

Interview with AJ Perrin

Do you find that Cardiff inspires you?

Aj: I don't know if I can say that Cardiff itself inspires me. I think that a lot of my inspiration comes from people that I meet and communicate with. I guess not a lot of that has been happening recently but, in that sense. It's that people of Cardiff that inspires me not Cardiff itself.

How do you feel connected to the city center?

Aj: I feel that I've met a good number of folks around Cardiff city centre and I guess I'm connected in that way. I like that fact that you can walk around and have genuine greetings from people I've met or taken photos of before. That makes me feel like I'm a part of Cardiff and not just a spectator behind a lens, yano?

When you were based in Cardiff, did you find it easy to network and find other young creatives?

Aj: I think I've always been blessed to have friends that are into similar or the same forms of creativity. I think, especially when I was living in Cardiff, I was slightly egotistical with my work in the sense that I didn't want to expand or collaborate, however now being that I feel differently, if I was to expand and connect, I would feel somewhat comfortable within Cardiff to do that. I guess it helps that it's a small place so everyone kinda knows everyone within the creative groups.

Is this photo part of a project? If so, could you tell me a little bit more?

Aj: The image wasn't part of any project however I try to find characters wherever I go. I took this photo sort of organically as I was with other people and it happened kind of fast. Projects are good but I find it really hard as my brain is far too hyperactive to stick to one style for a period of time.

I was gunna title that painting the caption of the photo, but, obviously if you have anything you would like better lemme know...

Aj: I like to give really direct titles to my work so for example I would probably title that photo 'Mathew on St John Street'.

Above we have the painting 'Mathew on St John Street'

Original photo taken by @ajamesperrin

'The Pink Sign'

Cardiff and inspiration

I would agree with AJ, I would say the people and the energies inspire me rather than the physical place more often than not, but I find the communities make up Cardiff or at least in my experience here, it's less of the place more the people and interactions, collective moods and

reactions and little moments that inspire me. Seeing my friends creating and truly being into it is also very inspiring.

Being a young creative in Cardiff and networking

There are always cool people about. I've met lots of creative individuals with a range of passions, which is so cool. I have only just started putting my work 'out there', which feels vulnerable and exiting. Most of my pieces are quite personal or I make them specifically for school work. I look forward to meeting and collaborating with more local artists.

Why I've decided to paint 'the pink sign'

I decided to paint this image because it was an important moment in my becoming which also took place in the centre. Back in the summer when the BLM protests were beginning to happen everywhere, the first one I went to was hosted just outside the castle, socially distanced and well organized. It was probably one of the first moments where I felt supported by my community, in the face of adversity physically seeing individuals that have experienced racism and even just the people that won't stand for it regardless of it impacting them, was emotional. The energy present was charged and supportive, the anger, distress and sadness could be felt communally but you can also feel the strength and resilience.