

THE NOTEBOOK

Our latest dispatch of local news from around Mayfair

INTERVIEW: Jonathan Addis



“I hope to salvage something of value in my surroundings so that I know better who I am”

To celebrate the drawing of his remarkable map of Mayfair, illustrator Jonathan Addis reflects on his career and life in the British capital

What was it that first drew you to London?

I had heard that the streets of London were paved with gold, and for me, in terms of the inspiration I find here, it is true.

What is it about locations, buildings and maps that you find so inspiring?

Maps fascinate me as our identity is tied with our environment and I feel that both are becoming more generic and characterless over time. I hope to salvage something of value in my surroundings so that I know better who I am.

How do you approach a piece of work that focusses on such a densely architectural area, such as Mayfair?

An artist has an 'idea' or vision and then one works to put that together. Detail is secondary in my work process.

Do your roots lie in London?

Very much so. My great-grandfather Sir George Pragnell was in charge of the British Red Cross relief effort for the wounded in the First World War and he gave up his mansion to live in the Hyde Park Hotel (now the Mandarin Oriental). In addition my grandmother Vera worked at The Royal Academy of Arts on Piccadilly, where rooms had been requisitioned to receive the wounded from the battlefield.

What is next on the horizon for Jonathan Addis?

I have new maps of Cambridge, London and Bloomsbury coming soon, in addition to a map of the Alhambra in Granada Spain, where I once lived.

Jonathan's maps can be seen at The Wren Press, 1 Curzon Street, W1J (wrenpress.co.uk)

