

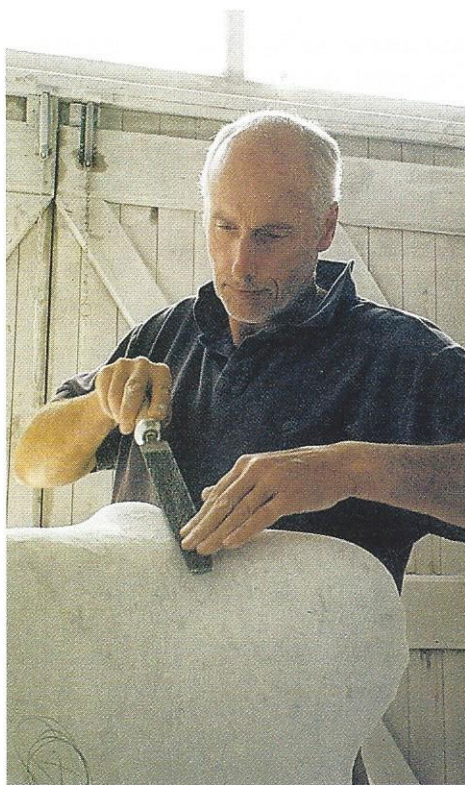
Light and

EROICA MILDMAJ MEETS SCULPTOR COLIN MILLER

There is something of the Mediterranean in Colin Miller's work, not surprising really as he spent ten years on the Greek island of Paros with his wife and family before coming to live in Cley-next-the-Sea in 1984. That's what attracted me to his work, having lived on a Mediterranean island myself. There are pieces that suggest grand ocean views, open skies, sea breezes, pine forests bordering the sea, perhaps against an olive grove backdrop and beyond that maybe a granite mountain. Colin Miller's work and choice of materials suggest water, nature, air – and space. How can a block of solid marble suggest space? Easy, you only need to look at a piece like 'Genesis' to see what I mean. (He works with olive wood, English stone, slate, Portland stone, Italian and Greek marble as well.) Colin's sculptures suggest a rarefied existence, wealth, gracious living, where money is no object. Less is usually more in the world of design anyway. But Colin Miller's work is quality 'less'. Simple, solid and beautiful, and asking to be touched. 'Octopus with Lobster' is exquisitely curved. Hours of hard graft go into exacting those simple sweeps and curves. And to buy one of his sculptures, you would be investing in a custom made piece, a limited edition

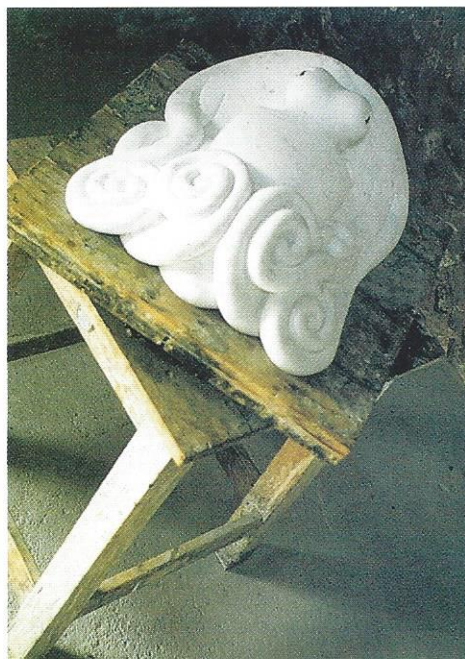


or a completely unique design. You are also buying into a high-octane dream. Sculpture is not for compromisers, but for dedicated artists who are prepared to take a risk. I've always admired sculptors. Not least because at art college they were always voted least likely to succeed – and most likely to drop their 'metier', usually by force of circumstance rather than choice. It is more of a life gamble than some would dare to embrace. I've admired sculptors, if I was honest, perhaps even more than painters because they've always got to have lots of space to work too. Space costs money. Materials cost money. It all costs money! I'll have a nice big chunk of your finest marble please. How much? Born in Simla, India in 1943, Colin returned to Britain with his parents in 1947 to the Lake District, Cambridge and eventually Norwich. His father who had been fighting the Japanese in Burma, came back to a job with the Guinness



corporation. His beloved mother, Bunty Miller was a well-known portrait painter, so art was in his genes and was arguably bound to emerge at some point. When he made a successful bust of his mother the family declared "Oh God, we've got another artist in the family!" But overall things were unclear as they so often are in your early twenties and with no certain career path before him, Colin set off for Nova Scotia. His destination was Canada and self-discovery. After a ghastly journey ploughing across the North Atlantic February seas he eventually arrived in Montreal. After nearly a year there, he set off across Canada for Calgary, hitching just one ride all the way in a Galaxy 500 as luckily the guy needed a co-driver. Through one particular place called Moose Jaw, he remembers with a smile. Well really, you don't forget a name like that do you? Then in giddy succession, the places flew by, Idaho, Utah, California, Honolulu, Fiji, Sydney, Brisbane, Jordan, and then "it was just Europe and I'm home."

Back home in Norfolk, needing to make a living he made

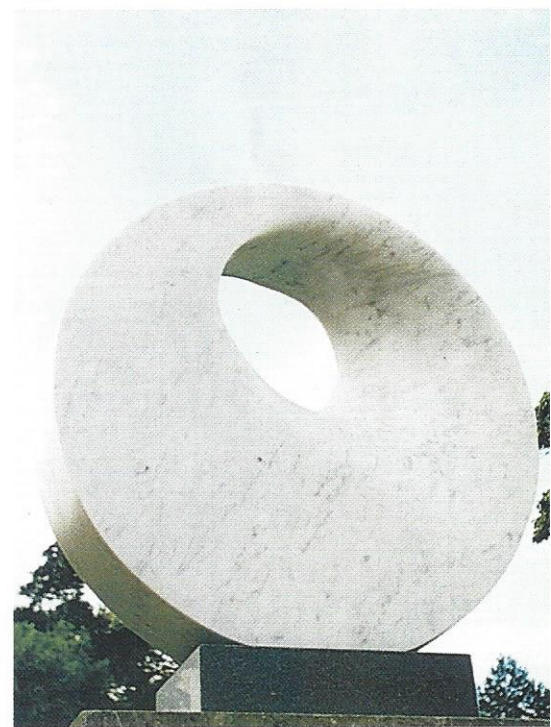


whippets moulds out of concrete for a while, stylish ones that graced plenty of gardens, sold out of the Norfolk Show amongst other places. The sculptor was forming. He then met and married his beautiful wife Diana. Her support for him is tangible and her work as a fashion buyer throughout the years has undoubtedly kept the show on the road. Unwilling to teach, "because it uses you up" Colin survives through one-off sales and commissions. "It's all a grand leap

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of faith really. Things seem to just come up just when you really need them to. But it is exhausting though, and these white hairs are well paid for, I can assure you." He is not an art school graduate, but self-taught. This has at times been "a thorn in his side". Academia doesn't like non-conformists apparently and without graduate status he is unable to apply for various assistance/studio loan schemes. But Sir Charles Wheeler, then President of the Royal Academy assured him years ago that (except for this irritating lack of eligibility for some things) overall it wouldn't matter a jot.

Having chalked up in excess of fifty exhibitions in Norfolk,



London, Paris, Amsterdam, Jersey, Dusseldorf, New York, Greece it would seem it hasn't. Colin also has several corporate commissions to his name as well, basically 'public space sculptures'. Two life-size bronze figures grace the Lyons Headquarters in London and likewise 'Surge' a 3 metre abstract bronze can be seen in Hammersmith in London. Closer to home, a group of bronze figures called 'Gaea' cluster outside Sentinel House, home of the Norwich Union Insurance Group in Norwich. Still, Colin feels rather ignored on home turf and he is currently looking for representation to take him forward. You sense that he has only just got into his stride and that he needs more rein, more scope for all those big ideas.

To see his epic work, visit his studio at Swan Lodge Bams, Cley Road, Cley-next-the-Sea 01263 740808 www.colin-miller.co.uk