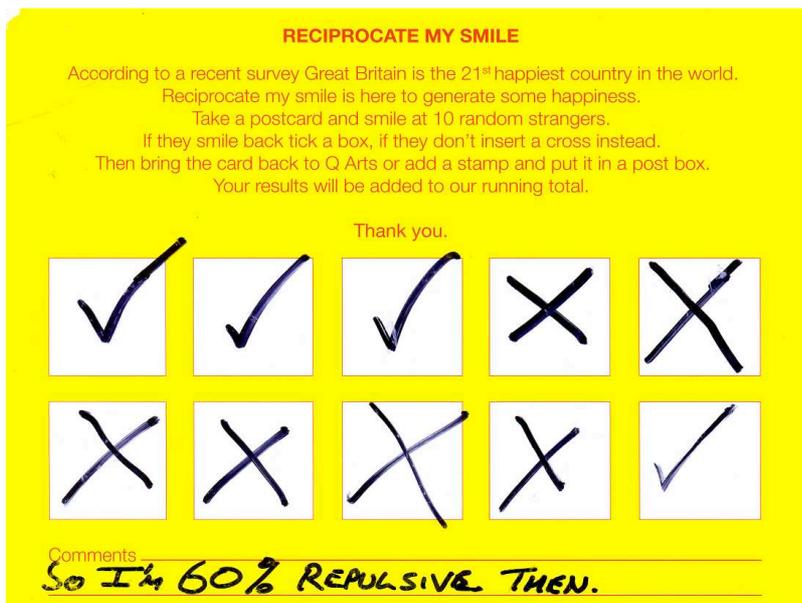


Artist's statement

I have always been fascinated by the ways in which we interact with each other in society. We perform actions that can comfort (like a hug) and also actions that can hurt (like a punch on the nose). Furthermore we act differently at work than at home and treat friends differently to work colleagues. I'm interested in turning these situations upside down, subverting them and then performing them all over again. Initial investigations into these areas began by looking at actions. I used to hug people in the street and hand out badges to strangers asking them to talk to each other, directly challenging them to reach out of their comfort zone. I also got commissioned by Q Arts (now Quad) in Derby to get people smiling at each other. For three weeks I handed out postcards encouraging people to smile at each other. It's important that people get involved in my work and performative actions are usually asked of the audience.



Reciprocate my smile, postcard project, 2006



Autographs are weird things..., 2008

Humour has a large part to play in my practice too. The aesthetics of my practice are sometimes wacky and rather childish, in fact whole projects can seem very silly. It's my aim to use humour as a tool for interaction and this approach can help in persuading people to get involved. There are underlying themes in all of my projects though that aims to make people think about how they act towards others. I'm a firm believer that art should be fun, for both me and the audience!

I also look at how the dysfunctional decide to communicate, essentially celebrities. Celebrity culture has influenced a whole section of society to communicate through autographs and achievement. It's not a case of "Hello, nice to see you" it's a case of "I'm better than you, would you like my autograph?" My most ambitious project so far saw me send my own personal signed photo to 1000 celebrities to see how they would react to being treated as an equal, celebrities together. The way I act has become a keen interest and tool in investigating my concerns in society and these works appeal to my playful and cheeky nature. Remarkably I got over 250 replies from celebrities, ranging from simple generic autographs to personal letters and even a jumper (from Terry Wogan).

I work in different media in different projects. Sometimes with performance art, sometimes with ephemera and even craft such as embroidery and watercolour painting. The main thrust of my practice is in galleries but I have also done commissions for off site events and mail art projects. I am a keen badge maker and give away a lot of work for free by handing it out in the streets or leaving badges on benches in specially limited edition envelopes. It is my aim to involve everyone, whether they are regular gallery visitors or not.

Our language, conversations, interactions and even fights on a Friday night will always captivate me and make me want to create situations and I hope that the art that comes out of these reflections will make people think and also importantly, laugh.