

A *passion* REKINDLED

Story by Phil Gravelle
Photos by Ted Brown

CARPENTER SAYS HIS SCULPTURES MUST HAVE SOME 'LIFE'

Tim Dolman has always loved to create things with his hands, whether it be houses for people to live in, or sculptures to display in their living rooms.

Carpentry has been his living, but art has been a lifelong passion. Portraits are his specialty- created in wax or clay, then cast in bronze.

"It's important to get a good likeness and capture the personality and essence of the subject. I also strive to get some animation in the piece, even if it is quite subtle. It has to have some life to it," he said.

With a simplicity of style, he is able to capture emotional energy in his creations.

"They are not supremely detailed- I don't want to make pretty sculptures. When you get too sophisticated, it very quickly starts to look phony and contrived. If you are trying to impress somebody else, you've failed before you started."

Sixteen years ago, he moved to an old schoolhouse in rural Erin, an open-concept living space well-suited to both carpentry and sculpting.

Over the years, he has done many sculptures on commission, plus works of personal interest. But there were periods when he created no art, and he has never developed a strong public image.

He has rekindled his artistic passion in recent years, with sensuous dance figures on glass stands adding a new element to his repertoire. The stands have been made by renowned Canadian glass artist Andrew Kuntz, who exhibits at the Williams Mill Visual Arts Centre in Glen Williams.

Dolman is improving his marketing efforts with a professional brochure, a website and an effort to get more exposure for his work through solo or group shows.

It is a tough field in which to prosper, especially while doing another job at the same time. Sculpting a portrait bust may take 200 hours, and having it cast in bronze could cost more than \$3,000.

The process usually starts with a series of photos, viewing the subject from many angles for on-going reference. Then there



is the choice of medium. Dolman has worked in stone and wood, which require material to be removed to create the figure.

He prefers to use wet clay or oil-based wax, with pieces constantly being stuck onto the project. He shapes them with his fingers or a small stick, and refines sharp details with a dental tool. These media provide the flexibility to experiment, with various areas reshaped until the desired look is achieved.

"You can go too far, but after 40 years, you know when to stop," he said.

As a young child, Dolman always drew full bodies instead of stick figures. He did well at painting in junior school in England and later developed a love for architectural drawing.

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Continued on page 26