

Life & Times

Books

The final images by Tunick are stunning and show the architecture of this proud maritime city transformed with a glorious sea of bodies. The genius of his work is that he stops you in your tracks, making you appreciate what is all around you together with the human form in all its shapes and sizes. On previous installations he hasn't had enough people to fill an entire concourse, but, here, the main street outside the city hall is full as far as the eye can see with a mesmerising sea of different hues of blue, and now representing the largest nude installation in the UK.

Next to these images is *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* by Édouard Manet, on loan from the Courtauld Gallery. It depicts a female nude having a picnic with two fully dressed men and, at the time, it shocked the art world, who denied it entrance to the fashionable Paris Salon in 1863. Now, 150 years on, nudity is seemingly still shocking and there remain critics of what is seen as sensationalism. Tunick himself said, '*For me the nude represents culture coming into the city and how culture makes the city a more open and accepting place.*'¹

He has certainly achieved this in Hull, and, at the same time, put its year as City of Culture firmly on the map. The 2017 programme is bold, interesting, and huge — from exhibitions about the first female boxing champion to a sound piece on the Humber bridge, a Nordic folk festival to a children's literature festival. What most impressed me with my visits to the city was the warmth and friendliness of the locals who are proud of their city, without displaying any arrogance.

And before you ask, no, I'm not going to reveal where I was lying ...

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<http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/Ferens>

The exhibition finishes on Sunday 13 August 2017.

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REFERENCE

1. McNulty B. Spencer Tunick: bare with me. *Telegraph* 2010; **2 Aug**: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-features/7922021/Spencer-Tunick-bare-with-me.html> [accessed 4 Jul 2017].

Night Shift

Debi Gliori

Hot Key Books, 2017, HB, 32pp, £9.99, 978-1471406232



DRAGONS OF DEPRESSION TO SEABIRDS

Night Shift is the story of Debi Gliori's personal battle with her own dragon of depression. Gliori is well known as a writer and illustrator of children's books. However, this beautiful little picture book is for adults, to help express what it can be like to suffer from depression.

The book itself looks lovely with its rich blue cloth colour and thick cream paper, and the monochrome illustrations (except for one showing the dragon's fiery breath) are beautiful and simple, but effectively convey a condition that can be difficult to express with words. The dragon in the story represents the author's own depression, creating a persistent fog around her through its smoke and a constant feeling of dread of something she cannot see or name. I have always been quite fond of dragons but the metaphor of the dragon as the depression clearly conveys the difficulties of having an illness that no one can see and many do not believe exists. The isolating nature of depression, of feeling hollow and lost, and the sense of not being yourself any more (something many patients have said to me) become visible through the illustrations. Gliori states that she published this book to help others going through depression and I can see that empathetic illustrations and text could be useful for patients who are struggling to express themselves, and perhaps to give to family and friends to read.

This book does not have a happy-ever-after ending. It does not show the author as recovered from her depression, or even show the things that may help, which may disappoint some people who are wanting

to find answers. Instead, it finishes with a little message of hope that the depression will not last forever as she stops seeing dragons but starts to see seabirds flying overhead instead. Despite its small size and only taking a few minutes to read, the book is quite a powerful and moving personal expression of depression and a worthwhile quick read.

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