

Charing Cross is a major road junction in the Scottish city of Glasgow. It is a major interchange of the M8 motorway. Formerly the gateway from the shopping area of Sauchiehall Street to the more prosperous Woodlands area, its architectural qualities were largely razed by the building of the motorway.

Wikipedia 2016

The following passage is a discussion about the work between the artist and Sorley Arthur Kleboe, an underfloor heating specialist from Sorn In Ayrshire. A former resident of many Charing Cross flats Sorley is a close friend and sounding board for the artist.

This discussion took place at The Carnarvon Bar on St Georges Road, Glasgow, over looking the M8.

The conversation is written verbatim.

Facts may be unfounded.

Sorely!

Hi Jonathan

Haws it goin'?

Nae bad

Cheers

(glasses clink)

Cheers big man...Right two questions for you about this er, piece, er here. This piece eh jewellery.

Uh-huh

First one is, eh... why would you choose the M8 over the M74?

Hahahahaha..... That! is a question I hadn't considered...and its probably becos' ...can't drive!

Ah'll Akceptdat. Haha

Are these two questions joined?

Hahughuhuhu..Ah Know... Eh.... Does the Eh...Necklace represent your eh, emotions? EH... in connection wi' Charing Cross Intersection o' the ehmeight?

That's a very deep question Sorley... It does...What are your thoughts on the ehmeight?

Ehm....Cos' havin' driven it for many years ah absolutely despise the motorway. Howeever!! the cross section at the ehme-eight has a lot of happy ramdhom memories as well.

...Yeah?

Living in Charin' Cross.

Aye well that's it ah can't drive...Which probably means my idea of what the ehmeight is.. is ah probably rosier than yours.....So! aye, it's quite a pretentious thing to think about but.. at the end....well this part of Glasgow at Charing Cross has divided my life.

?

On the left hand side, or the east side, I consider bein' at work, bein' a student, ah consider bein' ah adult and working.....The right hand side I consider my life goan out havin' a few beevies with you and havin' a laugh. and now ahm becoming a father so... it seems to be a weird centre point ...

And we lived close to it as well?

Very close

Very close!...Eh...How does this eh, necklace make you feel..about the ehmeight intersection when yer wearin' it?

Ahmmm..pfff ft....Ha Probably would just make me revel in my own pretentiousness! . Hahah well Ah suppose it's quite a strange thing to do.. to make a neckpiece about a motorway intersection...

Aye! Bhut ah understand it as well cos ah've shared memories wi' you near that intersection and ah can think oh' them just now....and wi' a terrible memory that pretty good ..so! Ah... Ah-Dunno...The wan' I think is if I was wearing any piece oh your jewellery ...which ah' do own. But ah' don't wear cos' i don't wear jewellery..

Me either

So when i do hae' it oan jewellery makes me feel special-..ah know that. And that's why I would wear it . The creativity that went into it makes wid make me feel special..

well... yeah.. exactly (?) ahm the same to you... with the work there's eighteen components... Aiyed wear two or three components of the work as a brooch...cos' i think I could get away with that

Ah'd agree with that...

But I don't like a closed neck.. things around my neck a closed shirt/collar...dont think you've ever seen me with with a tie done up..

Hahwaye Ahm the same

So I would wear the piece but maybe not the full work, cos' each link is a different story.

Right?

And each link and image is different and so there are 18 odd components to it- The big links are called A DAY IN THE LIFE...

right?

An' they are me sittin' watchin' people at Charing Cross and recording for a full day what goes on- who meets who- what happens-whatchin' people- cos' theres a pub, theres a gym, people going to work people comin' home from work just watching what happens how people move around- daily life! Its just an interesting vibrant place.

The small links are overhead conversations people speaking to each other, how they talk to each other and the pattering of speech... all these people walking through Charing Cross.

*The link wi' photographs are taken from the bridge over Charing Cross.. so see this f*ckin' concrete jungle.. look at this hideousness! But also the light!*

But very practical thou'!?

Exactly very practical! And that.. thats it is like a heart all these intersection coming in like a ...its like a heart....

Its eh its Glasgow's heartbeat in terms of all Glasgows traffic passes through that

Exactly

Therefore it the heartbeat through Glasgow to the airport and to Edinburgh and uh well... obviously the M74 question was linked with the fact that it has lessened the traffic around that area now!

Aye?

U'll probably have noticed that cos' ah have....

eh... well thank god i don't drive cos' then maybe ah wouldn't find it as romantic.! But then ah was also stuck in an M8 traffic jam for two hours the other...

THAT ALWIS HAPPINS! THAT ALWIS HAPPINS! Haha Thats the M8!

at which point I was thinking thank god i don't drive!

Hahaha

....

....

So I wis noticin' when I wis lookin' at the pice that ah saw a...what ah would describe as ah registered trade mark sign. What does that represent within the piece?

So... the big links are called A DAY IN THE LIFE so these are all the stories of what happens day to day at Charing Cross but i created a font for this series of work and this font is made up of the logos or main letters of all the major advertising companies that advertize in and around the centre of Glasgow. So if you look at the F is the F from Ford or the T is the T from Toyota. And its this idea that even a font... or even a single letter can have so many ideas and images...y'know... it can have so much weight and so much attached to it with out you really thinking about it....So the m is the M from McDonalds

NAHnever noticed that! That's... nah nah... i wish i spotted that....

Aye well if I was being naff I would maybe say the font's a satire but it's the idea that the city is y'know...you have this...y'know this information that surrounds you and all this commerciality that burrows in to the brain and your not sure how...so these individual letters even when you read a small word your brain makes unusual connections cos' you go I know that S (cos' it's the S from Sony) and it puts you in an urban setting or that's the idea. Whether is it works like that I don't know but it was interesting a wee girl pointed out all the symbols at a show I did recently and not one adult had noticed that these letters had different attachments. So thats why that font is there cos' its not just a narrative of what goes on but y'know written in the font of the city as well...

I like that ...I like that ...EH.....probably the most poinigent question would be ehm why is it me in particular you've asked, is it cos' ahm yer mate or is it because it's the ehmeight cos ahm yermate (M8)? Why are you wantin me to ask questions about this piece of art?

Well there's a few reasons and its not as in the ehmeight rhyming with my mate which annoying when I got home and showed jo the cover she thought it read Moo rather than ehmeight!

Haha

It doesn't say moo its ehmeight

I like the fact she said that...haha Moooo!

I know

....

It could mean Mooveover?

...?

haha

....

No the reason is.. this piece is a love letter really to Glasgow and what the city means to me as a person and as an artist. An ehm ... someone once said to me you have all this sort of concept and narrative behind yer work do you think anyone gets it? Ah think they do and also they can take whatever they want from it, art is meant to be interpretable... but I also wanted to ssppeak to someone about it cos' it the most amount of work or thought ah've put into a work... so with you and ...and well ah've lived with you... In Charing Cross

Very close to it... TWICE! either side!

exactly.. on both sides the adult side and the party side

True Very True! But we've partied on both sides!

Aye we've partied on both sides.... but also part of the work is about patterning of speech so the small links are about patterns of speech develop and how... well put it this way if you ask someone who writes or ask questions for a livin', ull get or will be driven by this sort of formulaic way of speakin' or writtin' which you dont have... and u've never had and u've got a particularity unique way of speaking which I dunno I think when this is all written down and you can see the patterns of how we talk to each other and how fragmented it is..... it adds to the work- cos' the patterns of our speech as pals sitting over a pint is more beautiful its more precious- it disappears

It's meaningless.... We don't even notice it sometimes like we'll get deep into a conversation and you can forget what started it... whats it about? What do we mean? Like we sometimes gloss over that and go phewmm next question.

Yeah

Next subject next question and spose its the beauty of the why we operate when talkin'?

It the beauty of conversation of ... talkin' and listenin' and or not listenin' in my case sometimes y'know?

Aye,... aye

which if you sit down with someone who would ask formulaic questions you would get this and it would be edited - which misses the point.

So..... How did you come up with the choice of venue for this interview? How is this venue connected to the piece?

So this is the Carnarvon Bar which you and me have sat in many times...

Frequented over the years! Horribly thinking back to 11 -12 years ago.

And... as ah've lived in Glasgow all the pubs I've loved the most - the traditional ones have either gone or evolved - The ones near Charing Cross- 'cept ..but this one...

Aye

This one has hasn't

Well technically speaking it changed to something ridiculous and then changed back ... Oscar Slaters or Babitty Bowsers or something.

And then everything changed back ... Aye well we missed that

Aye I missed that too I think I was in France or something..... Thats ma excuse. But ah remember turning up when it was Oscar Slaters and ah remember thinking whatdaf*ck?? It was like two months later it wis shut doon and was back to bein' the Carnarvon and wi kin go back now.

Buts its still exactly the same pub

Well they've stuck up a few tellies is the difference.

Aye well you get football now and you dont get pie'n beans for 20 pee.

Pfff

....

It over looks Charing Cross and like all the buildings in Charing Cross it was built in this time of money and wealth

wealth....

huge prosperity and money goin' throu Glasgow and it was the "Second city". And they built this massive motorway in front of it. I dont think that would happen in many other cities except London in the youkay. Like it wouldn't happen in Edinburgh!

Aye Aye ah Agree.

This would still be beautiful area in Glasgow if it for wasn't for some guy like Dr Beeching or who ever in the sixties came along and said we all need to drive

Aye well theres also the Merchant City based on the fact that the tobacco merchants helped finance Charing Cross and the Merchant city.

Aye but the Merchant city was warehouses this is where people lived....

Aye good point

And Merchant City is full of old Warehouses

Aye Charing Cross mansions a cross the road spose'...

exactly...So the fact that thats happened I find a romance to that it wouldn't have happened in other cities I like but don't love., I like Aberdeen cos' ahm from there ... Edinburgh is..... exists

haha thats it dinnae even say any mare! We'll end up offending folk.

But it doesn't evolve ... Glasgow and places like London go through..

Aye industrial revolutions ah see what you mean

they evolve and they evolve at the need of the people

CALLCENTRES!!

?

....

People in Glasgow will talk to people on the phone

....

Aye well.. its the beauty of a bastard city, this beauty of Georgian buildings next to this concrete carbuncle with its luminous day-glo orange lighting y'know?

Aye ah dae like that.....ahm..... So Next wan was eh. Don't how to phrase this.....Do you think people will find this piece ay art pretentious? Howeava' when ah say people ah say outwit like an art community might find it pretentious? Cos they don't really get it or they just don't really care? Y'know do think people will be like "y'know what a dick?" Who does that c**t think he is? Ad no say that... but?

Well the neckpiece itself I don't think is pretentious, I think the title of the piece is a bit grand but..... thats sort of the point I knew it was pretentious and ah know comparing my heart beat to Charing Cross is overblown and its a bit poetic and bit ... y'know?

But it's honest thou!

Aye it is honest I mean that

No No ah get that.

Its become so overblown... the fact there is the piece in this designed box made to look like a civil servants book and theres an interview... the fact I am being interviewed by ah pal in a piece in a book ... it has become such a big thing with all these ideas it is big and over blown so because of that I think it gets away with the title. Its part of the idea that all of it comes to together the neckpiece and the book and the box and imagery its all one big story. That weirdly crap poetry title works I think....

Haha! Aye we're no poets!!

My interest in language comes from the fact ahm no very good with it.

Aye but you can express that through a piece of work rather than a piece of writing. I cannae express things in words but ask me to express something in a bit of wood and ah can turn it and no bother. It'll take me ten minutes but would take two hours to write two sentences! But in five hours ah could do a bit of turning that wid bow peoples minds.

Aye well we're makers so you know thats how we express..

.....

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(at this point the recording breaks down to a mixture of Sorley monologuing about a pal who knows someone or something like that - for 7 minutes- this part of the recording has been left out to protect identities and also because it is nonsense.)

Well at that My Kleboe we should wrap up- Theres the answer to your third question why did I ask you to interview me cos' ah knew at some point it wid just end up you monologuing!

Hahah INEVITABLE!

Sorley Arthur Kleboe thank you very much

Jonathan Boyd... Jonathan Mathew Boyd ... it's always a pleasure

haha

haha

I thought that went quite well

aye 22 minutes big man no bad.

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