

# Detention for art's sake

The latest Gate House Gallery exhibition is all about money - **Shaun Shackleton** met the artist Philipp Valenta, who explained why



Elizabeth College students have been working with German conceptual artist Philipp Valenta on his latest project *The Financial World* by appearing in a video entitled *Writing Lines*.

**E**XPLORING Guernsey's relationship with money is the theme of the Gate House Gallery's latest exhibition. *Financial World* is the work of Philipp Valenta, who was the gallery's artist in residence last year. Having studied fine art at Bauhaus University, he graduated in 2012 and has exhibited widely in his native Germany. The work that will be on show at the Gate House was inspired by his time here. It is conceptual, and what interests him is not only the implications of money and the financial world but the actual physicality of money itself. 'I have flowers that I have cut out from Guernsey banknotes,' he said. 'So many banknotes over the world have flowers on them, they're a common object. I have framed them and collected them together, just like real flowers.' Philipp has used Guernsey coins, too. 'This is frottage, like what you did when you were a child [putting a coin under paper and rubbing over with a coloured

pencil to reveal its image]. Damien Hirst did some dot paintings and I thought what is a coin but a dot? So I made my own dot art.'

When I spoke to Philipp he was putting the show together.

'There will be two larger works and also a site-specific performance piece called *Making a Mint*. I am fascinated by language and love the fact that "making a mint" means making a lot of money, as well as a mint drop. I will be handing out mints.'

Something else that he has noticed from wandering through Town is the secrecy of some banks.

'When you see smaller houses that have been turned into banks they have their windows blacked out. I will be blacking the windows of the gallery.'

Perhaps the most important work is *Writing Lines*, a video installation he made with nine students from Elizabeth College.

'The students are "writing lines" but in a special way - each student is given the

code of conduct by a major bank which broke their very own rules recently. *Writing lines* is a symbolic punishment for remembering the rules again - and for the fact that sometimes our children are the ones paying for the mistakes of the older generation. Next to the video of them writing, each page written by the boys is displayed.'

There will also be a surprise atop the school flagpole.

● **Financial World by Philipp Valenta will be at the Gate House Gallery, Elizabeth College. It opens on Friday from 7 to 9pm and then continues from 10am to 4pm on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20, and 26 and 27 March.**

**Philipp, along with UK artist Frances Hatch (who will be exhibiting at the Gate House Gallery in November) will be in conversation with Jean-Christophe Godet on Monday 21 March from 7 to 8pm in the Elizabeth College Performing Arts Studio. Admission is free and everyone is welcome.**