lolly is sprinkled on top of a dipped chocolate base.

We find corresponding discs in browns, oranges, pinks and yellows to match this, arranged in apparently random fashion.

The middle band shows white discs arranged organically to match the corresponding layer of the real lolly, as does the red band below, which is slightly rounded at the bottom corners. The representation of a lolly stick is achieved by a slender central column of braille discs in a pale woody colour.

The artist encourages people to touch the artwork, with the braille discs acting as a linguistic code whose meaning will be known only to braille users.

Artist commentary:

This artwork acts as a memory of the first piece of art popularised by consumerism - Andy Warhol’s soup cans. What if those pieces could tell a story through touch? Imagine what they could say. Fast forward 50 years and inspired by Pop Art you are touching my artwork, a 2 metre tall fab ice lolly embedded with a story of how I am seen in the art world and how galleries don’t see me. As your fingers run across the 2cm discs painted in hard wearing exterior paint, you are wondering how these groups of dots can communicate with me? Are they random just like pointillism? Well, in each six dot pattern are letters which are braille. The negative spaces are as important as the positive and that is how I read. Stand back and visually it’s a fab ice lolly in all its glory. Hundreds and thousands atop the chocolate covering with the distinctive white and red bands. It’s only when you touch the piece that it comes to life and only gives up its secrets if you know braille! So… would you learn braille, this code for something that is visual, but made for a tactile experience….? Ponder that thought as you admire the fab but remember it’s fab to touch!

What’s written on the fab in braille?

Love going to galleries soaking up colours from a Lichtenstein or delving into emotions of a Turner, but what happened when I started to go blind? Galleries became a nightmare. Instead of enjoyment, colours disappeared, detail lost - and the question is raised, do I belong here? Took me years to explore these visual spaces without my eyes. Audio description? Maybe, if offered. Then I attended a touch tour, allowing conversation through tactile. To see the visual of my art, tell stories that can be touched, pushing boundaries. I want people to start talking in galleries, touching art when possible. This picture shows what you want to see - a fab ice lolly. As a gallery only sees me as a blind person. My story goes deeper, so should a gallery. As I say, it’s fab to touch.