

JOHN CROSSLEY

Studio assistant 1974-6

London, UK

How did the job come about?

I was asked by Tony after graduating from St. Martins, Postgraduate Sculpture.

Why did you want to work for him?

It enabled me to experience first hand, how a highly acclaimed sculptor developed their practice. And course it was an honour to be asked.

Which sculptures did you work on? And what was involved in the making?

All the work that was developed during that period both free standing and plinth based. The work involved discussion of placement. Tony acted in most cases as a composer, orchestrating his assistants by asking suggestions in the making process. Technical processes including initially tacking a series of works and while he was away working in the States, re-welding, bolting placing a base colour on occasions where appropriate, ready for his return to accept or rework the pieces.

Who else worked there? Are you still in touch?

Charlie [Hendy] and later on Pat who had returned from Ireland.

How was the role received by your peers/contemporaries?

Strangely enough this was never a topic, but there was always students waiting in the wings to come into the studio scenario.

How has- or has- working for Tony influenced you?

His main influence was during my period of being a student; when he was teaching me, while working with him and after leaving the position I found it very important to try and establish a way of working that belonged to me and was not so steeped in the history of sculpture that Tony lead.

Did you have an Art School Education? If so – where and to what level?

Yes, Foundation at East Ham.

B.A. Sculpture St. Martins, initially in the first year being a part of the 'A' group then transferring into the 'B' group lead by Bill Tucker in the second year.

Postgraduate course sculpture at St. Martins.

Have you worked as a studio Assistant to anyone else? If so- who and when?

Yes part time for William Turnbull after working on his one person exhibition at the Tate as a student in 1973 also at Stockwell depot for Peter Hide in 1977

Do you still make work?

Yes I have continued my practice and show both nationally and internationally. My practice has developed over the years from objects to painting. I am a member of The London Group from 1978 also a member of The Royal Watercolour society from 2015.

Do you employ assistants in the making of your own work?

No I have never felt the need to employ assistants, my work has for a long time been of an intimate size.

Have you taught in Art schools? If so, has being an Assistant informed your teaching methods in any way?

Yes I have taught in many Art Schools across all levels from Foundation to M.A for the 30 odd years. And was, until recently senior lecturer at Chelsea College of Art and Design where latterly I was Course Director of the Foundation course. My period as an assistant has really not informed my method of teaching, however the process and experience as a student has.