

ART

# The Art of Ken Clarke

**S**culptor and bodycaster, Ken Clarke is a familiar face at Erotica. You will find him in The Art Gallery, chatting easily to mesmerised onlookers while demonstrating his obvious skills as he slickly moulds a model's breast.

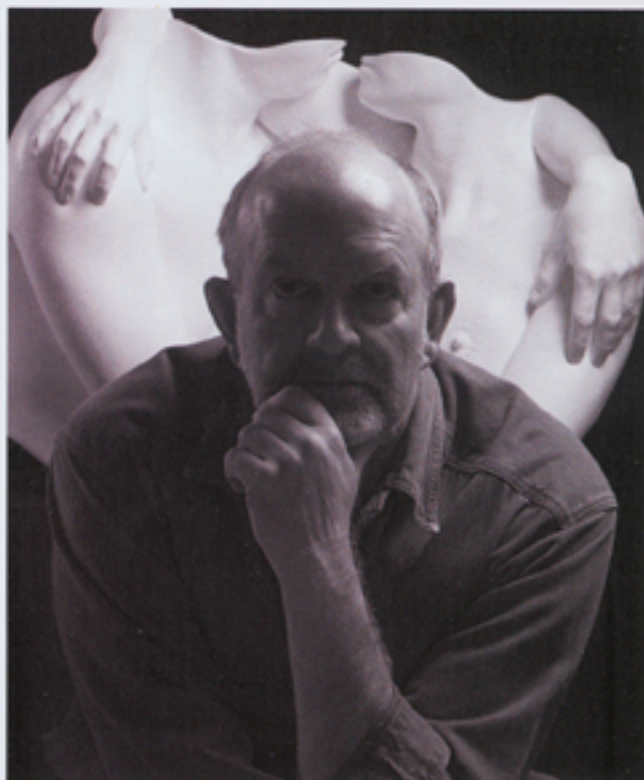
I asked Ken just how does one get into his line of work?

"I started a five-year apprenticeship in 1964 at Shepperton Film Studios simultaneously spending time at the Art & Craft College, Limegrove for my final City & Guilds. After my apprenticeship I spent an additional four years at Shepperton before going freelance.

"In the early days I enjoyed building sets in plaster for the big blockbuster movies and also taking moulds of the stars for special effects. The film stars at that time were Kim Novak, Richard Burton, Tony Curtis, Michael Cain, Oliver Reed, Peter O'Toole, Elizabeth Taylor and many more. I was also involved in the architectural side of set construction and design – columns, cornices, moulding, detailed architecture, Greek, Roman – all in plaster. This is where my passion for plaster started.

"I was self-motivated, self-employed and spent 36 years in the film industry working with many film stars on location such as Peter Sellers in *Pink Panther*; Christopher Reeves in *Superman*; Alan Parker, director of *Midnight Express*; Jack Nicholson in *The Shining* and Sigourney Weaver in *Alien* all of which required make-up effects, special effects, animatronics, bullet hits, cuts, blood, gore and more. My craft skills of mould making and casting were applied to most craft departments within the film industry, such as Set Construction, Special Effects, Animatronics, Creatures, Wardrobe, Prop Making, Sculpture and Body Moulding and of course Lifecasting.

"In 1982 I was asked to form a specialist moulding department to run alongside the great American make-up artist Rick Baker. He asked me to supervise the lifecasting of actors, artists, stunt men and women to form all the ape-like suits for the movie *Greystoke*. From this I progressed to movies such as the *Star Wars* trilogy and all the adventures of *Indiana Jones*, working with the great Steven Spielberg, George Lucas and, of course, Harrison Ford. For years I



had the privilege of working with a crew of finely tuned technicians on location around the world moulding bodies, film stars, actresses, glamour models, stunt men and women.

"Later I spent time teaching college students at degree level the arts of mould making and lifecasting. But I continued on action films making spare body parts for *The Fifth Element* with Bruce Willis, *Mortal Combat*, *The Mummy* and *Planet of the Apes*. My position was head of department. The moulding shop was the hub of the effects in modern films of the day. Everything came out of moulds. Today the computer has taken over and because of this I decided to start a company of my own, *Body Sculpture*. Now, with my wife Jenny who assists me, we create beautiful bodycasts.

"Having a mould and sculpture made of one's body is a unique experience. We can capture not only the shape of the body but all of the details and expressions that make it unique. Our studio is designed for privacy and comfort and the client is encouraged to bring along his or her partner or friends to take part, put on the creams, take photos and make the tea. The finished sculpture is a

**'Cathy' a 21.5cm handmade sculpture finished in white acrylic (as below) or bronze resin. Limited edition of 100.**



All photos of Ken and his work by David Ayerst Davies who is also exhibiting in the Erotica Art Gallery.

very personal work of art that will last a lifetime.

"Lifecasting preserves memories like no other medium. It's a memory that you can reach out and touch. A lifecast can be made of a woman while she is pregnant or of a child's hands at different stages. For many clients the thrill is in preserving the memory of what you looked like when you were in the best physical condition of your life. We are now introducing clothes to the parts that one

doesn't want to display. This can make a sculpture more sensuous than erotic. Our work is endless and gives us both great satisfaction, especially when a client comes to pick up their piece – just to see their face says it all.

"Some three years ago I opened a gallery, Beaumont Hall Studios, near St Albans, with Colin and Paul Ballard. The three of us are the founder members of The Guild of Erotic Artists which is growing rapidly. This gives us, and many other artists, a stage to exhibit erotic work.

"Jenny and I have exhibited at Erotica now for the past six years and have met many interesting people. We also do demonstrations which have attracted a great deal of business for Body Sculpture and it just seems to get better each year. Erotica has inspired me to spice up my work and makes it more exciting. I would love to thank all those who have helped me such as Savvas, Chris, Carol and Ray Leaning and the models who are many, but in particular Liz and Nadia for their support.

"I am always asked 'What of tomorrow? Where is it all going?' The answer to this is in the stars. I mean stars. Madonna, Beckham, Branson, politicians, royalty, Where are you all? Unlike with Madame Tussaud's you can purchase and retain your piece of body art and have history within your environment. It could be your foot that scored the famous goal or your left breast that made you the star we know today or the lips that made that movie a blockbuster. All these body parts can be reproduced to a limited edition for sale for your followers, your supporters and your fans. I personally would like to complete my circle of lifecasting back where I started in the film industry. I know the business and would like to finish by recording the stars of today for tomorrow."

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'Red Lilly' with her heart-shaped bodycast