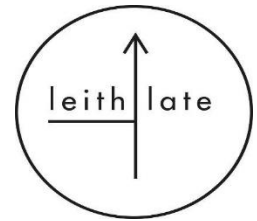


Speaker: Cameron Foster (Guide)

Mural: Eduardo Paolozzi

Audio 00:03:24

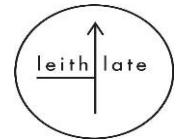


Hey, we're down on Henderson Street just by The Shore to have a closer look at Russell Ian Dempster's homage to Eduardo Paolozzi which was installed here in 2014 from a photo taken in 1952. Now, technically, this isn't actually a mural. As you might be able to tell from some of the areas where it's flaking a little, this is actually a paste-up much like you would see on a billboard. So in a way this is kind of like a big advert for Eduardo Paolozzi.

For those of you who don't know Paolozzi, he was born in Leith in 1924 and his parents had an ice-cream shop on Albert Street. All was well until June 10th 1940 - a particularly dark day in Leith History. Following Mussolini's declaration of war on Great Britain, a mob of up to 2000 people wandered the streets of Leith attacking Italian owned business and threatening people of Italian descent. Paolozzi, being only 16 at the time was interned in Saughton prison. During that time his father, grandfather and uncle were killed when the SS Anandora Star that was sending interned British-Italians to Canada, was sunk by a German U-boat on the 2nd of July.

Paolozzi chose to study at Edinburgh College of Art in 1943 and after the war he worked in Paris where he met the famous surrealist Alberto Giacometti and Georges Braque who had developed cubism Picasso. The influence of cubism can be seen in Paolozzi's later sculpture and perhaps more subtly in his interest in assemblage and collage.

He first rose to prominence in the 50s. Initially he was a proponent Art Brut an intentionally raw style developed by Jean Dubuffet. In fact, interestingly enough, given some of the buildings that



surround us here, he is credited with inventing the term 'Brutalism' by Peter Smithson who's wife Alison Smithson designed the first Brutalist building in the UK. But it was for his contribution to Pop Art that he is perhaps best known. In 1947 he created a collage called I was Rich Man's Plaything using colourful cut outs from magazines. Even then wasn't displayed until 1952 but nevertheless is still often cited as the first true piece of Pop Art and certainly the first to actually use the word 'Pop' itself. The 60s saw him produce spectacular and incredibly innovative screen prints while the 70s saw and interest in man-machine hybrids that would become a part of his sculptural repertoire for years to come. If you head up to the Dean Gallery not only can you see a recreation of his studio but also, you'll struggle to miss his epic sculpture of Vulcan.

So, basically, if you're a fan of a kind of linear Art History - and to be honest you probably shouldn't be but to keep things simple - in a linear Art History, Paolozzi joins the dots between Picasso and Warhol. To be honest, it's hard to overstate his importance as an artist, certainly you wouldn't get many complaints if you said he was the best artist Scotland ever produced and arguable Britain too. So, you'd think he'd be a local hero but no, not only is there's not a single piece of Paolozzi's work in Leith but the beer named after him is probably better known round these parts, a wrong that Russel has set out to put right.