



SAINT IGNATIUS; THE PILGRIM



*“In the church at Montserrat, Ignatius spends a night in vigil
at the altar of the Virgin,
and hangs up the arms of human warfare
with the votive offerings there.”*

The young Ignatius

The profundity and breadth of St Ignatius' legacy, and the strength of the Institute he engendered, leads us to think of him as complete, as the mature thinker, the man of action, the directed and self assured adult.

It is interesting to contemplate Ignatius as a young man, as potential still coming into being.

In the new sculpture we will we see him at the start of the journey - still not knowing where his feet will take him, wrong turns and missed directions still ahead, along with the achievements, the formation, the power of the man he became.

We see him listening for the voice of God, of Our Lady.

This is a time before his friends became followers, before his direction was clear. This is the moment when he has taken those first (painful and broken) steps in the direction of his (still unknown) destiny.



Laying down his sword and shield

In the sculpture we see the young man, the swordsman, the attractive young nobleman, the courtier, the fighter, - at the point of time where he has consciously and deliberately laid down the instruments of violence - his sword and shield, at the feet of the Virgin.

He has put aside his rich robes and donned the robe of a beggar, simultaneously laying aside a life of chivalry, of wealth and privilege.

He then steps out, into an unknown future, in some ways naked, stripped of his past, stripped of his identification, his image and his status in society. Knowing only his desire to dedicate his life to God. Not yet knowing how, or even quite what, that will mean, what that will ask of him.

He then walks from Montserrat to Manresa entering an era of meditative transformation.





Choosing non-violence

The point of time represented by this moment in the life of Ignatius is compelling.

The powerful choice for non-violence is profound and relevant to the young men of today. We live in a society that glorifies and celebrates violence, sells it as entertainment and advocates it as the easy solution to conflict.

Walking away from his sword, is one of St Ignatius' most profound gestures. At the point of time depicted in the sculpture, we see Ignatius is as a man who has had a successful career as a fighter, swordsman and leader. He has just made the choice to turn away from violent response to conflict. He has chosen a new kind of life and is still working out what that might imply.

This is one of several pivotal points, in a life lived with an heart open to profound change.

I want the sculpture to reflect the young man's determination to act on the insights and understanding of God's action in his life - as it still unravels within him.

Limited criteria

Sculpture allows only limited criteria. Very few words to work with.

It is the art of capturing one moment, one facial expression, a single observation, a photograph, a subtle gesture.

Therefore every aspect of the work must be multifaceted - able to invoke a dozen inferences, a dozen aspects of Ignatius' charism and life.



The naked sculpture

I work in the tradition of the old masters when sculpting the figure, no shortcuts. The body is hand sculpted precisely, as a completely unclad form, before any details of clothes are modelled into place.

I work from life models so as to capture the energy of the human form. It may seem a strange thing to do, to spend a year sculpting a figure, when all that shows after robing is the ankles, the hands and the face, but it is the only way to achieve a sense of veracity in a sculpture.

Any small movement will change all sorts of details in a figure. For instance; stretch out your hand with palm upwards, then twist your upturned palm inwards, note how every muscle down your arm rolls with it. The elbow, even the shoulder will change.

The truth is that every one of us is a familiar expert on the human body. When something is not right with a figure we know without knowing, we read the subtleties of movement, of gesture, at a deeply instinctual level, and in a single glance.

Gesture was our primal language, our first form of communication as a species, before the evolution of the spoken word. Gesture is so basic to communication that we still find ourselves waving our arms around for emphasis, even while talking on the phone!

To get the gesture right, the movement true, is the real work of the sculptor.





A beggar's robes

Ignatius exchanged his clothes with a beggar.
He wrapped himself in a cloak, tied with a belt of rope.

Think about the beggar's robe; old, ragged. The smell of the body of the beggar imbued into its fibres. It has been the man's only garment and also a blanket for sleeping, shelter from rain, a towel, a sunshade. Stained with blood, sweat, mud, faeces, washed in the clay water of rivers.

The nobleman, Ignatius, wore these rags with pride and deliberation. He was still recognisable when they came looking for him, despite the tattered robes.

In the sculpture I want to depict a robe too large for him. I want him to look like he is wearing another man's clothes. The fabric is hitched up, draping over the belt, falling in thick folds.

Hand modelled robes are the key to an energetic, powerfully descriptive sculpture. Clothes are an abstraction in the figure sculpture, a geometric shape wrapping a human form. I sculpt it with broad strokes, this is his new journey beginning.

The rough rendition of rags becomes a representation of his scars. The broken texture reflects the broken body.

St Ignatius' Robe & Shoes



The injured soldier



To sculpt the man I need to know the shape of his body and how he would have moved. The hip smashed by a canon ball, the bones then broken and reset. How twisted would his body have been? How would he have walked? Was he dragging his leg behind him? Which hand carried his staff to support him?

One of the members of my advisory team, Rachel McLoughlin, is a physiotherapist. She studied St Ignatius' injuries during her Ignatius pilgrimage to Europe in 2010. Her advice was valuable and insightful;

She said his limp would have been apparent in his gait, but that the body and leg would have been straight, not twisted. That the leg must have been strong enough to walk well as he subsequently walked long distances.

The staff is carried in his left hand to balance the weakness of the injured right leg, used with the natural swing of the arms.

The musculature of the athlete and swordsman are still apparent in the body. This is a very well rounded musculature - not the heavy shoulder muscles that we see on footballers - rather the lighter and more flexible muscle of an athlete. Agility is central to the swordsman.



Strong hands and arms.

The clenched fist of a fighter:

Face Portrait

Ignatius is a war veteran.

As I sculpted his face I was remembering the faces of the Vietnam veterans - young men when I was in my early teens, beautiful young men with haunted eyes, heavy drinkers, battle scarred. They had seen too much, too young, immersed in so much violence. They did not fit easily with ordinary society, the peaceful ways of a quiet city. They were raging, angry smouldering men, yet so very young.

I want the face of Ignatius to be young, yet haunted with a knowledge beyond his years.

Compassion and determination blend, worry and fearlessness side by side, compassion along with with a soldiers ferocity.



Modelling the face



The strong Spanish profile, hair and beard just beginning to grow out. Ignatius had always been fastidious with his hair and style, now he gives these concerns away.

The face was sculpted working firstly from a small bronze bust, itself a copy from the death mask of St Ignatius that is held in Rome.

From the bust I was able to sculpt a precise profile and outline of the head and face. The long aquiline Spanish nose, strong cheekbones and well defined forehead.

Bringing the face to life was a more interesting challenge.

I usually work faces directly from life models, capturing as much as possible the vividness and individuality of a real person. For Ignatius I had not found a model that resembled his distinctive look particularly his deep set eyes.

Late in project I realised that a young friend of ours had the same deep set eyes and strong forehead. He came to the studio for several long modelling sessions which focussed completely on the upper portion of the face.

Expression

The high cheekbones, rounded skull and powerful sloping forehead, the strong profile, narrow and high bridged nose, sensual mouth, very deep set eyes.

There is a faint smile, a slight warmth, an openness. There should be a slight sense of adventure, of anticipation in his face, of confidently facing the unknown.

A man who has laid down a heavy burden walks away, relieved, invigorated, ready to face the future.



The book



A small blank book became the journal that Ignatius used to track his spiritual life during his years of exile and hermitage. Today the notes from his time in Manresa form the basis of the Spiritual Exercises which are fundamental to Jesuit spirituality.

The original notebook no longer exists so we sought a book design that would have been common in the sixteen century. One of the members of the advisory committee had a notebook he had found in Spain during his Ignatian pilgrimage.

It is a small leather-bound book, distinctively hand stitched down the spine with crossed leather chords, its cover folding over to enclose the pages. In the sculpture we show it roped to Ignatius' belt with the same rope that holds his ragged clothes together.



Maquettes & approval of the completed sculpture

A project like this is guided by a committee that will advise, discuss and act as a fund of information and resources for the artist. At every stage of a project I return to the committee to review my work or ideas.

In the early stages a maquette is produced that defines the design. This is discussed in detail and approved before commencing work on the large figure.

When the clay of Ignatius was almost complete the Principal of John XXIII, Anne Fry, flew across from Perth to our SA Studios to review the work. A meeting of the Norwood Parish board and the sculpture reference group approved the clay before we commenced the mould making and bronze casting process.





Silicone rubber duplicating moulds

Duplicating moulds are three dimensional jigsaw puzzles. Flexible rubber moulds capture every detail of the original sculpture right down to the fingerprint of the artist. These are encased in rigid acrylic resin.

Every segment is planned from the outset to suit the wax duplicate, bronze casting and welding work which is ahead.

The moulds are designed to meet the needs of the bronze foundry, the segments in specific sizes and configurations.

The moulds are used to make a fragile wax duplicate of the sculpture. Every segment must come apart and bolt together again with perfect alignment.

completed rubber
moulds & acrylic
resin case moulds



Mould making for Bronze casting:

TUT foundry, Crafers

Sculpture with this level of detail and complexity can only be bronze cast using the traditional lost-wax bronze casting techniques. Liquid Metal Studios has its own bronze casting foundry specifically to cast our own work however with the time constraints for delivery of the first of the Edition to Norwood Parish, we decided to take the bronze casting to the expert team at TUT foundry, Crafers.

A hollow wax duplicate, identical to the original sculpture, is made using the silicone duplicating moulds. The ultra hard foundry wax is only 5mm thick and retains all of the details of the original sculpt.

Each sculpture is hand detailed by the artists. The sculpture is individually numbered for its place in an edition and signed by the artist.



Preparing the moulds for bronze, TUT foundry, Crafers

The hollow wax duplicates are prepared for bronze casting by attaching the tubes that will allow the bronze to flow into the form and the gases to escape out. These tubes will also be solid bronze when the casting is complete.

A fireproof refractory mould is constructed around the segments of hollow wax duplicate. In this foundry the refractory material is ceramic shell.

The ceramic shell moulds are prepared over several weeks of alternately dipping and drying the layers, meticulously ensuring that every layer is evenly spread and fully dried before the next layer is added. Every imperfection will cause a crack or a fissure in the final bronze cast.



Bronze casting

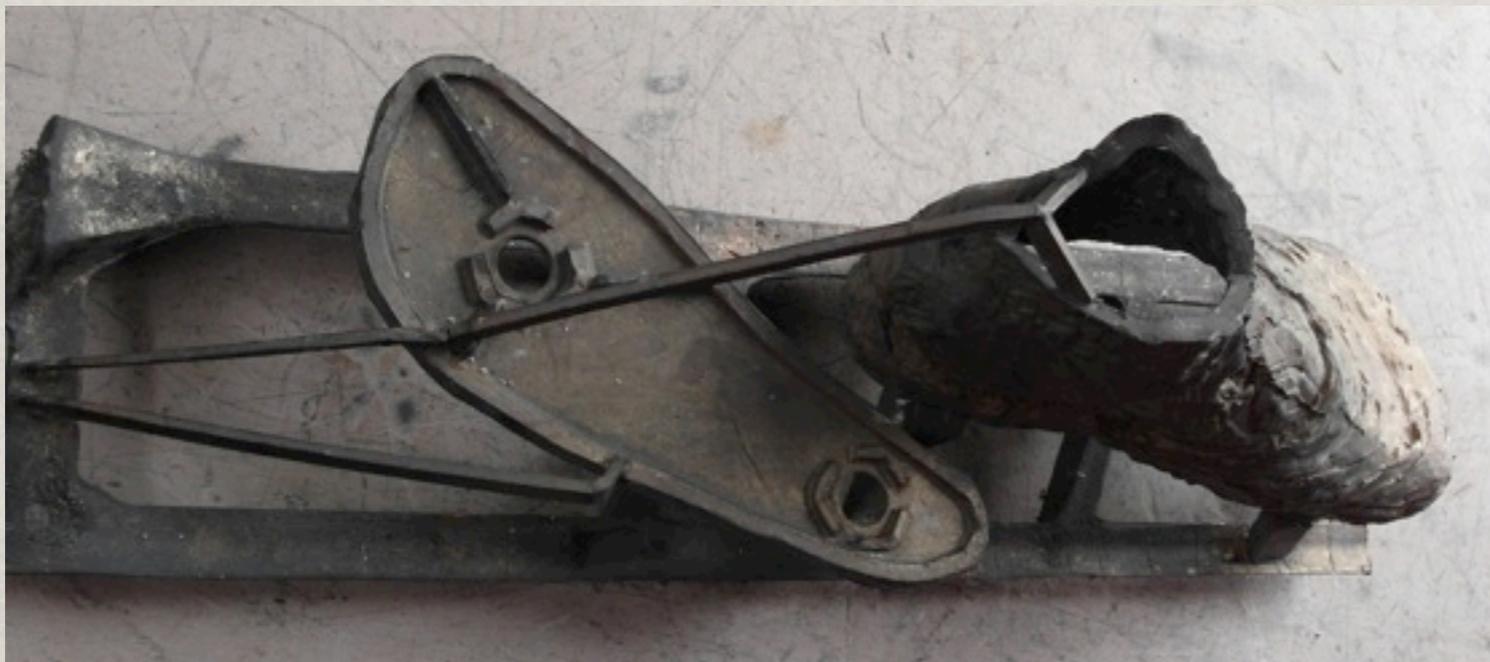


On completion the ceramic shell moulds are fired in a large kiln. The wax inside the moulds melts out, and is gathered and recycled. A hollow space is left inside the shell mould, a negative impression of the wax, with all the detail of the sculpture in reverse. The shell mould is fired until it is hard and strong enough to take the bronze.

The bronze is melted in a crucible, in the furnace. It is ready to pour at around 1150°C. It is iridescent orange and as fluid as water. The bronze flows down through the network of tubes into the figure.

Bronze grinding & detailing

Metal cutting; The tubes, which allowed the metal to flow in and the air to escape as the bronze was poured, are now also bronze. They are cut off the sculpture and the stubs are die-grinded, to match the contours of the original sculpture. The surface of the bronze is re-textured to match the original.



Bronze assembly & welding

Welding; Segments are re-aligned and welded together.

The seams of the join are hand detailed to match the original.

The process of matching the texture is an extremely specialised skill requiring meticulous attention to detail and an artist's eye.

The stainless steel attachment points that will fix the sculpture in place are usually welded into place at this time.



Patina

The completed sculpture is sandblasted to clean-up and even out the surface before it is coloured.

Patination; The metal is coloured using chemicals which react with the surface to produce the natural corrosion we associate with bronze, deep greens, olives, red browns and black. All chemicals are chosen in line with conservation practice, containing no chlorides or lead. The patination is built up in layers.

Wax finishing: A durable microcrystalline wax seals the surface and protects the sculpture from damage. Microcrystalline is recommended by museums as the best treatment for non-ferrous metals.



Before patina and wax



After patina and wax

Symbolism carries through to the bases of the sculptures



The concept for the base rocks for the Edition of sculptures is to symbolically reference the area of Montserrat through the use of natural stone.

The mountains of Montserrat are distinctive in their shape and form. An unforgettable and dramatic landscape that formed a backdrop to this moment of time in the life of St Ignatius. The mountainous area, natural stone formations eroded by time, are sculptural in their beauty. This landscape is echoed in the base rocks of the sculpture



Base Rocks

South Australia is home to one of only two black granite quarries in the world. Most of this is cut and exported to China where it is polished. However a single stonemason in Adelaide is selectively quarrying the site for natural, rounded boulders.

The colours are soft dark greys through to rare natural oxide stained oranges.

The individual boulders are selected by the artists. The tops and bases are sliced off at a specialist diamond cutting facility. The top surface is softly honed. The outside edges are left natural, the colours and textures intact.



Installation

Installation typically takes a single day if all aspects are organised beforehand.

Holes are diamond drilled according to the artists prepared template. The sculpture is dry fitted, adjustments made as necessary and then permanently fixed into place using high strength epoxy.



Unveiling

The first bronze for the Edition of sculptures was installed at St Ignatius Parish, Norwood. It was unveiled on the 3rd March 2013, by the Provincial of the Jesuits, Fr. Steven Curtis SJ in a simple ceremony surrounded by the Parishioners.







Sculpture:

An important tool
for communicating values
& ideas.

The theoretical background
to sculpture projects



Figurative sculpture is an effective way to communicate complex ideas to children.

Sculpture captivates a different centre in the imaginative function of a child to the brightly coloured, moving image.

Children will relate with warmth to sculpture while they often will not glance twice at a painting.

Touch-ability / tactile aspects are important to children.

Physical form in space evokes stability and assurance. The evocative power of a sculpture is in the actual presence of a three dimensional form as it occupies space. It makes it real to them.





A point of reflection & contemplation

For adults sculpture is a still point in the world. It is a point of reflection in a world that moves very rapidly.

We are bombarded with imagery from television, computer and advertising – coloured temporary imagery, disposable imagery.

Sculpture creates a dynamic opposite to this; it is permanent, deeply considered imagery, imbued with concepts and metaphors. Many layers of meaning are captured within a single artwork.

This allows the contemplative mind to actively explore the nuances and symbolism.

Communication & Revelation

My art starts from a basic premise; that art is both communication and revelation. This has been so since early humans painted the first cave painting, our first evidence of reflective consciousness evolving in the human mind.

To communicate to a general public the symbols used must have meaning to that public. The human form and its interpretation is one of the most accessible and immediate symbols we can use, while also being as infinitely subtle as we are ourselves.

There is no single product, item, idea which is sold, promoted or advertised without the aid of the human presence. Who we are and who we might aspire to be is constantly reflected back to us. The aspirations of a consumer society are wrapped in the gloss of human beauty, a distorted aesthetic.

Sculpture gives an opportunity to reflect our humanity on a different and more profound level. St Ignatius is a powerful symbol of man seeking a personal relationship with God, of the broken healing, of listening and discerning, of a young man seeking an alternative path through life and of choosing the way of non-violence. It is a profound and wonderful privilege to be able to place an image in the public realm that reflects on these human qualities.











St Ignatius;
1491 - 1556

Sculpture of Ignatius the Pilgrim
2013

Sculptor: Meliesa Judge
Liquid Metal Studios

Commissioned by:

St Ignatius Parish, Norwood, SA
John xxiii College, Claremont, WA
St Ignatius College, Geelong, Vic

Edition of Eight

Liquid Metal Studios
project management:
Will Kuiper

St Ignatius; the pilgrim

Bronze casting: 1/8:
TUT Foundry, Crafers SA

Mould making :
Kevin Monger Model Maker

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