

Biography

Jonathan Silver



Jonathan Silver was born in Bradford Yorkshire in 1949. He hated school, and exhibited an entrepreneurial streak from a very early age, often spending his school lunch breaks in local auction rooms where he bought and sold furniture.

Jonathan was usually bottom of the class, but in the early 60's he was given a school project that caught his imagination. He was working on the school magazine and had become aware of the rising fame of David Hockney, who had attended Bradford Grammar, the same school as Jonathan, a decade earlier. They met up in Jonathan's dad's Wimpy Bar, and David agreed to design the magazine cover.

After school, Jonathan studied Art History and Textiles at Leeds University and then began a clothing firm. He married Maggie in 1972, and worked so hard that by 1979 he had 13 menswear shops across the country.

Through the 70's and early 80's, Jonathan started many other businesses, but always one for playing a wild card, by 1984 he and Maggie fancied a change. They sold everything they owned and travelled the world for 18 months with their young daughters.

When they came back to England, Jonathan looked around for a new enterprise, and so

it was that in 1987 he bought Salts Mill, transforming it into a vibrant place of art and commerce. Days would start at 5a.m. and go on long into the night. It seemed that Jonathan's energy was boundless.

Jonathan and David Hockney had been in touch since that meeting in the Wimpy Bar all those years ago. Jonathan realized that Salts Mill was the perfect place for David to show his work, and David thought so too. That's how the 1853 Gallery was born.

Jonathan died of cancer in 1997.