



Have they got news for you?

Sarah Walters meets two artists
stripping communication to its core



KIM Rugg's work is the kind of deconstructive, artistic play that makes journalists squirm. Her painstaking approach to boiling mass communication down to its essence and subverting the messages it attempts to relay includes cutting up news stories and re-assembling the letters into alpha-

betical order. Her front pages remain recognisable enough to identify, but remind us that communication is a tool that can be both manipulated and manipulative, and highlights the aesthetic elegance of communication tools once their purpose has been removed.

Equally cryptic reassembly is afforded to the images, which are cut apart and stuck back together



TELLING ART Top, Kim Rugg's Bounce, Beano Comics, 2008. Above, Leo Fitzmaurice, Craterform and below left, his Ukrainian National Opera's Madama Butterfly flyers

according to the gradient. Most end up resembling static televisions, while the words suggest a message to be decrypted but the task is, of course, impossible.

It is little wonder, then, that her new show in Manchester's Castlefield Gallery brings her together with Leo Fitzmaurice, whose work also delights in tearing communication and context apart – disrupting the functionality of packaging and publicity material to help us appreciate the beauty of the object itself.

"It's not critical of the contents of the packaging or publicity," says Leo. "It's just a desire to relate to them in another way, a deeper way. "It creates an ownership of these things that are constantly flying through our hands."

The gallery believes that both artists are two of the finest in their field using 'mundane materials...to reconcile both the dexterity of labour intensive craft with that of cultural, social and political undertones imbuing a sense of playful dissent'.

Leo adds: "If you were an alien

visiting earth, you'd probably think packaging was one of the most beautiful things you'd ever seen – they have to be to get us to buy them, but you don't notice that.

"The Argos catalogue, for instance, is the most amazing thing in the shop, but we chuck it away.

"What connects up mine and Kim's work for me is they're totally about physicality and this material that we look at for information, but don't look at as an object.

"By getting rid of the language element or jamming the information in some way, we can point out the beauty of it."

Both artists bring known and new work to the show, including Rugg's A Single Balloon Drifting Skywards (featuring a dissected page of The Guardian) and Fitzmaurice's Grigorovich's Nutcracker, made from a series of refigured store flyers. Wirral-based Fitzmaurice is also working on a commission for The Lowry.

At Castlefield Gallery until April 3. See castlefieldgallery.co.uk for opening times.

