

## **Frankophilia !**

**An exhibition of artwork by Frank Sidebottom fans**

**Reviewed by [Fat Roland](#) November 2010**

I've followed Frank Sidebottom from his surreal infancy on Granada TV and his cartoon adventures in print (Frank's Fantastic Oink! Page) to his recent revival on Channel M.

Following the passing of his creator Chris Sievey earlier this year, Timperley's silliest export is now the subject of a comprehensive exhibition at Salford University. I visited the show carrying the whole weight of my Frank fandom: this was either going to be, as Frank would have it, bobbins or fantastic.

Frankophilia! is a labour of love for the university's art officer Suzanne Smith. Dozens of people have submitted a dazzling array of Frank artefacts, including portraits, models, photographs and some items that are so unusual, they're going to need more explanation in the paragraphs below. It is a room full of obsession with a man in a pretend head.

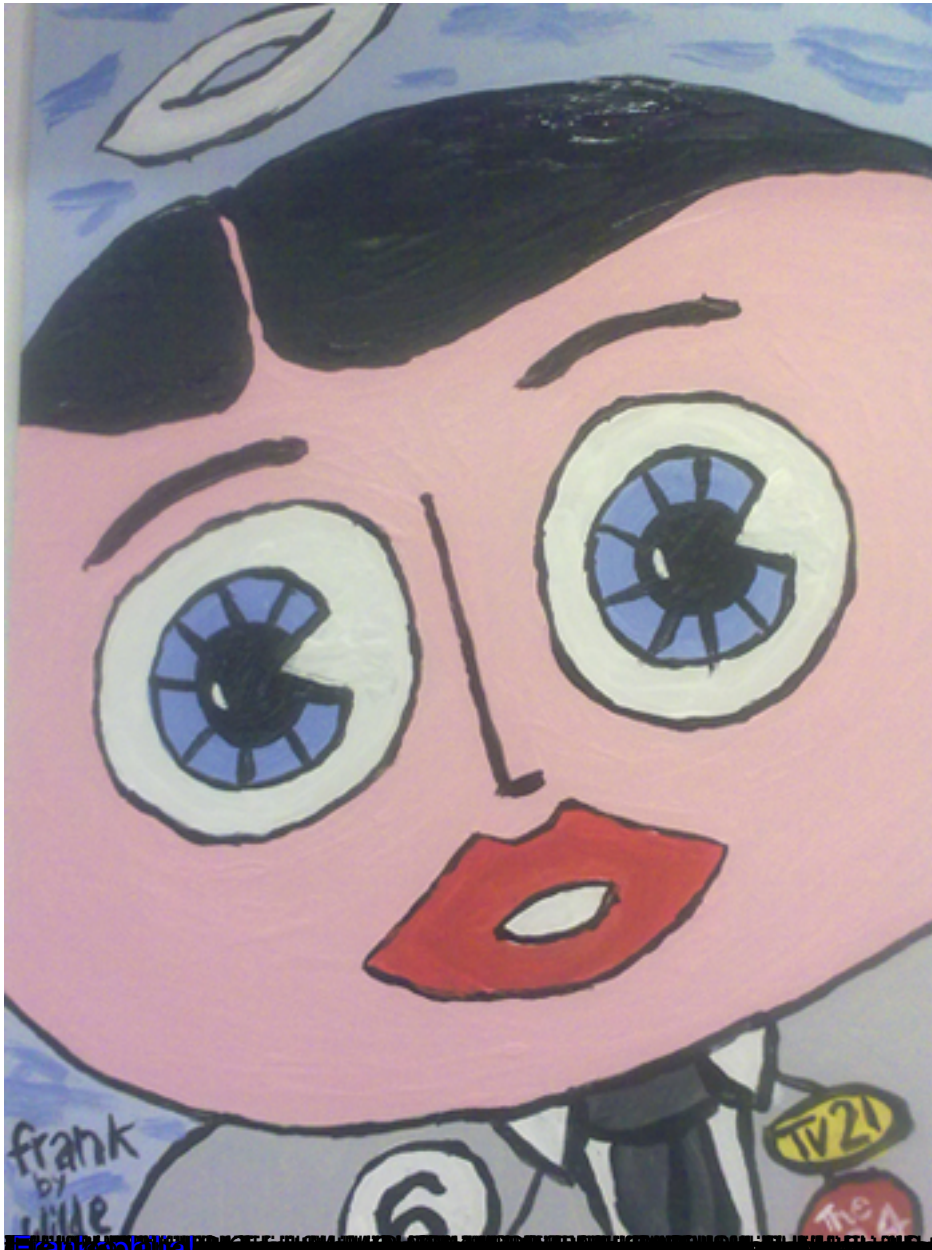
So what's there? Heads. Lots of heads. It's as if some kind of grotesque ancient Amazonian ritual has taken place in papier mâché form. This is not a subtle display, and because it is an exhibition about someone who has died, it may jar.

A model of the man greets you on entry and it's hard not to flinch with the thought that he's back from the dead. Seeing the awkward way the model sits on the chair, with his fat tie, cardboard arms and puffed-out chest, it's hard not to feel either grieved or aggrieved.

It brought to mind the same feelings I had at Frank's memorial in Castlefield when the organisers stamped on Little Frank's head so he could join his big brother in heaven. It's tasteless... but it's funny... and it's somehow uniquely Frank.

On first glance, you know this will be no ordinary exhibition. I'd recommend visitors skim round the exhibits once, give yourself a ten minute break, then start digging deeper because among the madness, there is sweetness to be found.





[Frankophilia!](#)