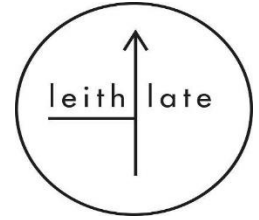


Speaker: Richie Cumming (Artist)

Mural: The Leith Aquatic

Audio 00:02:49



Hello, my name's Richie Cumming and I'm one of the artists who painted the Leith Aquatic and I'm a founding member of Blameless Collective.

I'll tell you a wee bit about Blameless and the artists who worked on this before I get into the mural details. Blameless is a very loose collection of artists who first came together to produce Rough Cut Nation in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in 2009. Since then we've produced a few large scale works around Scotland. The artists involved varying slightly each time. The Leith Aquatic is our only permanent work. The artists who worked on the Leith Aquatic were Fraser Gray, Martin McGuinness, Fin and Al, the highland duo who called themselves DUFI and Rabiya Choudhry with a late edition from Fraser Douglas who came and painted in the cat up on the ledge that was a feature of mural that was here previously.

The common theme of each of the Blameless productions is the methods by which we do it. They are highly collaborative, with little room for artists egos or singular visions. They usually involve some form of conflict, it's either us versus the physical nature of the spaces and the contexts we are working in or between us, with heated discussions around the ideas, colour schemes and aesthetics. We always have a fight with the weather and with the Leith Aquatic we also had a bit of a battle with the seagulls nesting above the mural.

Blameless productions are of the place they are produced. We speak to people in the area and pull



out wee stories, folk tales and myths that we can incorporate into the work.

A couple of years ago Fraser and I overheard a non-Leith late tour going past the mural and the descriptions the guide was giving of the work was pure fabrication, delivered with conviction. It was great. We want these pieces to be public monuments to these wee stories and for them to generate their own tales too, and we want the people who have to live with it feel that it's theirs. I think that's what makes them such fun projects to work on and such striking, unexpected images that usually fit in well with their surroundings despite being big and weird.

I lived in Leith when we made it and I'm really proud it's still here, even though I'm not. I try and visit it occasionally, it's like bumping into an old pal, both a wee bit more weather worn than the last time you saw each other.