

# phillip piperides

## Nude

September 30 – October 4, 2025

The sculptures in Phillip Piperides' current exhibition with Anthea Polson Art invite us to see beyond the physicality of the nude and into a spirit of presence that resonates across time and culture. Working primarily in bronze, Piperides brings a profound sensitivity to the portrayal of the human figure. Transcending mere representation, live models' poses have been transformed into timeless sculptural statements that embody states of being.

Enormous skill is required in the lengthy and painstaking processes involved in bringing mute, raw materials into a life-suffused, physical reality. From his Brisbane studio Piperides meticulously presides over every stage. Rather than striving for a preconceived outcome, he has responded to the poses his models have naturally assumed. Although proportion and form are carefully observed, Piperides is also searching for a nuance – a special something that will evoke the essence of his subject. Understanding the unclothed figure as a “landscape of soft undulations”, he selects an appealing pose and directly renders it in clay. This tactile medium provides one of the most satisfying ways of “thinking in three dimensions”.



When content that the preliminary maquette is aesthetically fulfilling, Piperides enlarges it by modelling clay over a steel armature. A cast is then made into which is poured molten bronze. Once cool, the cast is dismantled and long hours of chipping away dross and polishing ensue. Finally a patination is applied to give the bronze a deep lustrous brown, gold or deep greenish hue.

There is a timeless serenity to the bronzes Piperides creates. Light gently caresses rounded volumes and lustrous, burnished surfaces. A union of ideal and reality, the figures convey a profoundly classical air. But beyond the anatomical perfection and sensitive play of light, the works engage the viewer at a deeper, more contemplative level. There is a sense of complete quietude to the self-sufficient repose of each figure. Free of restless energy, Piperides' bronzes seem to represent a state of being which defies all worldly concern. His *Nude* series distils the essence of the body into forms that are both intimate and universal.

At the outset of his career Piperides noted the absence of foundries capable of casting bronze sculptures in Australia and so during the 1980's he journeyed to Greece and Italy to investigate the casting techniques of the great masters. He returned to Brisbane with crucial knowledge and established the Perides Art Foundry, generously sharing and teaching the complex processes he'd learnt abroad. In recognition of his service to the arts and the achievements of his personal practice, Piperides was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 1989. The grant enabled him to undertake further study in the USA, Canada and England where he explored contemporary methods of monumental casting.

Piperides' superb craftsmanship and mastery of form has earned him a great number of prestigious public commissions among which include: Clem Jones statue, City Hall, Brisbane, Queensland, 2018; Bee Gees sculpture, Redcliffe, Queensland, 2013; *Images*, acquired by Skywalk, Brisbane Airport, Queensland, 2013; Kokoda Track War Memorial, Ferntree Gully, Victoria, 2013; Darren Lockyer sculpture, Suncorp Stadium, Queensland, 2013; C.O. portrait bust, Sugar Cane Board, Queensland, 2013; Monument to the Vietnamese boat people, Kangaroo Point, Queensland, 2013; *Walking On Glass*, Brisbane Boys College, Queensland, 2011; Portrait sculpture of *Hurry Murry* for The Queensland Club 2011; Portrait plaque of the Hon. Ian Callinan, Justice of the High Court of Australia, 2011; Memorial to Peter Lacey, Gold Coast, 1997; the Stinson Crash Memorial, Lamington National Park, Queensland, 1997; the casting of the Australian Coat of Arms for the Australian High Commission, Papua New Guinea, 1996; the Hippocrates sculpture, Royal Brisbane Hospital Medical School, Queensland, 1996; Memorial to Banjo Patterson, Winton Shire Council, Queensland, 1994; Coat of Arms for the Commonwealth Law Courts, Brisbane, 1993; Portrait Medallions, University of Queensland, 1990; the Council Crest, Brisbane City Botanical Gardens, 1990; Bronze and Sandstone Group, Mount Isa Mines building, Brisbane, 1987 and a sculpture for Sheraton Mirage Resort, Gold Coast, 1987. JACQUELINE HOUGHTON

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