

The Majlis Gallery



The Art of Sculpture



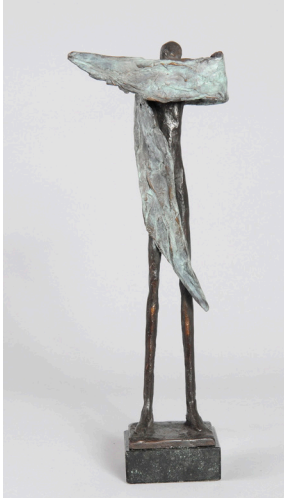


The Majlis Gallery, the first Fine Art Gallery in the UAE is a haven for artists and art lovers. The gallery founder Alison Collins came to Dubai in 1976 to work as an interior designer, and fell in love with the country and especially with the architecture and ambiance of the old wind tower houses in the Bastakiya. In 1978 she and her husband secured the lease on villa number 52 Bastakiya, Bur Dubai . Here, over the next ten years, they raised their three young children and hosted many informal soirees introducing artists both professional and amateur to a somewhat culturally bereft community. In 1989 the family moved out and the house became a permanent gallery . The gallery's vision then, as it is now, was to bring to Dubai artists of international repute and to support them in their exploration and interpretation of the Middle East, into visual forms and to represent locally based artists who meet the galleries high standards.

There is also an ever changing collection of three dimensional objects which are displayed along with fine art, sculpture and artifacts in the five main rooms of the house achieving a human scale which is enhanced by the house's original features - niches, palm frond ceilings, shuttered windows, oiled teak doors, and of course, the wind tower.

A Majlis is defined as a meeting place or common ground. Over the years The Majlis Gallery has more than fulfilled that description. It has hosted countless exhibitions, seminars and cultural events and formed a model for the feasibility study that ultimately led to the restoration of all the remaining buildings in the Bastakiya, now known as The Al Fahedi Historic Neighborhood and its emergence as a cultural centre for Dubai.





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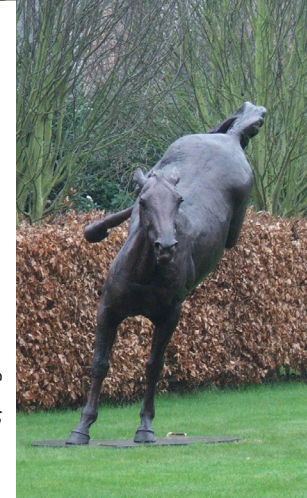


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Introduction

Sculpture has been part of mankind's world from prehistory to the present day. The story is populated by extraordinary artists, most until the Renaissance period sadly anonymous. Their creative and technical skills have given civilization an abundance of three dimensional art at every scale. Marble, stone and bronze were the favoured materials and are still the most durable and technically challenging of media.

The earliest known examples of sculpture are two primitive stone effigies, probably fertility symbols, known as *The Venus of Bereghat Ram* and *The Venus of Tan Tan* dating from circa 230,000 BCE and discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean. A big gap then exists before prehistoric sculptures in the form of carvings of figures, animals and birds dating from circa 35,000 BCE were discovered in caves in Germany.

Stone age sculptures made from materials as varied as mammoth bone, ceramic and clay, as well as various types of stone, such as steatite, limestone, serpentine, and volcanic rock were discovered throughout Europe, Africa and the Levant. These small icon forms set the ball rolling. The ensuing ages and periods in our cultural history from the Neoliths via the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans to the present day saw the art of sculpting develop into a documentation of daily life, the immortalization of gods, kings, queens, conquerors and heroes, the embodiment of religious beliefs of every creed as well as the depiction of the beauty of nature including the human form. Add to this the role of architectural sculpture in cementing national identity, The Eiffel Tower, The Statue of Liberty, Nelsons Column and even the Burj Khalifa and you have a fascinating subject worthy of deep exploration and full of household names. Michel Angelo, Bernini, Roubiliac, Canova, Rodin, Hepworth and Moore to name just a few.

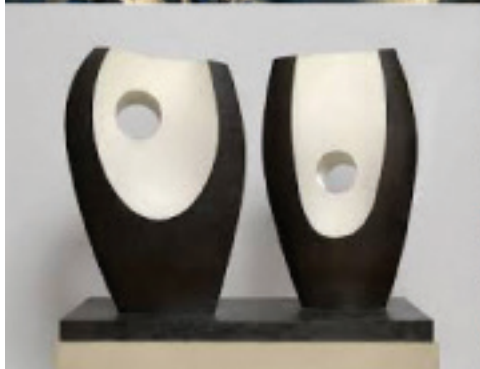
The Art of Sculpture

Brings together the work of Contemporary Sculptors

Cristiano Aliviti, Denise Dutton, Hannes Loots, Jamal Abdul Rahim, Judith Holmes Drewry,
Karel Zijlstra, Lloyd Le Blanc, Michael Chaikin, Mustafa Ali, Sanna Swart

A full portfolio of all their work with the gallery is always available on our website

They are all happy to work to commission.



Cristiano Alviti



Owning a gallery is a cross between being a fisherman and a gambler. One never knows what a day may bring. The day Cristiano came through our big wooden door we knew we had a hit lucky. Here was a young man so full of creativity, energy and enthusiasm. He had brought himself to Dubai to explore and discover what he felt would be an interesting multi cultural city. His drawings were so powerful and timeless and the photos of his sculpture so exciting that we just knew that the opportunity to work with him would present itself.

Cristiano was born and still lives in Rome. His youth was spent surrounded and influenced by the beauty and cultural history that personifies this iconic city. He drew and painted from a very young age and used his talent as an artist to pay for his university studies. In 1995, Cristiano decided to drop out of university and established a company with his brother and fellow artist Patrizio, inspired by old-style renaissance workshops. Since 2003, he has displayed his work through personal exhibitions and with public and private institutions.

His fountain in the Piazza Appio was commissioned by Rome's City Council. His participation in the Venice Biennale and numerous other commissions have established Cristiano firmly in the lineage of the Italian Sculptors. We look forward to a long relationship with him and with Rome.



Denise Dutton

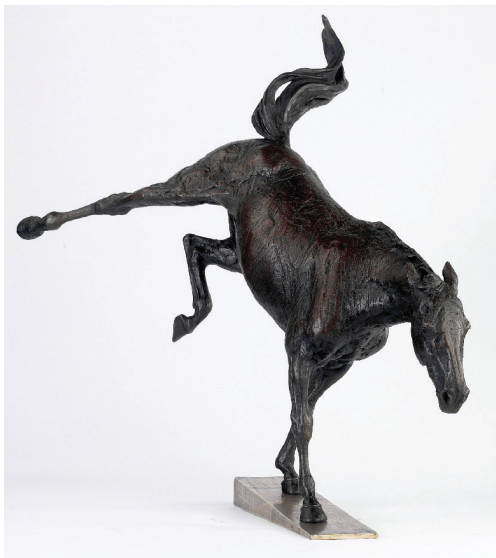


Alison first met Denise in the late 90's when as a very enterprising young artist she brought a collection of her work to the very first Arabian Horse Show. Then as now she came across as a very modest artist with extreme talent and dedication. She was showing the most stunning full sized horse balanced on one foreleg, quite a feat for a horse let alone a sculptor. Sculpture has been an integral part of Denise's life along with drawing and an admiration of the horse in particular. Committed study is the bedrock of her work. Daily refreshment through observation and drawing assures a familiarity which informs her art. Capturing the life and spirit of the subject, whether horse or human, is her reason to sculpt.

After a foundation course at Cambridge, Denise studied at the Sir Henry Doulton School of sculpture in Staffordshire. Here she studied both the figure and the horse.

The majority of her work is to commission and includes life size pieces such as Amberleigh House, the winner of the 2004 Grand National and the last Maharaja of India, Duleep Singh on horseback unveiled by Prince Charles, on Button Island, Thetford, England. She has just completed a Memorial to honor the work of the Land Girls and Lumber Jill's of the first and second world wars which is now sited at the Staffordshire Arboretum and was unveiled by the Countess of Wessex last October.

When not working on commissions she returns to the subject of the horse which constantly inspires her, studying the animal anatomically aesthetically and behaviorally. Working on any scale from small to more than life size - attention to detail underpins the processes of sculpting modeling and casting.



Hannes Loots



Hannes Loots is a medical doctor, executive consultant, student in philosophy, traveller and above all a sculptor. He lives and works in Stellenbosch, South Africa. His delightful bronze sculptures have been shown through The Majlis Gallery for many years. An Afghan hound, a Saluki and several Bulls have all moved on to become talking points in homes around the world.

Hannes studied sculpturing techniques by attending evening-classes at the Art School of Port Elizabeth Technicon's Faculty of Art and Design (now Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa) under the guidance of David Jones and Andriete Wentzel. From 1992 through to 1995 he completed advanced courses in sculpturing techniques, moulds and design using different media. In 2012 he took an art vacation and did marble sculpturing in the studio of the master sculptor, Severino Braccialarghe, in Croce/Caldarola, Italy. He works in different media but prefers to make his art in indigenous woods, bronze, stone and soft metals. A small bronze Maquette will often be enlarged into bigger sculptures to reach life size proportions.

Since 1996 he has taken part in many combined and solo exhibitions in South Africa and Dubai. He was awarded the Dave Macgregor Trophy for sculpturing by the Eastern Province Society of Fine Arts (South Africa) in 1993. His art can be seen in many private collections, internationally and local, as well as selected art galleries.



Jamal Abdul Rahim



We have had the good fortune to have known and worked with Jamal for many years, firstly showing his masterful etchings, lithographs, original drawings and paintings. Whilst these genres remain at the core of his work it is as a sculptor that Jamal is spending his "prime years" contending that the strength needed to sculpt could leave him in his later years when he can pick up his printmaking and painting skills once more.

He began life as a feisty individual in a Muharraqi environment in Bahrain. Strongly attached to the sea he spent most of his childhood enjoying its beauty and challenges. Towards the end of 1979 he decided to go to India where he took a course in drafting. He stayed in India for four years before returning to Bahrain with a diploma in engineering drawing. At the time Jamal saw free hand drawing simply as a hobby. He participated in his first joint exhibition at Al Hala club in Al Muharraq in 1987. During the exhibition he was introduced to the eminent Bahraini artist Ibrahim Busaad who encouraged him to take up art seriously.

It would be a mistake to describe Jamal's deep passion with sculpturing as experimental. He is an artist who exerts serious effort and understanding when sculpting. According to him, "stone is already beautiful and by sculpting it I am inspired to withdraw the forms hidden within its the natural beauty . While the bronze technique allows me to freely accomplish any ideas in my mind and make all the desired refinements to the mould till I reach exactly what I want. It is another kind of effort but believe me, it is worth it."

Jamal's entire portfolio is based on taking artistic rules to their limits. He has the ability to form a language which, while not following any particular technique or school, goes directly to the heart. Through the eyes and hands of this unique artist we too delve into the challenge.



Judith Holmes Drewry



Judith's legacy as a sculptor is deeply embedded in the way she lived her life with her husband, fellow sculptor, Lloyd Le Blanc at Manor House Saxby. Her instinct for good hospitality was at one with the self-discipline that underpins what she achieved. Her work enables us to see something of what it is to be that particular girl or boy, young man standing smiling, woman sitting hidden by a hat or whatever, as well as something universal we can recognise, enjoy or reflect upon.

Judith's clarity of vision shines through in her work. Many people who have encountered Judith's figures, whether wandering through gardens or in the formal spaces of a gallery, have been inspired to use her pieces to create something special in their own gardens or home. Whether as a gift, a memorial, fun for the grandchildren, an impressive sculpture garden in the Blue Mountains of Australia or a small piece in a corner of a room, people find ways to bring something of Judith's spirit into their own space and lives.

Judith's life as a sculptor, wife, mother, friend, mentor and bon viveur was lived to the full. She and Lloyd loved nothing more than a day spent working in the studio, garden or foundry - capped by an evening with patrons, friends, family and students around a table laden with home cooking and home grown vegetables. Judith also spent a good deal of her time encouraging and supporting young people, especially dyslexic students, through work experience and educational projects. It was alongside the excitement of watching others learn and grow that her own work developed. Judith's models were drawn from people she knew as well as those she was commissioned to portray. Clients invariably became friends, and Judith's work attracted increasing attention beyond this immediate circle. It is through sensory pleasures, whether from the earth or its produce, and how they help us to feel better about ourselves and others, that we can appreciate how Judith's work contributes to an understanding of ways to live well.



Le Blanc Fine Art

Bronze lost wax casting process



01 The Sculpture in Clay

The sculptor makes the sculpture in clay, over a metal armature.



02 Prep for the Mould

The clay sculpture is then cut into segments and painted with an oil residue, then clay sheets are placed over the segments.



03 Building the Mould

The clay sheets are then encased by a thick layer of plaster. Once the plaster is dry, the clay sheets are removed from between the sculpture segments and the plaster.



04 Rubber Negative

Rubber is then heated and poured into the plaster to fill the gap of where the clay sheets were, encasing the sculpture in rubber - this is then allowed to cool.



05 Applying the Wax

Molten wax is then painted onto the rubber mould sections to a suitable thickness.



06 Sculpture in Wax

When the wax is cooled, it is peeled away from the rubber and the different sections are put together to produce the sculpture in wax.



07 Gating

The wax sculpture is cut into suitable sections for casting. Wax runners and vents are attached to the sculpture pieces with a pouring cup on the top.



08 The Dip

The prepared waxes are dipped in a ceramic liquid and stuccoed with a refractory material six times to provide a strong ceramic shell.

Lloyd Le Blanc, with his fellow sculptor and partner, Judith Holmes Drewry, created the successful Le Blanc Fine Art at the Manor House in the tiny Leicestershire hamlet, in England.

It was here, that for over 35 years they made their family home and place of work. They developed the old farm buildings to house a bronze foundry, workshops and studios. Lloyd gathered an in-house team of craftsmen with diverse skills, to create a technically advanced bronze foundry, where all of their work is still made to this day.



09
The Furnace

Once the ceramic shells have dried the shells are placed into a furnace.



10
Lost Wax

The furnace is heated to 850°C to flush all the wax out, leaving empty ceramic shells.



11
The Ram-up

The hot ceramic shells are placed in a sand box which is then filled with sand. The box is then vibrated to pack the sand.



12
Bronze Pour

An electrical induction furnace melts the bronze to 1120°C. This is then poured into the ceramic shells.



13
Chip Out

Once cooled, the ceramic shell is chipped off, leaving the sculpture sections in bronze.



14
Metal Shop

The sculpture sections are then sand-blasted and the runners are cut off. The sculpture is then welded together.



15
Patina

The completed metal sculpture is then sandblasted and painted (oxidising the surface of the metal with heat and acids to produce colours).



16
Wax Coat

A wax coat is then applied and the sculpture polished, giving the final look desired.

Karel Zijlstra



It was our good fortune that Karel Zijlstra came across our website a couple of years ago and decided to contact us. The resultant show Black Cloth and Bronze with fellow artists Paul Wadsworth lit up the dark days in the middle of the recession. Karels work reminds one that life has more depth than the here and now and the spirit of past lives still fills the air we breath. When we asked him for a little more about his life as a sculpture he sent us this rather amusing summary.

“Such philosophical questions are too much for me. I never found an answer as to who I am or why I sculpt, the latest is because I never learned a decent profession. I suppose I quit university and started painting and sculpting. Suddenly I had a wife and a family, a car, a mortgage and exhibitions scheduled six years in advance. 25 years later I still do not know what I am doing. Just to embody those things I am occupied with for that moment I suppose.”

Other human beings have always been on this world; this fact has intrigued Karel Zijlstra since his childhood. Over thousands of years men and women developed from bestial creatures to spiritual human beings. Lack of scientific knowledge made them believe in gods and miracles; life was explained and made bearable by story telling. People joined secret associations, searching for the truth behind the harsh reality, preached by king and clergy. Human evolution is the leading motive in Zijlstra’s work. He was inspired by the Celts, who came from Eastern Europe through Holland, Scandinavia and England to Ireland. Like the upright Celtic dancer, Zijlstra’s statues reach out for elevation and spiritualization. His figures show no feet, they rise out of the misty Irish land like thin gods. Their spirituality makes them almost unassailable. These slender, introverted figures are often compared with Masai warriors or Egyptian gods. Rightly, according to the artist. Because his quest for origin, genesis and the future of mankind is universal and embraces all people and all cultures.



Lloyd Le Blanc



Having met and exhibited for Lloyd and his wife Judith back in the late 1990's specifically at The New Orientalists exhibition sponsored by The British Council and The British Embassy in 1997, we were delighted that Lloyd contacted us to say that following Judith's illness and sad death that he would like to come out to The Middle East again. It's no mean feat transporting large sculptures around the world but here is an artist totally unafraid of big challenges. Alison especially likes the following description of Lloyd and his work written by Ken Ford who was a tutor of hers.

"I have a high regard for Lloyd Le Blanc's many skills. His work is characterised by a fluid and versatile mastery of his materials. Not only that, but he is the complete sculptor in that he can handle every phase of his work from the clay or plaster of the modelling through all the many stages to the finished bronze sculpture. Nowadays, this is rare indeed. In recent years his work has been mostly concerned with animals, and in particular, birds. Here again his mastery of materials comes into the picture. His knowledge of the technicalities of metal has enabled him to create sculptures which exploit the precarious to the limit, resulting in intriguing and exciting structures. It could be argued that Lloyd Le Blanc's sculptures of birds have optical elements in them.

His surfaces are modelled in a fashion so that in certain light conditions they lose their structure to become almost photographic; a proposal to fade into nature, be it landscape or water. This fulfils one of sculptures' prime duties; to modulate light in a novel way. This change of perceptual direction will almost certainly be perceived unconsciously but even so will be felt as added reality.

On a personal level, Lloyd is well known among his friends for his dry sense of humour which often encapsulates a situation, a problem, or what needs to be done. This is significant, since humour, like art, through a slight of hand changes one thing into another, thereby allowing a resolution of apparent tension. When one looks hard at any object there are sure to be surprises, and this will be so for anyone who looks hard at Lloyd Le Blanc's sculpture. They will be surprised, and more."



Michael Chaikin



Michael trained and worked initially as a hospital doctor and GP but movement and form were always his greatest obsessions. He is continually experimenting and playing with different types of movement and materials using wind, steam power, hand cranks, electric motors and anything else that comes to mind. He has two main lines of work at the moment: his copper fish mobiles and his perspex mobiles. Both materials he loves for different reasons, copper for its beauty and malleability and perspex for its light reflectivity.

He always wanted to take things apart when he was younger - trains, motors etc and when he became a doctor was interested in the workings of the human body. As a sculptor he loves the mechanics of his work as well as the look of the sculpture. All parts should work well and smoothly and compliment the form. He first studied at Eastbourne Art College, East Sussex, UK in 1986 then Falmouth Art College, Cornwall, UK (1987 - 1990) where he obtained a degree in Fine Art. He taught sculpture at Hawkesbay University, New Zealand and then joined Red Herring Studios in Brighton, England as a working sculptor. Exhibited in London, Brighton, Hamburg, Paris and Dubai with numerous one man shows. He lived and worked in Brighton until 1999 then moved to Falmouth, Cornwall, UK to start his own studio complex in a derelict water mill which he renovated and turned into a thriving artistic community.

Michael then went on to work with The Eden Project and a number of Theatre Companies making moving sculptures for theatre and TV.

It is his life's work to make sculptures that look beautiful when they are still and spectacular when they move. Michael now lives and works in Penzance, in the far West of Cornwall, UK on an old farm with 7 acres of land and outbuildings, one of which is his studio. His wife is also an artist and he has two young daughters.



Mustafa Ali



Mustafa Ali is one of the Middle East's finest sculptors, a statement which is justified by the fact that his work can now be found in many private and public collections throughout The Middle East, Europe and the Americas. Indeed, his appreciative audience devotedly follow the progress of his work as his exhibitions take him from Syria, the place of his birth, to Jordan, Geneva, Lebanon, Washington, Paris, Milan and of course, Dubai.

Mustafa cites his upbringing in Lattakia, Syria as the primary influence in his work. Indeed, his figurative sculptures, mostly of people and animals, often depict Mesopotamian mythology. It is also possible to sense something of the Italian in his sculptures, probably due to the fact that Lattakia was located on the Roman trade route, leaving an indelible cultural mark on the lives of its inhabitants including the young Mustafa Ali. The result is that Mustafa's work is at once stunningly graceful, wonderfully simple and incredibly evocative – many capture the natural beauty of the human form, while others playfully depict subjects in the most unlikely poses. Mustafa works mainly in wood and in bronze often combining the two materials in stunning one off pieces.

We met Mustafa through one of Syria's most renowned artists the late Abdul Latif Al Smoudi. They often held joint shows with us and days spent in their company were full of creative conversation.



Sanna Swart



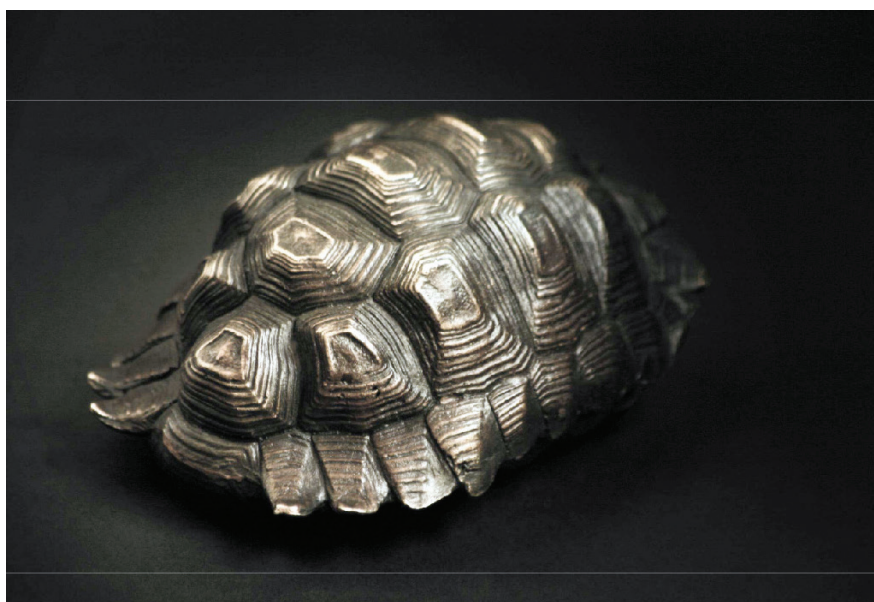
We are often asked how we find our artists, Susanna or Sanna, as she prefers to be known, is a very close friend and colleague of Lynette ten Krooden. Lynette often talked of the work and on her last visit brought us some samples of exquisite bronze shells modelled and cast by Sanna. We were entranced by them, their weight, tactility and patina.

Born in Pretoria in 1967 Susanna graduated from the University of Pretoria in 1989 with a Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree majoring in sculpture and visual communication. She then pursued a four year apprenticeship at the Johnson Atelier Technical Institute of Sculpture in New Jersey, USA, receiving her technical certifications in all aspects of foundry work in 1994. She also gained valuable experience in working with various materials including bronze alloys, mild and stainless steels, aluminium, cupro-nickel, cast iron and silver.

Europe then beckoned but after working for two years in Belgium, Sanna returned to South Africa and now produces sculpture that encompasses her love of the land and its people. The veld, its metaphysical beings, and the ancient mysteries of Africa are all reflected in her work.

Sanna has been active in showing, guest lecturing, judging and curating competitions in South Africa. She has been awarded the ABSA/Association of the Arts (Pretoria) Medal for Achievement for contribution to the arts. Her sculptures are in private collections worldwide and in the last few years she has completed commissions for the Development Bank of South Africa, the National Archives R.S.A. North-West University, Aardvark Award for Theatre 2012; and the ATKV Awards for the Stellenbosch Woordfees (language festival) as well as the Media and Author's "Veertjie" Feather Awards.

"Spiritual and emotional elements are embodied by the visual aspects in my work. Such characteristics are intended to function as primal memory triggers opening forgotten internal dialogues within the viewer. The limitless technical possibilities with bronze are an enticing challenge to me as an artist. The durability of a bronze, which when executed and finished will last thousands of years, fuels my feeling of the ongoing connection with the earth. The earth will outlast me and so will my sculptures, the cycles of birth and re-birth will continue." Roll one of her shells in your hand and you will understand.



Notes





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