

Birmingham: It's Not Shit

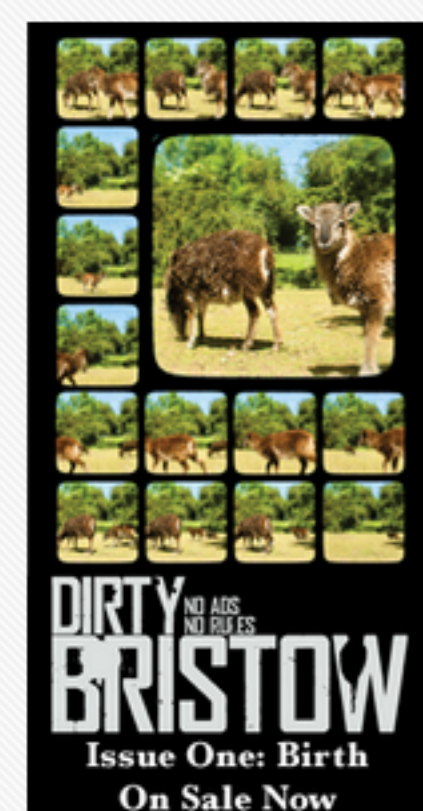
Mildly sarcastic since 2002

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Birmingham: It's Not Shit loves Birmingham, its people, arts, animals, buildings, parks, grass verges, factories and bus stops. We've even got a soft spot for the Black Country.

BiNS runs The Brummie of the Year Award, Talk Like a Brummie Day and organises odd stuff like spending all day on the eleven bus.

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Birmingham's emotional wellbeing* on Saturday 28th of May 2011 07:46: 56.6 % (average)

Twice daily scores on Twitter.

*Every ten seconds this site reads the 1000 latest Tweets from within a 10 mile radius of the centre of Birmingham and rates the words against a database.

How does this work?

Danny Smith: Big City Culture

20 December 2009
By Danny Smith

I want to talk about Birmingham's bid for Britain's City of Culture. Now this shouldn't be confused for the European City of Culture bid, which if won brings money, tourists and actual prestige. That's going to the South Hampshire region in 2022 which by then, if Internet idiots are to be believed, we will all be destroyed by an alignment of planets as predicted by the Mayans*. No this is the British city of culture, a knock off basically.

So if Birmingham is successful what would we actually win? Well, potentially holding the Brit awards and the Turner prize, although not even that is not definite. And I'm not sure how this would be that even be beneficial. Do we want the Turner prize? Recently it's turned into an attention grabbing oddity choosing deliberately challenging pieces for the sole reason of angering Sun readers and inciting headlines. And lets face it the art facilities in Birmingham are embarrassingly small, although what we do have is excellent. Including the always interesting Vivid, the young but ever growing Eastside projects, and the only venue really large enough to hold the Turner prize, the Ikon.

And the Brits, who watches the Brits any more? Can anyone, without Googling, name any winners of this years Brits? (and for that matter the Turner prize) and if we do get the Brits, it'll probably be held in one of the convention centres, squirrelled away from the public. I can imagine the only coverage Birmingham getting will be quaint and condescending 'Birmingham's quite nice, that's a surprise' pieces using stock footage of the Selfridges building.



So say we do get the bid AND it does bring people in from out of the city, how are they getting here? New Street station will be a building site by then, and Digbeth coach station, while being shiny and new, is still in the middle of an area in the process of rejuvenation. Any wrong turn, which is frankly likely given the signage in Birmingham, could end them in a depressing industrialised maze fulfilling every stereotype of Birmingham people could have.

The other prize, I swear to god, is rights to use the logo and label of Britain's city of culture. Thus making the whole process a promise pissing contest for a graphic design solution.

Britain has 66 official cities, and lets be honest there are probably only half of them that could feasibly host the British city culture without making it look like a teachers smiley sticker given to anyone who tries hard. And no matter how low your opinion of Birmingham were defiantly in the top 20 percent, so inevitably even if we don't put that much effort in, we will be hosting the thing in the next 5 years or so anyway.

The only good I can see if we do get it is, not only will the council will have had to had a good look at our really interesting, worthwhile things that creatives in Birmingham are all ready doing but also they will probably be obliged to make good on all the promises they're having to make in the bid. Which in the current economic climate of art budgets being cut everywhere is a great move. During the great depression Teddy Roosevelt was applauded for seeing that spending on the arts actually helps resolve economic decline, when he established as part of his New Deal package. Perhaps if Birmingham does get the bid this year (and if you look at the list of competition, the only strong competition is Manchester) the money invested will mean we can grow to be one of the stronger economic cities in Britain and then become a city that will attract tourists anyway.

*This, any right minded person knows, is utter tosh. The apocalypse is a uniquely western idea, the Mayan calender merely resets as part of a cycle, and the ancient Mayans didn't have the good sense not not eat their own rotting children's hearts let alone predict the future.**

**actually this is exaggeration, the Mayans were a sophisticated and surprisingly knowledgeable people, and another good example of religion ruining a perfectly good culture.

The opinions of Danny Smith do not necessarily reflect the views of the publishers of this blog, its affiliates, or any sane adult human beings. He currently lives in your cupboard, watching, always watching.

Illustration by Phil Davis

Tags: Birmingham, birminghamuk, city of culture, danny smith, Phil Davis

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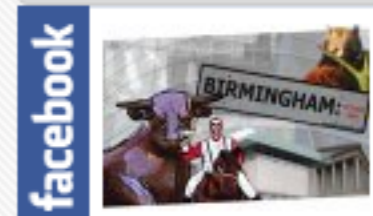
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BiNS is mostly by Jon Bounds, a Birmingham based social web consultant, producer and writer. You can hire him to work on your stuff, or follow him on twitter. There's also the odd bit of stuff from Danny Smith.

Feel free to send us anything you're interested in - or think we might be. If you've got gigs to promote, best to chuck them on the talk board.