

Aspencrow

Aspencrow is the alias of Lithuanian artist Edgar Askelovic, known for his striking hyper-realistic sculptures of celebrities such as Amy Winehouse, Kurt Cobain and Kate Moss. Over the years, Aspencrow's practice has seen him learning a number of technical processes that help him to create a more realistic finish to his sculptures, something which has helped with his overall artistic vision to accurately portray the person in synthetic form. To gaze into the resin eyes of Aspencrow's hyper-realistic sculptures is to gaze into the soul of the person depicted. Now based in Germany, his body of work includes the controversial pieces 'Begging Queen' - which saw an effigy of Queen Elizabeth II sitting homeless on the streets - and 'ICON'; a half dog, half David Bowie hybrid perched upon a white plinth.

What drew you to sculpture as a medium? Has it always been your main practice?

From early childhood I could draw well. Unfortunately, at school I did not study at all and I was lucky to finish it. When I finished school, I understood that I can do art only and I am interested with art only, so it was easy for me to make a choice to study at the Academy of Art. As I already had drawing skills, I decided to try sculpting, so I applied to the Sculpture Faculty. At that time I did not think about my future; who I would be and how I would earn money after I received my degree.

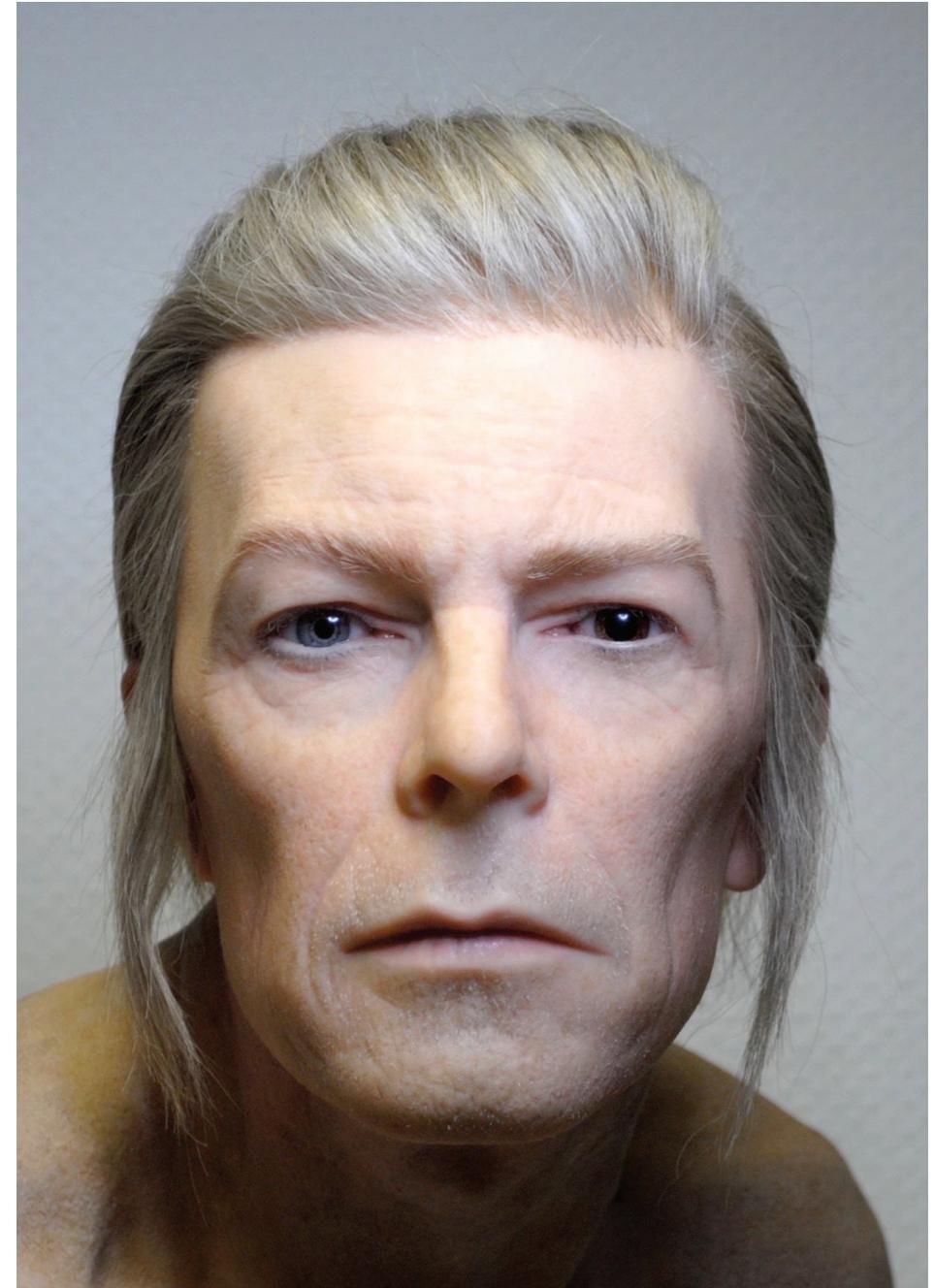
Can you tell us more about your process, from initial idea to finished piece?

Looking at art in general, I have always thought that hyperrealism is the top level in art. I mean,

working in hyperrealism, an artist can show their technique and skills. In my opinion, most of hyperrealist artists focus on technique, not an idea. So their sculptures become uninspired after a short amount of time.

In Lithuania, during the first three years of university, we learned conceptualism, minimalism and did performance instead of sculpting. All of these developed my artistic side. While finishing university in the United Kingdom I gained freedom in my head and in my thoughts. In my free time from work and university, I gained and improve sculpting skills from internet resources and practice.

In my personal case, hyperrealism in my artworks is a tool, not base. I mean, you can have a great



Diamond Dog - sculpture of David Bowie, YEAR, plinth, silicone and natural hairs, 170 x 170 x 170 cm



idea, but if the artwork has poor quality, the audience will be not interested. Similarly, it could be brilliant quality, but a poor idea. There should be balance, to get interest.

Talking about my work process, I begin with the idea and what I want to say through my artwork. After this I think about which technique I will use, as I have many. I think all the details and then leave the sketch for 1-2 months. If after this time I still want to realise this artwork, I start a project.

What's the most challenging aspect of the way you create work?

The main challenges are the financial parts, and time. The materials are expensive, making the final piece less accessible to everyone. From

this I have less clientele/buyers. As I create my artworks from start to finish, the production can takes from 3 months up to a year, therefore there is not fast financial turnover. My work process includes: sketch, construction, sculpting, moldmaking, casting finishing and personal delivery.

Your work has a focus on hyper-realism; have you always created work with such attention to real-life details?

Not always. At first university in Vilnius, I really loved creating kinetic installations. Later, in the UK, when I did my first hyper realistic artwork 'Begging Queen', I really believed that I could reach a good quality with the piece, but comparing my current and first artworks, there is



ICON, 2012, silicone, burned wood, gold, hairs and painted flowers, 160 x 110 x 23 cm



huge difference. For example, to make the eyes for Begging Queen I used shell from eggs. Now, after many experiments, I create perfect prosthetic resin eyes.

Themes of celebrity, excess and death are often present in your sculptures; can you tell us about your inspirations for creating new work?

For me theme of death does not exist. For my projects I choose people - legends - who are interesting to me and it doesn't make a difference if they are they alive or not. When I choose a celebrity for a project, I discover details of their life and my task is to interpret their lifestyle and

personality in sculpture. I do not create hyper realistic sculpture, I create hyper realistic soul.

What are you currently working on? Do you have any upcoming shows?

Currently I am creating sculpture of Rihanna. For next year I have plans to organise solo exhibition, but the location is not yet finalised -it could be England or Denmark. To find out more, you can follow me on social media.

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Death's-head hawk moth Seattle - sculpture of Kurt Cobain, YEAR, silicone, natural hairs, garment, metal construction, 200 x 250 x 70 cm



"Andy walking, Andy tired, Andy take a little snooze..." - sculpture of Andy Warhol, 2011
silicone, plastic, metal construction, expansion foam, garment., 160 x 70 x 60 cm



MILF - sculpture of Kate Moss, YEAR, plinth, silicone and natural hairs, 180 x 70 x 70 cm