

about looking for meanings or goals in order to help someone back on track. What I have thought about when writing down my own experiences of joy, is that they do not necessarily have to have meaning or goal, in fact, that is what makes those moments so important.

JOYLAND

By Krzysztof Fijalkowski

Joy. Few other words in the English language seem so blithe, so uncomplicated. Knowing its origins reveals little: *gaudere* in Latin ('rejoice'), then the old French *joie*. We normally look to the grain of a word, to its double meanings or unexpected backstory, to get a feel for the texture of its concept. We want shadows, something dormant and unexplained that will give us a grip on it as we turn it over in our hands and examine it from every side. But this time, nothing... pure joy, sheer happiness.

This is joy's mystery: its purity, no hidden emotion, no otherness. And by the same token, from the outside – watched by envious onlookers – it appears to lack almost any defining feature ('all happy families are alike', writes Tolstoy in *Anna Karenina*), any geography, beyond a fuzzy and pastel-hued rapture. It is only experienced from within, cannot truly be shared and once finished – like some emotional wasabi – is largely lost to memory, just as this writing can circle joy's geometric perfection but offer no plausible descriptions.

Never a mask, it effaces all other states if only for an instant, paints itself across the wearer's demeanour. Head up, eyes wide, feeling leaks out uncontrollably to meet what the body should otherwise resist. The face opens out in smiles, the chest broadens its gait, perhaps the mouth falls open: open to the world, to a slow bolt of pure sunlight that bleaches out every dark tone with an intensity free of calculation or value. For a moment, as joy unhooks us from cares and the burden of reason, everything is connected and radiant: pleasure is crowned king for a day.

Of course, joy would have none of this majesty were it not that we long for it in the face of tedium, oppression or despair. Nietzsche, for instance, sees joy as the ultimate human state, one that is

precisely the overcoming of unhappiness or pain. A life-affirming principle, the special province of art in particular, joy absorbs suffering, turns it into power. It is this quality that, for the philosopher, gives joy a tragic quality ('deeper still than grief' says Zarathustra), something profound, beyond either pleasure or sorrow and through which the individual may begin to re-align the world.

But could we really live in a state of permanent joy – forgo the doubled nature of the world for an ideal of harmony and elation against which nothing else can be the measure? The French phrase *joie de vivre* promises most nearly to express this apparently impossible notion: life professed in the face of everything that should tell us otherwise, a well-spring of optimism impregnable against everyday cares. Again, an impulse of sweeping away, of the stunning absence of disappointment or dark, but now prolonged into a spirit of vitality that wants to turn everything in its path to pleasure.

You might find the promise of happiness extended far into the distance in a constructive form in a place such as Joyland, on the seafront of Great Yarmouth (there are Joylands around the world: Texas, Kansas, Shanghai, Lahore...), an island of tourist amusement since 1949. Little funfair rides, sideshows, an arcade: it's bottled and gaudy, naturally, but there's still something about this brand of joy that feels close to its truth: transient, intense, temporarily but completely ignoring the world beyond its limits. A world of props and flats, of things gaily painted and colourfully out of kilter. While the children shriek with pleasure the grown-ups look on, sceptical or indulgent, sensing something missing in their own inability to be taken in. Here's a reminder that joy is above all watched over by the realm of childhood, one to which adults long to return but that for the most part they may only glimpse, always out of dimension.

The revelation of joy is its replication of an instant of the unfathomable state of our earlier life, a time when each thought, each emotion eclipses all that has gone before, with no cares for that unfolding thing that might come next. Like a line of gunpowder, it sparks and leaves nothing, perhaps just a faint line that traces the route of an intimate apocalypse.

The Tetley
Hunslet Road, Leeds, LS10 1JQ / 0113 3202323
www.thetetley.org

Twitter: @The_Tetley
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PORTRAITS OF EMOTIONS

PAUL DIGBY

16 JANUARY - 1 MARCH

GROUND FLOOR, BOARDROOM AND SECOND FLOOR



PORTRAITS OF EMOTIONS

This exhibition of large-scale paintings by Leeds-based artist Paul Digby portrays people enacting the emotion of joy. Participants were photographed and the images then manipulated by Digby before being translated through the painting process over a period of twelve months in the artist's studio.

Digby's research for the project is centred around Charles Darwin's 'Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals' (1872). In this publication Darwin uses photographs made by French neurologist Duchenne de Boulogne of 'The Old Man'. Boulogne attached electrodes to a man who allegedly had no nerve endings in his face (and therefore could not feel pain) to create facial expressions.

The idea was a catalyst for the concept of drawing portraits of people expressing emotions. The participants in Digby's paintings were selected via an open call facilitated by Leeds Adult Social Care.

PAINTINGS

GROUND FLOOR ATRIUM

David (2014)
Acrylic oil bar on canvas, 2x3m

Satwant (2014)
Acrylic oil bar on canvas, 2x3m

DRAWINGS

The second floor hosts a selection of drawings produced by local schoolchildren in a series of workshops which Digby undertook within local primary schools.

The children were taught basic portrait drawing techniques such as cross hatching, light and dark study, proportions and asked to draw either themselves or a friend in response to the emotion of happiness. The workshops were facilitated by the artist with the assistance of Leeds Beckett University Fine Art students Sarah-Ann Maden and Serena Comrie

The schools involved were Chapel Allerton Primary, Blenheim Primary and Leeds City Academy.

The artist has a personal interest in what he calls 'outsider-ness' and the world in which people with disabilities enter when they are admitted into social care.

Despite the often negative headlines of abuse and care centre closures, these places are often an important focal point of social interaction. Portraits of Emotions is a celebration of the humour and joy of people who inhabit these environments.

The project was supported by the Workers Education Association, Leeds Adult Social Care and Charity groups.

THE BOARDROOM

Gaynor (2014)
Acrylic matt paint and oil bar on canvas, 1.5x2m

Tauseef (2014)
Acrylic oil bar on canvas, 2x3m

The children created approximately 200 drawings in total and the selection included in the exhibition were chosen by the artist, Artforms staff and The Tetley curatorial team to be exhibited alongside the large-scale painting works that make up this exhibition.

With special thanks to David, Gaynor, Satwant, Tauseef, Paul Boston and East Street Arts.

The project is supported by:
Artforms and Arts Council England

All drawings are graphite on paper, 29x42cm

COMMISSIONED ESSAYS

Two essays about the emotion of Joy were commissioned by Paul Digby as part of this 12-month project. They are also available at www.portraitsofemotions.uk along with full interviews with participants of the project.

JOY

By Dr. Emily Clavering-Lee
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

When asked to write a piece about joy, at first I tried to link it to my work as a mental health professional. I started to think about what this word, and what this idea, means to me, my family, my friends and the people I work with. I then started to realise that to all of these people it means very different things, related to any number of experiences and events that have occurred over the course of the individual's life. I would find it impossible to collate the endless information about others' joy, and crystallize it into something coherent on paper so I thought I would instead talk about my own sources of joy, and the way that I experience it. To me joy is so much more than being happy or contented, it is the surge of positive feeling which comes when I feel that I am a small part making up a bigger whole, and this leads to a sensation of being overwhelmed by feeling, and at the same time feeling safe and at peace.

The first time I vividly remember this experience was during a choir practice as a teenager. We were learning Verdi's 'Requiem' and I remember the moment when all the choral parts seemed to come together. I love singing on my own, and in groups, but there is nothing quite like the feeling of a full choir all singing in four-part harmony together, and the sense of wellbeing this promotes. It is so much more than the sum of its parts, and you feel as if you have transcended what you could achieve as an individual.

Music, for me, speaks to a very primal and visceral part of myself. It is a communication of feeling that can bring me to tears of joy, or of sadness, and I would be lost without it.

But I can feel this way when alone, or at least, without the company of other people. From a young age I have visited many ancient historical sites across Britain and Europe, and my interest in this area has grown as the years have passed. One of my favourite sites which I have visited on a number of occasions is Avebury stone circle in Wiltshire. I have visited this site with my family, my friends, and latterly my husband, but always try to take a few moments by myself. I find it incredible that I am even able to visit these stones, and the pre-historic site which has been preserved for thousands of years. It gives you a sense of your own connections with the past, and the continuing importance of coming together. It also reminds me of the central themes inherent in most pagan religions around the wheel of the year and respecting your natural surroundings. Whenever I go to Avebury there is almost a hum of natural energy and joy that runs through my body from my feet. I can't quite explain it, but I always come back feeling replenished and revitalised.

To try and link this back to my work, I thought about the young people I see who struggle to experience happiness, and even more so joy. For some, at least for a short while, life can feel like an uphill struggle towards an undefined end, and often we think

EVENTS

ARTIST'S TALK
WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY, 6PM
Free, no booking required.
Paul Digby will be talking about his work and the wider project as part of his exhibition *Portraits of Emotions*.

FAMILY DRAWING WORKSHOP
THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY, 11AM-3PM
Free and no booking required.
Family Drawing Workshop as part of *Portraits Of Emotions*. Suitable for children from 5yrs upwards.