

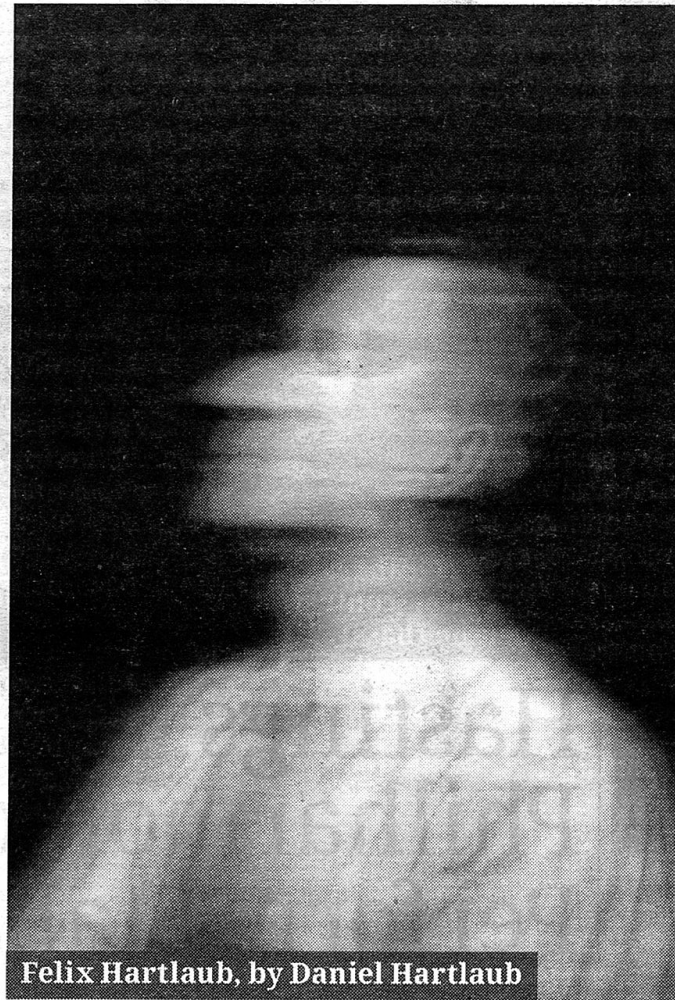
Electro Studios: The Artist that Never Was

JUDY PARKINSON

Lights All Awry in the Sky brings together works by artist and film-maker Daniel Hartlaub, from Frankfurt, and musician Keith Rodway, from Hastings. The centrepiece of the exhibition at Electro Studios is *Vanished, The Curious Life and Death of Felix Hartlaub*, inspired by Daniel's late uncle, with animated drawings and videos by Daniel, and live music.

In May 1945, three days before the end of WW2, Felix Hartlaub, a 31-year-old draughtsman and writer, was recalled for duty and boarded a train to Spandau. He was never seen again, cutting tragically short a promising literary career. Since 1940 Hartlaub had lived in

occupied Paris on archival work for the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He chronicled daily life in the French capital as 'word etchings' with a painter's eye for detail. He was only too aware of his presence as an unwelcome intruder, visible through meticulous sketches of the city's skyline and its people: civilians and soldiers in cafés and half-seen trysts during blackout hours, and not least an ever-looming threat marked with swastika flags distressed by the wind. His book *Clouds Over Paris* is a unique testament to the persistence of ordinary life, even when overshadowed by a calamitous



Felix Hartlaub, by Daniel Hartlaub

in his work, shaped by tumultuous times – an uncertain world in danger of destroying itself.

These fragmentary impressions give us a glimpse of an artistic and literary career that never was. "With the film *Vanished* explains Daniel Hartlaub "I hope to find some answers concerning an uncle I never met, and subsequently about the barbarous times he lived in and the parallels to today."

Hartlaub and Rodway lay open these parallels and leave the viewer to ponder whether history is in danger of repeating itself.

Electro Studios, Seaside Road, St Leonards, TN38 0AL Friday 16 May 5:30pm: *Necessary Animals* with music specially written for the show, plus *Simon and the Pope*. Saturday 17 May 11:00am–5:00pm: gallery open, 7.30pm: *AKA* with *Anthony Moore and Jury Service*. Sunday 18 May, 11am – 4pm, gallery open

backdrop. The mystery and strangeness which surrounded Felix Hartlaub's life are reflected