

PROPOSAL

for

COMMEMORATIVE SCULPTURE FOR FORMER

CHILD MIGRANTS

by

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COMMEMORATIVE SCULPTURE FOR FORMER CHILD MIGRANTS

OBJECTIVE

The aim is to create a dynamic memorial sculpture by carving a large block of **Australian black marble** and attaching **figurative bronze** components of children that are **naturalistic**. It will be a unique mixed-media assemblage from **traditional** outdoor materials. The massive size of the marble carved in the form of **clouds** that appear to be suspended will have an instant impact. The sculpture will commemorate former child migrants in a dignified way by conveying their experiences, their feelings, and their settlement in NSW. It will express their trauma, as well as their strength to overcome adversity. The aim is to inspire a **deep respect** and **understanding** of these child migrants by touching the viewer through a **narrative** sculpture that is novel, humorous, and moving. The sculpture is intended to relate to a **broad audience** of children and adults alike. It will be **interactive** and **educational** with visual puzzles to decipher in the shapes. Clouds are a source of infinite stimulus to **the imagination** especially to children. The marble will be shaped by hand carving to a **tactile** finish. The sculpture will be weatherproof, safe, sturdy, and as vandal-proof as possible.

CONCEPT

The overall effect envisaged is of young children enveloped in billowing clouds, demonstrating their vulnerability and helplessness when trapped in circumstances beyond their control. Their **destiny** is drifting with the clouds. The purpose is to raise awareness and empathy. The scale of the marble will create the feeling of helplessness, but also signify the endurance and resilience of the spirit.

The bronze components will consist of two heads of children, two arms with hands touching, and two legs with feet. The bronze components will be **life size** for maximum effect. One child will be positioned upside-down to symbolise heading for the land 'down-under' – the child's legs will emerge through the top surface of the marble and its face will peep through the base of the clouds. The touching hands of two children dragged in opposite directions will signify the separation of **siblings**. The facial expressions will vary from fear and bewilderment on one child to hope and joy in the laughing face of a 6-year-old with missing front teeth.

The **symbolism** of the **clouds** is manifold. The massive size will reflect the scale of child migration, the long period (spanning more than 150 years), and the thousands of children involved. The ominous grey (the colour of hand-scuffed marble) signifies the loss and trauma experienced, being plunged into the unknown and consumed in the darkness of institutionalisation. The clouds could even be interpreted as rolls of smoke billowing from the imaginary funnel of an ocean liner, or the overall form of a boat angled on a wave! Clouds are associated with wonderment, dreams, adventure, and a bright future, but also with bleakness, loss, deprivation, and maltreatment.

The viewer can marvel at the **paradox** between ephemeral clouds that are soft, light and drifting, and the actual solid block of marble that is hard, heavy and static!

MATERIALS

I already have a massive 3/4-ton block of **beautiful black marble** that is ideal for this project (see attached photos). This particular marble (from Chillago, QLD) is the highest quality: it is extremely fine-grained and hard. It has amazing tonal and textural variations, perfect for rendering the billowing free form of clouds. The colours in the marble vary from twinkling crystalline flecks and sparkling white streaks to shining jet-black when polished. When carved with a scutch comb it becomes a glistening grey. Pathways of parallel scutch lines created with a hand tool will spiral around the forms. When carved with a flat and polished, the marble turns a brilliant shiny black. When **wet with rain** the marble changes its character to a deep shiny charcoal grey.

The bronze components will be of the highest standard coming from a fine-art foundry that has produced many public bronzes for Sydney, including the soldier on the Anzac Bridge.

QUALITY – AESTHETICS – SKILLS

I have developed the **technical skills** to create the special effects of texture and tone that are unique to this particular type of stone (see 2 photographs of *Head in the Clouds*).

My art is internationally recognized through exhibitions and reviews in New York, Amsterdam, Cologne, Florence, etc. and through acquisition for public collections worldwide. One of my major assemblage sculptures is exhibited frequently in The National Building Museum (Washington DC) with other selected works from The Hechinger Collection (see photograph *To Cut Both Ways*).

The **human form** is my main vehicle of expression and I have a thorough knowledge of human **anatomy**. Mixed media assemblage is my latest development. My expertise is in expressive figurative art – *Gallery & Studio NY* wrote that it is "...some of the most emotionally jarring narrative imagery in recent art. However, her work can also be informed by an appealing light-heartedness..."

I have produced many artworks of children of various ages, including my own children and my grandchildren (see images).

Bronze and fine-grained black marble are the best materials for outdoor sculpture. The **bronze** components will be cast from my **clay maquettes** by the fine-art foundry that has produced my work for two decades (see photographs of bronzes). I will supervise the patination.

TACTILE & INTERACTIVE ASPECTS

The sculpture will rest on the ground and will therefore be accessible to all ages. The surface will be **highly tactile**. The bronze and marble can be safely caressed. Fingers can follow the meandering trails of lines made by the sculptor's scutching tool. The texture of the grey scutch lines will contrast with the smooth polished black areas.

To make the sculpture **interactive**, shapes of various creatures of NSW will be disguised in the cloud forms, and their footprints will be polished black in positions on the marble that do not interfere with the aesthetics of the form. Human handprints in varying sizes will also be polished black in discrete locations. **Children** of all ages can match their hand size to the handprints. The handprints will progress in size around the sculpture to an adult hand, where the cycle begins over again with the migrants rearing their families here.

SIZE

The size of the proposed sculpture (bronze components included) is approximately 170 cm wide x 110 cm high x 150 cm deep. The horizontal diagonal is about 2 metres. The size of the marble dimension stone itself is about 170 x 90 x 150 cm. The bronze components will be life size.

STYLE

I have developed a distinctive narrative style that combines imaginative realism with symbolism and humour that is easily recognised and understood (see *NY ART* review by Dorothy Roatz Myers). The realistic figures will be life-like with expressive movement. My techniques and figurative style are drawn from long study of the European tradition, in particular from the psychological expression of Kollwitz, Rodin, and Claudel (who combined stone with bronze figures).

DELIVERY ON TIME

- If selected, I will work full-time on this project.
- Work has already commenced — I have undertaken preparatory removal of loose and unwanted areas, and have begun shaping the marble.
- I am experienced in carving sculptures in dimension stone to meet deadlines.
- I have collaborated for years with Sydney fine-art foundry **Crawford's Castings** that will cast the bronze components and assemble the sculpture on time.
- I am accustomed to meeting deadlines for exhibitions in Europe and USA that involve shipping and assemblage of complex, mixed media sculptures.

PLAQUE

The plaque will be a brass plate with inscription, and will be made by specialists in metal plate signs (size to be determined when length of inscription is known). It will be shaped in the outline of NSW and attached to the flat area on the stern of the marble.

SAFETY, DURABILITY, ENVIRONMENT, MAINTENANCE & VANDALISM

Although the sculpture expands out and up to give the illusion that it is suspended, it is actually very **stable** and **safe** as the centre of gravity of the mass lies close to the ground and its weight is distributed on broad contacts. There are no sharp protrusions. This particular marble is extremely durable; it does not discolour and retains its sparkle. The bronze components will be smooth and safe to touch and will be securely embedded and bonded in the marble to create a **sturdy** sculpture that is weatherproof.

Bronze and marble are the most **vandal-resistant** materials. It is most unlikely that the marble could be damaged, as the shapes are broad and rounded. In the unlikely event that vandals damage the bronze components, the foundry can replace any parts as it retains the master moulds.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

The sculpture is easily relocatable in a single operation by a crane, as it does not require dismantling or reassembling.

COST EFFECTIVENESS – WITHIN BUDGET

The artwork is a rock-bottom bargain because:

- The marble dimension stone bought and transported to Sydney 10 years ago at a cost of \$1000; this represents a significant saving over today's costs. Black Chillago marble is now very rare and valuable because it is no longer being mined due to the cost of extracting it from below the surface.
- **No plinth** (or base) is required because the marble is so massive that it can rest safely, directly on the ground.
- The sculpture will be **assembled** at my premises so that it can be transported in one piece to the site. This will ensure further savings compared to the cost of assembling the sculpture *in situ*.
- In view of the fact that the current prices of my bronze sculptures at the Josef Lebovic Gallery (Sydney) range from \$3,500 to \$11,000 per piece (Collectors List #109 – 2004: Australian Art at www.joseflebovicgallery.com), the bronze components of the proposed sculpture represent a giveaway.

Although the budget for such a monumental sculpture is inadequate, I am so inspired by the project that I am prepared to receive very little for my labour and creativity and will absorb any extra costs to ensure that the sculpture is within budget.

BUDGET

<u>Materials</u>	\$
Master moulds & bronze castings	6358 (includes GST)
Brass plaque & installation	770 (includes GST)

Drilling & assemblage	880	(includes GST)
Transport	968	(includes GST)
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>8976</u>	(includes GST)
Marble dimension stone	1000	(already purchased)
<u>Balance</u>		
Artist's labour & creativity	6624	(includes GST)
<u>Total</u>	<u>16600</u>	

SKETCHES & PHOTOGRAPHS

Sketches of proposal (2 views)

Marble dimension stone (2 views)

Head in the Clouds (black limestone)

Head in the Clouds (detail)

Close-Knit Family (bronze)

All I Want for Christmas is my Two Front Teeth (clay maquette of Gaia, 6 years)

Imy (bronze)

Young Amazon in Training (sandstone)

Girl Skipping (sandstone)

Slugs in Love (sandstone)

Reinventing the Wheel (mixed media assemblage)

To Cut Both Ways (mixed media assemblage; Hechinger Collection, Washington, DC)