



Nigel Caldwell

Facing Out

3/20/19

Whitworth Art Gallery

Hi, I'm Nigel Caldwell and I got involved in this project through going to the Facing Out conference all day looking at and talking about different aspects of facial changes, which was something I was beginning to have to think about. I found it really interesting both professionally speaking and psychologically speaking. A facial surgeon and other people who were going through the same as me in different ways. There was a lunch break and Lucy very kindly came up to me and asked whether I would mind or be very interested in having my picture painted, so I was very pleased to be asked. Then we had a discussion on where and how, and I thought it would be a straight forward head and shoulders but, actually Lucy wanted a bit more of the character to come through and I'd been telling her that two weeks before my operation I'd still been playing 5 a side football with the old guys, the Vets team in New Mills. And after my operation that was my target. If I could get back to playing 5 a side that was a true mark of my recovery. I think what was good about the picture was a positive thing and it's more than just "hey, you've had your nose changed. It's about actually yeah, you've got your nose changed but your still doing things, you're playing football and I think what I've seen in other portraits by Lucy is, the subject has a facial change but what struck me was engagement of the eye, the gaze that came out, was capturing the spirit. Not just for me, but of Graeme and all the others, where you might have had a change in face but actually the person comes through. And I think that's the skill of Lucy really. Erm.. I think whenever you've got a difference there's a danger that people actually look at what's been done, "Oh you're different, I must have a photo of you" or "must have a painting, do you mind?" But it was more of an engagement with me. More than the facial change it was about the person and the person dealing with the change, and how you look at the person with the changed face. You know they're still the same person behind. Whether they're deal with a few psychological issues about the change, but actually it's still the same person.



My next one I want to talk about is this picture, it's actually a portrait of myself by my daughter Sarah while she was doing A level art. She was doing a focus on family portraits and that's a close up. I find it a really interesting and sensitive picture and I'm glad that sound of my family can feature in this as well, as family is really important. But the piece of work itself is also good but it shows maybe what I was like a few years before my operation.

Going back to the front cover picture, that's a striking piece of lively fabric it's mounted on, chosen by me really because it captured one of my great passions and involvements, and my family's involvement, in Samba Drumming in a community band in High Peak that played at the Edinburgh Festival and Lantern processions and Carnivals across the Peak District.

That has always been a powerful part of what I've enjoyed doing, engaging with the community, but being full of community spirit and life and fun. And that picture, it captures the excitement, the life and vitality of the Samba Band. It was actually printed just half a mile

from where I spent a lot of my time living in New Mills, at Strines, and that's just a few hundred yards down from where I lived.

So moving now to the picture on the right (sorry not the best effort), that's a Turner print of a very natural scene high up in the mountains. Since in my mid-twenties I've spent a lot of time climbing, walking in the hills, fells and the mountains in the Alps and all over. For me this was one in the Whitworth collection that captured that spirit of being out in the wild. And it actually has an echo – where a bunch of friends of mine had gone into the mountains behind Llanberis. We spotted a waterfall with a patch of grass next to it and we decided to pitch our tent there. Everything was fine until about half five in the morning, when my ground sheet had turned into a waterbed. The waterfall had massively expanded through heavy rainfall over the night and we had to scarper quickly. If you look closely there are characters moving about in the landscape but you have to look quite closely to find them.



So, the last picture I chose to go alongside the image, is this piece of woven fabric from Japan. And actually, as I understand now is used, or was used, as very high class wrapping for presents that had



been given. I didn't know about that, but the image struck me because one of the things that I had to think about before I had the operation and whether I would have any nose left, whether I would be needing to have a prosthetic. And this is where my wife comes in really because she was my advocate trying to preserve a most functional result. I've always been really into swimming, diving, swimming under water and this fabric has a Turtle in there, which kind of represents a really nice image, but also reminds me of the time I dived in waters off Zante and swam with Turtles. I was doing breast stroke, and ten feet below me Turtle was doing the same beneath me. And I wondered when the nose had gone, whether I'd be able to do that, or if I had a prosthetic, whether that would

float to the surface. My wife championed my cause and said "well if the skin around the nose isn't affected, can you not just re-construct? It may not look absolutely perfect but it functions then!" And sure enough, a couple of years later, we went on a family holiday and I did dive off a boat ten feet into the water and only then did I think, "Oh, I wonder if I should have done that?" and I wondered if a prosthetic nose would have actually withstood that. But the image in that is good in itself and I like the pictures that sort of lead you into other images, other landscapes.

But the Turtle represents that to me, resonated with me, and that's why I chose it.

Okay, and lastly. It's not the area where my portrait is, but as you come into the area you will have seen a large pink fabric and that's Lantern Cloth by Mathew Harris. He was inspired by Japanese Lanterns and how they were – not discarded, but repaired and put together. And for me and my family, lantern procession is really important. My wife and I introduced the Lantern Procession into New Mills back in the year 2000, to celebrate the Millennium Walkway. We had 350 lanterns cross that walkway and people wanted to come back and keep coming back. About ten years later we had 5000 people and I think since it's got even bigger. But the Lantern Procession itself has a bearing with this because this cloth is the lanterns that have been put together – and in fact you look more closely you can see the stitching, the clever stitching. The fact that stitches come into it are very relevant to the operation, the number of stitches I had to reconstruct my nose both internally and externally. A very strong image for me. And it relates to the philosophy of Kintsugi, the whole Japanese philosophy, of just because it's broke you don't throw it away. It has a value in itself. You can repair it and put it back together and it has a different quality about it. It's still vibrant and useful.

That's pretty much why I chose all my pieces, Thank You.

