

FROM

ONE

OTHER

THE

END

TO

ST. JOHN'S
CATHEDRAL

NORWICH
CATHEDRAL

NORWICH
CITY
COUNCIL

NORWICH
CASTLE

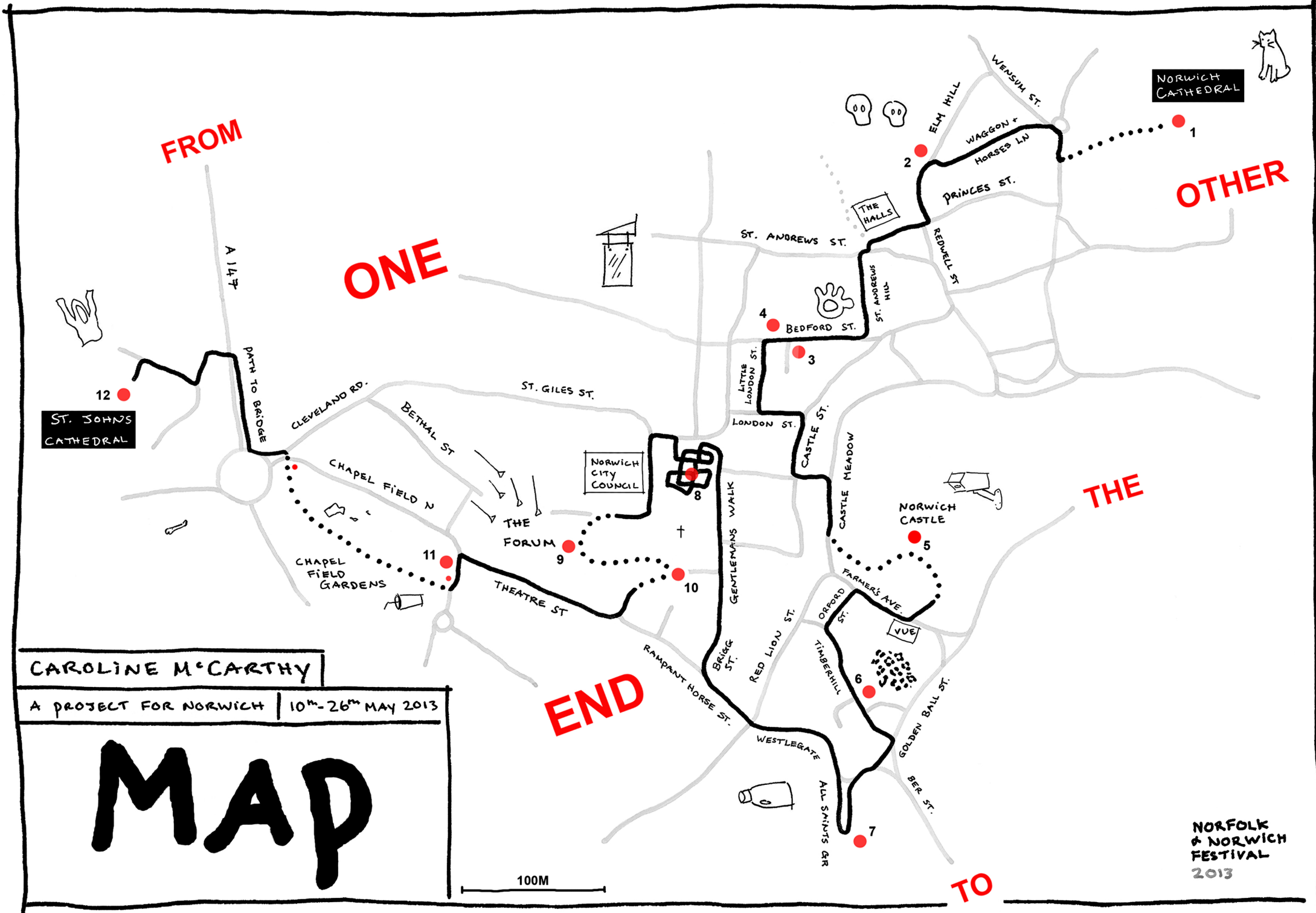
CAROLINE M'CARTHY

A PROJECT FOR NORWICH | 10th-26th MAY 2013

MAP

100M

NORFOLK
& NORWICH
FESTIVAL
2013



Caroline McCarthy: *FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER*

Commissioned for the Norwich and Norfolk Festival 2013, the artist **Caroline McCarthy** has created a number of interventions in unexpected locations across the city. Starting from Norwich Cathedral and ending at St John's Cathedral, the trail weaves through sites ranging from John Lewis to empty street poles, Norwich Market to the railings of Chapelfield Gardens.

The accompanying text is written by **Jeni Walwin**.

Caroline McCarthy was born in Dublin, and has been based in London since completing an MFA at Goldsmiths College in 1997. She exhibits regularly, recent solo shows including Green On Red Gallery, Dublin; Parker's Box Gallery, New York; Gimpel Fils Gallery, London; Group shows include Dorsky Gallery, New York; Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai; Helsinki Kunsthalle, Helsinki; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London; Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna.

- 1 Norwich Cathedral (Cathedral noticeboards)
LOST
A4 flyer
- 2 20 Elm Hill (front bay windows)
From The Vanitas Range (Luxury)
From The Vanitas Range (Value)
Two photographs of a still life - one made from a *Luxury* 4-pack of toilet roll, the other from a *Value* 4-pack.
- 3 Aurum Gallery, 9 Swan Lane (off Bedford Street)
Think Big
Contents of one packet of Monster Munch crisps, resin, gold paint.
- 4 Sign bracket (above Brian Coombes Hairdressing, 17 Bedford St.)
Ghost
A sign made for an empty sign bracket.
- 5 Norwich Castle (in locations including the Foyer and Cafe area)
Mon - Sat 10am - 4.30pm; Sun 1 - 4.30pm
TetraCam
Juice carton, beige paint, security bracket.
- 6 Castle Mall Shopping Centre (window next to entrance off Timberhill)
Escape
A bedroom furnished with found leopard skin objects.
- 7 John Lewis (window next to store entrance on All Saints Green)
From The Humbrol Series
Found packaging, Humbrol enamel paint, pedestals.
- 8 A stall in Norwich Market (no.34)
From One End To The Other
Stall open: Mon - Sat 12 - 5pm; Sunday 12 - 4pm
Ink and pencil drawing on paper, perspex, market stall table.
- 9 The Forum (front glass facade)
Untitled (Arrows)
Sucker-tipped luminous arrows
- 10 A street pole (opposite The Forum and adjacent to St. Peters)
Sign
A sign made for an empty pole.
- 11 The railings at Chapelfield Gardens (by two entrances - see map)
Rubbish Paintings
Small paintings
- 12 The Cathedral of St John The Baptist (by the 'Sunk' Chapel)
11am - 7pm
Found Spirit
Video

MAP and INFO can be downloaded:
http://www.nnfestival.org.uk/festival/visual_arts/caroline-mccarthy

LOST



1



2



3



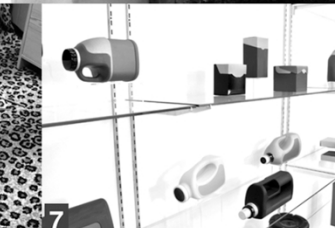
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8



9



10



11



12



11



12

FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER

From One End to the Other can be viewed as a single work in twelve parts: a work that takes the visitor on a walking tour of an ancient city, drawing attention to its remarkable history and using the paraphernalia of our contemporary lives to shed light on our ambiguous relationship with our day-to-day environment explored through a plethora of packaged products. Throughout there is a tension between the spiritual and the material, the creative impetus and the consumer industry. The walk begins and ends at cathedrals - one Catholic, the other Church of England - and we are reminded of the place of religion in the history of this region, where many of the famous Norfolk wool churches still dominate the rural landscape.

The walk begins at the most famous of them all, Norwich Cathedral. Here the work *Lost* (1) is a response to the Cathedral's Labyrinth and to the idea of searching for something. The stone cat is not actually in the Labyrinth, only in the image of the Labyrinth. This cold, grey, generic form is like a ghost or a spirit, a fleeting vision of something that might have been, but the flyers, pinned to three cathedral notice boards, express hope for a reappearance.

What was 'lost' at the start of the walk may have been 'found' at the end. *Found Spirit* (12), a short looped film of an empty, fluttering hoody, cleverly installed at ground level behind a wooden screen in St John's Cathedral, requires us to crouch and peep to get a better view. It recalls the famous Norfolk anchoress, Julian of Norwich, a fourteenth century mystic and visionary who is reputed to have written the first book in England by a woman. With days devoted to writing and prayer, anchorites lived an ascetic, hermit-like existence in tiny, unfurnished spaces attached to religious buildings, often near to the ground with narrow openings in the wall, through which food and water would be passed.

Norwich is a city where it is difficult to escape history. It is evident around every bend in the medieval lanes, the half timbered houses, the Norman castle and the many historic churches. At its heart is the outdoor market which the Normans moved to the current site in the eleventh century in order to accommodate goods from French merchants and to make room for building the Cathedral in Tombland. In an empty market unit a drawing stretched across a table mimics the tricky navigation of a city on foot and a wander through the maze of stalls. Cheap plastic straws in *From One End to the Other* (8) share the aesthetic of the market stall awnings and determine the line and colour of the drawing. The straws, symbolic of their ability to draw liquid sustenance into the body, invite the viewer to take the tangled journey through the digestive system of a modern city, in one end and out of the other.

Sustaining the mind and the body is a recurring theme, and many of the works propose a challenge to overabundance. In *Think Big* (3) the entire contents of a packet of Monster Munch have been delicately painted in gold and displayed in a locked cabinet. The work was made as a comment on the overheated Irish economy, where property values plummeted after the banking crisis. Placing the work in a jewellers' shop next to expensive items reinforces the appeal of bling, and the way in which we are often seduced by sparkle and glamour without looking beneath the surface to understand the true value of something.

McCarthy's ability to transform the banal, the ordinary and the overlooked into something seductive is also apparent in *From the Humbrol Series* (7). Disposable packaging has been turned into objects of desire using coded colours from Humbrol's range of model-makers paint and each revived container is displayed on customized stands in a John Lewis window. By appropriating especially mundane material here and at the Castle in *Tetracam* (5) where Tetrapak cartons are transformed into video surveillance cameras, the artist creates a bridge between art and life; the boundary is blurred between what might be art and what is commonplace. "At heart I am interested in the way a veneer of colour or an image... applied to a thing can change our perception of it."

As well as the transformative nature of these works, there is a highly crafted approach that often belies the subject. In the two works *From the Vanitas Range* (2) a popular art historical subject is sculpted from two packs of wet toilet paper – one 'luxury', the other 'value'. The process of image-making is laid bare - the discarded tools, the remnants of the rolls taking equal place beside the finished skull, all set against a draped black bin liner – and the iconography of art history is juxtaposed with the disposable goods of the present day. In the tiny paintings of rubbish found in Chapelfield Gardens (11) this same attention to detail confers new status on the incidental and the throwaway. Nestling close to the ground, not far from the sites of their subject, these works draw our attention to the discarded, the abandoned and the redundant, and challenge conventional notions of works of art in public spaces.

In *Sign* (10) and *Ghost* (4) the artist has recruited two empty structures where signs were missing. The viewer is actively encouraged to engage in 'decoding' the signs that McCarthy has installed. What was here before? What might come next? What message is needed? In *Sign* the exquisitely painted brickwork, merely reinforcing the wall behind it, persuades us to inspect the world around us, to unpick the detail and to ask questions of it. In a work nearby, *Untitled (Arrows)* (9) the question is immediately and unexpectedly humorous. Who would have shot such a large quantity of arrows and with what bow? Reference here is to ancient military weapons, and perhaps to an early act of terrorism (attacking the facade of the city's Millennium Building). Norwich has an unusually high record of historic battles and violence. It was, for example, the only city ever to have been excommunicated by the Pope in the thirteenth century following a riot between monks and citizens. However the darker mood of this work's historical associations is undermined by the dazzling colour of its luminous green spokes with their bright red sucker tips.

Escape (6) in many ways encapsulates the project overall. The obsessive accumulation of leopard print objects demonstrates the excesses of our desire to acquire, to improve our lot by surrounding ourselves with material goods – and in this case, with ones that have especially exotic overtones. The exotic skin, however, is in stark contrast to the mundane functionality of the objects it enfolds. In an apparent denial of their menial status the objects themselves are expressing a fantasy of escaping their ordinariness. This is consumerism overdone, and as the title suggests, an escape is imminent, and there is a break out in search of something more meaningful.

Jeni Walwin
April 2013