

An Interview with...

Mr Rubeus Warren – Art teacher and drama club leader

Hi Mr Warren, or Ruby to those of us in drama club.

Is this really the best we can do? Most interviews include a nice lunch or at least a few cocktails, maybe even an iced, skinny, double-shot Frappuccino.

Would you like us to arrange refreshments?

Oh I couldn't possibly, darling. Counting the calories, don't ya know!

Oh... kay then. The end of another year at Kingswood. What has been the highlight?

Doubtlessly my incomparable hosting skills as the school's social events. Oh, I'm sorry, that was the highlight for all of YOU. My personal highlight? While I love the art we've put on display in the new peace garden, I would have to say it was the Halloween costume competition. Seeing student creativity celebrated and put on show is what I live for. So much time and effort across the board this year.

Speaking of the costume competition, any comment on... one particular set of costumes?

Don't play coy, Timothy. If you want a direct answer, ask a direct question.

My name's not Timothy!

Neither's mine. Are there more questions?

Yes, well, moving on... anyone who has received one of your end-of-year reports will know all-too-well your dislike of the national curriculum for art. Care to explain?

Art is life... and life is art. The pursuit of art should be the pursuit of oneself, the discovery of what lies beyond the blank canvass or the block of clay or the slab of marble. Art should be what remains when the mundane is stripped away and only passion and emotion and heart are left. Art doesn't fit into a mould, it isn't made to tick a box, it doesn't exist for any purpose beyond its own existence.

To create a curriculum... to state what 'should' be done... to say what is good and what is not... it loses the true spirit of art. Marking every student against the same measure is nonsensical. Grading a piece on an arbitrary scale achieves nothing. It is like taking an apple and a pencil and marking them on their ability to work as a mode of transport. It simply doesn't make sense. Each of you boys is a work of art in your own sense, and your creations are just as unique as yourselves. That is what we should be teaching.

You are well known for your flamboyance and dramatic flare. Have you always had such a unique style?

Alas not. At your age I was every bit as mundane as you look right now! No no no, don't look offended, you're not a lost cause! It was only when I moved to university and discovered an environment where it was safe to let the inner me become the outer me and the radiant butterfly you see before you emerged from the cocoon of mediocrity. Can you believe I didn't even own my first cape until I was almost twenty-one?

Yes, I can completely believe that. So with time nearly up, care to give us a sneaky preview of what's coming up next year?

Sadly much of that depends on this damnable virus. The annual school play was put on hold this year, as what good is a play without an audience? Perhaps if the situation improves sufficiently, the show will finally go on. However, you can expect to continue to enjoy your art classes with me and you shall certainly get to enjoy more of my excellent hosting skills at parties and events. Start planning those Halloween costumes now, boys. Nobody likes last minute hot-glue burns!

Wise words to end on. Thank you very much for gracing us with your presence, Ruby.

It was my pleasure. Now, where's that Frappuccino?