

DISSONANT SPACES

David Maddock: a residency at Leicester Contemporary

Leicester has been subject to the innovative work practices that have transformed life in many regional city centres and disrupted their urban spaces accordingly. During this residency, I have tried to convey the impact of this phenomenon on the refurbished thoroughfares here in the vicinity of Leicester Contemporary.

My response to the experience of change has been intuitive but, like the caricaturist who exaggerates in order to reveal an underlying truth, I have tried to accentuate the salient signs in order to convey an underlying reality. My appeal, therefore, is not to verisimilitude so much as the veracity of shared experience.

Urban change manifests itself on different levels of course. Transitory phenomena, whether they take a material form like litter strewn in the street or a temporal one like some momentary exchange between pedestrians, can speak with an eloquence denied to more lasting signs of the times. Leicester's late-Victorian architectural heritage or the recent developments in and around High Cross, are eloquent too but in the sense of a setting that conditions one's experience of everyday life. I have tried to suggest through this body of work that, taken alone, neither the ephemeral truth nor its enduring setting can adequately convey the experience of everyday life in Leicester but that, taken together, they convey compelling truths about life as we live it in this municipal city at the moment.

My use of that most transitory of materials, corrugated cardboard, supports the idea of impermanence in the urban setting. Apart from its association with the locality, I like the redemptive quality that throw-away cardboard confers upon the work of art as a whole. Once used, discarded, and then returned to use, it serves as a simple metaphor for the mundane realities of life in our well-worn city and, indeed, the possibilities for which we hope, as Leicester negotiates another round of upheaval in a long and chequered history.

DWM
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