



Dropping Out



Looking Back

## LINES OF BEAUTY

The works of City banker turned sculptor **BRUCE DENNY** are classical in that they embody male physical perfection — but he insists he is still a trendsetter

Sculptor Bruce Denny came to art later in life, rather circuitously via anatomy and banking. In one form or another his science degree and stint in the City both inform his vigorous but intimate bronze sculptures of the nude male form. The anatomical knowledge is clearly there in the sculptures' detail, which is expressive and knowledgeable but never laboured; the influence of the City is more subtle.

"I was specifically drawn to sculpture because I've always been fascinated by three-dimensional space," Denny, 40, says in his quiet, deep voice. "Everything is flattened out into two dimensions in our lives now. I spent years working at a computer screen and I wanted to connect with the real three-dimensional world and do something real." This desire to escape or ascend out of the rat race is most palpably felt in the knowingly entitled *Upwardly Mobile*. In that piece, a man scales a metallic pole and is at once supported but also trapped by the pole, which holds him suspended in mid-air. The image as well as the contrast created by the organic texture of the roughly finished bronze and the slippery metallic pole is deeply felt and moving. *Upwardly Mobile* is part of a series of

Denny sculptures called *Fitting In* which explore different aspects of Denny's journey through his life and his developing sexuality.

However, Denny is keen to point out that the themes explored in the pieces — alienation, success, frustration — are universals: "I'm very keen to create pieces that don't have any limitations on them, anyone from anywhere in the world can interact with my work because they are about

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human emotions and situations and the human form itself." Which brings us to the nitty-gritty issue of male beauty. Denny's sculptures describe an idealised form of muscular male beauty. Denny says: "I choose aspirational figures rather than the everyday man because I think no matter what people look like they do aspire to a certain aesthetic. Saying that, I used well-toned male and female figures because I felt that was appropriate for this collection, which is not to say I won't do different body shapes in the future, but I do think it makes the human form that much more universal if it is aspirational. It's a well-defined aesthetic that people aspire to and hopefully people will relate to it."

Is he worried about being seen as old-fashioned because he chooses not to celebrate the humdrum, so much a part of the modern art world? "I'm certainly not worried about fashion," he says. "There is an inherent classicism to my work because they are representational nudes but I'm never worried about following trends — I'd rather be a trendsetter." Bruce Denny's 'Humanity' exhibition is on at the Albemarle Gallery in London, 6–29 March. [www.brucedenny.com](http://www.brucedenny.com) or [www.albemarlegallery.com](http://www.albemarlegallery.com)