

**G Celant** Every artistic path is the reflection of a life, so that artworks trace a personal course. Everything that is made means leaving something behind, so that others will be able to understand what one was or is like. A story is told that almost seems like the portrait of a person, the storyteller. As each one of us is unique and carries out actions that are unrepeatable, where does your adventure in art begin . . . and what does it consist of, in terms of both your intentions and your manipulation of things and materials?

**M Quinn** What I think is really stimulating is that to me, it was about realizing an interest in things about the material world like texture and colour. When I was a small child and how things felt like then and these different things and being really curious in that, but not thinking that this was art, just thinking this - and then obviously going to school and then realising that it sort of is art. So it's sort of from the very beginning, really. Also, I remember I made this duck out of marzipan. I loved having made this little sculpture and also eating it, so this idea of the material transforming was something I was intuitively fascinated by, that the duck would become part of me if I ate it. And then when I was older and saw artists like Joseph Beuys that were using the idea of the material having a meaning or the energy potential or transformative potential of the material, I kind of felt like this was something I was interested in, too.

**GC** The idea of realizing an artefact from a loaf of bread, *Louis XVI*, 1989 (pp. 41-42), presupposes the next stage, that of devouring it, and this process underlies the ritual method to excite its vitality, as well as assuming an exterior image to modify its interior. At the same time the act is indicative of a transformation of the whole body into a work of art. It is the drive to transform carnal fixity into

something that's mystical, part of the aesthetic and creative flow. What becomes your obsession with offering yourself first as a lead casting - in *Faux*, 1988 - hence, capable of opening your interior, breaking through the limit of your epidermal perimeter, and then finding the whole of your effigy using your lymphatic matter. This is the typical primary process of alchemical transmutation, where the opposites interior and exterior, inside and outside, are joined and the leaden "nigredo" is transformed into a lymphatic fire, your own blood.

**MQ** And also the idea that the material of an artwork can be as important as the shape of it and that art is an engagement with the material world and its continuous transformative energy as well as the immaterial world of emotions and ideas, and that of course the two should interact and integrate. That was the blood head, *Self*, 1991 (pp. 48-50) for instance, which came from the idea that it's a self portrait in the shape but also it actually is made of me. So it's this idea of material having not just a symbolic but a real function.

**GC** One of the great metaphors that distinguishes your work, from *Self*, 1991, to *Incarnate*, 1996, to *Garden*, 2000 (pp. 130-136), is the stiffening and paralysis of existence which, however, is easily crumbled, just like bread. The feeling of a vacillation and precariousness of a body about to decompose and putrefy, hence, the danger of disintegration. And so the attention seems to be directed towards underscoring the extreme fragility of natural things, from the body to flowers; although they present a continuous living flux they can break down into thousands of fragments. Indeed, ever since 1993 you have pointed out the harmony and equivalence between plants and parts of the body, in *My Ever Changing Moods*, 1993 (pp. 54-55), where the hard smoothness of the human parts, head, arm, leg, foot lives alongside the softness and suppleness of the branches. These works seem to underscore the twofold reality of opposite and diverse realities, which are ready to be poured into each other. This explains the mangled limbs of the lead sculptures, *Emotional Detox*, 1994-1995 (pp. 65-67), crushed to the ground or exploded. They appear as the symbol of a dispossessed body, where the elements transit through gaps and fissures from heavy to void, as if both were puffs from interior to exterior: here the flesh overturns its own fullness and becomes empty: *You Take My Breath Away*, 1992, and *Study for Approaching Planck Density*, 1996. At the same time these sculptures truly represent the "crucible" in which all the existential materials boil, they underscore the breathing of the heavy mass of limbs, as well as the concrete and glassy aggregate of the human being. If we look at the series of classical sculptures that portray the sublime "handicapped", from *Peter Hull*, 1999, to *Helen Smith*, 2000 (pp.

112-113, 141, 224), to *Alison Lapper 8 Months*, 2000 (p. 146), it bears witness to how your work has gone from "your" mangled limbs, submitted to effervescent grinding, which could also have been existential and negative - for personal reasons - to the heralding of a body rendered productive by a surprising and unexpected vitality, where the energy that comes from the deep is a stimulus for a full existence. And since the fire that agitates the being also enlivens its flesh, we can understand why your most recent paintings make the viewer perceive the power of the carnal image, how they become a leap into a passage of material and chromatic thickness, where you can see the layering of the pulp and the nerves, the fat and the muscle striations, *Flesh Painting (On Voluptuousness)*, 2012 (pp. 464-465).

**MQ** The meat paintings are beautiful and disgusting at the same time, although to me they are really about acceptance of the inherent duality of the human condition, that a person can be repelled by the idea of killing an animal and seeing their flesh, but that that same person can order a steak in a restaurant and enjoy it. I am not preaching morally, I am in the same situation, it's one of the ways humans cope with the world and it is a moral paradox.

I like things that have a charge in them, that have a contradiction within them. It's almost like an atom where you have the oppositely charged particles coexisting within the same atom and it is in fact this which gives the atom and hence the world its structure and permanence. In artistic terms an unresolvable thing is constantly fascinating. So sometimes you look at it, you feel one thing and sometimes the other which is a bit like the inside outside. It's getting these, it's exploring these kinds of contradictions in a way.

**GC** The attempt to intertwine opposites in a quest for totality drives the overlapping between beauty and reality. The latter can be lacerated but it is filled with vital intensity.

**MQ** Yes, but in some ways what I feel is that beauty lies in reality, that it is beyond appearances and is about feeling contradictory emotions at the same time in a compelling way. What I mean by that is that the artwork has to be like a magnet for your eyes and emotions so you are sort of hypnotized and don't want to look away, after all we all spend most of our time trying to avoid feeling anything at all.

**GC** The tendency to insert something inside that is almost sacred and ritual - as art is - a reality that, once it has been doused with the fire of life becomes "another dimension", almost a luxuriant and classical image, herefore of extreme beauty, goes from the narcissistic destruction of your appearance, the lead sculptures (pp. 65-67, 74-75), and the rising up again in the vital cry expressed by the marble sculptures (pp. 112-114, 145-146, 187, 239, 388, 394, 396,

401-402, 476). But where do you get the bread and the nourishment for this transformation which passes from a gaze upon oneself to a gaze upon others? What was the passage from the opening of the interior eye to the exterior one, in which you began to gather the distortions of the reality of a classical and sublime beauty?

**MQ** Sure, well my parents were both academics. My mother taught French at university, my father's a scientist, he was a physicist, so that was the kind of background and then for the art world I was not even aware that there was such a thing as the art world. I mean, I remember going to the Tate gallery when I was small, and the two things I remember are the Lichtenstein *Whaam*, 1963, and the Oldenburg *Soft Drainpipe*, 1967. These are the two works that I remember even though I remember nothing else.

**GC** However, the London art scene in around the 1980s seems to become magnetic, attracting a whole generation of artists, from all over Great Britain, who come to form a very strong nucleus. It is a set of personalities that identify with a new language that is neither formalist nor abstract, from Anthony Caro to Tony Cragg, but more concrete and realistic. This reference to the everyday and physical life appears to be indifferent to the magic of the forms and colours, and more interested in the stories of life, with its personal and social tragedies. It tends to sink its teeth into the brutality of things that represent common life. It is certainly less romantic and poetic than the previous one. And perhaps its charm is owed to this realism.

**MQ** In Britain at that time art was very much a minority interest. And the literary establishment was the only kind of mainstream art form - theatre and literature. So when my generation of artists started, in a way, looking back it was great because there was nothing, we could create the world in some way. Luckily, there were people like Charles Saatchi who was doing his museum and things like this, so we kind of just invented it as we went along, and of course when you're young you don't realise what's different - you just think this is normal.

**GC** As compared with the previous generation, the YBA Young British Art Generation produced a scene that focused on the right meaning of life and death, love and sex, because it saw art as no longer being able to avoid the consistency of the real. It can no longer be referred to a formal and abstract, allusive and labyrinthine scenario, but it must face the dramas of existence. Not to murmur, but to cry out. Here is the need to jump into a crucible of boiling matter - on this is based the lead metaphor - to be reconciled with everything: *Triaxial Planck Density*, 2000 (p. 92).

**MQ** You're completely right, the big change is bringing real life into

art and I didn't want to see any more artworks that were again for initiated people who would applaud an interesting new little quirk someone had found. Or not use abstraction to mean something, which of course it can but to stop art being a kind of theological game like medieval theologians wasting their time trying to work out how many angels could fit onto the head of a pin, that's where the art world had got to when we started. It was total bullshit. It became bullshit. Or at least the discourse did obviously, there were still some artists making great art like Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon, and what I liked about them was that they existed outside of any art world discourse, they were just themselves. I think you're right, I mean I would look at all the different artists that came at the same time as me and the one unifying factor is bringing real life into art.

GC Historically speaking, the start of your work coincides with a certain cultural breakaway that is manifested, in London, Berlin and New York, as being that of a generation marked by music by the Sex Pistols and punk culture, with its anger and aggressiveness. It is a moment during which violence mingles with sex, innocence mixes with perversion, sweetness is tainted by aggression.

MQ I think you're right with punk. Punk was so important to me and to my generation, because it was this thing where the youth took over and told all the record companies to fuck off. They didn't want to have any more pre-packaged . . . and unfortunately to me, I was talking to my son about it today, we're back in the same situation. How can the main pop stars be created on this programme "XFactor"? How can the young people let this happen? It reminds me of this period in the 1970s before punk. So I said to my son "You guys have got to sort this out, it can't be like this!".

GC During the period up to the punk revolution, both art and music were pre-packaged, almost an inanimate materiality nailed to the formal stereotypes of sculpture and sound. There was a need for an infusion of energy to trigger off a new existential spark. Almost a process of the regeneration of the vital fibres, which leads to dealing with carnality, as a sign of life and death. Both the flesh where the vital force circulates and the instinctive power of being, as well as meat as putrefaction and decomposition: Damien Hirst. I think your work at first dealt with the inertia and ponderability of the body, condensed in its fulls and voids, its blood and epidermal contours, from *No Visible Means of Escape*, 1996 (p. 80), to *Stripped (Blockhead Again)*, 1997 (p. 86 right), to *Centripetal Morphology*, 1996 (p. 82 bottom), which you followed with your marble figures, from *Stuart Penn*, 2000, to *Catherine Long*, 2000 (pp. 112-113, 117-118, 224), where the lightness and the flexibility of the gestures express a sense of

propriety and lightness. The seam between spirit and material is present in both moments of your making, but in the former case the material nucleus is broken up and dissolved in fragments or portions, hence, it indicates an "inner de-composition", while the group of handicapped figures tends to show a total recomposition of the material with the soul and the will. Between the two states is the theme of change and transformation that develop strength and vitality.

**MQ** Well, there is a kind of sense of the body as an envelope, and also of time, is that you know you can shed your skin, that the thing on the floor is not you. That somehow it's like you can have a good moment, a bad moment, but you're always in the present moment. One of the fundamentals is that life is about transformation. Changing. Change is life, I mean that's the definition of life in science, movement is life. If a tiny thing moves, then it's alive. I think also I looked at the whole world, I saw how much stuff is in it. I looked at art, I saw how little stuff was in it. And I just thought this was insane, you know - I want to make art about the world I live in. I want to make art about every time I go somewhere and see something. And maybe it means that all the things look different, but actually the core themes come through. I feel like I'm mapping a territory really for myself, and anyone else as well. Maybe it will be useful to other artists in the future, young artists, or different paths. Anyway, I made the sculptures in lead when I stopped drinking.

**GC** A metaphor for a change in life, but also a way of expressing a rescuing that comes from below and from the present, which is transformed through art into a new existential condition.

**MQ** A kind of transformation and of tectonic shift in. Lead is this toxic material so it's about toxicity and the shedding of toxicity and it's kind of - you know - it is kind of a work about my life at the time in some ways. Then I also realised that the blood head is also a work about it, because the blood head is plugged in, it's dependent, in some ways it's a work about addiction. But also the addiction of the fact that of my life when I was an alcoholic, but also the addiction of society to infrastructure. I am thinking about the electricity's on and we're talking into these electric tape recorders. This is something that we take for granted, but it's a dependency that we have.

**GC** This inhuman and intoxicated territory is the scene of our vital pilgrimage. In this sense the function of art may indeed be that of revealing both the pollution of our world, as well as the stance taken by those who, whether they are artists or not, fight for the decantation and purification of both themselves and of the planet. So it's important to show one's position on the battlefield by means of

the presence of the body, the way Robert Mapplethorpe did for the visual acceptance of homosexuality and sadomasochism, or Jeff Koons does for kitsch and pornography. It is essential to include oneself in one's work in order to attest to a shouldering of responsibility, without hiding "behind" the work. One's own body is what's at stake. Clearly, until the 1970s the artist "would not expose himself" in order to let the work speak, which became a theoretical and impersonal narrative. After that, this dissociation fell and the creator filled the same space of his action with both his living body and performative activity and with its depiction. He placed himself at the scene in order to burn energies and representations, in fact he came to light, he carried out a self parthenogenesis to free himself of a past history and earn a new dimension of existence unobscured by rhetoric and ideology.

**MQ** You're completely right, there's not a theoretical generation although theories come after, you can see the links in things.

**GC** It's the mute theatre of everyday things, both in terms of global information and at a personal level.

**MQ** It's more of an unconscious to reflect the world . . . you look at some of the newer works like the eyes with the maps, for example *The Eye of History (Indian Ocean Perspective) Blue*, 2012 (p. 475 top), and the aeroplane mobiles . . . they're kind of to me, they're about our post-9/11 world, but I don't always think of that when I'm making it. Here also the idea of the inside and outside becomes reflected in the borders or countries or the dichotomies between us and them allies and enemies which our world is pushing more and more.

**GC** Do you want to function like a seismograph, better still, do you want to reveal yourself as the DNA of a historical moment? Which leads to the double meaning of *Cloned D.N.A. Selfportrait*, 2001, a work that acts as a revealer of your being there and as the metaphor for your reflection in the present.

**MQ** To me what's engaging and fascinating is that art should have an element of timelessness, because it should be about something that is part of the human condition. But also should be rooted in the time it's made. And to me when I look at art of the past, that's what's stimulating.

**GC** The telling or recording of facts in the terrestrial sphere define the "real", but what is the most effective language for your narrative? Painting or sculpture, photography or something else?

**MQ** Because the craft isn't the major point, the craft is the means of purpose to get to the finished work. When I started to be interested in art around thirteen or fourteen, I set up a studio in my parents'

attic, and I painted hundreds of paintings, going through all the styles I saw in art history books, sort of trying it all on for size from realism to abstraction and sort of crashed through the history of art. Most of these are now lost but it was sort of getting the craft out of my system so I could see more clearly what I really wanted to do in art. That is why later when I did history of art at Cambridge University I found that a very useful grounding for being an artist was to understand where the present came from and so I hopefully wouldn't be condemned to repeat the past. Maybe sometimes I pick a paint brush up, maybe sometimes I will ask someone else to do it, I don't have a hang up about that. I just know what I want to make and it has to be made, so it's prioritising the message.

GC The material is the face of the contents, it is the mechanism with which you articulate your discourse, so it can change minute by minute in relation to the abyss into which you want the gaze to fall, whether this means being tortured in an Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, *Mirage*, 2009 (p. 342), or a fashion model who influences style culture, like Kate Moss, *Siren*, 2008 (pp. 310-312, 321-322, 331-332). In fact, your sculptures reflect the furor of the negative, like human cruelty, as well as the positive that makes consumers happy and satisfied. What counts is the regenerating force that these images involve, angst that denounces violence and exalts the acrobatic nature of a trendy body, to the extent that in your trajectory Moss's figure appears to be in a sexual state, golden, as opposed to the fleshless and skeletal one characterized by a terrible pallor in *Waiting for Godot*, 2006. It is in this passage from a systole to a diastole of living, from male to female, from tragic to glamour, from the inside to the outside of being, with your tattoos in *Zombie Boy (Rick) Cu Pb Nn Fe Mg Si*, 2011 (pp. 442-444), or with your macroscopic variations in cosmetic surgery in *Chelsea Charms*, 2010 (pp. 396-397), that the change is declared. It is a vital flow that allows the human being to be transmuted, from woman to man and then from father to pregnant mother in *Thomas Beatie* (monumental work), 2009 (pp. 388-389), or from male to female and vice versa, such as in *Buck & Allannah*, 2009 (pp. 381-382). These works are a paean to an unlimited metamorphosis in compliance with the passage from life to death, from sensual flesh to the cold skeleton, of both the human being and the global society of *The Future of the Planet*, 2009 (p. 363).

MQ What counts is the result rather than fetishising the method, a method which comes naturally to me, which at school was called a butterfly mind in my reports actually is the consciousness of now of our new digitally virtual globalised world, a world of new connections always being made of unlikely but true connections. I think it was E.M. Forster who said that it was all about connecting things in a new way



and I feel that my work reflects our world. I mean I'm just reading a book by Jared Diamond about Papua New Guinea, where there's thousands of languages in this tiny area, and I feel that's maybe how the world is becoming a coexistence of multiple microcultures. Now with the Internet even minority interests can become big and get momentum if you put all the people in the world interested together through the web. It is as if the whole Internet is becoming a brain and we are becoming synapses.

GC Today, thanks to the Internet it seems that a universal language is taking hold, where linguistic polarities no longer exist and the imaginary is expressed, transcending every limit.

MQ People don't have to learn the language in order to express art although you do have to know how to make something or be able to learn but now everyone has to really invent their own language. Every artist is like a Papua New Guinea tribe inventing their own language to describe the world.

GC So the hierarchy imposed by the system doesn't follow anymore.

MQ Exactly.

GC You can create your own way of process and narrative.

MQ Yeah, so you don't have to go to art school to learn the language.

GC Do you think that this is a kind of democratization?

MQ It is, it is democratization. I think it's also, again, really of the time, it's like the Internet, it's completely democratized, how people now have a power that no longer has to be mediated through a political class, just look at the Arab Spring for instance or Wikileaks, although they are flawed and human this is a new way of interacting with the world. I think one of the great historical changes of our time you know, things that were niche interests when you look at the whole world - there's enough people to make a big thing about it. So you get this thing of the local and the global kind of knitting together in some way . . . So I think it is about now.

GC When you began working the Internet wasn't very widespread, and yet the materials that you started to use, such as bread and blood, underlie a common and diffused system of nutrition and survival. They are entities that reverberate in all life systems. Your protests speak, then, of a total system that is marked by a continuous transmutation, and therefore a human network, one that is antithetical to the technological one.

MQ Well, I thought bread is the most universal everyday material. It's you, what you eat, daily bread, also it's a tool of transformation. Because you make the dough, the yeast, the water, the flour, and when

you put it in the oven, it changes and it has its own life, so in a way you set up the conditions for something to happen. And for me art is about transformation so the bread literally articulates the artistic thing which has to happen, something needs to be transformed in order to bring reality into art, or I suppose to affect the transformation from nature to culture. For me the purest and most magical expression of this in my work happens with the frozen flowers, *Eternal Spring (Sunflower) I*, 1998 (p. 94). I get a real flower and put it in a container of frozen silicone oil, as the flower goes in it freezes, dies, but becomes an eternal image of itself, a sculpture of itself made from the same atoms which were in the living flower, to me the purest and most magical transformation from reality into art which happens imperceptibly right before our very eyes.

**GC** The flower is a living beauty that you try to keep alive by way of industrial instruments. In truth, you pick it but then you move away from it as if it were an independent entity capable of creating an extreme situation, in which the ephemeral becomes an eternal visual value. It means overturning the space of death into life, or the condition of decadence into eternity. Measuring up to the preservation of a feeling and a seeing that tend to flow into nothing. It is a struggle of light and colour against the darkness. Keeping alive the surprising vitality of a situation destined to be consumed. There's a feverish fecundity in your constant going back to the images of the flowers, as if you wanted to keep them alive, outside of the risk of dissolution and corruption. So you use art to regenerate them constantly. It's a struggle against the disappearance that is nurtured by art to avoid the devastation and horror of putrefaction. It's a process of reabsorption that's very similar to eating bread as a synonym for nutrition for both the person and art, to the extent that it is transformed into sculpture. If this is true, any situation that you place inside the body of your art is the nourishment of survival, including what takes place day after day in your studio.

**MQ** It's free to happen and so there's a detachment, which I think in a weird way I can also get by working with other people. So they become like the bread, so if I work with a fabricator, the fabricator's like the element of chance or nature which creates things I might not have thought about but which I can then decide to keep if they make the work better, like throwing paint at the canvas, an excitement that can make or break something, a moment of chance in there. So I ask them to do something and I control it, but also things happen that I wouldn't have thought of happening.

**GC** The human material.

**MQ** Or even in the shell sculptures. I'm collaborating with these tiny

brainless creatures that live at the bottom of the sea, that make these unbelievable symmetrical forms. To me, it's like looking at the archaeology of art. Even though these creatures have no sense of self-awareness, they create what we see as amazingly beautiful things and there's a kind of interesting collaboration there. I feel like I'm collaborating with a creature from the beginning of time or the beginning of art that somehow these shells are about time travel and also are actually to me sculptures of the time-space continuum. By that I mean you have the rings on the outside of the shell which look like and are like the rings of a tree which show the past of the object and which also to me are like a map of the turning of the world and then on the front surface you have the polished reflective part which is of course always in the present moment, always reflecting now, and the form of the shell is like a found structural diagram of how the present becomes the past.

GC Art does not just imitate reality, it records the movements of the force buried inside it. Beauty that nestles in a flower destined to extinction, as well as the light radiating in a body by way of vitreous composition, from *Puff-Headed Heleotropic Morphology*, 1997, to *Schistosome Morphology*, 1999. It's always a revelation, which is what happens in *Shells*, 2011-2012.

MQ The glass pieces (pp. 76-78, 82, 93) are a sort of antidote to the lead pieces, there's sort of, freedom about a body reconfiguring, and like the shells their reflective surface is always in the present moment and always reflecting the environment in which they are, so they are sort of camouflaged, and they felt to me to be sculptures of moods and motivations which we may not even recognize being played out in our lives, sculptures of the unconscious and fragile. And also you remember at the time: this is a time of the film *Terminator*. They have a reflection in contemporary culture then as well. So they're the idea of, that you can deform and reform and because they're mirrored, they reflect the world. I remember at the time a critic derided the pieces because of that film reference, but in fact to me that was one of the great successes of the work to make something which linked both to contemporary culture of the moment and more eternal unconscious human needs. It's about the idea of taking on the place that you are, of reflecting where you are, of being embedded in reality.

GC What was your reason for becoming interested in the universe of the disabled, whose power to master what they lack you seem to exalt with your transposition into the classical, turning them into actions capable of triggering off vital forces never before thought of?

MQ I'd always thought that I was using myself as a model, as a sort of everyman, but then I just got sick of seeing representations of

myself, boring, and also I was not interested in myself, I was intrigued in the world. So I wanted to bring the world into the work more, and expand outwards from this base position. Then I was at the British Museum looking at the Elgin marbles, the fragmented statues and all the tourists going "Oh it's so beautiful", and then I'd been to the Louvre the week before and the Venus de Milo was there, and all these women were having their photograph taken in front of it, as if to measure up to this ideal of beauty, and it struck me that if a real person, whose shape was the same as these statues, walked in the door these people would . . . in all likelihood have the exact opposite reaction, be embarrassed, not know how to react to them. This kind of dichotomy between what was acceptable in art and not in life seemed really interesting and I thought, you know, like in judo, using your opponent's weight to throw them. I could make sculptures of people who appeared to be fragmentary but obviously weren't, they were whole, and make those in marble and see what happens. So I made them and what happened were some very interesting things - it became not only about this original idea, conceit, but it also became about celebrating the beauty of different kinds of bodies and realizing that by using, in a way, neoclassicism - which in some ways became the language of body fascism, because Canova's figure is the idealized perfect body - so then, if you make a body which may be perceived culturally as imperfect, then you get a very curious thing happening, where you have to think about all these ideas of what is im/perfect, what is whole. Are these people no different to me when they close their eyes? We feel the same wholeness.

**GC** The intention seems to be that of bringing into question the canon of beauty and perfection which is expressed here by means of a struggle against fate.

**MQ** It's about the contradiction between the inside of somebody and the outside.

**GC** Not only that, they all achieved something that is the real recognition of the struggle against fate. They have become horseback riding, swimming, archery and javelin champions.

**MQ** Peter Hull, who was born without legs and with shortened arms, has won a gold medal in the Paralympics in swimming. Jamie Gillespie represented Britain in Paralympic sprinting. Alison Lapper is an unbelievable woman who's had a child herself, who's an artist, who lives her life, so they were about a different kind of heroism. But also under this white perfect surface there are many other social and political movements happening, for instance Selma lost her leg in a bomb attack on a café in Sarajevo. Tom was born without arms because his mother took thalidomide during her pregnancy unaware of its side

effects. As always under the perfect surface deeper currents run. When the Alison Lapper sculpture went in Trafalgar Square (pp. 239, 242-243) it was, in a way, the ultimate thing. I had always felt that these sculptures were like sculptures from the future, because they were celebrating a very different kind of body in the language of the established canon of beauty, and so when Alison Lapper was put up in Trafalgar Square and later in the closing ceremony of the Paralympics it felt like something profound had changed, that art was affecting society and our attitudes which I think for an artist is about as good as it gets.

The Paralympic version is very intriguing. It is an inflatable which sounds terrible, but is actually very interesting on many levels. Firstly, it was born from a practical point of view - that the work needed to be at least 12 meters high in order for it to work in the context of the Olympic stadium.

Also, the work needed to appear very quickly. In the show a spotlight moves onto Stephen Hawking who is at the other end of the stadium and a few minutes later after he has spoken the whole place is lit up again and the Alison Lapper pregnant sculpture has to be there in the centre of the arena. With an inflatable (pp. 512-513) on a static base it was possible for the sculpture to appear in a minute in the dark.

Originally, I was worried about the realism of an inflatable. But now the technology has changed so fast that it is very engaging. How they are now made is that the original object, in this case the marble, is scanned for form and the surface photographed for colour and texture. Then like the shells it exists as a 3D version in the computer. This is then used to cut incredibly precise pieces of cloth which when sew together create the exact shape of the sculpture and don't have the bouncy castle feel of a traditional inflatable. When combined with the printed texture and colour the result is pretty extraordinary. But when I was really convinced was when I began to think about the meaning of it and realised that it was in fact articulating on the core ideas of my recent work. The idea of the difference between an object, its mass and gravity and an object's presence in mass culture. A bit like the Kate Moss sculptures (pp. 275, 277-278, 311-312, 360) which are sculptures of the image of Kate as the perfect woman that we have all agreed to create as a cultural hallucination rather than Kate as a woman of flesh and blood. In that case an immaterial image which is legion in the massless Internet is anchored in a bronze or gold trap for itself, like some of the pacific dreamcatcher nets or in the way that a chola bronze sculpture from India becomes a vessel which if correctly made and treated can be inhabited by the similarly shaped spirit of the god or goddess.

So in the case of the Alison Lapper pregnant sculpture you have the cultural image of the sculpture being literalized as an inflatable.

It is the cultural hallucination not the original and the way it has to be kept upright by constantly having air blown into it what to me seems to be like the way that cultural importance only survives if people are collectively talking about something, it is almost as if the form is being held up by the breath of all the people in the stadium and the billion watching on TV around the world. It connects also to my earlier frozen work where things exist only when they are plugged in and are dependant on the existence of society and in fact are dependent on the connections between people being maintained and sustained by cooperation which is almost a definition of society. So when I thought of all that, the inflatable Alison became to me one of my most important and relevant works. The original marble in Trafalgar Square, it was in a place which was reserved for public heroes, people who'd gone out and conquered the world, and was located within a cultural context, and had been celebrating it, and were mostly dead, and men. Well, in fact all. And then Alison was living, a woman, and pregnant so then it became about . . .

GC A metaphor?

MQ A future rather than the past . . . so as a monument to the future.

GC Also accepting the physical, or the intellectual, or whatever, diversity.

MQ Celebrating diversity and also a kind of different heroism about someone who's conquered their circumstances, rather than someone who's conquered the outside world.

GC The power of the inside.

MQ It was an inside where this battle had happened and not on the outside world and interestingly enough, of course, there is one disabled person in Trafalgar Square already - because Admiral Nelson has lost an arm and lost an eye, and if you look at the statue of him, he has no arm, but of course no one ever thinks of him as a disabled person.

GC The transformation into a hero wipes out any trace that is not ideal.

MQ Because he did the outside conquering, the whole became culturally an extraordinary thing.

GC The conquest of one's own body belongs to this show of heroism. What is "submitted to" and disciplined by willpower is the carnal whole, so that the idea of oneself holds sway over one's own epidermis, *Zombie Boy*, 2011, or sex, *Buck & Allannah*, 2009.

MQ The whole show I did in White Cube, London, in 2010 was about, again, reflecting the world and reflecting the Internet, and it was sort of about how people want to culturally possess their biological bodies.

So all the people in there from *Zombie Boy* to *Buck Angel* (the man who became a woman) (p. 384), to *Thomas Beatie* and *Chealsea Charms* are people who in a way have decided that their body needs to be assimilated from the biological world to the cultural world, they're like artists, they're like outsider artists.

GC Shaping and sculpturing their own flesh.

MQ Using their body as a medium. And I think in more or less consciously in different cases. But I think it's a very simulating thing and because I think people have always had these wishes, but now because of medicine and surgery people can actually act it out and it's almost like Ovid, where people become their own mythological creatures and I think that's another thing I'm interested in: looking at things that have existed in the past within a ritual context. Nowadays the same impulses exist but there's no ritual context, so everyone invents their own story. Again, like these tribes, everyone is inventing their own way of doing this and not being told how to do it by a religion or a culture.

GC Today tattooing seems a reference to the personal desire of conquering your own space.

MQ Tattooing existed in traditional societies within a very strict cultural context - you didn't just go and get a tattoo. It meant something to do with your life and your position in life.

GC It's very symbolic and very ritual.

MQ Symbolic and now people just do it but I would argue that it still has the same function, but they don't sort of quite understand that they're doing it unconsciously and it's like the sculpture of Kate Moss emaciated, *The Road to Enlightenment*, 2007 (p. 278). It's based on a Buddhist sculpture of 2,000 years ago, of Buddha where he's starving himself along with Ascetics to try and find the way to enlightenment, and then at a certain point he realised that austerity was not the solution, so this sculpture even though it looks like a sculpture of death is a sculpture of life, because it's the moment of him rejecting this route, the birth of Buddhist philosophy. I like very much something which appears to be one thing and in fact is really its opposite. But the idea of austerity as a means to enlightenment is really what anorexia is about in many ways. Control of self leading to control of the world, which we know in many cases leads to its polar opposite. And as you know, girls look at these images of models and try and be perfect, and try and control their lives by starving themselves to perfection - and again it's something that happens in a ritual context in traditional societies but is happening in a slightly random way. It's very connected to the idea of

us as a society making images then letting the images control us, i.e. forgetting that we created them in the first place. So now instead of a ritually created god or goddess which represents some archetype we measure ourselves against images which have unconsciously risen up in the media, like the idea of the perfect body or beauty or the successful life which lead people towards self loathing and pain. With Siren I wanted to mash all that together, so not only is it an image of the culturally created "Perfect" beauty but also it is made of the culturally created "most valuable" element, all the culturally created illusions which lead people to wreck their lives on the rocks, like the sirens in mythology. In a way it's like the glass sculptures from the late 1990s, things which lead our lives which we are unconscious of.

So I'm interested in the way that these deep human things come up, and nowadays because we don't live in a ritual society with a structure that everyone believes in, they come up in a random way. Well, controlling the world, to make yourself feel like you have a reason to exist and that you have a cultural context.

**GC** To define your own territory.

**MQ** Yes and I think it's not for nothing that many of the traditional tattoos are like an anchor.

It's about anchoring yourself, and why did sailors do it? Because when you're on a ship you're continually being wobbled about, so, you know, by drawing an anchor maybe you're the extreme version of it, the physical manifestation of a floating which we all to a greater or lesser extent feel we are in. I think as our life becomes more virtual, as we spend more time on computers etc., we feel more of a need to anchor ourselves in our bodies. Another thing I'm really fascinated by is the way that human beings create images - like looking around here an image of a Buddha carved 2,000 years ago. Everyone knows it's created by a human being, but then once it is finished, people worship it. Basically, you create something, then you forget that you created it, and it controls you, and I think this is what's happening in the media as well . . . we create someone like Kate Moss, as the most beautiful person in the world . . . she exists in millions of images, which are not really about her, they're about an abstraction. People forget that this isn't really a real person they're looking at, it's a photograph that's been doctored or whatever. And then they start to try and measure up to it, and of course they can't, so I think that celebrities in the media very much play the same position that gods and goddesses did before, but again like we said before, in a way that people maybe aren't fully conscious of it happening, so it's almost like an era where everyone's blindly acting out these things without realising that these things have always existed.



GC Does the body somehow become an emitter of images? Both in *Zombie Boy* in terms of the surface, as an epidermal body, and in *Buck & Allannah* in its carnal totality as sexual body.

MQ I see art as like something concrete philosophy. Within this, they're two different bodies, male in female and female in male . . . they're like two lights illuminating different sides of one object, so they're kind of, they just seem to, to sort of look at. It is a metaphor of creating art but it's also just about reality and then bringing it into. It's intriguing that there's no sculptures of people with tattoos or sex change . . . I mean, there are, but you have to look back to Antiquity, there's the hermaphrodite in the Louvre. But these are fantasy and I suppose the difference now is that people have become these fantasies, in reality and physical reality. So it's the same idea, but then we've literalised it . . . people have actually become these things. Or perhaps more properly we could say they have aped the outside appearance of them. So I think it is about art, but it's also what we've said before - about bringing real life into art and, you know, so that in a hundred, two hundred years time people look back and they see something that tells them about now.

GC Now I understand the continuity of your discourse, which passes from the use of blood to construct the head to the need to make the body coincide with its own feeling, male or female, or with its own acknowledgement of identity by external signs, the tattoo. It is as if the flesh were a material to be shaped sculpturally and pictorially: a sort of Terminator in constant natural and not artificial evolution, where art is felt as the body that crosses the different stages of being, becoming pictorial or plastic surface.

MQ Well, I made meat sculptures in 2003/2004, *Meat Head (Dematerialised)*, 2003 (p. 209). I did a whole body of work that was based on animal carcasses, I would get animal carcasses at either the abattoir or at the meat market, and then take off everything that looked like it that was particularly animal, so hooves, head, anything, tail - then cast them in bronze in a black version and a metallic version so they became like a Rodin body, in a way. And then when you looked at it, you sort of realised, again, it was that thing. We are animals but we don't think of ourselves as animals. But when you see an abstract sculpture of a body that looks like a Rodin, you sort of think it might be human and then you realise it's a sheep or an ox or something like this. Then I made some, like the head in the exhibition in Venice, which were more like taking the material of meat . . . well actually taking the material of meat from cuts of meat, and creating a figure out of that, and then casting it in metal so that it was using flesh as a medium to make a representation of itself.

- GC Like blood.
- MQ And then I became attracted by the material of meat and the colour and the fact that I always liked the paintings of John Martin, these great kinds of cracked cliffs with a kind of cow at the bottom or great things, and Willem de Kooning paintings, the meat paintings seem to be found abstractions, and in fact they sort of articulate one of the profound reasons for abstraction - to distil reality into a sort of acceptable thing or to create a screen which hides and reveals at the same time. So in real life, when we see a beautifully marbled cut of meat we are seduced by the beauty of the abstract image into not thinking about the bodily source of it.
- Abstraction can help make the unacceptable acceptable to our psyches. Also those Gerhard Richter paintings of brushstrokes, where you get something very visceral and then you paint it in a very calm way. So I got these pieces of meat and photographed it and then painted the result - and it again was quite interesting, because it seemed to be about abstraction. But paradoxically it was also made from the material of figuration because it was made of flesh. So really to me it's mapping that border.
- And this is something else I have been interested in recently. In our new world when we meet the physical borders of countries we tend towards abstraction. By that I mean our identity becomes reduced to a fingerprint or an eye scan, we become encoded into a unique abstraction which is also profoundly figurative.
- GC Crossing the meat is a journey through painting and sculpture, almost the transiting inside the body to reveal an unknown force, a totally visual and plastic one.
- MQ The *Flesh* paintings (pp. 458, 461, 464-465, 479, 492) have this contradiction within them, and it's beautiful and some people found it disgusting but it's also that it brought up the real life contradiction, that every time we go and have a steak to eat, we sort of know it's an animal but we don't think about it, and we can appreciate the taste of it and all this, but if you really think about it, it's quite disgusting.
- GC Like killing an animal.
- MQ It's this amazing human thing being able to compartmentalise the world and that's how we survive. It's an evolutionary thing. In a way, the *Flesh* paintings are an evolution from perhaps *Self* - the blood head - because, as you say, it's taking something that's usually inside and bringing it outside.
- GC The portrait of Lara Stone, *The Way of all Flesh*, 2013, the pregnant woman lying on meat seems to represent a connecting point between the sculptures and the paintings, almost an inversion in which the meat

takes possession of the body and, vice versa, the sinuous female body prevails over its carnal substance.

**MQ** It's a bridge, and it's also to me a beautiful thing because it's an acceptance of the world, so here you have dead meat, dead flesh but also the living flesh . . . her flesh and then flesh being made . . . the baby in her womb. So you have this kind of whole cycle of life.

**GC** The newborn is the golden state of life, where the body becomes new energy and power. The painting of *Lara* (the model) is similar to the representation of the Tree of Life in which the totality of existence, old and new, from the roots to the new branches take hold. Unsurprisingly, the female figure Lara Stone abandons itself, on the couch meat, stroking her lap: the new meat. It is a further visual leap of the intensive germination that life coagulates in ever-new images and forms.

**MQ** *Evolution*, 2007 (pp. 285, 288-289, 292-293), was really about that process about how does matter become alive . . . For doing it I got some scans of embryos from the different stages and then from those scans I made the clay models, I built them - and then I got a polystyrene block and I cut the exact shape and put the (now cast into fiberglass) models in it. Later I made these sculptures of embryos that were about two and a half, three feet high that were exactly how I wanted it. I went to Pietrasanta and worked with the amazing stonemasons there and they carved them in the right scale. So, basically, what looks like random carving out of the block was all created in the smaller version, and they copied it.

**GC** Here is a reference to Michelangelo's *Dying Slaves*, except that the reference is no longer the religion of the soul that struggles against the heaviness of the body, but of a lay acceptance of the birth of the human being.

**MQ** Of course, I mean that's what inspired the thing, to be honest, was a visit to see the *Dying Slaves* and I've always loved Michelangelo: life coming out of the material world that is one of the great mysteries of the world. And every generation asks the same questions in different ways, and that is why the great works of art are always relevant. Because they have something eternal about them. To me all works of art are really mirrors of our time.

**GC** While all your production seems to be oriented toward exalting the power of life, even when the body is filled with chemical substances, *Silvia Petretti*, 2005 (p. 232 top), to overcome HIV, and *Carl Whittaker*, 2005 (p. 232 bottom), to be able to continue to make his transplanted heart function, at a certain point your attention focuses on the image of the skeleton which recalls death: *Meditation*

on *Illusion*, 2007 (p. 281). These are images of transitions, to the extent that the 2011 series deals with titles such as *Matter into Light: The Discovery of Fire* (p. 430) or *Matter into Light: Energy is neither Created nor Destroyed in the Universe* (p. 431). Nonetheless, in these sculptures the phantom of the dead is totally in love with life, it copulates and prays, it is a concrete shadow that appears to be filled with life. It is evidently the triumph of a new life, such as the one exalted by Western and Eastern religion, the triumph deserved after death. Furthermore the arrangement of these funeral rites comes with fire, as if the ashes continued to burn, from which a hyperactive and radiating skeletal body is derived. At the same time the image of a person who from the pyre continues to arise and light new passions some of which even are erotic: *Matter into Light: The Discovery of Fire*. These works seem to prolong the physical aspect of the meat, they continue to be images of the living. This depicting and transfiguring are the same thing for you.

**MQ** The skeleton is in a way absorbing because it sort of more truly stands in for anybody than that idea when originally I was making the sculptures with myself, to stand in as anybody, it became too much about me. Whereas the skeleton is like the abstraction of a person. And it could be any person so then it's much more of a figuration without reference to particulars to use the skeleton, and also it's sort of the bit that's left . . . it's the bit that transcends.

**GC** The skeleton in the position of a prayer?

**MQ** I made first of all a piece called *Waiting for Godot*, 2006, that was a praying skeleton and obviously to me the irony was that, you know, you can wait a long . . . you can wait until you die but you're never gonna get an answer. It's this idea of relying on something outside yourself to guide your life. But then in a way the burning sculptures are like the opposite of the embryo sculptures, where life is coming out of material . . . autonomous life . . . here it's at the end of the world: your atoms go back into the world. You become part of the world. If you're burnt, you turn into carbon that then gets fixed into a tree or a bird or duck or into a diamond or some plastics and completely taken out of the carbon cycle. Like the piece *At Last I'm Perfect*, 2002 (p. 197), where I collected hair from my head over a period then that was carbonized then graphitised. I worked with a lab that had a machine which recreated the heat and pressure in the centre of the earth which creates diamonds and grew a diamond which had atoms in it which had been in my body so these atoms are now taken out of the carbon cycle forever. The title *At Last I'm Perfect* is of course ironic as life isn't a frozen perfection of the anorexic but resides in change and transformation, from that unique structure of human, it goes back into the cycle of nature and in a way I want to celebrate

that . . . this is not a bad thing, this is an amazing thing, that we will become something else even if ourselves don't. And then I was in India, in Varanasi, they burn people by the side of the river, after they died, and when you say that it sounds rather horrific and awful, and when you see it it's amazing. It's peaceful and it's an acceptance of the reality of the world and the celebration of transformation. And you realise that in our society, it's all hidden, and when you hide something it becomes much worse. Whereas when it's open, it's a kind of an amazing thing.

GC Dying is still confined to hospitals - no one dies at home any more - so that the effigy of dying has vanished from daily life. The representation of death as a passing and passage to another dimension, hence as a rebirth has slowly become secondary. The nomads burn their dear ones and entrust them to the wind or the stars. Each one has its grave forms, but many of them are public, no one is closed in a space that is hidden and then consecrated, as in Christian culture. The corpse has always been a thing or a material translated into the work of art.

MQ Death has been abstracted . . . and so then I thought: is it possible to make a sculpture like these pyres that I saw in India, and luckily enough at the same time they had just invented a new kind of fire which is using bioethanol burners, which are fires that you can have without a chimney, because it doesn't produce any toxic gas at all. So then I made these sculptures with these commercially available burners in it. So then these sculptures - *Matter into Light* - were about . . . you know celebrating the final transformation of life I suppose. The final ecstasy when all the potential energy of your body is finally released into the universe in heat and light.

GC Death, like life, is another mystery. It brought the gaze from the visible to the invisible. A further mirror, so that if *Evolution* is a reflection of the living, with its increasing fullness, *Waiting for Godot* is the reflection on nothing and on the abyss of the beyond the grave. It is a way of getting rid of the double negative, therefor of protecting us against the thought and vision that sinks into putrefaction.

MQ I hadn't thought of that, but I love that it's another reversal, it's like the final energy that the person gives off is the energy that's kept within their body. Then become light and warmth into the universe. For me it's a celebration of life rather than a depressing thing about death.

GC Just another and different distribution of energy.

MQ In fact, all people are really just a temporary combination of atoms

that are like a massive kit . . . the whole world is made of them. It's always coming together and being broken apart, but it's like a wave coming in . . . it comes together, it goes away . . . it comes.

**GC** The relationship between visible and invisible returns in the water paintings, *The Zone (Where Time Meets Space)*, 2012 (pp. 470-471), which appear to be a magical universe where the bodies float weightlessly or without a terrestrial articulation . . . and therefore close to an "other" world. In the water one loses sight of one's own body, which thus signifies diminishing the murky fascination of uncontrollable darkness. At the same time there is an anaesthesia of gravity and weight, an aphysical reduction that leads to a loss of consistency . . . a moment of jubilation in the "loss" of the body. The image has become a part of the unreal world, inert and unstable, illuminated by a sunray.

**MQ** For the water paintings I worked with a guy I know who works on films for David Attenborough, making nature films, called Doug, and I'd also seen this amazing Werner Herzog film where he filmed under the ice. He set a whole film under the ice, but on another planet and it made me realise that you have these areas in life that are perfectly ordinary, like the waves crashing, but they become a mythic zone. So I asked Doug to go to Australia, which is where the water was completely clear at the time that we are talking, and to put his diving stuff on, to go under water and take like a few hundred pictures of just on everyday people at the beach when the waves crash. Then I went through the pictures that he'd taken and chose like the ten best ones that I liked and made them into paintings. What I love about them is that they are, again, a zone. Is it a zone of creation or destruction? Is it a zone in the real world or is it a myth? And in fact of course it's completely real but it's completely mythic as well in some way. And I like the way that the people are wearing swimming shorts or bikini, that shows that it's from the real world. I suppose it is about the co-existence of reality and myth or a floating world.

**GC** Is it also going back to a placenta situation?

**MQ** In vitro. It's like being in vitro in a way, or in utero.

**GC** This whole discussion implies the idea that the body and flesh are the tabernacle of a hidden and latent energy, which produces light or fire . . . it is already a sacred statue . . . which heralds a mapping of the immaterial world . . . it is still linked to the idea of the gaze within, which records the events of the world.

**MQ** The eye paintings, *The Eye of History*, 2012 (pp. 425, 463, 474-475, 486, 488, 494), with the maps on, and the finger prints, *Labyrinth*

*Painting, 2011-2012* . . . you go to the airport now, you get your fingerprint and your eye scan made So our identity comes down to an abstract pattern - we have our own, like, abstract identity and I thought that it's quite intriguing to make portraits of people that seem to be abstract, but in fact are incredibly particular. For this reason I did the fingerprint paintings and sculptures (pp. 405, 415-416, 483, 485, 507). They are like portraits of people and then I put the map on the eye as well. And it seemed to be something about that whole paranoia that we live in now, in this 24-hour 7 news . . . you and I are sitting here but we might be thinking about Mali or North Korea - places that we may never go to, but somehow the whole world is connected now.

We're much more conscious of it and I think that it's kind of reflecting the history, like the picture of the rioter - the tapestry carpet. I wanted again to make a contradictory thing, so the carpet is something about home and warmth and security and this is the opposite . . . so we live in a contradictory world, where these contradictions - and we kind of have to live in this contradictory world and accept the existence of beauty and terror at the same time. And, you know, when you first, when it first happens, everyone's traumatised and then you just learn how to live . . . In this new world. And so in a way I'm not making any moral judgments or drama - it's just the new reality that we live in and as I said before it's interesting for me for art to reflect the world.

**GC** This network system is evidently the result of the creation of a work that is not real, that is virtual.

**MQ** I think the Internet has very much to do with that, because it's almost like the whole Internet has become one neural brain and that every person is just one synapse in that brain. We're connected in some massive way and we need more and more. It depends on society so it's about celebrating the things, the things that happen because of where we are.

**GC** The image is a mediation between the visible and the invisible, so that your art tends to suspend time, stop decomposition, for example in *Garden, 2000*. It's a tribute to the life of flowers, but at the same time the perfect translation of reality in absolute chromatic sculpture. In fact, it is potentially eternal like a classical marble element. It is a generous gesture towards the ephemeral dimension of life, it subtracts it from death and it turns it into a holy shroud of natural beauty.

**MQ** These plants, in order to look like they live forever, they have to give up their life. What was really engaging for me, when you put a plant in frozen silicone it immediately freezes and is no longer a

plant - it becomes a sculpture of the plant. It's the purest form of making sculpture, because you get the actual object and then that object, made of atoms, becomes a sculpture of itself. It's happened in a magical moment - and it's the moment of release. It's like you find it in religion - transfiguration, when people get taken to heaven.

**GC** Ecstasy!

**MQ** It's like an ecstasy . . . there's a moment of ecstasy and I think that for me it is stimulating about the DNA as well . . . when I made the DNA, with John Sulston, who was one of the people who got the Nobel Prize for sequencing the human genome. He said the best way you can get DNA if you're a man is from your sperm, if you want a really good quality. So I love the idea that these portraits, particularly the male ones, are born in ecstasy as well. And yet even though they look completely unecstatic when you see them. They are very blank, kind of like when we see any person in the world we can forget quite easily that in most cases they were conceived in a moment of ecstasy and that is actually quite a wonderful thing about the world.

**GC** Your art is an art of incarnation, with priority to visual and tactile values, aimed at nature and the human being, as well as light and the retina that filters it . . .

**MQ** DNA is interesting for me to do with the shells. What I've done with the shells is scan them with a 3D scanner (pp. 450-451) - so effectively what happens is that the form of the shell becomes a binary code, like a DNA. It becomes an image within the computer, and then the computer tells this 3D printer - which is essentially a vat of liquid with lasers that play on the surface and where the lasers meet the liquid solidifies but it takes a very long time to do it - so then the object comes out. So it's been born in the same way as an animal uses its DNA to do the next generation, these are sculptures made by DNA - but by a DNA in a computer not in a body. And then they're cast afterwards by me into bronze . . . the other thing I love about them is that they are, I suddenly realised, when I was looking at a shell first, that they are sculptures of time - because you have, on the side of it, you have the rings from the thing, which are like the rings of the tree, the accumulation. Then, because I polished the front it's a mirror so it's always in the now.

So then you have the mirrored bit going into this bit, so it's almost like a sculpture of time/space - like one of those Einstein sculptures of the universe, of how the present becomes the past and they come together. So to me these sculptures are really about time as well.



- GC** Your works are projected backwards and forwards, from birth to death. They are fluctuating images that concern the body and its flesh, the joyous registration of its contemplation, both positively and negatively. They exteriorize the internal desires and mental images of a human being who transits from one sexual condition to another. They embrace both interior and exterior life. Are the sculptures of flowers another insurgence of time's attack which sacrifices beauty?
- MQ** It's a mixture of temporary beauty, a celebration of sexuality and reproduction, also it's like a frozen thing. I like the idea of taking a tiny delicate thing, and making a big, monumental, solid thing out of bronze from a very fragile thing. But they're celebrations of nature and life.