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#74

Artist transforms former rubber factory with 120 creative windows

STV Edinburgh - 25th August, 2014

Quote:

The dilapidated building is the canvas, the graffiti emblazoned on the building's brick façade a part of its story.

Artist Calum Colvin works in a dusty and dark makeshift studio on site, sorting the final layout for a new public art work in Edinburgh's Fountainbridge.

Once the headquarters of the North British Rubber Company, the Castle Mills building was at the heart of a thriving community and an industrial hub where millions of pairs of Wellington boots, car tyres and traffic cones were made.

The building has lain empty since the factory gates shut in 1973, with over 100 windows boarded up and the land around the site gone untouched for years.

In April, it was announced that at least part of the industrial site will be given a new lease of life and transformed into the new home for Edinburgh Printmakers.

Edinburgh Printmakers get funding boost for Fountainbridge move

A window into his work

Calum walks around the building examining its new look. Each boarded window of the derelict building is now home to a piece of his public art.

The Glasgow-born artist is a practitioner of painting, sculpture and photography and is renowned for bringing these disciplines together to create his unique style of 'constructed photography'.

Currently artist in resident at Edinburgh Printmakers, his current Union Street exhibition called A Magic Box: Calum Colvin is described as an 'archaeology of his creative practice' from the last 28 years.

And he hopes that by showing his work in both the Edinburgh Printmakers' current home and at their future dwelling, a creative link will be created.

He said: "This will be a hub for the arts in this area and I am sure there will be all kinds of community involvement, so it is quite apt in a way to tag this building with what's going on.

"I want to catch people's eyes. When people go past big hoardings, they usually see adverts.

"These are adverts for creativity and a call to the creative spirit.

"A lot of people are not really interested in going to a gallery to see work so this way they can see it when they are out and about.

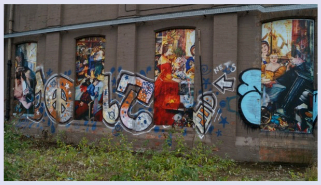
"It might draw them in and then if they like it, they can come to the exhibition too, because this is just part of the story.

"It is great to see modern buildings but it is also nice to see old buildings being preserved."

The team working on the installation hope to have all of their 120 posters up by the start of this week, but say the initial pieces have already caught the attention of people passing by.

Explaining the installation, Calum said: "The posters are details of pictures that I have made over the last 28 years, with various bits from different exhibitions.

"We have mixed it all up and cropped it and I decided not to be precious about it.



"They are painted sets that are then photographed. It is a combination of painting, sculpture and photography.

"Most of them have some sort of relation to Scotland and quite a lot have a link to Edinburgh. One of the themes in my work is Scottish history and identity."

Calum, who is a professor of Fine Art Photography at Dundee's Duncan of Jordanstone Art and Design college, says his favourite part of the building is the combination of photography and graffiti.

"I really like the three photos in a row that has the graffiti in between," Calum said.

"I like graffiti, always have, and I like the idea of making three-dimensional sets and painting over things.

"That's what I do, so I really like the way this looks and I think the colours work really nicely.

"In time, the posters will probably be spray-painted over, but I quite like that, mixing the derelict nature of the building with the spray painting and the posters.

"From the street, it will make a good view for people and highlight the future of this building."

Quote