

Will Kuiper and Meliesa Judge. Liquid Metal Studios

www.liquidmetalstudios.com.au

Will Kuiper and Meliesa Judge have been working together for over 25 years during which time they have established themselves amongst the foremost producers of Contemporary Figurative Sculpture in Australia.

Liquid Metal Studios is housed in a reclaimed industrial warehouse in the Hills face zone where the artists run a bronze casting foundry specifically to cast their own work. The foundry uses the traditional lost-wax bronze casting techniques. The process and equipment has been modified to minimise environmental impact and is fully compliant with EPA standards.

The combination of the sculptors' modelling and design skills with mastery of the bronze casting methodology, enables a confluence between inspiration and technique. The distinctive possibilities of the process also inform and extend the sculptor's approach.

The two Artists design and sculpt their own work individually and separately, developing their own styles and themes. However bronze casting requires a team approach; project management, mould making, casting, assembling and finishing are shared tasks, with each artist responsible for diverse areas of production.

Milestone points have each been intense, challenging and powerful projects.

Will Kuiper is best known for the sculpture of Malcolm Blight for Adelaide Oval. Will's design captured the singular style of Malcolm's long-kick, but also demanded a complex engineering solution as the entire sculpture is canter-levered back from the single point of contact, as the heel of the striding foot hits the ground.

The short deadline meant that both artists worked the wet clay alongside each other, climbing over and around each other, trying to resolve the musculature in the sculpted form. They had an athlete as a life model to bring authenticity to the sculpt. The finished work almost floats beside the stadium, every muscle ready for the next stride.

Mary Ward, for the Loreto Schools in Australia, was Meliesa's first nationwide commission. It took several years to bronze cast the entire edition of eight of the life sized portraits, casting them all at the Studios. Subsequent projects have honed her skills in historic interpretive portraiture. Her most recent sculpture is Catherine MacAuley for Monte Sant Angelo College, North Sydney, 2018. Meliesa is a Churchill Fellow 2001.

The Aurora sculpture in the Aurora building, Pirie St Adelaide is a bronze that truly reflects the combined skills of these two artists. It is a loosely sculpted figure of a walking woman cast as a fine filigree of bronze, ethereal and not quite solid. It is a sculpture that could only have been made by artists who also are bronze casters.

Ancient skills and techniques combining with contemporary sensibility; it is the collaboration of minds across their busy workshop, the level of unique insight from each artist, that brings the sculpture into existence.