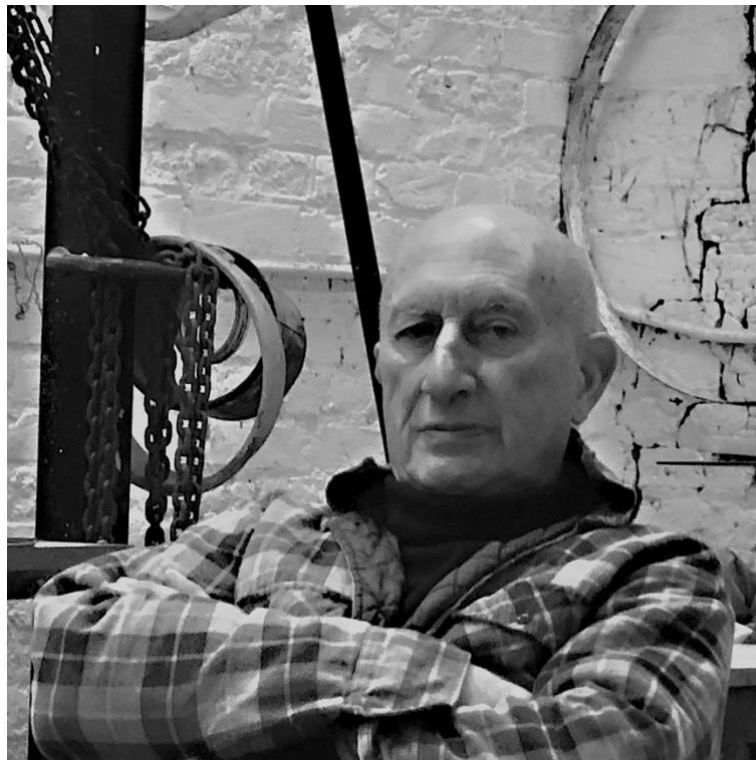


BOWMAN SCULPTURE

MAURICE BLIK (Dutch/British, b. 1939)

There's no denying that Maurice Blik's sculpture is deeply personal. One of his most beloved pieces, *Second Breath* was part of a series inspired by redemption and getting a second chance in life. In many ways, these themes relate directly to Blik, surviving, as a six-year-old, the notorious Nazi concentration camp, Bergen-Belsen.

For forty years, Blik's sculptures have continued to earn him national and international acclaim. He has become one of the world's most thought-provoking sculptors, renowned for inciting passion and serenity with work that is personal, honest and intense.



Maurice Blik in his studio, courtesy of Debra Blik

Blik has traditionally used clay as his preferred medium for sculpting, for him it represents the beginning of time. As Prometheus created mankind from the earth, so too does the feeling of wet clay encapsulate the birth of a new creation. The physical act of sculpting, squeezing the clay through his fingers and shaping the features of his figures with his hands, allows Blik to realise his sculptures.

'I am inspired by what I want to express about the feeling of engaging in life and the internal imagery that comes from thinking about it,' Maurice Blik, The London List, 2019.

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Blik's early work is believed to be self-portraiture by many art critics and admirers. Others, particularly his wife, recognise the physical likeness between Blik's sculptures and his father. The artist himself admitted during a frontline special on PBS a need to '*somehow bring my father back to life.*'

'Blik's creativity has been both prodigious and profoundly moving. His huge bronze figures typically emerge from black metallic masses like butterflies from cocoons and stretch upwards, their fingers often just touching some mysterious shining object above them. You don't have to be an art critic to grasp the metaphor. This might be the artist emerging from his dark past. Or perhaps it is the indomitable human spirit rising from apparent devastation to reach for the beauty that will not be crushed.'

Richard Morrison, The Times, 2005

The themes of hope, optimism and belief in the future are intrinsic to Blik's work. His figurative forms convey an irrepressible joy of life, confronting the viewer with an energy that is both startling and inspiring.

Blik's renaissance didn't come until his 40s when he created a series of bronze horse heads. The inspiration for these works emerged naturally, surprising even Blik himself. He would later realise that the sculpture of these horses was, in all likelihood, connected to his liberation by Cossacks in 1945.

In the 1980s, he began experimenting with clay, subsequently rediscovering his passion and talent for the medium. Sculpture slowly began to materialise in Blik's life as the expression of discourse with his daily life and memories.

His first exhibition was in 1985, a solo display at the Alwin Gallery in London and in 1991, Blik gave up teaching to focus solely on his work as a sculptor.

Born in Amsterdam in 1939, Blik is an Anglo-Dutch artist whose work is exhibited at major London and international art fairs. Having spent the majority of his 40-year career creating powerful figurative male pieces, linked, subconsciously, to his childhood experience of Nazi persecution, Blik, now in his eighties, has begun creating innovative new works.

His latest sculptures - best described as human impressions - portray abstract figures in transit through clearly defined circular forms. A metaphor perhaps for the way in which we journey through and interact with the world. With this work, Blik suspends reality and challenges figurative perceptions, whilst demonstrating the playful side of his nature.

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Maurice Blik, *Sway*, bronze with green and brown patina, height 12.9" (33 cm)

Modelling the majority of his originals in plaster, using a mind-bending self-developed method which Blik refers to as modelling 'inside out', he then embraces digital technology to introduce discs to his forms. In some cases, these splice vertically through the figures, disrupting the space that his forms inhabit.

'With this new method, I can get forms which are fresh and surprising.....with imagination as my only reference. It leaves me free to create sculpture as a direct expression of my internal imagery...' Maurice Blik, The London List. 2019.

'...the work is very fluent and dynamic, and at the same time looks effortless which is actually very very hard to do....'
Michael Sandle R.A.

Maurice Blik exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition four times between 1991 and 1998 before holding solo exhibitions at Blains Fine Art London in 1999 and at the Royal Society of Sculptors London in 2008. He also undertook numerous public and private commissions during this time including *Renaissance*, 1995, at London's East India Dock, *Splish Splash*, 2005, Vanderbilt University Nashville, USA.

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However, Blik's status as one of art history's most prominent sculptors was cemented in 1996 when he was elected President of the Royal Society of Sculptors shortly becoming a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts 1997.

His most recent commission, *For Love of Cyprus* is a 6.5-metre-high bronze panel. Blik completed the giant sculpture in only 12 months showcasing his remarkable productivity and fervour.

Blik works in the U.K. and has worked in the USA where he was awarded residency as 'a person of extraordinary artistic ability'. His artworks are part of important private collections around the world, including *Behold*, Middlesex University, UK, *Second Breath*, the University of Kentucky USA, *Splish Splash*, Vanderbilt University USA. *Every Which Way*, The National Memorial to the Evacuation WW2. The National Memorial Arboretum Staffordshire UK

Blik has been represented by Bowman Sculpture since 2008. His works have appeared in major art fairs around the world including The British Art Fair Saatchi Gallery, London UK, Art Miami USA, Fine Art Fair Hong Kong, Sculpt Gallery London UK, Masterpiece London UK, Hannah Peschar Sculpture Park Surrey UK, Pier Walk Sculpture Chicago USA, Cavalier Galleries New York USA.

Blik studied at Hornsey College of Art (National Diploma in Sculpture) and the University of Miami. In 1969 he was awarded his Art Teacher's Certificate at the University of London.

Blik's work is in public and private collections throughout the world. He is a Past President of the Royal Society of Sculptors (PPRSS) and has undertaken many major commissions. These include *For Love of Cyprus*, Kyrenia, Cyprus (Arkin Group), *Every Which Way*, The National Memorial to the Evacuation WW2. National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire (British Evacuees Association); *Splish Splash* Vanderbilt University Nashville USA. *Second Breath*, UK Chandler Hospital, Kentucky, USA; *Behold*, Middlesex University. *Inspired Encounter* Glaxo Smith Kline - London HQ; *About Face* P&O Developments; *Pursuit of Knowledge* JP Morgan Bank; *Early Morning Shadow* Burmah-Castrol, Swindon HQ; and *Renaissance*, East India Dock, UK.

Blik reveals his extraordinary life story in his illustrated autobiography, *The Art of Survival*, published in 2022.