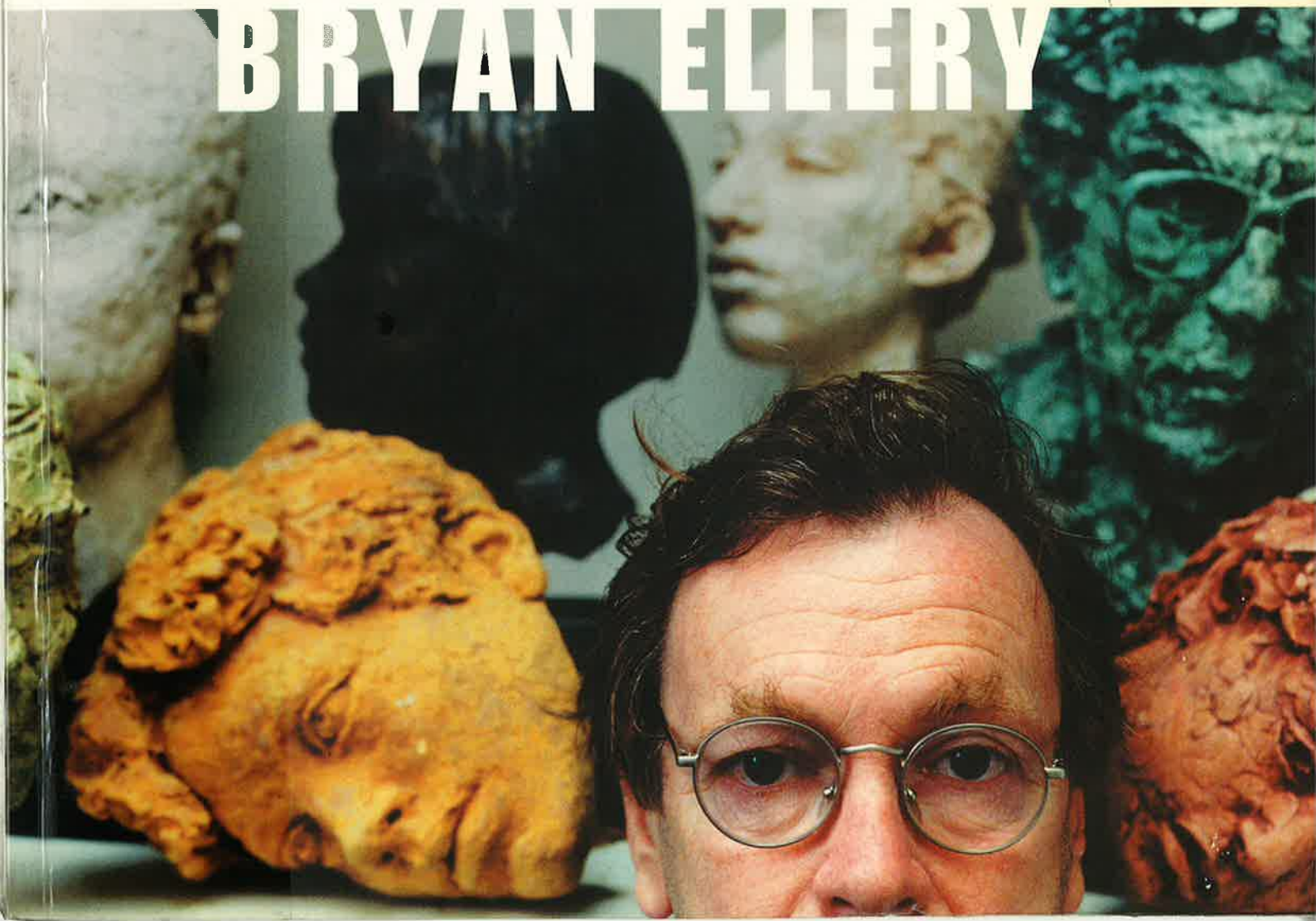


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BRYAN ELLERY



BRYAN ELLERY

portrait sculptor • 5 - 25 June 1999

L A S A L L E G A L L E R Y

LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, Singapore

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college of the arts

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I would like to thank the artist, Bryan Ellery, for his inspiration in providing 22 portrait sculptures ranging from cultural figures to vivid portraits of children.

I would like to thank Brother Joseph McNally for his continued support of the Earl Lu Gallery as well as his insightful essay introducing the work of Bryan Ellery. My thanks to the entire gallery staff for their great enthusiasm in this project and their tireless efforts in putting this exhibition together particularly assistant curator, Matin Tran.

I would also like to thank the British Council for their generous support, which has contributed to the realization of the exhibition and the publication of this catalogue. Thank you to the National Arts Council of Singapore for their great interest in including this exhibition as a visual arts project for the Singapore Art Festival programme.

Thanks to the College's President, Dr Brian Howard, and Vice-President, Alan Rubenstein, and my colleagues and friends in the college for their continued support of Earl Lu Gallery and its staff. To them, my heartfelt thanks.

Binghui Huangfu
Curator
Earl Lu Gallery
LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts

FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to present the work of Bryan Ellery at Earl Lu Gallery for the first time. This is the first exhibition of Bryan Ellery's sculptures to be seen in Singapore. Bryan began his artistic career as a sculptor. Not finding his real direction he stopped painting and worked as a carpenter for 15 years. This connection with making objects finally led him back to art. His connection with portraiture has led him to many parts of the world and more recently to Singapore.

It may seem unusual in the middle of 1999 to be presenting an exhibition of portrait sculptures. At a time when we are inundated with information, photography, digital images and the internet we still seem drawn to look at still portraits of people we may recognize. It is interesting to wonder why we still have such a fascination with an art form that has existed for so long. It strikes me that what portrait art represents is an immediate link between the viewer and the work of art. This link has many levels that seem to present themselves rather like the layers of an onion.

When we approach a single portrait, or in this case an exhibition of many portraits, we initially link directly to the subject rather than the object. Depending upon the skill of the artist we are led directly into a facet of the subject's character. We wish to know more. The nuance found in well-executed portraits allows us to feel a rounded personality. After this visual impact we tend to want to analyze the character of the subject. We want to know what the artist was seeing, and if we have any knowledge at all of the person represented, we want to know whether the artist has seen the same character that we have seen.

This rapid absorption into the character of the subject of a portrait is an unusual process in the viewing of art. Generally with contemporary art, people approach the artwork from the outside and slowly work their way in. In the case of portraiture, one has a tendency to be drawn directly into the subject before then

working your way out to the process. It is not until after you feel you have an understanding of the subject that you begin to look at the technique employed to render the subject. In the case of Bryan Ellery's use of highly textured impressionistic surfaces there is an attempt to balance this process.

Bryan's use of sculpture as the medium for portraiture extends the possibilities of expression beyond that which would be available to the two-dimensional artist. In the case of photographs and paintings we approach the work from a single standpoint. In the case of sculptures, such as Bryan's, we approach the work from any angle - as indeed we do with people. The "in round" inherent in the third dimension allows the extra dimension in the exploration of the character of the subject. As we approach Bryan Ellery's work, we are able to see a gifted portrait artist at work. When we examine his subjects, we feel that we have engaged in their personalities, and by the surface and solidity of the products we are able to feel the process used by the artist in realizing those works.

BINGHUI HUANGFU
Curator
Earl Lu Gallery

MAN OF BRONZE

Of all the materials used by artists of East and West down through the millennia, bronze is probably the most loved. Perhaps if wood were more enduring it might rival the metal but it is too fragile and too combustible. Stone, granite and marble have had great advocates; no one would deny the passion of a Michaelangelo. Clay and terracotta have been exploited in the sculpted armies of Sian, in the Tang Dynasty of China and the Della Robbia of the Renaissance. But, for expressing the emotions and the subtle changes of a human face, bronze is supreme.

The very processes by which bronze is cast and patinated ensure an overall triumph for the artist. They are complex. Mastery is required most of all in the modelling of form. Portraiture demands exactitude. Whatever liberties or "poetic license" the artist is conceded; however cubist or abstract the style; in the final analysis, the work will be judged on its resemblance to the sitter. Hence the first statement of the artist whether executed in clay, plaster, wax or other substance must bear the clear image of the subject and be recognizable as such by the public. There is no doubt that the art of the cartoonist produces recognizable images. It so happened also with the seeming distortions of the Post-Impressionists and Cubists.

Bryan has complete mastery of his genre and the images he produces are instantly recognizable as sculptured portraits. One of the reasons is that he is scrupulous in measurement of form. Just as the conductor of a Beethoven Symphony has first of all to follow the metre before injecting a life - force into the performance, so it is with him. He somehow imbibes the sitter's spirit and transmutes it through the clay into the final bronze.

A word about the process may therefore be in order. Bryan works with the same kind of clay as potters use. It is sufficiently soft to take a fingerprint without sticking to the fingers. He first constructs a simple but rigid armature of the shape of a head. On to that he places layer after layer of clay to build up the form, while constantly checking facial measurements. All the while he is studying, with the changing light produced on the face, emotions induced through conversation between him and the sitter.

A portrait photographer may take multiple shots in order to get the correct and most characteristic image of the sitter. Bryan, in the course of several sittings will reveal many aspects of the subject's personality in one single work of Art. It is during this stage of the work that he has to make decisions on the depiction of calmness, gentleness, ruggedness, strength, refinement, texture, softness or personality traits. There is an interplay between sculptor and sitter which results in the truthfulness of the final statement and its ultimate beauty. He has to make hard decisions on whether to use a "warts and all" approach or to tone down obvious unpleasant features in the sitter.

Much of the rest of the technical work can be done by helpers or at the foundry which Bryan selects to cast his work. But he does the casting of the mould himself. The foundry casts the wax model which he can alter as he wishes. The wax shell is covered inside and outside by a heat resistant plaster and the wax is burned away. Then comes the important task of pouring molten bronze into the mould, the separation of the cast, the cutting and burnishing of it and the hastening of its oxidation process. The final process is decided by Bryan himself. He knows that all bronzes darken on being exposed to the air or to rain or to various acids. He carefully chooses what is called a patina. These vary in colour from golden browns through blues and greens to reds and blacks. Each patina puts a final and natural seal on the work of art.

How Bryan arrived at this seal of excellence is a long and interesting story, which will be adequately told elsewhere. Suffice it to say, that unsatisfied with his first degree in English Literature he sought and obtained another in Fine Arts. In the exhilarating and somewhat stormy youth culture of the late 60s he was very much "with it" in music and sculpture, in surrealism and Pop art. However instead of joining the revolutions of Paris or New York he headed for Italy where he lectured in English and executed and sold his mixed media pieces in timber and aluminium. Still not satisfied, he took courses in carpentry and architecture and accepted employment as a sculptor of gigantic caricature heads for the Adriatic Festival. Back in England in 1979 he designed skateboards and even ran a successful factory for their production. Interior Design beckoned and his total training fitted him for projects all over Europe. But all other occupations were distractions from the real love of his life and his proven skills.

Not only did he execute successful portraits of outstanding personalities of his native England but increasingly the rest of the world has made demands on his time. As an artist he has been himself equally at home with children and with the elderly; with British aristocracy and with African writers Ben Okri and Patience Agbabe. Veteran Actress Julie Christie as well as the late BBC writer Erik de Mauny were both immortalized by his bronzes. His exhibition of heads of writers and poets held at the Rocket Gallery in London proved a great attraction.

Here in Singapore I have had the singular pleasure of being "bronzed" by Bryan. Within the small confines of my office he set up his trestle and without any fuss but with much humour and gentle banter he set to work. I just sat comfortably and talked and became increasingly amazed at what was transforming in front of me. Amorphous lumps of soft clay were being pressed on to the armature by his dexterous fingers. I saw my profile emerge as I had never seen it in a mirror. We had time, or at least I had time for endless cups of jasmine tea while he observed every flicker of my eyelids and the pressure on my lips. My spiky eyebrows projected dangerously as never in life. My bald pate failed to faze me or him; a wall, as of granite, soon surrounded it. We spoke of everything under the sun while he worked, measured, pinched, flattened rounded the ever pliable grey matter. It was not at all the same as sitting for a painter where the studio light had to remain focussed and a movement of the head could easily provoke the anger of the artist or make him want to start the whole operation anew. Bryan was infinitely accommodating and always observant. He never missed but rather revelled in the slightest twinkle of the eye.

One aspect of his style I loved was the ruggedness of his treatment of the clay, while he captured a very exact likeness he ensured that every insertion of clay into the general form would preserve the imprint of his fingers and spatula. He knew that the final bronze, despite the intervening transmigrations through liquid plaster, liquid and hardened wax, molten and solid bronze would finally and for all foreseeable time reflect the changing light of the sun through age-old patinas.

This very notable exhibition of mainly bronze portrait heads is probably the first of its kind in Singapore. Although in the 30s there were several good portrait sculptors working in Singapore only Dora Gordine used bronze. Since World War II the portrait market whether in two or three dimensions has not prospered in Singapore. Now at last we have a chance of catching up on what has been happening. This is a major show by a major artist.

The portraits produced by Bryan embrace not only the sitter. They are also self-portraits of the Man of Bronze.

BROTHER MCNALLY
President Emeritus
LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts

THE SPIRIT OF PORTRAIT SCULPTURE

What is it about the human face that draws our desire to record and preserve its image, its form and its substance? What compels our intent gaze and fascination with the person it encapsulates? German philosopher and sociologist, George Simmel, rationalizes the answers to these questions eloquently:

"Within the perceptible world, there is no other structure like the human face which merges such a great variety of shapes and surfaces into an absolute unity of meaning."¹

The depiction of the human face has been traced as far back as the third millennium BC when Egyptians portrayed their deceased rulers in funerary monuments and death masks that served as both icons of preservation and celebration and evoking tensions between the ephemeral and eternal.² Sculptures in the round from the Late Chou Period (600 – 222 BC) of China saw figures with exceptional mastery of form and expression.³ The Early Christian period and in Byzantine art saw portrait busts successfully invoking spirituality, while the portrayal of Buddha in sculptural form has never been without emphasis on expressing a transcendental state.

The portrait sculpture goes beyond the act of accurately recording the physical appearance of the subject. It addresses the intangible, the spiritual character that defines the subject. The Greek artists

in portrayals of their powerful leaders concerned themselves more with capturing and expressing the emotional reactions (pathos) and character (ethos) than revealing a close physical resemblance.⁴

Techniques in portraiture have developed based on careful observation and study in efforts to express this spirit, the ethos and the pathos. Details and characteristics of the face have been moulded into expressions of mood and notions. Emphasis on postures and gestures have offered insights into personalities and social conditions.⁵ The contortions of facial features captured and moulded by the artist describe not only the character of his subject, but also his own judgement of himself. The spectator too participates in this self-awareness. The mirror that gratifies the ego of the subject offers illumination of our own perceptions and character.

Thus drives our desire to capture the face of an individual. In the process of moulding a face from clay, chiseling its features from stone or casting it in bronze to eternalise its expression we are discovering our own individuality, and in consequence constructing iconographs of our social conditions. In viewing the portrait form we experience an association with the subject. We not only absorb the presence of the subject, but also come to recognise our own psyche and spirit.

MATIN TRAN
Assistant Curator
Earl Lu Gallery

¹ "The Portrait in Printing, Sculpture and Photography", *Purposes of Art*, 4th Edition, Albert E. Elsen. Copyright 1981, Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc.

² Ibid

³ A History of Far Eastern Art, Sherman Lee. Copyright 1978, Thames and Hudson Ltd, London.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ A Concise History of World Sculpture, Germain Bazin. Copyright 1931, Smeets B.V. Amsterdam.



From the artist ...

I present these portraits in the hope that you will enjoy them as examples of the variety and complexity of humanity, and if nothing else I hope the exhibition will inspire you to appreciate and ponder the beauty of our human race. On a personal level I have to admit that often when starting a portrait I pause for a moment to absorb the surprise at finding yet another new presence in front of me. This is what gives me great pleasure and fills me with wonder.

In building up my portraits in the clay I work in a traditional and academic manner. I find that this discipline gives me a provisional framework to contain the more important subjective insights. The almost journeyman task of capturing the external likeness, allows the more tentative and personal processes to grow. The balance between the need to show the sitter's personality as well as the immediately recognisable outer 'likeness' is a fine one and varies with each person. The changing surface textures on my portraits may to some extent suggest this tension.

A famous portraitist once said that "to portray in the final analysis is to betray". This may be true in that the artist can get behind and expose any mask that his sitter tries to hold up, but to me it would be a greater betrayal to turn out a mere reproduction of an ideal self-image. I hope that my portraits are a successful synthesis of tentative intuition and hard-nosed observation, speaking less about human vanity and more about the uniqueness of the particular person.

In this collection I show a few of my favourite portraits done over the years, some with obvious connections to Singapore, others a world away. I have tried to make it a truly multi-ethnic mix especially appropriate for Singapore, and the ages of my sitter's range from 2 to 96!

It is time to enjoy the passing show!

"Most difficult perhaps to portray is the sophisticated self-awareness, the mature beauty, and sometimes glorious pretensions of the adult. Later there is a certain relief in examining the weight of the experience which is borne inescapably and tangibly by the older sitters. The light of wisdom shines through their features."

Bryan Ellery

STEPHEN DOMINIC ELLERY

He sat, at the age of two, for long periods, thoughtfully and probably slightly resentful. Now he is 32 years old and I recognise that same person, that same look, though he is much too busy these days to pose. When a portrait is good enough to capture the intrinsic presence of an individual, it will remain a 'likeness' however much the external features develop and alter.

His shoulders have certainly got broader since he started waving the conductor's baton. This portrait is one of my favourites.

Plaster, 1967



JOHN NAPPER

It was lucky for John that his planned trip to Singapore during the war was cancelled at the last minute. Being noticed as an exceptionally strong swimmer he had been 'volunteered' by his commanding officer to be dropped off a fishing boat outside the harbour to plant limpet mines on Japanese shipping. He trained for nearly six months.

He comments, "Every aspect of the exercise was rehearsed, but nothing was said about picking me up afterwards!" John was at that time an official war artist, and over the last fifty years has consolidated a fascinating and wide-ranging oeuvre. In his time he has produced portraits of the Queen and several of the Prince of Wales (who happens to have one of the largest of John's work), and now in his mid-eighties he is busier than ever. Always encouraging to me, I regard him as a sort of kindly Merlin figure.

Oscar Wilde quipped about the English face "once seen, never remembered" but with faces like John's around I think for once he was well off the mark!

Bronze, 1995



ILIA MUSIN

At the age of 95 Musin is fit and still teaching conducting in St. Petersburg Conservatoire. I went to Russia two years ago to do his portrait and was astonished to see him throw a chair at an unruly student during one of his masterclasses. His long life spans the fall of the Tsars, two world wars, the dark years of Stalinism, and the collapse of Communism in an epic life story worthy of a Tolstoy novel.

He is a much prized teacher in many of the great music centres of Europe, travelling abroad with his son, a mere strip-of-a-lad at the age of 75 (retired).

Bronze, 1995



MRS. K. CHATWELL

Mrs. Chatwell's features are naturally strong and classical. Her husband is proud of her beauty and wanted her to look like a Greek goddess. Therefore the little details which define the individual were discarded and a more distant and enigmatic image appeared.

Someone once advised me... "flattery, flattery, flattery, you simply can't lay it on too thick!" However, in this case, I hasten to add, it was entirely unnecessary!

Bronze, 1995



CRAZY CATHERINE

Catherine twinkled and bubbled like champagne during our sittings. A dedicated and talented sculpture student at the Slade School of Art, London, she positively radiated the electricity of youth, brightness, joy, and a touch of madness. Like one of those still photos of expanding cosmos my graven image gives just a mere hint of her prevailing life force.

Bronze, 1995



RICHARD INGRAMS

Probably best known in Britain as the editor of the sometimes viciously satirical magazine *Private Eye* – scourge of the pompous, the vapid, and the corrupt. Since the Sixties he has regularly been upsetting all sorts of people. Thanks to a society which is generally mature enough to tolerate strong satire, he has survived, though in attacking money and power he has occasionally been bankrupted, and once or twice close imprisonment. As he sat for me it amused him to strike the formal pose, the dignified aloofness of the public statue. When we discussed whether to include a suggestion of a smile he commented "I think I should look suitably glum".

Bronze, 1996



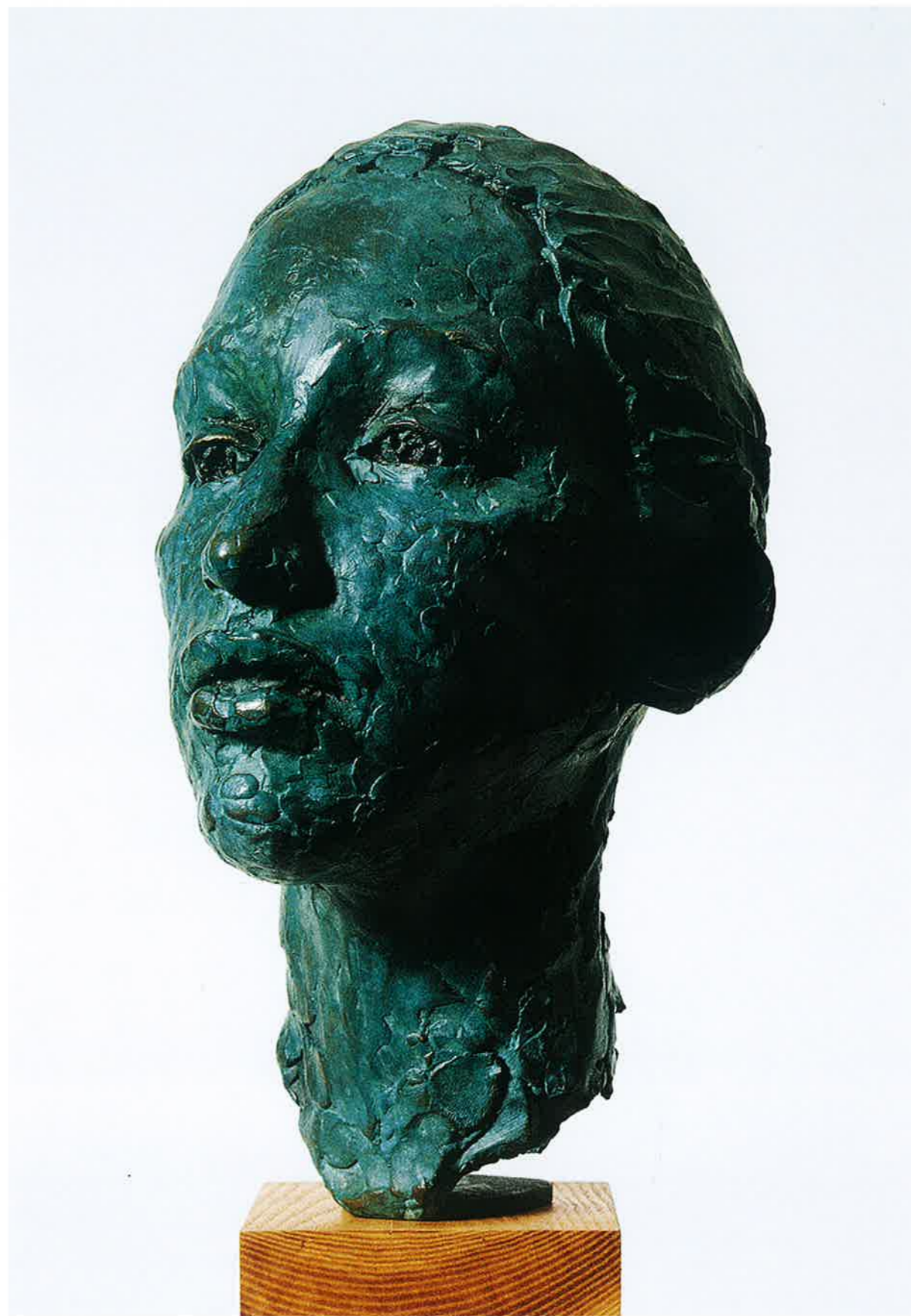
BIDISHA

Her parents are from Calcutta, but Bidisha is a precocious child of London. At the age of fifteen she was already writing for the hip music magazines like NME and Dazed and Confused, at seventeen she wrote her first novel, "Seahorses".

She sat for me as if in a trance and I was captivated by the magic of her presence. Her Indian features at the same time strong and delicate, are proud and graceful. At present she is reading Gender Studies at Oxford. When I applauded her Indian beauty she dismissed me as being an 'ethno-fetishist'.

Best to stick to clay modeling!

Bronze, 1997



INDIA CORNETT

India always seemed to like sitting for her portrait, and we got on well. The peaceful times we had together allowed me to quickly capture her powerful and very feminine presence in the sculpture.

Bronze, 1997



JOHN MORTIMER

John Mortimer was not keen to sit for another portrait. He found the experience of sitting still to have his portrait painted quite exacting. I had to convince him that sculptors were different. He need not come to my studio. I actually prefer to visit sitters in their own homes. He sat for me in his crowded, book-lined office and continued his usual routine.

John worked away at his desk cheerfully. A gentle but energetic man. I was more exhausted by the sheer number of phone calls he had to make than by the work I was doing. Suddenly after about three sittings we both looked at the clay and decided that we had caught him. There was nothing to add but the glasses.

Bronze, 1997



PATIENCE AGBABI

Patience is a performance poet and her work on stage is electrifying. A radical feminist, her subject matter tends to be about society's exploitation of sex, people, and power. She is a well-known poet in Europe and the States.

I think this is one of my most beautiful portrayals of a woman – the hint of threat in her gaze possibly says more about my problems than hers.

Plaster, 1997



BROTHER MCNALLY

Bronze, 1997

When I first came to Singapore I soon noted that any talk of the arts usually involved the words 'Brother Joe'. Not clear whether this was code for some kind of local mafia don, I decided to find out for myself. On our first meeting that he was the antithesis of this. Now, having got to know him and searching for a way to describe him and his approach to life I came across the word 'catholic' (with a small 'c'). My dictionary gives the meaning as 'all-embracing, of wide sympathies, broad-minded, tolerant; of interest or use to all men'. Close enough, I think. And I have realised he comes readily to the lips of the Singapore art works simply because he has had so much to do with developing it.

Typically, when I asked to do his portrait, permission was given only on the understanding that it should involve his students at every possible stage, so the sittings (I normally insist on privacy) were continually punctuated by curious young sculptors, design students, photographers, visitors from abroad, teachers and friends. His little niche in the college, where he works as 'Sculptor in residence' radiates busyness and creativity. But in spite of – perhaps because of – the comparative chaos, my work went well, and I hope I've caught something of the man with the smiling eyes and the startling eyebrows!



BEN OKRI

Ben advised me to portray his thoughts, not his appearance. As I got to know him I picked up the challenge. There's something of the unknown, the dark mysterious richness of Africa in his image. Beyond that, a hint of the nearness of the spirit world with both fear and pleasure attendant. To get an inkling of his thoughts I read his novel 'The Famished Road' which won the Booker Prize a few years ago. A magical book, with a kaleidoscope of colourful beings and places, it only reinforced my feelings of inadequacy in trying to make a portrait of its author, who to me kept up a chameleon mask of expressions and comments.

Bronze, 1998



JEREMY RAMSEY

Jeremy seems to manage a hectic business life together with a very productive artistic existence as a painter. It's a balancing trick I have never been able to manage. To make any serious attempt at being a portraitist I had to "give up my day job". In the sittings we had together he kept an eagle eye on the way I worked. I would not be surprised if he started to fit in the odd portrait bust himself before too long.

Bronze, 1998



DR EARL LU

I worked on Dr Earl Lu's portrait whilst he was convalescing after a serious operation – a captive sitter – so my image of him is possibly a little drawn and gaunt compared to his normal state of 'rude health'. Yet I feel the essence is there. A much travelled man with a disquieting insight into the English character, I enjoyed his humour and the brightness of his off-the-cuff remarks.

And it's always good to work with a fellow artist – you can talk shop as much as you like. When I'd brought my work to a conclusion Earl did a painting especially for me, there and then, giving me an inkling of the skill and speed required for Chinese brush work.

Bronze, 1998



ANNIE SHAFRAN

I suspect Annie could easily become a top American model when she grows up – not that she could particularly choose to be, she's much too cerebral for that, but the required perfect looks are already there. We enjoyed sculpting and chatting but were of course plagued by the enormous language barrier that divides the Americans and the British. Thank goodness there were some Singaporeans around to translate.

Bronze, 1998



DATO DR LESLIE LAM

This is the portrait of a quiet and thoughtful man who enjoys nothing better than to contemplate the fish and plants of his garden. In fact he is an internationally known heart surgeon living an intensely busy life. He studied in Ireland and still has to spend much time abroad because his skills are in great demand outside of Singapore; but I was struck by the great pride he has in the achievements of his native country. One of the pleasures of being an itinerant portraitist is that I often get to share the benefits of another person's success. My sittings with Leslie usually began with him offering a glass of the sort of French wine I rarely encounter! But the surgeon's and the sculptor's hands remained steady.

Bronze, 1998



BERTIE CORNETT

Could have a great future as a professional contortionist. During the sittings he was constantly investigating new and ever more difficult ways of moving from one side of the chair to the other, in spite of being bribed to keep still with a constant stream of 'Smarties'. Still, I love Smarties too, and I was nicknamed shuffle bottom when I was his age, so we have a lot in common. We've become best mates since I finished his portrait.

Bronze, 1998



MAGGIE SHAFRAN

I would describe Maggie as a glorious eccentric, but she might take that as an insult, so I won't! She certainly has a mind of her own, and amongst many talents, does very original portraits of horses, something I can never get right. During the sittings we watched the Spice Girls video again, and again, and again.

Bronze, 1998



MEGAN MACMAHON

Even during the odd tantrum Megan managed to maintain a certain regal dignity. A powerful personality, at the grand age of 1¼ she easily took charge of the proceedings, granting modelling time according to her whim. Luckily we got on well, and she found enough windows in her busy diary to allow the work to be finished. Mrs Thatcher watch out.

Bronze, 1998



MEIRA CHAND

Like many writers Meira is an observer of life and people, so that when her family decided to commission a portrait of her, she suddenly saw the tables turned. She was to be observed! At first she was very defensive, but we soon established a close rapport when it realised that we were both essentially interested in the same thing, celebrating and listening to 'the still sad music of humanity'.

Bronze, 1998



CHOO HOEY

Bronze, 1999

Another Singaporean who has made the world his demesne, I managed to track him down to London, where he was resting between concerts in Athens and Beijing. This nomadic aspect of his lifestyle provided a certain common sympathy between us. I think we both enjoyed the natural 'pause' which the sittings gave us. Back here Choo is best known as the creator and chief architect of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra.



VICTOR WEE TAR TAN

Bronze, 1999

Creativity often flourishes in adversity. The events in Victor's life seem to prove this. At the age of 21 he suddenly (and it seems irrevocably) lost all power of sight. Out of this catastrophe he now emerges as an artist of rare talent, who has already attracted much attention in Singapore and beyond. This year he has won the 'Commonwealth Arts and Crafts Award', and recently his sculptures have been chosen for a public site.

He builds his sculpted figures with a delicate tactile observation, a sense of scale which gives them the same monumental quality that one finds in the work of Henry Moore or Aristide Maillol. In my portrait of him I have tried to capture the almost incandescent quality of his aura.



Artist's Biodata

Born in 1943 in England he attended Wells Cathedral School before going up to Exeter University to read English. At that time he discovered an interest in sculpture and after gaining his degree went on to Art school. Swept along by the intoxicating art scene of 60's Britain he produced brightly coloured, mixed media work which now might be described as Surrealist Pop, with the influence of Paolozzi, Allen Jones, and George Fullard visible.

After successfully completing art college he moved to Italy and established a studio near Urbino. His first one-man show was at Galleria Segnapassi, in Pesaro, 1970. For the next three years he lived and worked in Italy participating in local exhibitions and teaching at the University of Urbino.

Through disillusionment with his contemporary artwork he chose to abandon it, return to England and take up a career in Interior Design. Though continuing to carry out the occasional portrait he worked from 1975 to 1995 based in London as director in his own Building and Design company.

After winning several high profile commissions including the actress and 60's icon Julie Christie, Lord Gowrie, chairman of the Arts Council of England, and John Mortimer the playwright, he decided in 1995 to concentrate solely on sculpted portraiture, and had an exhibition at the 'Rocket' gallery, London. This brought more commissions, both in England and abroad. Within the last three years he has worked in Russia, Belgium, Italy, France and several countries of Asia. He has exhibited regularly in London – again at the Rocket in a one-man show in 1998 but also in group exhibitions such as the Royal Academy Summer Show, the Mall Galleries, and Gallery 21, Cork St.

After exhibiting at the LASALLE Gallery in Singapore in June 1999, his next exhibition is scheduled for Hong Kong, followed by Bangkok in November, and the Barbican Centre, London, in December.



"Making a portrait of another human being is a great privilege for me, and it needs certain conditions. I always work from life, in a one-to-one situation with peaceful surroundings, so that my subject's natural presence can become clear to me. It is then my job to record my impressions in clay – a synthesis of feelings and observation."

Bryan Ellery

