

FOCUS

For ART'S Sake



Peter Haxworth is shunning scenic views and highlighting the ugly monstrosities that blight the city. Tim Hughes finds out more

THE past month has once again revealed the huge wealth of artistic talent in our county.

Oxfordshire Artweeks continues until Monday, giving art lovers a chance to peep inside the workplaces of some of the city's talented painters, photographers, sculptors, jewellers and other creative individuals – and admire (or even take home) the fruits of their labours.

But while much of it celebrates the beauty of our surroundings, a more interesting perspective comes from artists who are less enamoured by what they see around them.

Best is Summertown's Peter Haxworth, who is presenting – among other works – Oxford Let Down – 12 watercolours in which he expresses his disappointment with some of the city's more recent buildings.

He says: "Oxford Let Down is the title of a little book that I have written explaining the reasons for my views about the buildings featured.

"I am not the only Oxford citizen who has grave reservations about some of the buildings that we have allowed to be built in our city in decades since the second world war.

"I felt strongly enough about this to select 12 buildings that seemed to me to have done the city no credit at all, with a handful of them being complete outrages.

"Thinking to spend some of my time in painting to some purpose, I selected

These are buildings that have done the city no credit and some are outrages

12 notable examples and painted them so that my feelings were placed on record. But just doing this did not seem sufficient, so I wrote this little book, explaining the reasons for my views, with comments by Martin Lipson, a friend and keen and experienced observer of cityscapes.

"This is available during Artweeks, for those interested."

Peter is also exhibiting eight table sculptures created in white acrylic – perhaps somewhat architectural in inspiration, which is not surprising given his delight in high quality building design in all its forms.

He particularly enjoys the strong tonal contrasts in the sculptures that are generated under directional lighting.

See Peter Haxworth's work at Tattersalls, Islip Road, Summertown

•More details from artweeks.org



Peter Haxworth's picture of the Denys Wilkinson Building and, top, Seacourt Tower