

Video transcript

Coldwar Steve on collage

Duration:

5.19

Speakers:

Christopher Spencer (Coldwar Steve)

Transcript

I had a personal message from Stephen Fry. He said: 'Oh thank you. It's like I've won a gold Blue Peter badge.' And I was, like, this is Stephen Fry!

But really, really pleased with how it's turned out.

Massively influenced by Martin Creed - who is on there, actually, wearing four hats.

That was my starting point, really – 'Everything is going to be alright'. Because myself, family, friends, and everyone, we're all beside ourselves with anguish at what's happening. And, although, he himself may not have been saying that everything is going to be alright... I thought, to have it there, with people that are inspirational...

The main inspiration is Bosch and Brueghel in the way I frame everything.

But in terms of collage the most obvious is Peter Blake with his 'Sgt Pepper's...' – everyone refers to that one when I do it. You can see why – it's the disparate nature of all the different people involved. The quite crude manner in which it's been put together. So there are definite similarities there. And in the vibrancy.

There is an outsider art element to it. My art was never intended for a gallery, really. It was done as a personal therapy more than anything.

This is like a really early Coldwar Steve. It's the Fellows of the Royal Society. But they couldn't get everyone in the same room at the same time, because they were scattered all over the world. So, much as the way I do, he's brought everyone together using photomontage.

It isn't oilpaint on canvas, but the message can be just as powerful, and the image can be just as beautiful. Especially when you come and have a look at them presented together like this.

During the rise of Fascism in Germany at that time there were people like [John] Heartfield that were against Fascism, and trying to send it up.

I'm not comparing myself to Heartfield in what I'm doing in the current Brexit environment. Rebellious or protesting against something in this way is very much what I do. In getting people to see the absurdity of the individual, and hopefully bring home the message to make them laugh.

Obviously we're not in the desperate times that Heartfield was in.

This is a lot braver than what I'm doing. I could get chucked off Twitter or something— the very worst that can happen! Heartfield was at that time doing something that was genuinely life threatening. To mock the Fuhrer in this way.

With collage you can with immediacy get down what you want to get across. And that's quite apparent with these pictures.

Criminal damage, I suppose, at the time. Vandalism, almost. And now much-prized art-pieces.

You worry about things like copyright and ownership...getting sued by someone...But not prison yet. But, I don't know, actually - you've got me thinking now.

From my childhood, I grew into adulthood in the European Union. I could live and work anywhere in Europe I wanted.

There were the 2012 Olympic Games in London, which were diverse. Britain seemed a wonderful, diverse place.

But, as Harold parps on his tuba, he reminds us that my children, who are growing up now, perhaps may not have the future that I had.

We shouldn't forget that we do still need to stand up to bigotry, racism and intolerance. We do still have to protest, peacefully. Because I don't want my children's future to be lost. I want it to still exist. So that's the message there, really.

To get images out there that might, just a little bit, turn someone's head, make someone think. Then I'll have done something that I think is worthwhile.