

arts

visual and expressive



with Rebecca Gilbert

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Ellie makes a meal of it

EVERY single morsel of food that passed artist Ellie Harrison's lips between her 22nd and 23rd birthdays was documented, recorded and photographed for her gastronomic art project Eat 22.

The resulting 1,640 photographs were then translated into an animation which can be seen this weekend on the screens in Spyglass, Welshback, where they join other food-related video art, in the latest installment of Bristol artist and curator Carolyn Black's The Awning Project.

Flicking through the pictures, displayed week by week on Harrison's website, www.ellieharrison.com, a bizarre yet fascinating story unfolds, of a girl who loves Bran Flakes and just about anything else she can get her hands on. Every shot features Harrison's face set in an expression of concentration as she shovels in the latest meal or snack, in a series of decidedly unglamorous yet honest images ranging from the mundane to the drunken.

Looking back on her year, the Nottingham-based fine art graduate, who is now 24, says it got tough at times and actually put her off snacking, because it wasn't worth the hassle.

"It makes you really think each time you eat something," she says. "I became quite obsessed with not cheating and making sure that I took a picture every time I ate something. It got to the point that if I forgot to take my camera with me, which I did a couple of times, I couldn't eat."

Harrison says the project came about simply because she loves eating, and it became a kind of diary of a year-long love affair with food.

"There are pictures of me eating in my studio making work for my degree show," she says. "There are some random pictures of me on the top of mountains on holiday, eating chocolate bars and things, and there's a picture of me eating an ice cream on the beach in Scotland. I even took pictures when I was drunk. On the evening of our degree show there was a party and the next day I looked at my digital camera and there was this really seedy picture where I'm just shovelling a slice of pizza into my mouth and I have no recollection of it being taken at all."

Rebecca Gilbert found out about the latest helping of mouth-watering visual treats on offer to passers-by in Bristol's Welshback

"When I finished, I would just open up the fridge and pick at things. It was a real novelty not to have to take a picture."

Other video projects on show this weekend include work by Black herself, while she was doing an artist's residency in the radiology department of the Bristol Children's Hospital. She passed fruit and veg through the hospital's MRI scanner to create 3D images which became animations, creating beautiful images like cauliflowers which look like fireworks.

Black said: "The idea is that the range of films show food and eating at various stages, some surreal and some humorous."

Bristol-based Lucy Bailey's animated film Do Not Eat Fruit shows seeds being nurtured.

Meanwhile German artist Thomas Bartels' work shows him playfully cooking up something in his kitchen.

And on February 5, 6 and 7, local artist Dominic Thomas will be performing a piece called Scratch Kitchen - A Recipe for Disaster, between 12noon and 8pm each day. It will feature some experimental dining, with Glass Boat and Byzantium chef Vincent Castellano, making a special guest appearance and helping Thomas to explore and explode the myths surrounding food, cooking and eating.

The films will be on show on Friday and Saturday at Spyglass, Welshback, Bristol.

For more information visit the website: www.hybrideyes.com/awning/1.htm

