**BRIEFING NOTE**

**THIS IS A FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION CENTRE – BOB AND ROBERTA SMITH**

WHAT IS LOOK UP?

Look Up is a year-long programme of artists’ works made specifically for Hull’s public places and spaces, designed to challenge people’s perceptions of Hull and offer different ways to experience the city.

Look Up will present a series of new artworks to intrigue and inspire throughout 2017, created in partnership with organisations including The Deep, GF Smith and Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

Previous Look Up commissions have included:

· Blade conceived by artist Nayan Kulkarni in Queen Victoria Square, January – March, which used one of the first B75 Rotor blades made in Hull at Siemens and changed its status to that of a readymade artwork.

· The City Speaks by Michael Pinsky, on the tower of the Hull Tidal Barrier (newly listed!) in place from February 2017 until 31st Dec 2017. A steel lectern located on the quayside of Humber Dock provides a platform for members of the public to broadcast their thoughts and feelings. A microphone captures their words and sends them to a data processing cloud which transcribes these words into a scrolling dot-matrix text ascending the tidal barrier.

· The first co-commission with The Deep, Washed Up Car-go by Chris Dobrowolski – installed from April to June 2017, 3 cars in the car park of The Deep containing a “beach” and washed up items, sound and video, commenting on plastics pollution

· The Train Track and the Basket, by Claire Barber at Hull Paragon Railway station from April to June and now extended until the end of the year. This is a series of huge window vinyls on the arched windows at the station entrance, exploring the 19th and 20th century "Transmigration" phenomenon in Hull.

· Paper City – for 10 days at the beginning of July, 8 installations made from paper in places and spaces around the Fruitmarket. A co-commission with Hull paper merchant GF Smith, whose “Colorplan” range was used in all the installations. This project also incorporated the research into and reveal of the World’s Favourite Colour.

· Two other installations will be opening at the end of July/beginning of August – Tania Kovats BLEACHED at C4DI and Elephant in the Room by Claire Morgan at Princes Quay.

THIS IS A FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION CENTRE

Bob and Roberta Smith will declare Hull School of Art and Design a “Freedom of Expression Centre” during the summer break of 2017. In a joint project between the School of Art and Hull 2017, This is a Freedom of Expression Centre will comprise:

· A large scale new public artwork by Bob and Roberta Smith – a 12 m long illuminated sign on the top of the School of Art and Design building “This is a Freedom of Expression Centre”. To be in place for the duration of the project. The maquette, hand-painted on wood, was made by Bob in his Kent studio. The design has fabricated in Hull on a large scale, with Bob intervening at intervals in the process to approve detail and specify colours.

· An exhibition of works by Bob and Roberta Smith, plus works by students at the Hull School of Art and Design. The exhibition will inhabit both the Brodrick gallery in the foyer of the building, and the large studio space in the Art School. Exhibition will run 4 August – 3 September.

· The student works respond to a provocation by Bob “Subject to Events” – he has been to talk to the students a few times during this academic year.

· The exhibition will include a significant new work made especially for this project by Bob & Roberta Smith, inspired by his recent work on the nature of protest and a particular encounter with a black rights activist in the US (see below).

· The project will also include 2 days of workshops entitled “Your Voice Needs You” run by Bob & Roberta Smith– 4 & 5 August at HSAD. Participation has been by invitation to Fine Art Students and 6th Form art students in Hull.

· On the final weekend of the project, Bob’s band The Apathy Band will perform at the Adelphi Saturday Sept 2 ,8pm, this will also be part of the Freedom Festival, see the Adelphi webpage here http://www.theadelphi.com/events/bob-roberta-smith-and-the-apathy-band/

· On Sunday Sept 3, in the afternoon (time TBC) again linked to and jointly promoted by the Freedom Festival, there will be a series of Freedom Talks of which this project is part. One talk will be by the black rights activist Blair Imani whose words have inspired Bob’s new work referred to above.

Bob has said about this project:

“To show this new work at Hull School of Art and Design during the City of Culture year is a huge honour.

This is a Freedom of Expression Centre has been inspired by two key experiences of mine. The first experience spans the past five years as an advocate for the arts, which has taken me on a journey to try to understand clearly what art does, and explore why democratic societies generally support and defend the arts, while repressive regimes curb them.  The second experience was an interview I conducted with a Black Lives Matter activist in New York, while making a programme on protest for BBC4. The interviewee, Blair Imani, talked of her own experiences of prejudice and violence; you can see her inspiring interview in the exhibition.

Art is about supporting people and encouraging people, not opposing them or telling people what to think. I want people to reflect on what art can do, and what latent potential there is in all of us.”

Bob and Roberta Smith (real name Patrick Brill OBE, RA) is a British contemporary artist, writer, author, musician, art education advocate and keynote speaker. He is known for his “slogan” art, is an associate professor at Sir John Cass Department of Art at London Metropolitan University and has been curator of public art projects, like Art U Need. In the 2015 general election, he stood against Michael Gove in his Surrey Heath constituency, in protest at the former education secretary’s marginalisation of the arts in schools. Bob and Roberta Smith is famous for protest art such as “Make

Art Not War” and “Letter to Michael Gove” amongst others. He was curator for the 2006 Peace Camp and created the 2013 Art Party to promote contemporary art and advocacy. His works have been exhibited and are in collections in Europe and the United States. Brill co-founded The Ken Ardley Playboys. Brill hosts The Bob & Roberta Smith Radio Show called Make Your Own Damn Music on Resonance FM.