

lorenzo quinn

Tom Sheppard meets the world-renowned sculptor and discussed his art, his philosophy of life and the complex relationship between a father and a son.

I first met Lorenzo Quinn on the occasion of his inaugural London show. The press preview was to take place on the following day and the Halcyon Gallery was alive with activity: gallery assistants were everywhere, adjusting hangings and shifting sculptures. Everyone was running a little behind time, and I was given the opportunity of a few spare moments to wander around the space and view the works on display. The sculptures were intriguing; largely figurative in their conception, played against mystical symbols and archetypal designs, their deep turquoise surface sometimes burnished, sometimes offset by the richer texture of wood. The more formal works spoke immediately of the artist's major influences, Bernini and Carpeaux, but I found myself making a more definite comparison between his work and that of Rodin, in the delicately conceived portraits emerging from rough cast blocks of bronze.

Lorenzo Quinn eventually appeared, dressed in a charcoal grey suit, quietly and sincerely apologetic for his being late. The morning had been taken up putting the finishing touches to the displays, the afternoon would be taken up with interviews; Gloria Hunniford and Nicky Campbell. With the arrival of coffee the conversation turned away from opening formalities to the streets beyond the glass of the gallery window.

"London's a great city – I've been here before but never to put on a show. The prospect's exciting – there's a little apprehension – but I'm excited."

And the buzz of the place? The wave of talent that has seen the city rise again to pre-eminence within the modern art market? Lorenzo waved the question away.

"It's not important to me."

I found the dismissive nature of his response a little off-putting and pressed him on the subject, but he did not waver. Contemporary art, he felt, held no relevance to his way of working, instead he drew inspiration from the achievements of more established artists.

"When I first started out as an artist, I wanted to be the new Dalí," he mused, but added with wry afterthought; "but there could only ever be one Dalí. An artist cannot copy, he has to create."

His latest project 'The Globe of Life' gives full rein to this creative impulse. A monument to the spirit of

"I make art for myself and the people who wish to come along for a ride through my dreams."

humanity it is a thirty foot high representation of the world, constructed from decorated plates of bronze. It is possible for visitors to actually enter into the sculpture, to view further artworks and multimedia displays. With another five sculptures planned, one on each continent and each connected to the other via the internet, the idea is to establish a symbolic link between different communities across the globe. Lorenzo holds out hope that the work will eventually involve hundreds of smaller sculptures, to be placed at various locations around the world: there are even hopes to eventually place one on the moon. His thoughts make clear the ambitious scope of the project: