

I DON'T THINK SELFRIDGES IS READY FOR THAT KIND OF WINDOW DISPLAY

written by
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WELL, we have signed up our first cadre of StreetWise Programme Participants – SPPs. They have claimed their 50 free copies and headed off into the metropolis that is Manchester to take up their StreetZones and offer you, the general public,

a copy of StreetWise for just £1.

For many of them there was a sense of expectation and for that I am very happy. I think everyone can identify with that feeling. When you have been fed a proverbial poo butty and had to choke it down, then the fickle finger of fate takes you around the next corner and your mood lifts.

This is the notion that I would like each and every member of the public to entertain when they pass homeless people in the street. We all have those fundamental human impulses; whatever our background and circumstances.

Unfortunately, that common thread is often ignored in the context of politics and prejudices, particularly by influential institutions and sectors of the media. The homeless are objectified and become an asset of cultural or social capital and professional territoriality.

Our journey from concept to producing our

first edition could adequately be compared with Sunday League football. The playing field is not even. In fact, the pitch is on a 45-degree slope, with tree roots growing in the 18-yard box, a gravelly midfield littered with broken bottles and half-bricks, sideways rain, an overzealous referee, and a couple of stray dogs invading the pitch; chasing the ball and players alike.

You win some, you lose a few more. There have been times when I have formed the distinct impression that we would have had to dance naked in Selfridges window to garner any recognition, or indeed vague interest from the media, despite our approaches. A media which is not currently short on coverage of homelessness. A media with an element of which goes so far as to pledge to report on anything concerning the 'fight against homelessness' in Manchester.

I would even overcome my British inclination to be self-deprecating to try and raise the profile our SPPs and their potential as human beings. StreetWise is human story, not in the individual sense but in the humanistic sense.

In indigenous cultures around the world, artisans make beautiful objects and in them they incorporate their own cultures, traditions and beliefs. On first glance, their work is intricate and perfectly formed. However, for the most part, they include small imperfections, because nothing in nature is perfect and so how can human kind presume to make something perfect?

So, from one flawed human being to another, I invite you to join us in acknowledging our imperfections and remember when you last felt that seed of expectation. □