

Art

Tate finds Lowry's reply to Matisse bronze appeal

In 1956 the Tate Gallery launched a public appeal to buy a set of four abstract bronze sculptures of the backs of naked women, by the French artist Henri Matisse, and received in response a handwritten note in rather blotty blue ink, sent from The Elms, at Mottram in Longdendale, offering a donation.

It was from LS Lowry, famous for his northern industrial landscapes and matchstick men. The Elms was the drab house in Greater Manchester, given listed building status three years ago, where Lowry lived and worked for 28 years until his death in 1976.

The letter turned up again in the Tate archives, in the research for a major

exhibition on Matisse, which opens on Friday at Tate Liverpool.

The curator Stephanie Straine said it was a fascinating find. The letter, and the sculptures it helped buy, will both be in the exhibition, along with works covering a half-century of Matisse's work, including his famous giant cut-paper work *The Snail* - now very fragile, and being shown for the first time in the UK outside its home at Tate Britain.

The sculptures, made from 1909 to 1930, were Matisse's largest sculptures. The set was only cast in bronze from his clay maquettes a year after he died in 1954, and the Tate appealed to art lovers to help acquire them for the nation.

Straine said: "I hope the public will visit the gallery knowing that when they are looking at these works by Matisse, it is in part due to the generosity of one of the north-west's most famous artists."

Maev Kennedy



Three of the Matisse sculptures that will be exhibited at the Tate along with a letter from LS Lowry offering a donation to help buy the works

Arts

More needs to be done on diversity, says Elba

Idris Elba has said the UK is "moving in the right direction" when it comes to diversity in TV roles. But the 43-year-old actor, who played the drug lord Russell "Stringer" Bell in *The Wire* and will return as Luther in a new series of the BBC detective drama, added there was still more that could be done.

Elba - who, with David Oyelowo, David Harewood, Lenny Henry and Meera Syal, has asked UK networks to improve their representation of ethnic minorities in the past - has found success in the UK and the US, with roles in *Thor*, *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* and *Mandela: Long Walk To Freedom*.

He said: "There is a lot of work to do but it's definitely moving in the right direction. People are aware of the issues that are faced. It's one of these problems that won't get fixed overnight but I think it's progressively getting better."

He added: "The BBC and Luther are very supportive of diversity, especially behind and in front of the camera. It's important to keep trying." PA

Education

Students plan further action over Tory reforms

Students are stepping up their campaign against the government's plans for higher education with a series of demonstrations, sit-ins and strikes planned for the coming months.

Campaigners who organised a protest in London earlier this month have called another day of action on 26 November and a two-day strike in the New Year.

Deborah Hermanns, of the National Campaign against Fees and Cuts, which is organising the protests, said: "As a result of the further marketisation proposed in the higher education green paper and cuts to maintenance grants, thousands of students will be priced out of education and the whole structure of the sector will change, creating a multi-tier system and attacking poorer students and institutions."

Activists are now organising a two-day strike in February, which could see thousands walk out of lectures. The campaign has received backing from the top of the Labour party. **Matthew Taylor**

Accident

Four who died in plane crash 'from same family'

Four people killed when a six-seater light aircraft crashed in Somerset are believed to be from the same family, police have said.

Two men and two women died when the plane came down near Churchinford in the Blackdown Hills, south of Taunton, just before 11.45am on Saturday.

Although formal identification had not taken place, they were believed to be from the same family from the Surrey area, Avon and Somerset police said.

A 56-year-old man, a 55-year-old woman, a 23-year-old woman and a 20-year-old man were pronounced dead at the scene.

Supt Richard Corrigan said a joint investigation was under way with the Air Accidents Investigation Branch. The plane was en route from Surrey to east Devon when it crashed. **Aisha Gani**

Advertisement

Dear François Hollande,

I have a question for you: Is this a WAR, as you claim?

Sorry but although I'm also caught in the heat of the moment and in "riverrun" of emotions after the Paris massacre, it may seem out of tune but I am shocked by your affirmation: "This time it's WAR."

No, Monsieur Hollande, it's not! "It's a terrorist attack". Of course, the French always break our hearts! And your café culture of existentialism and structuralism, your philosophers in general who see flies on walls and think therefore (never mind)... your "Liberté, égalité, fraternité", your Constitution, your Revolutions have taught the world huge lessons and are undeniably moving! And that is precisely why I was so shocked to hear you say that "This time it's WAR." No, Monsieur Hollande. A WAR is something different than what just took place in Paris.

I'm writing this in a country that borders yours and I don't hear a thing. If this were a war, my lights would be out and this article would probably not make it to print.

In fact, this planet has rarely enjoyed a 70 year period of (relative) peace. And I'm kind of hoping we can stretch that.

You heard me, Monsieur Hollande. And by relative peace I don't mean to overlook the unnecessary atrocities of Vietnam, Cambodia or Korea. Or, even, Rwanda (and I could go on and on pointing out the miscarriages of geopolitical pros and cons, ambushes here and there), until it all comes to a sudden HALT, right in front of my window, on the East River, at barely past 8 in the morning when two planes hit the gigantic towers of the World Trade Center. Yes, that was, for us then, a WAR. Nobody in the US had ever seen a spectacle like it. I saw it live, the whole thing, till the end, the cascading collapse of it all, the rubble, the mushroom cloud of ash, the burning asbestos, the 3 thousand burning souls. Yes, read whatever metaphor you want into it. But there will be none that matches the sadness and hatred and fear of this era we've come to live in, Mr. Hollande.

9/11 changed the course of History and, well. You know the rest. What I'm afraid of this time, is what I was afraid of when a certain Mr. "W" plus a Cheney and an Ashcroft, a Rumsfeld (can you hear the earth tremors?) decided for all the wrong reasons to endanger our existence. And so they have. This gang and this gang alone has put our lives in danger forever and here is where you, Mr. Hollande, come in to the equation. At that time, in 2003, France did everything right and did not invade Iraq, since Saddam, surely a bad SOB, did not pose a threat to our existence and did not have any WMDs. Now, all this ISIS garbage is, as you well know, nothing but bad mixture of left overs from tribal wars between Sunnis and Shiites and a super well trained military army left over from Saddam's Ba'ath Party. But what do I know? What do I know about Assad being an Allawite and the Kurds and the Yazidis being eternally persecuted by all of them and what do I know about the dozens of dissidents within the splinter groups ever since the PLO had a huge fight with the Life of Bryan and John Cleese deciding to form a party of his own?

In all seriousness, dear reader, the concept of a REAL WAR is something you would not know unless you happen to be 90 years of age. Are you? I guess not. I'm only sixty one, but I did lose almost my entire family in concentration camps, so, I know. A WAR engages ALL countries in the world and involves the Army, the Navy and the Air Force of ALL NATIONS.

Is this what's happening? NO! In hindsight, we will look at this Paris tragedy with sadness, but that's all. Just like we look at London July 7, 2005 with a lot of sadness, but that's all. Again, I'll remind you: we have rarely enjoyed a 70 year period of (relative) peace on this planet as we do now. "Things have never been so good, in the field of human rights, in spite of the 35 million slaves, victims of human trafficking, in spite of so much abuse and starvation", says a friend, when I complain about the online radicalization of the lunatic losers who join this idiotic cause (which, by the way, kills more Muslims than it does any other religious group put together). These losers found a fun game to play with real weapons, instead of street gangs in the poor urban neighborhoods of our capitals.

A WAR is something else. With no "SMARTbombs" or Drones, the Second World War left a death toll of something between 65 million and 75 dead. THAT IS WHAT A WORLD WAR DOES after 6 years. Please remember that, between World War 1 and World War 2, there was only a short breathing space of 21 years. Twenty one years and the entire thing begins again. Imagine that! That is why I insist on the 70 years of relative peace we enjoy.

Nowadays, a world war would probably kill 2.2 billion people. Imagine. That's what wars are: huge unimaginable numbers. Huge like in WW2 where 12 million died in Hitler's Germany (6 million only in Auschwitz), and in Stalin's Soviet Union (an approximate 13 million) and it brought AIR RAIDS (blitzes) over England, by the Nazis, where sirens went off and people had to hide in the 'Underground' or in bunkers. And, when they came out, there was nothing or little left. Yet, Europe rebuilt. Even Dresden, flattened by the Brits, rebuilt. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, have rebuilt. Yes, in a World War, they use ATOMIC BOMBS.

So, Monsieur Hollande: was this TERRORISM or WAR? PLEASE THINK carefully before you incite the younger population of the world (who know NOTHING) into thinking that the tragic death of 128 people was an act of war. It wasn't. WAR begins by signing a treaty. It is a strange thing. Have you signed it? Did De Gaulle? If, tomorrow morning, a household in Colorado turns on their lights and makes their coffee and says good morning to their dear ones or in Tokyo, a couple makes green tea and smiles to their kids and, say, in Rio, people make plans to go to the beach in Ipanema, Monsieur Hollande, I guarantee you: **THIS IS NOT A WAR. IT'S TERRORISM !!!**

Gerald Thomas

Playwright, Theater and Opera Director

AKRAM KHAN COMPANY
UNTIL THE LIONS

A WORLD PREMIERE FROM MULTI AWARD-WINNING CHOREOGRAPHER AND DANCER AKRAM KHAN

9 - 24 JANUARY 2016

ROUNDHOUSE
roundhouse.org.uk
sadlerswells.com

Produced by Akram Khan Company
Co-produced by Roundhouse and Sadler's Wells.

ASTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Image: Richard Hugman