

adhoc

The Art of Peter Huby

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This piece is based, notionally, on the story of Judith and Holofernes, a motif much used by sculptors in the past. The life sized clay prototype was cast hollow into white cement using a plaster piece mould, which had nine separate pieces. It was very awkward to assemble. Luckily, Linda is left handed and I am right handed so that we were able more easily to get our respective arms inside to smear on the cement goo.

Water burbles nicely out of Holofernes' mouth into the pool below, on the odd occasions we run the pump.

Years ago, in India, I saw the Hindu temple sculptures in Kajuraho. I don't often want to own things, but the lush figures on the temples themselves and in the museum there, were definitely objects of desire for me. Subsequently, I made several clay pieces deriving from these Indian carvings.

The glaze firing for this particular piece was done in a very large three chambered wood fired kiln built by a potter I used to know, Peter Kelley, in his garden. Peter rented out kiln space to other potters, if he had room.

One of the people who had pots in the kiln on the night my piece was fired was a guy who had brought some bowls with an ash glaze made from the remains of a dead friend who had recently been cremated.

Another bloke was on parole from jail where he was serving a long sentence for his involvement, as a youth, in a murder. A nice guy.

The pale marks around the eyes of the figure in the picture are smudges of clay. At some point I made a number of fibreglass casts from this piece. I used soft clay to block up the empty eye sockets and to make a wall around the edge, and never got round to cleaning it off properly.



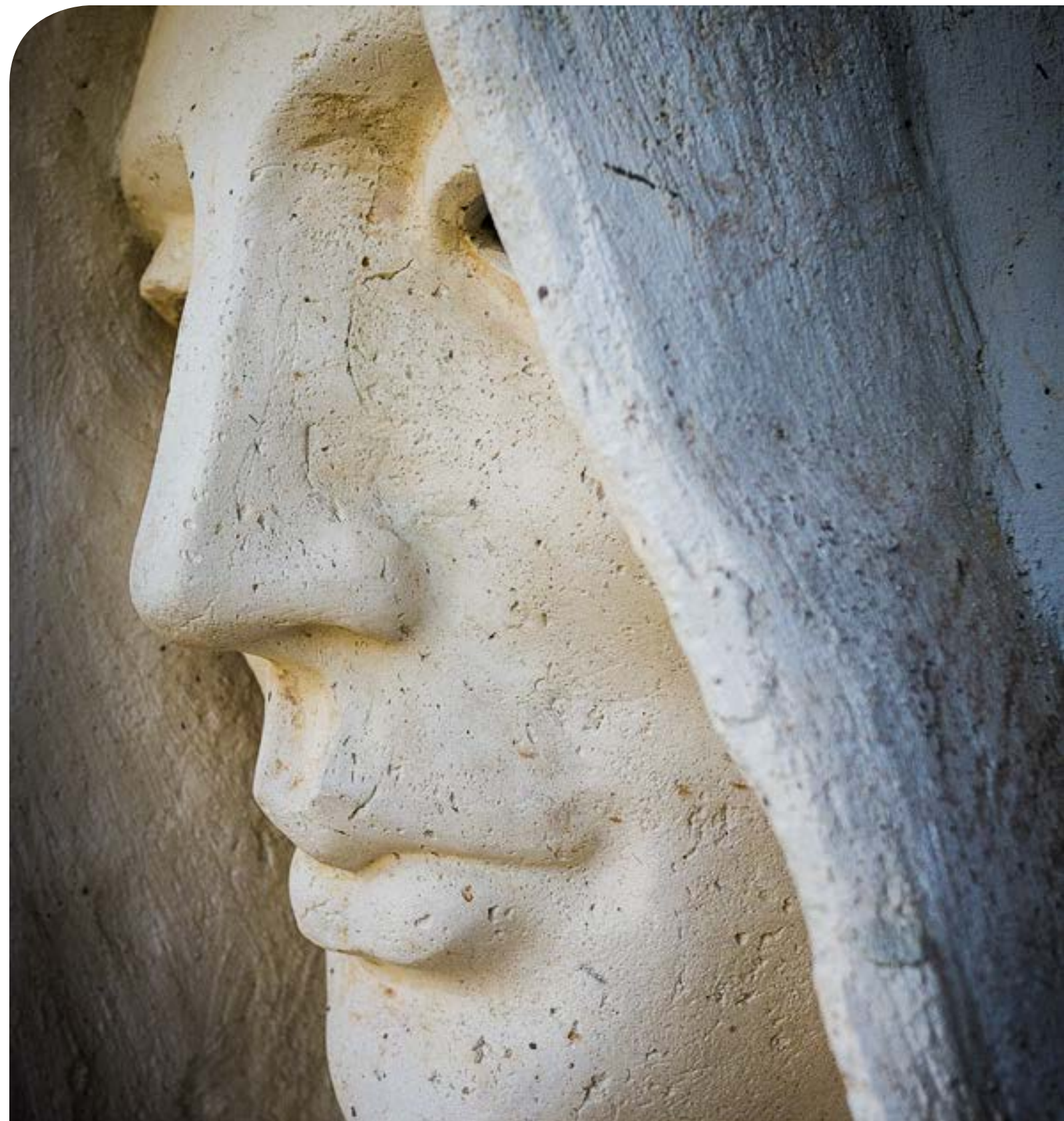


These figures are almost life sized. They were made originally in clay before being cast in fibreglass. I had seen a medieval carving in a German churchyard, a Calvary, a crucifixion, depicting Jesus between the thief and the murderer, but centuries before, iconoclasts had destroyed the central figure of Christ, leaving the remaining figures on either side of a void.

A bleak image.





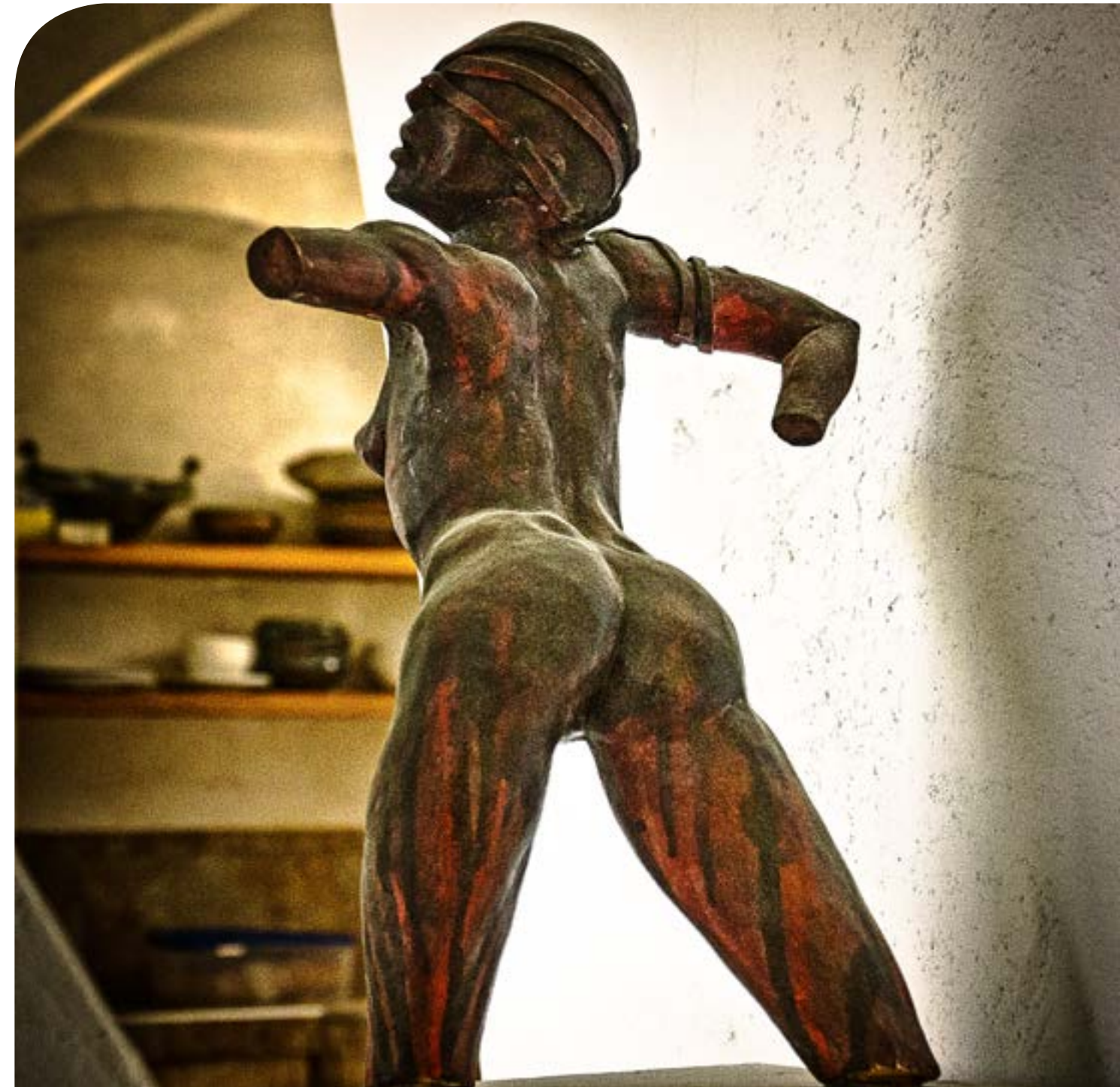






*Clay is a very sensual material, everybody knows this, but it took me a long time, years, to become quite comfortable showing people the female figures I made from clay, since most of them are obviously, if at some remove, not unconnected with desire. I had made a number of pieces based on Greek/Roman originals but only very gradually was I able to work more freely.*

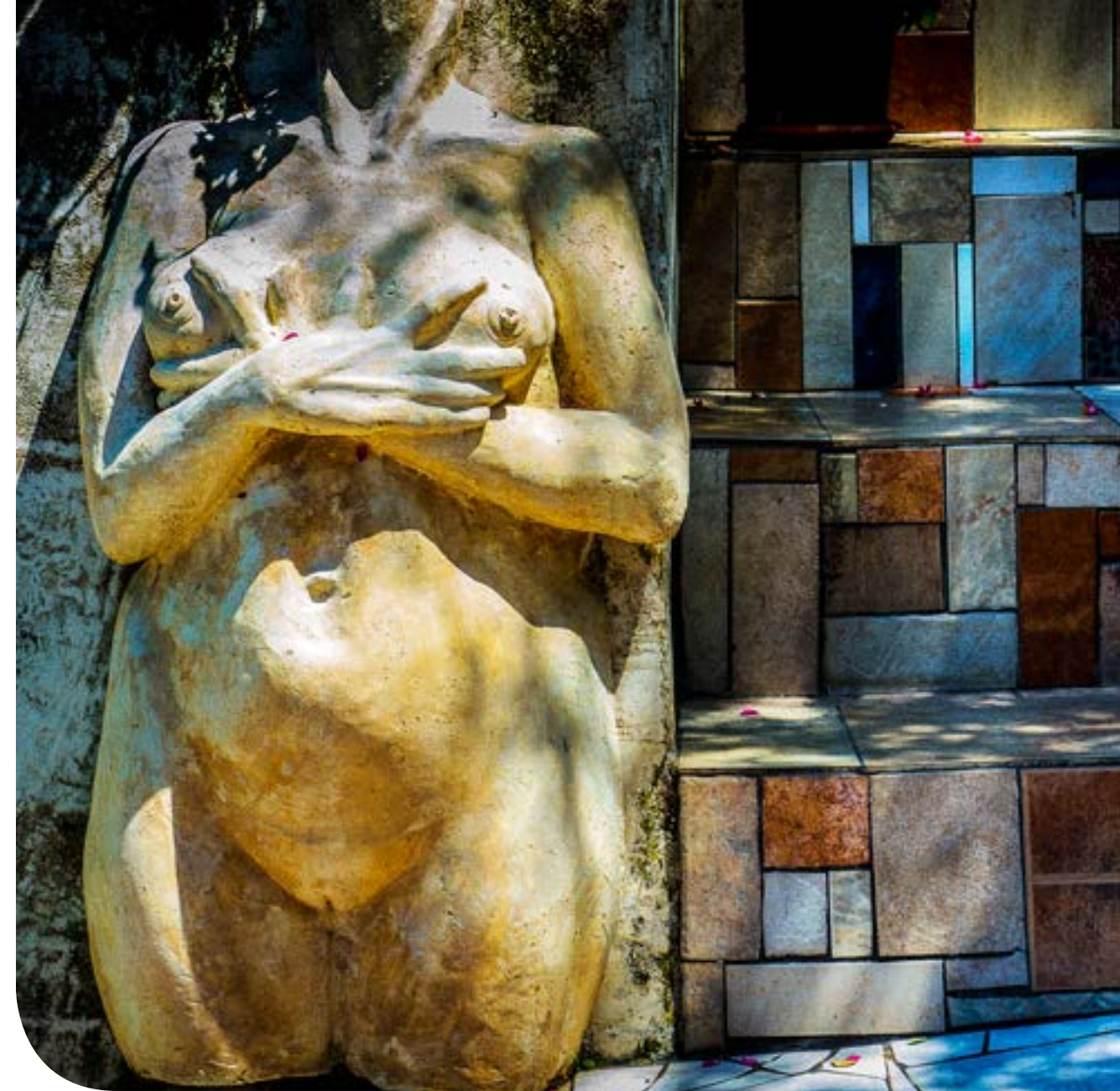






Some years ago, groups of ceramic female figures, were excavated in the Danube valley. They are thought to be several thousand years old. Their existence was cited as evidence for an early matriarchal society.

I had seen photographs of these images before, but we finally encountered some of the objects themselves, about five years ago, at a temporary exhibition in Athens. Soon after, I made a series of clay figures in response to what I had seen. I made plaster press moulds so that others could make copies and apply scraffito to the damp clay.



This life sized piece was going to be a fountain and I had drilled the nipples to allow water to flow out, but I didn't install it.

Linda and I had visited Nurnberg in Germany where I had heard there was a fountain in a square in the altstad which included a group of Nurnberg matrons expressing water from their several pairs of nipples. The piece itself turned out to be a slightly pinched affair, something of a lost opportunity, I thought, which is why, I suppose, I was moved to respond to such an excellent motif myself.

Interestingly, this piece, which is cast in white cement, fell over and shattered in a minor earthquake. It was some months before I could persuade myself to repair it.





It's always nice when people add something to the structure. The tile mosaic of the sea at the base of the wall was made by Elizabeth Clough, a former student, and the fish was added a few weeks later by her sister Anna.







Peter Huby worked as a teacher in the north of England for 26 years. He also directed festivals and community theatre. He and his wife Linda have lived in Greece for the past 11 years. He has made a number of independent films and published 3 novels.