



adhoc

The Art of Peter Huby

Issue 07: The Fallen Statue

Quite recently I spent some months working on a very large piece of sculpture, a standing figure. (a woman, obviously). My first thought was that I would make it from strips of steel, welded together. It was a little over three metres high, almost twice life sized, so it soon became quite heavy as I welded one strip to another. With the help of a family of couch surfers who were staying at the time, we wrestled it up on to the concrete plinth I had made for it beside the track about fifty metres from the house, so that I could finish it in situ.

I liked it less and less as I continued to work on it. At some point I decided to use the steel figure as an armature and to cover the whole thing in ciment fondu. A mistake, or at least a waste of time. The thing refused to cooperate. In the end I could hardly bear to look at it, even though it was obscured by scaffolding.

After a month or two of averting my eyes as I drove past this faulty monument, I unwound a fifty metre electrical cable from the house, connected an angle grinder, and cut the wretched thing off at the ankles.

It went over with a very satisfactory crunch.





What I hadn't realised was that people had got used to its presence- it had been around for maybe six months- and were perplexed that I had destroyed it. I cut the prostrate figure up with my angle grinder into manageable pieces as it was blocking the track and ferried them in the truck to a local tip.

The empty concrete plinth stood there for some months like an open invitation. At some point, I built it higher, thinking that I might make a sitting figure to perch on it, but time went by and it didn't happen. An enormous frog seemed like a good idea, for a while.

Later, I found myself converting it into a fairly substantial obelisk. I recruited two Albanian blokes to help me install the four triangular concrete pieces which I had cast previously, having badly misjudged how heavy they would be. I shall cover the obelisk with ceramic tiles in due course, I expect.

I might even add some kind of garden space for it to occupy.

Who knows?

// *What occurs to me as I write, is how unfathomable my own actions have always been, even to me, when it comes to making things.*

I sometimes used to think of myself as some kind of vessel out of which poured the objects I made, as if the paintings, sculptures, etc, created themselves, and me just the means, the servant of the inscrutable task.





Peter Huby worked as a teacher in the north of England for 26 years. He also directed festivals and community theatre. He and his wife Linda have lived in Greece for the past 11 years. He has made a number of independent films and published 3 novels.