



Mike Bizley - Carving the stone

'To carve an image is to test the ability to comprehend and to leave some evidence of continuity between the past and the future. Being aware of what has gone before, to try and attain in one's own work the content and spirit that is within all great creative achievements. It is not possible to equal these but one must never lose that awareness and purpose'.

I began working for three years as a trainee mason at Guildford Cathedral, learning there how to hold and use the mallet, hammer and chisel in order to waste the stone without undue fatigue, and to square a rough block - from that squared block all architectural and sculptural purpose begins. After the cathedral I completed a four year sculpture course at Guildford School of Art and then began to earn my living as a sculptor, working in stone, marble, wood and terracotta.

Moving to Purbeck was of course a different experience. To live within sight of the sea and to learn to work the stone, it has a particular quality and density that I had not known before. I began to carve the "marble" of Purbeck and to consider which images are sympathetic to that medium.

There is sometimes, an intense light along this coast with an Aegean clarity, which defines form, accentuating the contrast of light and dark in one's work, which can be revelatory to the content and purpose of the image. This can happen at any time of the year, depending on the atmospheric conditions. With their simplicity and clarity, and the purity and luminosity of the marble, the Greek carvings of the geometric and Archaic period could only have been made in a similar but more intense ambience. For myself, whatever is carved must have this quality and spirit - without such content it has no value.