A share of a pensioner’s Christmas ‘bonus’

Exhibition

Deborah Ballin

The output is an exhibition, created as part of collaborative research, consisting of 26’ audio work by Esther Johnson and Debbie Ballin, a photographic series by Esther Johnson, and a selection of artefacts, from the People’s History Museum archive, curated by Johnson and Ballin

Research process

A share of a pensioner’s Christmas ‘Bonus’ is part of a larger research project titled Echoes of Protest, investigating the legacy of being involved in significant protest movements from a child’s perspective. The project aims to understand the role protest can play in the politicization of children and the long-term impact of its aftermath on their lives. The research explores the story of how acts of generosity by total strangers made Christmas possible for the children of striking miners in 1984, and what it was like to grow up in the shadow of the Miners’ Strike.

Research insights

During the Miners’ Strike in December 1984, the Thatcher government paid pensioners the same £10 Christmas heating bonus they had received since 1972. A nationwide appeal, in several national newspapers, invited pensioners to give up their bonus in support of the striking miners. Hundreds of pounds worth of bonuses were donated to support this cause. Thanks to remarkable acts of generosity many children of Miners’ and their families were able to celebrate Christmas that year. The exhibition bears witness to the untold stories of the children.

Dissemination

The output was exhibited at:

People’s History Museum, Manchester. 5 December 2015 – 18 January 2016.

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Audio:

https://soundcloud.com/blanche-pictures/a-share-of-a-pensioners-christmas-bonus/s-h3tb1

The People’s Echo Newspaper:

https://issuu.com/blanchepictures/docs/the_peoples_echo_newspaper_2016
A share of a pensioner's Christmas 'Bonus'

A collaborative project by Esther Johnson and Debbie Ballin

Saturday 5 December 2015–Monday 18 January 2016

It’s Christmas 1984. Sam, Gayle, Janye and Craig are the children of striking miners. This is the story of how acts of generosity by total strangers made Christmas possible for them that year, and what it was like for them to grow up in the shadow of the Miners’ Strike.
Sunday 6th December
A Share of a Pensioner's Christmas "Bonus"
Exhibition Launch 12-3.30pm
Music from Salford Brass 1-2pm
Book via Eventbrite or Ask at Reception for Details
Free Event
Donations gratefully received
A share of a pensioner's Christmas 'Bonus'  
A collaborative project by Esther Johnson and Debbie Bello

Saturday 5 December 2015 - Monday 18 January 2016  
Opening Times Monday-Saturday 9am-5pm, Sunday 10am-4pm

It's Christmas 1984. Sam, Gayle, Jayne and Craig are the children of striking miners. This is the story of how acts of generosity by total strangers made Christmas possible for them that year, and what it was like for them to grow up in the shadow of the Miners' Strike.

This exhibition bears witness to their untold stories, and includes artifacts from the People’s History Museum archive, and a newly commissioned audio-visual project by artist and filmmaker Esther Johnson, and filmmaker and writer Debbie Bello.

Project background
During the Miners’ Strike in December 1984, the Thatcher government paid pensioners the same £10 Christmas heating bonus they had received since 1929. A nationwide appeal, in several national newspapers, invited pensioners to give up their bonus to support the striking miners. Hundreds of pounds' worth of bonuses were donated to support the cause. Thanks to remarkable acts of generosity many children of miners and their families were able to celebrate Christmas that year.

A share of a pensioner's Christmas 'Bonus' is part of a larger research project itself called 'Families of Protest', investigating the legacy of being involved in significant social movements from a child's perspective. The project aims to understand the role protest can play in the politicisation of children and the long-term impact of its aftermath on their lives.

Esther Johnson is a UK-based artist and filmmaker working with moving image, video, and photography. She was awarded an MA from the Royal College of Art, London and in 2012 she won the Philip Leverhulme Prize. Her short film 'Night Sky' has been exhibited in 40 countries in 2006-2007. Her work has been broadcast on national TV in the UK and internationally. She has written for several arts publications and is the author of a book within the Art & Design Research Centre, Sheffield Hallam University.

Debbie Bello is a filmmaker and writer. She has worked with the BBC for work heard on all major radio programs, including The Jeremy Vine Show, the BBC World Service, and Radio 4. Her film 'The Huddle' was shown on BBC1. She has a background in the arts having worked within the Tate Modern and the Art & Design Research Centre, Sheffield Hallam University. She is the artistic director of 'Families of Protest' and currently working on a project called 'Wasting Time' at the Centre for Contemporary Art in Glasgow and currently working on a project called 'Wasting Time' at the Centre for Contemporary Art in Glasgow.