

Robert Carter - Happy Man, Isotop Fellesatelier, 25 Mars - 6 Feb

When I moved to Bergen I had this idea that I wanted to be a painter. Re invent myself as an artist with a capital A. Traditional, the lone wolf. The author of all their creations and master of a craft. It didn't quite work out. And it's obvious now in a way, I didn't need to re-invent myself because I already was who I needed to be.

I don't know quite why I made this decision. That I had to be someone else, Rob the painter, start from scratch. It wasn't long until the past version of myself started to make himself known in new surroundings. Same person, different supermarket. I think part of it was embarrassingly a kind of response to the - what do you do/what kind of art do you make - question. I wanted to give a straight forward, satisfying answer to this question around the dinner table. The answer I thought they wanted to hear.

I was by the beach in Malaga on the phone to my uncle in America, it was Christmas and my friend Michael had wandered down to the sea front so I could take the call. I am giving him an update about his brother. It's a bit grim and unclear, as usual. Towards the end of the call he asks me what I'm doing with my life, or something like that. I tell him I'm making art in Norway. What kind of art? I tell him I'm making films actually, and writing, adding that I recently got into photography after buying a 35mm camera. I bought it from this old camera shop in London from a man in his 50s wearing a matching tracksuit.

What is it with certain men who are into photography? He was a real salesman, old school, and I think I need that. To be seduced into buying something. Even if the flash doesn't work properly. The camera allows us to make a record of what we see in front of us. It allows us to be outside in the world, interacting with the people and the animals, waiting for something unexpected to happen, not stuck inside all day. After making my purchase I sat in a nearby park to eat my lunch and it occurred to me that I had bought a matpakke all the way down from Manchester - a sign that I had become Norwegian.

My sister and I recently discovered an archive of our dad's old letters. I took a few diaries, I wanted to know what he was like as a man before I existed. They'd be of zero interest to anyone else. In them he mostly records how many cigs he smoked on nights out, which he constantly wants to cut down on, and records his bed times (surprisingly late 3ams are quite common). There are some mentions to his moods, his depressions and a nagging guilt he feels about being lazy. He remarks on how difficult college is and the relief he feels when he passes an exam. There are girlfriends. In fact, he's quite candid about that stuff.

Last year was the first time I properly kept a journal. Wrote with the same pen, in my best handwriting. Such an uneventful year, but perhaps that's why it made sense to keep it. In a way the diary became a companion, albeit one I couldn't be bothered writing to sometimes. It makes me wonder who exactly I'm writing to when I put pen to paper. Future me? Or the public? I haven't decided yet, and I don't think I ever will but that's the point I think, that its use value might be invisible. It's neither private nor public. But I think somewhere in that intersection is where my interest lies. Here's an entry of mine from 23 May:

Stayed at home all day barring short walk up Fløyen (Ed. where else?) Terje came round to help with taxes then I baked a quiche which came out pretty bloody well if I may say so myself. Currently enjoying *The Offing*, a novel by Benjamin Myers set in Robin Hood's Bay: "That's what ghosts are: the raw truths we dare not face or the voices of those we have failed. We carry within us our own ghosts with which we haunt ourselves".

People (you know who you are) have tried to tell me over the years that I don't have to chose who I am, what kind of artist I want to be, what I will make. Fit the medium around the idea. Different shoes for different occasions. Respond to the moment and feeling you are in. I think I'm finally getting round to that idea. Uncle asks if I can send him some links to my films, they're interested in what I am making he says. I think that it would be probably inappropriate to send him a video of me cleaning his brother's apartment with my sister. What if he thinks it's terrible?



# Schools in deep water over swimming cuts

CHILDREN'S lives could be put at risk in a new swathe of cuts to hit school swimming lessons.

Teachers in some primary schools across Rossendale could have to drop the sport from their year's curriculum and go against Government recommendations after Lancashire County Council announced a drastic reduction in its budget.

An unknown number of jobs are also set to be axed in the swimming service as redundancy notices were issued this week.

Although measures have been put in place to make it easier for private firms to step in, opponents fear the move could cost lives.

By **CORIN GIBSON**

"Swimming on the school curriculum is far more than a sport, it could be a life-saver," said Dorothy Lord, of Bacup Swimming Club.

"But it could soon be the case that parents will have to send their child on private courses if they want to learn how to swim."

Her comments were echoed by Gillian Johnson, headteacher at St Saviour's CE Primary, Bacup, who said the move had left many schools scratching their heads as to where the extra money would come from.

From the new school term in September, county council announced it would only pay pool costs and no cash would be provided for transport.

It means some Valley schools will have to halt all lessons over the next 12 months in order to save up enough money to afford to teach pupils how to swim the following year.

"It's going to be a real struggle for some schools, particularly those in Bacup and Waterfoot who have to travel out of the town to get to a pool," said Mrs Johnson.

"The Government says we need to swim but somewhere along the way the wires have been crossed and the County Council is giving us less money."



● Check-mate ... Holly Carter wants to add another trophy to her collection. (W4169)

## Check-mate Holly is queen of the board

IN an age of "girl power" there is nothing quite like beating boys at their own game.

Just ask Holly Carter.

The Year 9 Haslingden High School pupil has defeated many a male check-mate thanks to her prize-winning chess skills.

The queen of the 64-square board now has a hat-trick of trophies under her belt

By **Suzanne Geldard**

after winning the girls' North West Megafinal in the UK Chess Challenge for the last three years.

But Holly (14), of Colldale Terrace, Haslingden, is graceful in victory ... and defeat.

"I don't mind whether I play boys or girls and it doesn't bother me if I lose, I just enjoy playing chess," she said.

"I've been playing since I was 10 when my friend taught me a few moves, then I joined the chess club at Haslingden High School and it went from there.

"Whenever I play against boys from other schools I can tell by the look on their faces that they're expecting quite an easy game because I'm a girl.

"They tend to be a bit embarrassed if they lose."

Holly was one of 34,000 pupils from more than 1,000 schools to take part in the national UK Chess Challenge, the biggest chess competition in the world.

She is now looking forward to competing in the Gigafinal at Nottingham University on July 11.