

*“The finest statue in the world can only resemble a man turned to stone, sculpture, though not proper to express health or life or motion, accords admirably with the repose of the tomb.”* Hazlitt.

I began my sculpt career at school, long ago, making dioramas in the art and craft lessons and in my teens bought the plastic kits most boys of my generation bashed, and continued doing commissions into the mid nineties for various hobby companies until got this bust commission in 1997/8.

This commission and essay was therefore by way of a meaningful, if minor revival, but the thrust of my meaning is, truthfully, mainly in regard to its painterly state as well as to its portraiture, given Art is but the Latin for Craft, and betokens neither aesthete emotion nor any particular fictional mode.

People are generally unfamiliar with the fact that ancient sculpture was painted or gilded, nor was I, and this was true of architecture of all kinds and of its related statuary so as to liken them to images of life. Mediaeval statuary and architecture might also be realistically finished.

I don't think the popular analogues of High brow art such as cartoons, Pop music or kitbashing, as being of needs, inferior art forms, because these are only modern kinds of folk art. Even midbrow kitsch is better than High brow Conceptual kitsch or than No brow kitschy Brutalism: Making things is as instinctive as is the love of recognisable Beauty or of evolutionary Order.

The bust is solidly three dimensional and its mass is factual, despite depicting a fictional contour in 1:1 scale. It is redolent of a mannikin, waxwork, surgical dummy or a taxidermoid object, and not needfully of fine art. The badges were moulded in situ on the clay prototype before casting.

It is the first of what I mean to be more commissions, wherein the multi-media (but not the kinetoid) techniques of the miniaturist's hobby are used in the service of Art, both expressively and realistically.

All the paints were used realistically and not for the redundant faux-three dimensional effect so no highlight or shading was used as Miniaturists use given the light source is natural when the object is lifesize.

An object less than 1:1 is an image of space, that is, of a perspective miniature, so one does not use 2-D techniques on a real 3-D object, which is already lit by ambient light. Objects bigger than life are innerly occult. All kinds of paints were used, the flesh was doen in oils, including the sculptor's own and post and enamel was used where apt. Only the essential glasses lacked.

The piece was sculpted in clay on a table and evolved from photographs and live measurements. It was cheaper to make it flatback in half which meant only a one-piece mould was made, thus the end product is a cast from same, yet is an original from a clay prototype, after which it was improved by engraving, given the bespoke nature of the job, and given the mould was only prototypical.

Many problems arose in this first job, not least weightwise, and though the bust was meant to be

hollowcast, it was cast solid from ceramic resin, a composite medium which is very stony, weighty and hard for stability and durability.

Painterly portraiture in 3-D is naturally easier than in 2-D, and is like make-up, save for the sculptural facts of eyes, lips, insignia, weave, et caetera. The final result, only, has the real context of the room it embodies – it has mass and even functions spatially from the front with a framed space as a burglar deterrent, according to my customer.

## II

In the fictional Arts, today, (as opposed to the practical arts), poetry in the literary field and sculpture in the visual field seem to be relatively unpopular expressive modes. It is to the latter craft these recent ideas mainly relate to, as a painter who both sculpts and poets.

Such ideas may be of interesse to painters, whether hobbyists, gallery or commission artists, and which may perhaps help clarify their motivations and development as makers.

Certainly the Arts all concern themselves with doing and not so much with mere Having or with the holiness of Being, insofar as even Carl might have arranged his own bricky loveliness and Jackson have dribbled his own smelly paint, so that Art is always concrete, (unless conceptual nothingness, much like God or the soul). No pun meant, if present.

As work, however, Art is symboloid, not consumable, save to memory, thus its difference to other work is that it is not contingent nor a media because of what is is to the perceiver, or not, but is a thing to be sued for perception and emotion, an idealist object, useless to an ignorant mentality just because art is a spiritual reality for the spiritual innermost of mankind where it is extant and in thiswise, all Art is concerned with the abstract past and abstract future, in short, with the duality of Eternity.

As far as Art modes within the Art realm, sculpture seems to be to the plastic arts what poetry is to the literary arts, a poor relation, yet both activities are the solider, more demonstrative and outdoorsy modes of their respective idioms.

There is something sexier about Representational forms that involve space and mass and are more sociable, extrovert or lifelike, whether in the presence of heavyweight dense sculpture or in the body of the histrionic poet.

This relates to painters in so far as what they are not, which is embodiery of words or of impastoes into paintures which might show the maker's mind mingling modes or might betoken more possible minglings in all the Arts and thus themlseves show some instinct for other media.

To me, the habit of private reading and of picture-hanging suggests a relatively estranged and anaesthesoid society, one stately impersonal, whose moral import is wholly unlike that of those brazenly heroic public statues, (unless you like Moore or Giacometti's 3-D LS Lowries), while mute reading is selfish, unlike Homeric, Teutonic or Celtic bard readings are, that are oral and public.

Painture overlap here in the sale of books and music in pictorial jackets and in the sets built for the theatron – Music is much more privatisable than opera and plays and noone has to be able to read music to enjoy it.

I am saying that sculpture and poetry are live Arts and that literature and painture are relatively dead or lonely Arts. Notwithstanding, sculpture and poetry are noisier objects to make, given poetry is

only orphan lyrics, as in lyre, than are novels and pictures.

There is a plain difference between the Becoming and Being Arts, in that the former are analogoid to the life of their makers and to the Seer/Listener who also beset space-time like sculpture, poetry and music.

So, what do I think, that painters should try sculpture or that novelists try oral poetry or book readings? Or nothing more than the trendiness of modern multi-media Dadasim or of the Wagnerish Gesamtkunstwerk? Or do I suggest something nearer to the traditional and human universalism of generalist or amateur creation and enjoyment of the Arts? Flash shows exemplify this. Would painters and novelists say things they are not saying in relatively shy gallery-painting-viewing or book reading, alone, in private?

I ask how real are pictures and novels, and is their reality dependant on the artist's society and therefore on the artist's reality; if money is the realest thing in society, then the art, artist or society are subreal, because in the debt of capital that forestalls Magic Realismus with abstract fungus.

If the society is only subreal, one sees this clearest in the colonial and inhuman vacuity of conceptual art and in the nihilist ugliness of figurative masochism, of the multi-ethnoid poseurs and plunderers and in the tourists of plagiarism, the raiders of the rubbish dumps whose work is literally kitsch. We need be neither in the box of the hidebound traditional nor in the box of the ersatz Futurist.

Hazlitt's aphorism at the start of this essay likens the sculpture to a victim of the Gorgons gaze; while every art work is such a victim, as the makers focus is a magic that solidifies the dreamers images into public artifices inversely to how a spyglass gathers sunrays to burn an object to ash.