

Dear Gordon 05.07.2014 – 02.08.2014

The Letter Queens Road Hastings 1996.

It started with a letter, found by two artists, screwed up in the corner of a dusty new studio. 'Dear Gordon' it began. Actually, it started earlier than this, when the writer sat down to write a letter.

'Dear Gordon. I know by now you are asleep but not me. I could not sleep.....'

The writer did not know, could not know, when they sat down late at night to write to Gordon that the letter would set in motion a chain of events which would lead, many years later, to this exhibition on Kings Road. The letter was written carefully in capital letters, in blue biro, on blue lined notepaper. It was read and later abandoned. It could have ended there, but by chance the letter was found again.

The artists were struck by the power of the writing, by the attempt to express love, anguish and heartbreak in such succinct sentences, by the strange punctuation. They wanted to celebrate it and so they wrote it in Smartie tops. It took three years to assemble. Children helped them. They presented it in their gallery at 12 Claremont in Hastings. 'Dear Gordon', visitors read spelt out on the wall in 908 Smartie tops. 'I know by now you are asleep but not me. I could not sleep

.....

Sorry about the writing as I am crying writing this bloody note.

Love B. '

The letter ends.

The Exhibition. Kings Rd St Leonards 2014

A transcript of B's original letter was passed on to 5 artists who were invited to respond in their own way. These artists have noticed and picked up the small things, the forgotten and the discarded. Finding their own voice they have each remarked on what to many may seem unremarkable and chosen to value and to celebrate it in ways that are sometimes bittersweet, sometimes funny, but always surprising. Picking up on the things that others leave behind has produced an unplanned cohesion in the aesthetic which is has distinctly retro feel, rooted firmly somewhere between the late seventies and early nineties, a time of Smartie tops, cigarettes, balloons and reel-to-reel tape players. Long before mobile phones and texting when we stayed up all night, wrote long heartfelt letters to each other, read them and then threw them away.

The Workshops Hollington Youth Centre

Dear Gordon is seen as a link to the current use of text in street art. It has been installed in the gallery by young adults and used to provide a context for art workshops exploring art, language and relationships in their lives. Community engagement is facilitated by gender focussed partners 'aGender. In the workshops the young people work alongside local artists and look at how we communicate, our use of words or images and the psychological impact of texting and sexting on young people and their relationships.

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