



Monday 31 July 2017

Artist Bob & Roberta Smith wants you to think about Freedom of Expression

Friday 4 August to Sunday 3 September

This is a Freedom of Expression Centre to open at Hull School of Art and Design as part of Hull 2017 'Look Up' programme

Artist **Bob and Roberta Smith** is heading to Hull in August, where he will install a sign more than 12 metres long on the roof of **Hull School Art and Design**, proclaiming "***This is a Freedom of Expression Centre***".

In a joint project with the School and as part of the Hull 2017 **Look Up** programme of public art installations, the sign will herald a month of activity exploring the nature of modern protest, the role that art and arts education have in reinforcing the democratic process and the freedom and restrictions that artists experience around the world.

This is a Freedom of Expression Centre encompasses an exhibition, including a new Bob & Roberta Smith artwork that is more than 14 metres long, plus workshops, talks and a special performance by the artist's **Apathy Band** on Saturday 2 September and a conversation between **Bob and Roberta Smith** and **Blair Imani** on Sunday 3 September, during the Freedom Festival. Freedom Festival is Hull's annual celebration of notions of Freedom, borne out of the celebration in 2007 of the bi-centenary of the anti-slavery act.

Bob and Roberta Smith comments:

"It's a huge honour to show this new work. This is a Freedom of Expression Centre has been inspired by two key experiences of mine: firstly, the past five years as an advocate for the arts, exploring why democratic societies generally support and defend the arts, while repressive regimes curb them. The second experience was an interview I conducted with a Black Lives Matter activist, Blair Imani, while making a BBC 4 programme on protest. You can see Blair's inspiring interview in the exhibition. Blair's interview took us on a journey from New York to Louisiana and into the heart of a story that is rarely revealed in the news media."

"I have painted a 14.40 metre long painting which is a transcription of two important passages of the interview. Reading is about trying to understand another's experience. I hope the viewers of this work will read and walk the 14 metres and partake in a unique insight into contemporary protest."

"Art isn't about opposing people or telling them what to think. I want people to reflect on what art can do, and what latent potential there is in all of us."

Work in the exhibition by fine art students at Hull School of Art and Design will include installation and process-based participative pieces resulting from a provocation Bob & Roberta Smith presented to them earlier this year during a talk by the artist entitled 'Subject to Events'.

His work with students will also expand on this idea with 'Your Voice Needs You', looking at how we map out the world and ideas about self through drawing, painting and sculpture. The project will conclude with a parade of the self - a reflection on how through art we can affect our environment and influence our lives.

Martin Green, Director of Hull 2017, said: 'Hull has a long history of championing human rights and freedom. At a time of change in the UK Bob and Roberta Smith's *This is a Freedom of Expression Centre* is a reminder of the important role that art and artists have in commenting on issues of the day and challenging the status quo and will be a thought-provoking part of our Freedom season.'

The Freedom of Expression Centre at Hull School of Art and Design runs from Friday 4 August to Sunday 3 September. The Apathy Band will perform live at the New Adelphi Club in Hull on Saturday 2 September during the Freedom Festival. *The Freedom of Expression Centre* is part of *Look Up*, a year-long programme of temporary artworks commissioned by Hull UK City of Culture 2017.

For further information about The Freedom of Expression Centre
and the Look Up programme,
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LISTINGS

THIS IS A FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION CENTRE

Exhibition

Friday 4 August - Sunday 3 September (Monday - Saturday)

Private View 3 August.

Apathy Band Live at the New Adelphi Club (part of Freedom Festival)

Saturday 2 September

Freedom Talks - Bob & Roberta Smith and Blair Imani

Sunday 3 September

NOTES TO EDITORS

Bob and Roberta Smith

Bob and Roberta Smith (real name Patrick Brill OBE, RA) is a British contemporary artist, a lifelong protester, writer, author, musician, art education advocate and keynote speaker. He is known for his "slogan" art, is an associate professor at Sir John Cass Department of Art at London Metropolitan University and has been curator of public art projects, like Art U Need. In the 2015 general election, he stood against Michael Gove in his Surrey Heath constituency, in protest at the former education secretary's marginalisation of the arts in schools. Bob and Roberta Smith is famous for protest art such as "Make Art Not War" and "Letter to Michael Gove" amongst others. He was curator for the 2006 Peace Camp and created the 2013 Art Party to promote contemporary art and advocacy. His works have been exhibited and are in collections in Europe and the United States. Brill co-founded The Ken Ardley Playboys. Brill hosts The Bob & Roberta Smith Radio Show called Make Your Own Damn Music on Resonance FM. His wife is the contemporary artist and lecturer, Jessica Voorsanger.

Recent and current work includes 'All Schools Should be Art Schools' (2017) at Yorkshire Sculpture Park and a commission for the Folkestone Triennial in September.

Hull 2017 Look Up programme

Look Up is a year-long programme of major public art commissioned by Hull UK City of Culture 2017 and made for the Hull's public spaces and places, co-curated by Andrew Knight and Hazel Colquhoun.

Each installation will reflect Hull's history, present or future, each will catch passers-by by surprise interrupting the public realm with ideas that amuse, confront or challenge residents and visitors alike.

The first Look Up installation was Nayan Kulkarni's *Blade*, a 75 metre long Rotor blade that would normally be at the top of a wind turbine, which became an artwork and a spectacular interruption into the newly renovated public space in January this year. The second which runs till the end of the year is Michael Pinsky's *The City Speaks* which functions as a 21st century Speakers' Corner in which open-air public speaking takes on epic proportions as spoken words are translated to text and relayed on the west tower supporting Hull's Tidal Surge Barrier.

During seasons two and three, *Look Up* sees commissioned works popping up in shopping centres, train stations, car parks, streets and public squares, by artists including Bob & Roberta Smith, Tania Kovats, Chris Dobrowolski and Claire Barber.

Look Up has been developed in partnership with a number of organisations and companies including The Deep, GF Smith, Hull School of Art & Design and Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

Freedom Festival

Freedom Festival is Hull's annual cultural festival, it began in 2007 as a celebration of the bi-centenary of the anti-slavery act. The festival takes over the city's streets and draws audiences each year of circa 110000, it celebrates and explores notions of Freedom through an international multi-disciplinary arts program.

Hull UK City of Culture 2017

Hull UK City of Culture 2017 is a 365 day programme of cultural events and creativity inspired by the city and told to the world. Hull secured the title of UK City of Culture 2017 in November 2013. It is only the second city to hold the title and the first in England.

Divided into four seasons, this nationally significant event draws on the distinctive spirit of the city and the artists, writers, directors, musicians, revolutionaries and thinkers that have contributed to the development of art and ideas.

The Culture Company was set up to deliver the Hull 2017 programme and is an independent organisation with charitable status. It has raised £32 million, with over 70 partners supporting the project, including public bodies, trusts and foundations and local and national businesses.

Key contributions are coming from: **Host City** - Hull City Council; **Principal Partners** - Arts Council England, BBC, Big Lottery Fund, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, KCOM, KWL, Spirit of 2012, Yorkshire Water and the University of Hull; **Major Partners** - Associated British Ports, Arco, BP, the British Council, British Film Institute, Green Port Hull, Hull Clinical Commissioning Group, MKM Building Supplies, P&O Ferries, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Sewell Group, Siemens, Smith & Nephew and Wykeland Group. The National Lottery has contributed more than £10m of this funding, making it the largest single funding body for Hull 2017.

Hull 2017's International Partners are: Aarhus, Denmark, which is European Capital of Culture 2017; Reykjavik, Iceland; Rotterdam, The Netherlands; and Freetown, Sierra Leone (twinned with Hull). These relationships are reflected in a number of events throughout the year.

For information go to www.hull2017.co.uk Follow us on Twitter @2017Hull Instagram @2017hull Facebook HullCityofCulture