

Illustrated Report for the Sir Denis Mahon Foundation

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3rd Year Stone



My Initial Proposal for the Sir Denis Mahon Foundation Award

My inspiration for this has been the doctors, nurses and care staff that have been on the front line of the Covid outbreak, some of whom have sacrificed and lost their own lives.

The stone drapery will be the (Scubs) PPE garments nurses and doctors wear, formed as the crucified Christ to represent the sacrifice they have made to help others. A respiratory mask will represent the head.

This artwork will show an abstract human figure mixed with the realism of draped clothing. The piece will act as a memorial to Covid sufferers and the heroes who fought it.

I believe that my proposed design has many characteristics and elements relating to the interests of Sir Denis Mahon. Known for his knowledge of history and his collection of Italian baroque paintings, including masterpieces by Guido Reni, Guercino and Luca Giordano. A running theme in all of these baroque artists' paintings is the use of drapery. Such an example in his collection is the detailed oil study, of a group of 12 that Giordano made in preparation for the ceiling frescoes in the Palazzo Medici Riccardi in Florence in 1682–85. The overall theme of these highly elaborate, showpiece frescoes is the progress of mankind by means of Wisdom and Virtue.

My drapery carving will represent these continued Virtues of our NHS, however, mixed with a failure in Wisdom from our leaders. Like many of his baroque paintings the carving contains biblical imagery. It is not meant to be a religious carving, but one of sacrifice and honour.

Sir Denis also had interest in the abstract as suggested through his friendships with Moore and Paolozzi.



fig 1.



fig.2

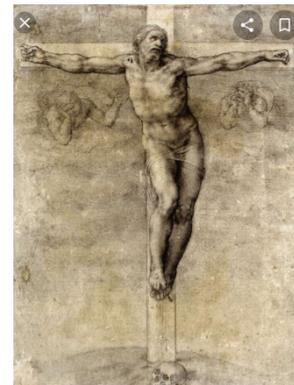


fig. 3

Knowing by how the drapes can represent the figure from our drapery classes (fig 1), and contemporary marble sculptors such as Alex Seton (fig 2) and Jacopo Cardillo (fig 3) , combined with the crucified Christ of the renaissance (figs 4,5,6), I experimented with clothing as a stand alone crucified figure. Firstly with jogging trousers and a t- shirt (figs 7,8,9) until I acquired a real scrubs uniform and 2 types of face mask to represent the head.



figs 4,5,6



figs 7,8,9



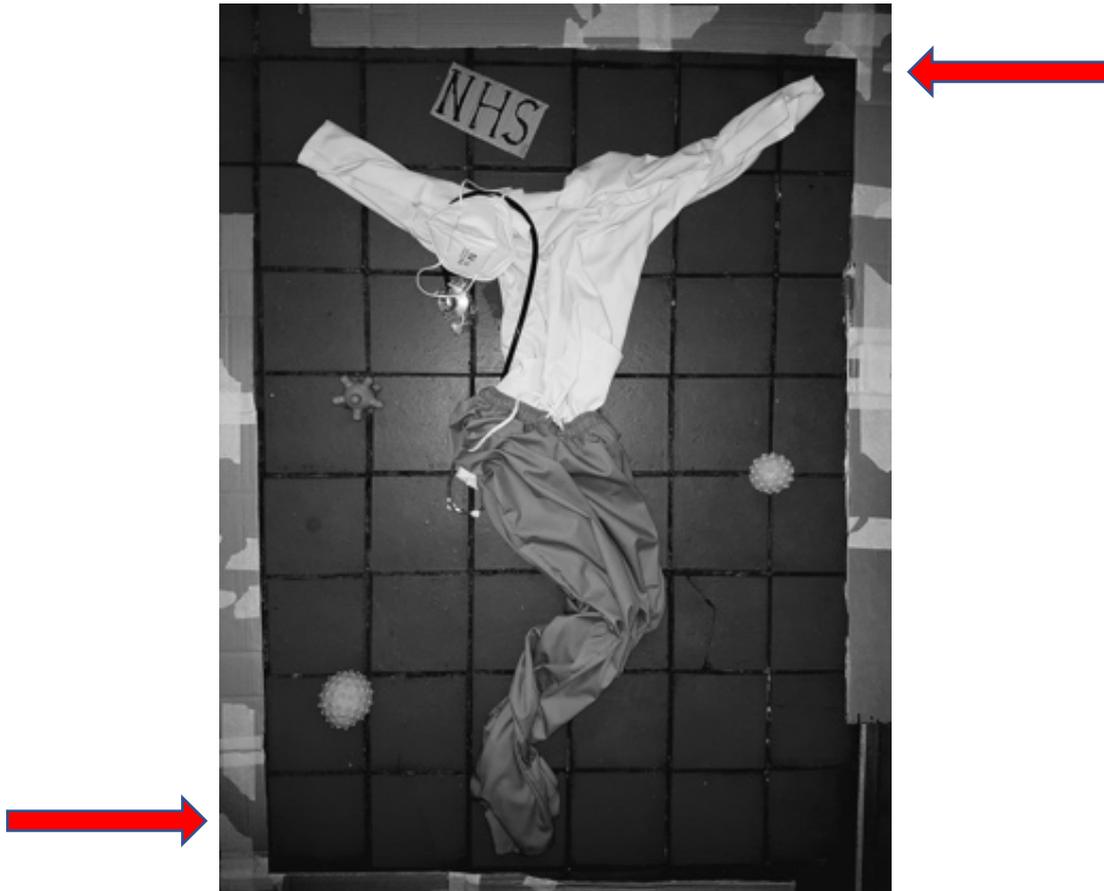


fig 10.

After buying a scrubs uniform and arranging the drapes in a design that I thought would be something like the final image I was then able to frame the image by constructing 2 cardboard squares. These are indicated by the red arrows in fig 10. This framing of the image helped me with deciding on the length and width of the stone I would need.

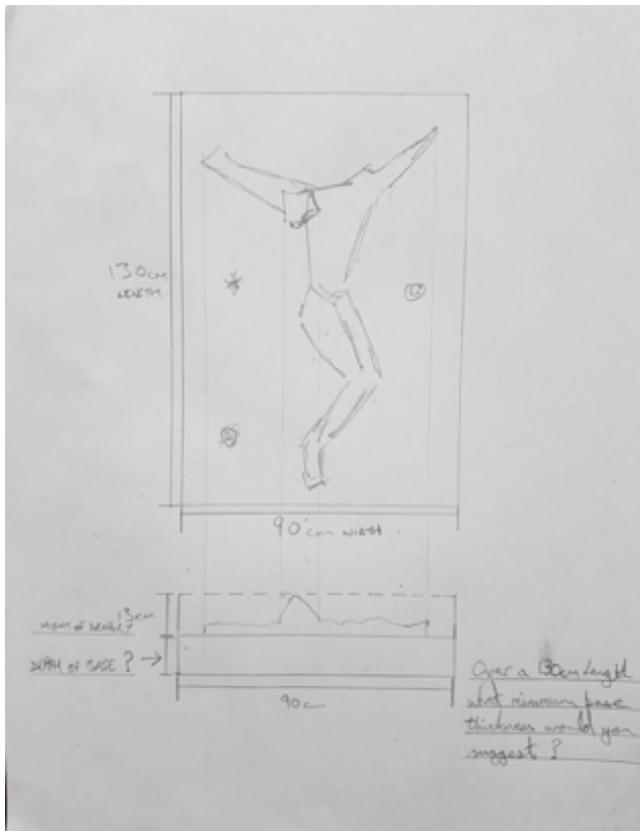


fig 11 .

Fig 11. shows an A4 sketch I sent to Nina Bilbey. The sketch relates to the question of thickness of the stone. I knew from measuring the highest point (which was the mask) would be 13cm, but was not sure on the thickness of the supporting background. From our discussion a thickness of 6cm of stone behind the relief would be sufficient.

The dimensions of 1300 x 900 x 190mm were then ordered from Stonefirms (Portland).



fig 12. Final design



Fig 13.

Fig 13. shows the Portland stone slab and pointing machine with the drapery model in the background.



Fig. 14

Fig. 14. The legs of the pointing machine frame sit in their location points. Held in place by glued in Phillips screw heads. The drapery model has these same location points also with Phillips screws, screwed into the board.



fig 15.

Here after measuring and drawing out the image on the stone with extra space added for safety. I've used the angle grinder to cut out the form and quickly remove the excess stone surrounding the figure. This was easily done by cutting lines with the grinder and knocking out with a hammer. Fig 15.



fig 16

Fig. 16 shows my last picture before the second Lockdown. Here most of the excess stone has been removed, again with an angle grinder. The background is finished to a flat surface.



fig 17.

Fig 17 shows the waste being removed from the figure. Again, first by using the grinder with parallel cut lines and a cut below so it can be knocked off.



Fig 18.

After the desired height was found with flat planes I was able to take some of the highest points with the pointing machine. This enabled me to then take diagonal planes (fig18) away with the grinder, again making my way to the surface quicker.



Fig 19.

Once the diagonal planes were removed I could start to find the form of the cloth with a claw chisel and additional points (fig 19). This was now done with the stone raised. I did this by hiring my banker with good quality pallets which was a much better carving position.



Fig 20.

After further roughing out with the claw chisel I could start to find the surface form. Here the stone starts to resemble cloth (fig20).

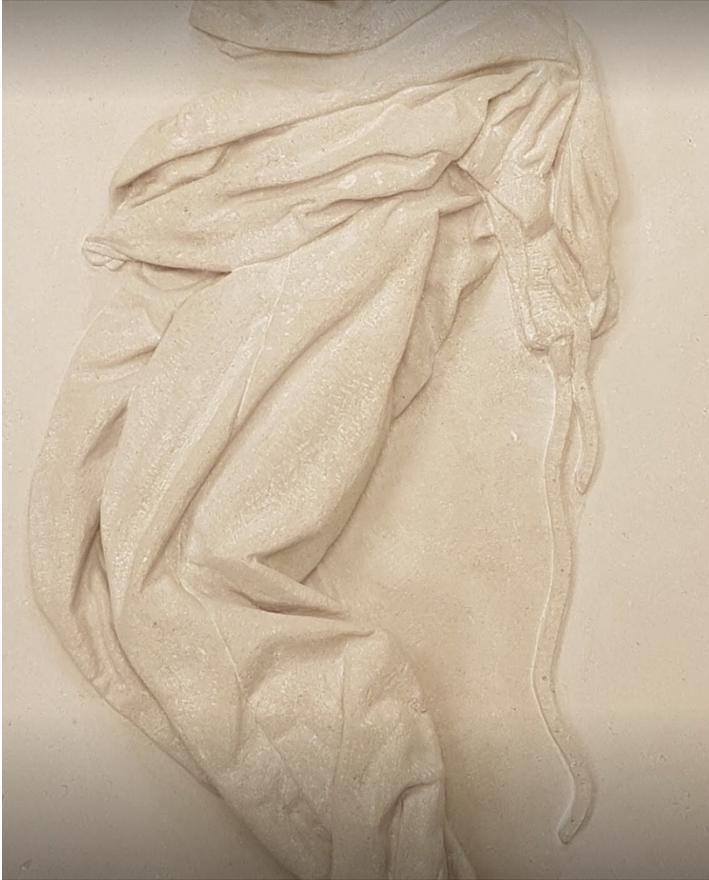


Fig 21.

Here with not being able to get behind the draw string with the vanity blade on the grinder made my new masonry skills come in handy.



Fig 22.

I was initially quite apprehensive about trying to replicate an elasticated waist band but once I'd thought it through it was fun and easier than I thought.



Fig 23.

Carving the mask was slightly trickier than the drapery as there were overhanging thinner edges. The plastic vent on the front was mostly made using masonry skills. And once the carving was completed I used the vanity blade to take the 3 pointing machine locators off and put a chamfer around the edge by hand.



Fig 23.



Fig 24.

I made 6 steel hooks and a bracket for the piece to hang on a wall which I have cut and welded myself. Figs 23 and 24 show the hooks, and figs 25 and 26 show the hooks set into indents in the stone and fixed with stone glue and 10mm threaded bar for securing with nuts. The threaded bar sits 3.5cm into the tone.



Fig 25.



Fig 26.



Fig 27.

Fig 27 shows the steel bracket that will be attached to the wall and how it slides onto the hooks in the stone. Fig 28. Shows the carving being lifted into position on a fork lift pump truck. Once at the correct height, the carving was gently moved to the wall bracket on carpet rolls and lowered onto the cross beams of the wall bracket. Ready for the show.

With the funding from The Sir Denis Mahon Foundation I was able to choose a more expensive stone (Portland) which is stronger and holds greater detail, enabling me to push the carving further. I was also able to buy a pointing machine which was essential when replicating a design in stone with greater accuracy. Plus additional tools needed for the carving. This carving most certainly added to my overall mark of a 'first class honours degree' plus the 'De Laszlo award for stone carving'. The carving has since been sold to a retired Professor of St Thomas's Hospital. He is in talks with the Hospital trust to have it installed at the hospital Chapel.

The work is called 'The Last Shift'.

