



Words by John Slemensek
Photographs by Bokehgo

Hello & Welcome to Leeds



If you have been down by Leeds Kirkgate Market's outdoor market recently, you might have noticed there's been some changes.

Across from the hundreds of workers in hi-vis jackets getting John Lewis ready to open later this year, the sounds of construction and heavy machinery, a bright, new piece of public art has emerged.

A bit of a David and Goliath story if you like. One man, armed with some rollers and paint cans, tackled a 20 plus metre stretch of bare wall, through rain, rain, and more rain, day-in and day-out for three weeks. But the end result has brought the people of Leeds something quite magnificent; a public art piece that acts as a beacon, an entrance to Leeds' historical and beloved market, as well as welcoming new visitors to the city.

The piece was commissioned by Leeds City Council's Unfold program with funding from Leeds BID to celebrate the coming of the British Art Show 8. It's a marriage of the integral history of Leeds, as well as the new creative blood coursing through its veins, and make up the face of the city as we know it and is all down to one incredibly talented artists with a love for words.

Working for over 12 years in illustration, Nathan Evans, has always had an interest in creating individual and unique 'type' pieces throughout his work. From a showcase of letterform techniques in his new alphabets, to visual representations of rapper lyrics in the Typog-RAP-hy Series, his work

draws on his ingrained creative practice.

He takes inspiration for his eclectic letterforms from a bank of collected and created source material spanning his creative career. Once a few relevant examples are found, he puts pen to paper to create words which act as a visual representation of the character and feeling he believes they resonate.

The sometimes unbelievable precision of his compositions comes from the help of tight grid networks however, this only works when working on paper. For this 'Hello & Welcome to Leeds' piece, the brickwork took on this role, working as an excellent upscale when mapping out the letters. Nathan explains;

"Every letter has its own structural rules. I experiment with them, abstracting their form as much as possible whilst still retaining their legibility and meaning"

His distinctive colour palette choices sign off the piece into a perfect bundle, giving a wholesome feeling of togetherness despite a wide variation in the forms of the words.

The result? Beautiful works that draw you in, make you smile, and give words personalities of their own.

You can see Nathan Evans' 'Hello & Welcome to Leeds' mural in the flesh on George Street, next to Leeds Bus Station. To see more of Nathan's work visit:

www.n-evans.com // Instagram: @neillustration