

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Nathan Coley | The Lamp Of Sacrifice
2017
[6:09]

Nathan Coley:

My name's Nathan Coley. I'm an artist based in Glasgow, and I run a studio here in The Whisky Bond.

I think people would describe me as someone who makes work that deals with architecture. I'm interested in public space, ideas of religion and communities. My work manifests itself as being both text works, sculptures, photography, film, and I think I, essentially I think of myself as someone who makes objects.

So *The Lamp of Sacrifice* takes its start from the Edinburgh Yellow Pages of 2004, and within that listed under 'places of worship' there are 286 listings. And so that list of buildings that occupy the cityscape of Edinburgh have been remade, have been rebuilt using cardboard. So the existing churches, mosques and synagogues and preaching halls are, taken from the real world and I'm abstracting the form that the manifestation of faith takes. Due to installing them and displaying them in a cityscape and in a layout which is not the way that the real world is, we look again at them. So the audience come in and see these cardboard objects and I think initially there's a look of recognition. They look to find the church that Lesley was married in. Is that the synagogue on the corner of such-a-street? So they want to see their world in the form.

These places of worship have meaning due to the fact that they've been made and financed by the community that use them. Whether it's a fancy building with a spire or a Portakabin® in an industrial estate, is not the thing that interests me. The thing that interests me is that they manifest, they manifest communities and people.

It's the first major project that I've had bad news about in that way and, I think at first I thought what a shame that it's gone. But then quite quickly actually started to try and see, see it as a, could there be something positive that comes out of a bad situation? We met to discuss what to do. What's the, what are we going to do, bearing in mind this work has been damaged? And I, I decided quite early on I had to think what was the best thing for the work and it became quite easy because the answer is that the work needed to be remade.

My memory went back to making it the first time around which was gruelling and tough, and physically demanding. And I guess there's a bit of me thought to myself that I was crazy to do it again. I think, I think going back to visit a work that's twelve years old is conceptually and emotionally quite something. We had to decide are we going to go back to the original photographs and make again from the research, or are we gonna copy the object that was made? Some of the existing buildings are still churches; some have fallen out of use perhaps; some have maybe even been made into luxury flats. So, is it the same work that we are making or is it different? The interesting thing I think is that the making of the cardboard models the first time around was with no intention other than making manifest the idea. So the original was the making from the world and the second, the restoration, is the making from the first one. So I like the idea that it's ever so slightly moving away from its origin. If we think about the essence of the work which is about the remaking of something which already exists, maybe it's not, maybe it's not a bad idea to remake it. Maybe it's, we should just think of it being a continuation of the project.

I'm not the person I was twelve years ago and I'm not the artist I was, and the nice thing is I've really enjoyed, it's almost like kind of meeting an old friend and starting again, not having to really, you know, catch up, and I feel quite lucky that I made a work when I was relatively young that's in the national collection which illustrates what I've continued to be.