

Exercise: Looking at Cartoons

One of Steve Bell's best known creations was the cartoon of John Major wearing his underpants on the outside of his trousers. I think that this started with a chance remark, perhaps by Norma Major, that John may have "tucked his shirt inside his underpants" or something like that. But from then on, that became his 'tab of identity' so far as Bell was concerned and after that he was always portrayed with his underwear over the top of his other clothes.

http://www.belltoons.co.uk/bellworks/index.php/others/All-Sorts-1977-1999/910000_MAJOR-ROADWORKS

The following cartoon shows the tabs of identity for a number of recent or current politicians:

- Vince Cable portrayed as an old elephant
- The staring eyes of Margaret Thatcher
- The one enlarged eye and sticking out ears of Tony Blair
- Davis Cameron with skin so smooth it is portrayed as a sheath
- Nick Clegg – usually portrayed as Cameron's butler

http://www.belltoons.co.uk/bellworks/index.php/leaders/2010/2998-15-4-10_LIBDEMASCENT

For profiles I found the following examples by Nicola Jennings – Bob Geldof, Tracey Emin and Jeremy Paxman. I think that they are a perfect example of the genre – instantly recognisable, but also conveying something of the sense of the person portrayed.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/cartoon/2013/oct/05/bob-geldof-caricature>

<http://www.nicolajennings.co.uk/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/cartoon/2013/may/11/jeremy-paxman-caricature>

While in the Cartoon Museum in London as part of this research I came across the following cartoon by Dave Gibbons

<http://procartoonists.org/tag/dave-gibbons-roy-lichtenstein/>

Which is a direct take on the famous work by Roy Lichtenstein

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/lichtenstein-whaam-t00897>

There is a great irony in the cartoonist poking fun at an artist who used cartoon principles to make a (very comfortable) living!

While researching this article I also found it interesting to note how Steve Bell had used (and adapted) great paintings for his cartoons.

http://www.belltoons.co.uk/bellworks/index.php/others/BOOKPLATES-COVERS/889999_TS006-TEBBITORIG

http://www.belltoons.co.uk/bellworks/index.php/leaders/2007/2487-22-2-07_DUKEOFPORK

http://www.belltoons.co.uk/bellworks/index.php/others/BOOKPLATES-COVERS/830500_IFCHRON_MONAMAG

Or even using classic photographs

http://www.belltoons.co.uk/bellworks/index.php/others/New-Statesman/901008_NS124-AFTERDOROTHEA