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HEW LOCKE

Walker, Hannah, *Sharing vision to lift town's spirits*, South London Press, Friday June 15th, 2012

Deptford X

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CREATIVE STREAK: Hew Locke, left, will decorate the front of the old Tidemill School building in Deptford, above

Sharing vision to lift town's spirits

FESTIVAL ARTIST WILL DECORATE FORMER SCHOOL BUILDING ON A FINANCIAL THEME

ARTIST Hew Locke has grand designs as he sets out on one of his most ambitious projects yet for this year's Deptford X Festival.

Hew is about to cover the front of the former Tidemill School, in Frankham Street, with old share certificates. It will make the frontage of the building look like a huge billboard while still retaining some of the buildings character features.

The work, called Gold Standard, will be the centrepiece of next month's two-week festival coinciding with the Olympics and set to draw thousands of people from around the world.

And while plastering a town centre building with old financial documents of companies may seem like some kind of judgemental statement about banking, the 52-year-old insists this is not a protest or gloomy piece.

In fact, the internationally renowned artist says his work generates a kind of optimism – just like the festival itself.

Hew believes this year's visual arts festival, which will be the 14th, will be the biggest yet, drawing together both internationally respected artists and a range of less well-known contributors included in the extensive fringe programme.

By HANNAH WALKER

The event takes art out onto the streets as well as into shops and businesses.

And the art trail from New Cross railway station to Greenwich Park is expected to draw huge crowds as they make their way to the 2012 equestrian events at the park.

> 'Things can change over time in a way we have no concept of' – *Hew Locke*

Regarding his own work, Hew is keen for people to enjoy the intricate detail of the share certificates themselves while getting them to think about their history and what they say about their times.

The original certificates are born out of an optimism and confidence 'companies had in their own existence.

Hew has reworked these to offer even greater detail, mirroring his love of the richness of the baroque.

Edinburgh-born Hew started buying up old share certificates in 2008, mainly through auctions as a reaction to the financial crash. He copies and magnifies the detailed certificates and superimposes his own work, many in oil, on top.

He will often work a figure into the certificates, leaving the viewer to wonder what that says about the individual. Do these figures represent the community breaking through in spite of the power and money represented by big companies?

Hew admits that overall it is the sheer beauty of the original certificates that attracts him most to this project, being almost obsessed by the detail they illustrate.

The artist is generally known for his highly decorative work, whether with cardboard, beads, metal, wood or paper.

He said: "These certificates are very beautiful because they are so detailed.

"They almost satisfy my fascination with the baroque and these are detailed in their own way with all their fine print.

"The certificates give us an insight into history. These companies once existed and now they don't – they have disappeared. But we keep on going. We are by nature very optimistic people, so this is a double-edged project.

"And look how things are changed and things can change over time in a way we have no concept of.

"We're all worried about the current economic situation but we must be taking the long view. There are so many companies that exist today that we think of as fixtures in our society, but that doesn't mean they will exist in the future. But we keep going on. We are generally an optimistic people."

Hew, who has his work in the Tate Gallery Collection and the Arts Council of England Collection, has used tankers and container ships on his Chinese share certificates to illustrate how times have changed as businesses have disappeared and others have prospered and economic circumstances altered.

The Tidemill project will see Hew's work magnified and pasted on to huge billboards. But he is anxious that the most detailed and beautiful of the certificates is not out of view.

The most detailed will be displayed nearer the street. Public art at its best.

He said: "This is a very exciting time for us with the Olympics and Deptford X.

"All the community is involved, no one is excluded. Deptford X is for everyone."

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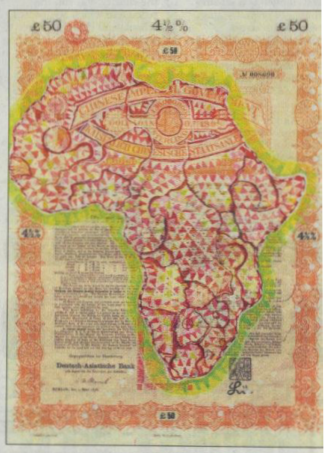
● **Deptford X runs from July 27 to August 12. The event is funded by the Arts Council England, Lewisham council and the South London and Maudsley Charitable Trust. *South London Press* is media partner.**

ART POTENTIAL: A piece for the Tidemill School display 40307ST10



ORNATE: Chinese Imperial Gold Loan artwork by Hew Locke g7999/C

'WHITE CUBES TO STREET WORKS'

STREET artists will exhibit alongside internationally recognised ones for Deptford X. Lead artists-curators Hew Locke and Indra Khanna have selected the artists to be involved in this year's event.

Indra, *pictured inset*, said: "It was important we were able to draw on different works that could be accommodated in a variety of spaces around Deptford, from white cubes to street works."

Names in the programme include Henna Nadeem, Dzine, Doug Jones and The Hidden Noise.

Nadeem will create her work called a Picture Book of Britain which will be installed on an external wall leading from Deptford to Greenwich.

The Hidden Noise looks at the importance of dress and movement and will be exhibited at Gallop, Deptford High Street.

Chicago-based Dzine, whose work has been collected by Eric Clapton, will show off his elaborate trophy sculptures at Bearspace Gallery, Deptford High Street.

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