

‘It’s hard work; you come, you work, you don’t work just when the muse takes you. Art is hard work.’

Chase correspondent **AMY FORDE**, marketing and communications assistant at Rotherham Open Arts Renaissance (ROAR), talks to artist Kevan Cadman who left teaching behind to pursue his own artistic path.



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T'S my first time really talking to Kevan Cadman, who has been a studio holder here at Westgate Chambers since October.

Kevan strikes me as the sort of person who doesn't sit down often; on both occasions when I have entered his studio he has been up, working with a focused, determined energy about him. You sense he's got a real, creative hunger, which is not only visible by the numerous pieces of work which surround him, but there is a deeper, burning drive which makes a lot more sense as we start talking.

He studied art at university in York and tells me one thing which will stay with him forever is a quotation by his art lecturer: "If you think you're going to have an artistic temperament forget it. It's hard work; you come, you work, you don't work just when the muse takes you. Art is hard work."

This is something which obviously rings true and sheds light on my first impression of Kevan.

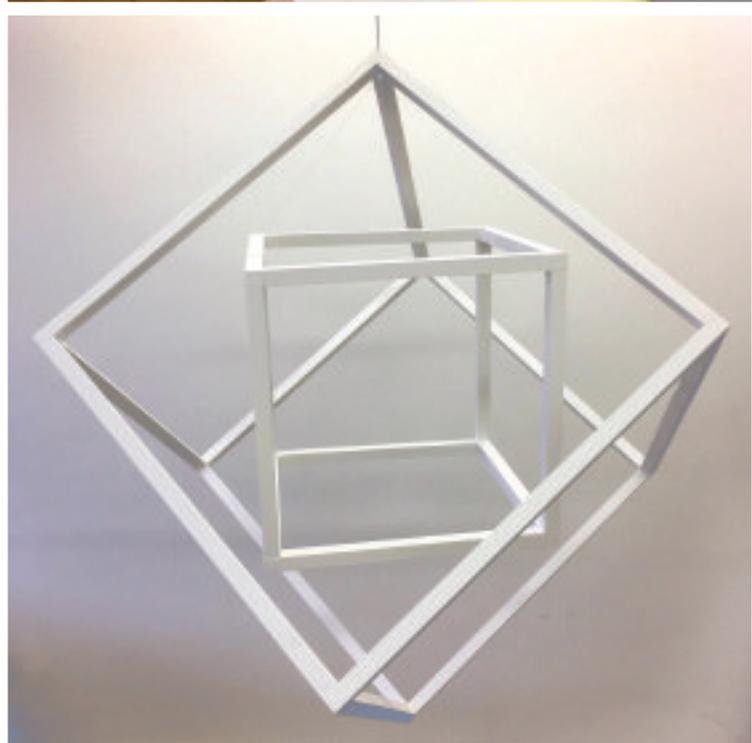
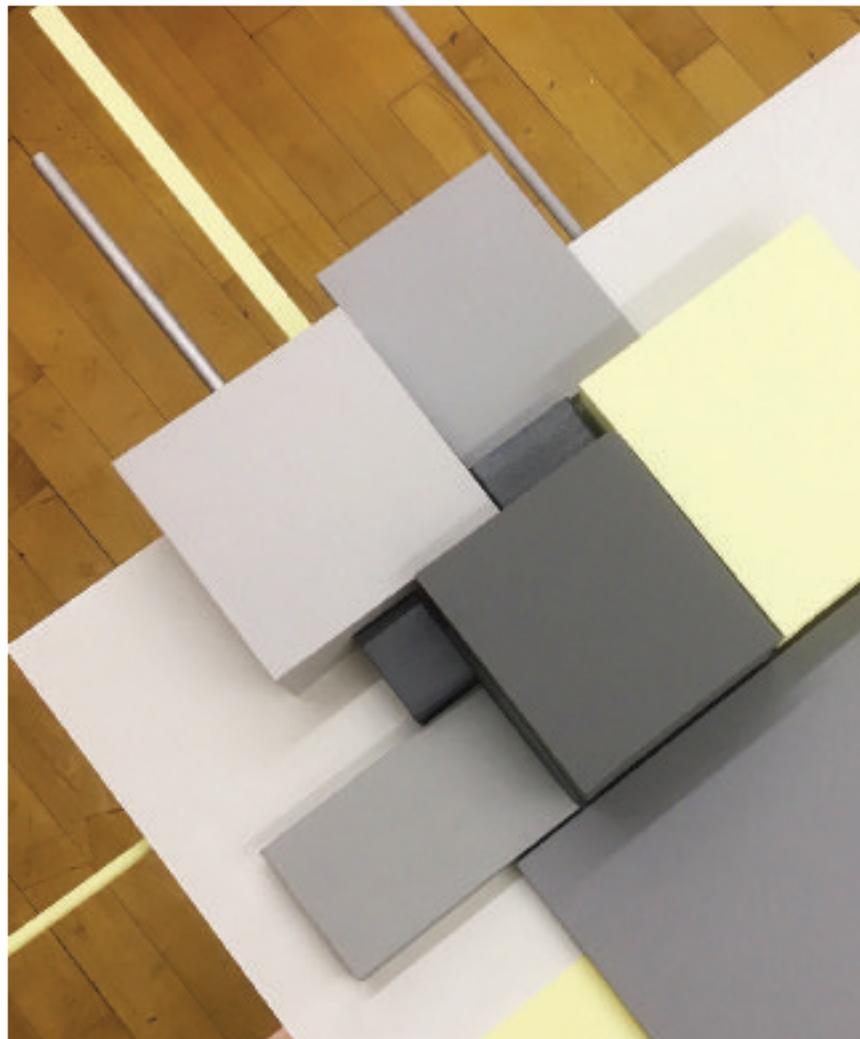
Kevan went on to work in education, something to which he dedicated 37 years of his life. I think it is fair to say that although it is obviously something he was passionate about, he became very frustrated with it by the end: "When I left teaching I was sick to death, and this sounds really corny, of filling in tick boxes, statistics and data. Boxes which were utterly meaningless because you don't need to tick a box to know a child; you react with the child, you talk to the child, you build a relationship with them."

His teaching career, and later frustration with it, is even more relevant as we start discussing his recent work.

The first piece that catches my eye is a mobile structure of clocks which are designed and shaped as flies. Stemming from the phrase "time flies", Kevan's way of working is quite unique: "Years of planning topics in primary, you often start with the word or the theme. That's how you plan your maths, your history, your geography. So I wrote the words, statistics and then wrote all these ideas, whatever came to mind."

Another mobile structure is Dropbox, a series of white cubes of different sizes and hanging at different lengths. There is something quite mesmerising and thrilling about the work. He goes into a bit more detail about another piece on the wall: "I originally got some rods and I was also looking at bar charts, another form of statistics. But when I laid the rods out on the floor they kind of reminded me of sound waves." After assessing the wave patterns which were created from recording a phrase about statistics (he did not wish to repeat the phrase), the central part of the work, the rods, mirrored the form of this wave pattern.

As we discuss this catalogue of work I use the term rebellion which may actually give the wrong impression of what is very neat and ordered work, but he explains that for him, like many artists, there is a need to be creative: it's something which has always been there. And this stretch of work is another example of this: "It's reclaiming the





nonsense of the boxes and the statistics.” Kevan explains it is “tumbling out” of him at the minute: “It’s like the old phrase anger is an energy, isn’t it?”

Either way, what he has done through this body of art is take something negative and make something quite beautiful out of it.

Juxtaposing the overall feel and style of his art-work, Kevan envisions his work being displayed in the natural environment. He recently took one piece to Boston Park and hung it on a tree: “It’s quite clinical I think, but I like it hanging in a more natural setting.”

The piece he is currently working on is inspired by the phrase “statistics manipulate truths” and he would like to present it in a natural setting “with stuff growing in or out of it”.

Like many creatives, his art doesn’t begin and end in the studio. I spot a couple of instruments in the corner and he tells me he has played music all his life, still gigging with bands Rotherham Rogues and Meadowland. I ask him what instruments he plays and there is a sort of pause and I imagine he is thinking to himself, where do I start? He tells me guitar is his main instrument, but he plays some keyboards as well. I gather he could get a tune out of anything with strings.

Having the studio has been a great aid to his work, originally a needs-must situation as he required a space to be able to leave his

stuff safely, especially using the variety of tools he does.

He explains that after Christmas he tried to create some music at home but found he couldn’t. He came into the studio and it just worked: “I have a space where I can reflect upon and do all the things I haven’t had the chance to do in my teaching career. And I just like coming in.”

The music he creates in turn easily inspires some pieces of his 3D artwork; the two interlink and intermingle and always have.

One of the benefits of having a studio and being a member of ROAR is interacting with other artists who are also dotted around: “It’s difficult because as 30-odd years as a teacher I am with people constantly and suddenly I am on my own. So snippets of conversation, I need them. I think you can get lost in your own little world if you’re not careful.”

In a way we finish as we started, looking to the future links directly back to his strong work ethic. He clarifies, he wants to work as a professional artist and start by exhibiting his work: “To me, and not everyone agrees with this I know, there is not a lot of point creating art of any sort – music, poetry, 2D, 3D – unless someone is going to see it. It’s the sort of thing like if you clap in a forest and nobody hears it, does it make a sound?”

You can keep up with Kevan on his website <http://www.groovevareart.com/> or www.groovevareart.com.



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FAMILY ARTS FESTIVAL IS A SUPER SUCCESS...



FAMILIES flocked to a special event at a popular Doncaster art venue.

The annual #PointFEST was held at the site on South Parade in the town which is run by darts (Doncaster Community Arts).

The free festival had a superhero theme and attracted almost 500 family members.

It included two sell-out family raves, a fancy-dress competition and live music.

Families put The Avengers to shame with their spectacular superhero costumes, as the likes of Cactus Man and The Flaming Carrot made their appearances.

Families were also treated to a wide range of interactive activities throughout the day, from Superhero Selfie Booths to free face painting.

Live music acts, including Doncaster Ukulele Group, took to The Point’s comic book exhibition space Scribble, Doodle and Draw for a grand finale of hits.

#PointFEST was well received by families, with some calling it an “amazing family inclusive event”, “the best day ever” and “an absolutely fantastic afternoon.”

This year’s event was sponsored by Keepmoat Homes, which helped it to be bigger and better than last year.

#PointFEST organiser Hayley Beecher said: “The event was a real success.”

“We were thrilled to see so many families in the building getting stuck into creative activities and having fun.

“The biggest joy for me was seeing the children and young people we work with in Doncaster’s five special schools coming to The Point with their families, many of them for the first time.”

