

Transcription of New Ways Forward conversation with Pete

Amelie: What's it been like to be a part of Artists First?

Pete: Good, yes.

Amelie: Good in terms of making your own art?

Pete: Yes.

Amelie: And what about being with other artists - has that been good?

Pete: Yes.

Amelie: In terms of working with other artists Peter, I know that you've got a focus on portraiture, has it been nice to meet people and draw them?

Pete: Yes. Ladies especially. I prefer to draw ladies to men.

Amelie: Andy (Artists First Coordinator) showed me some of your collections of art and it's beautiful. It's really varied. Where has your interest in portraiture come from? Do you feel you'd like to do more portraits as you move into the future?

Pete: Yes.

Amelie: I've also seen that you've done some still-life, aside from portraiture.

Pete: That's right, yes.

Amelie: How is it different doing a still-life work to a portraiture?

Pete: Some I prefer to others yes.

Amelie: Can you remember any still-life artworks you've done?

Pete: Yes. The coloured glass bottle and flowers, jugs.

Amelie: When you've painted these artworks, if you're in a group like Artists First, do you sometimes ask other artists 'What colour do you think this should be' ?

Pete: I don't, no.

Amelie: OK - so you tend to make those decisions yourself. So once those artworks are finished and you come to maybe exhibiting them, how does that feel?

Pete: Good yes.

Amelie: Just thinking back to some of the workshops that you might've taken part in, am I right in thinking that there is an artist called James Lake?

Pete: There is yes - I've met James Lake. The artist with one leg.

Amelie: That's it. Can you remember a little bit about him and what he does? He's a sculptor I think who makes cardboard structures.

Pete: Glue, yes.

Amelie: Just coming back to portraiture Pete and thinking about the way that you work, do you prefer to work with someone who is sat right opposite you and you can draw them like that?

Pete: Yes.

Amelie: Comparing that to a photo, is it better to have someone sat right opposite you?

Pete: Yes.

Amelie: And do you know why that is? Is it a more interesting experience?

Pete: Yes.

Amelie: Moving on Pete, we've only got a few months left of Artists First. We've got about 2 and a half months.

Pete: Then after that we're carrying on but individually.

Amelie: So we've put in a funding application for you so that you can continue your art sessions and work with an artist called Sarah Lavelle, who does portraiture.

Pete: I think I've met her once. I saw a picture of her on the wall yesterday.

Amelie: That's it - fingers crossed we get that funding ! When you look back on your time at Artists First, has it made you feel good to do your artwork and share your artwork?

Pete: Yes.

Amelie: Do you think it's been something that's boosted your confidence, learning new skills?

Pete: Yes.

Amelie: So from the group of artists in Artists First, are there any other artists whose work you really like?

Pete: I like that one on the wall (referring to *Dancers At A Pantomime* by Bob Toose) .

Amelie: I think there is an Artists First style aswell.

Pete: Yes.

Amelie: When you look at all the different paintings you've done as a group, there is a style to the group. There's been a huge amount of artists throughout the years ...

Pete: Ones who have passed away too.

Amelie: Do you still remember working with them?

Pete: Yes.

Amelie: One of the projects that you have spoken about was a potential exhibition of artists who had passed away ...

Pete: That's right. An exhibition of all my artwork too, because I have about 400 pieces in the warehouse.

Amelie: You've got an absolutely massive collection haven't you ! One of our tasks after this interview is to pick out your favourite 10 works.

Pete: I was thinking of having a solo exhibition of my artwork and a past artists exhibition.

Amelie: When you think about different exhibition spaces in the city, are there any exhibition spaces where you think 'I'd love to exhibit my work' ...

Pete: Well there's the museum at the top of Park Street. One that is also not far from there ...

Amelie: The RWA ?

Pete: That's it, yes.

Amelie: Do you have any favourite moments from your time at Artists First? Or favourite paintings?

Pete: Yes. I've got some favourite paintings but I can't picture them off the top of my head.

Amelie: Well you've got so many haven't you - over 400 !

Pete: Probably over 500 now !

Amelie: Are there any people that you would like to draw that you haven't yet drawn or painted?

Pete: I'd like to draw Sarah Lavelle. Yes. I drew a lot of the others such as Kate Thomas, Felicity Inkpen* - I don't know if you've met Felicity.

Amelie: I haven't - no. You've drawn me haven't you !

Pete: I drew you yes.

Amelie: Have you drawn Andy yet Pete?

Pete: I think I have. I drew Jane Sallis who sadly isn't with us now. And Louise Planton.

Amelie: It's a very special skill to be able to paint people and share that with the world. Is there anything that I've missed that you would like to say Pete?

Pete: I'd like my work exhibited at other places like Cardiff, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bath ...

Amelie: Well there's so many places aren't there. Thank you Peter, shall we leave it there?

Pete: Yes.

*Felicity Inkpen - Felicity is a former Trustee of Artists First.

*Louise Planton - a former Volunteer and employee of Artists First.