

# the benchpeg newsletter

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## 26.1 Silversmith Elizabeth Auriol Peers Faces Marathon

Whilst on the 'Silver in Motion - Programme of Excellence', a one year residency which is based in Schoonhoven, Holland Elizabeth Auriol Peers has developed her current body of work inspired by facial disfiguration and scarring.

Her new work has developed with research into the structure of our skin and what happens to it and ourselves when it becomes damaged. It is a little known fact that 1 in 100 people in the UK suffer some degree of scarring or disfigurement. Elizabeth wishes to transform what people can often see as distasteful or ugly, deformed or offensive into something beautiful, alluring and coveted. She believes that silverware should be held and caressed, just as those with misfortune should be loved and admired.

The Silver in Motion residency program is an intensive year staged in the 'silver city' of Holland – Schoonhoven. The program offers silversmiths a chance to improve upon particular skills, take a breath to really think and develop their ideas and produce a consistent body of work under the watchful eyes of some of the silversmiths in town. It is



designed to support young silversmiths at the beginning of their careers, giving them confidence to work independently in the years after as a professional.

silversmiths workshops and the Zilver Galerie. She is now based at Studio925 with Jan van Nouhuys. All three silversmiths have given her a huge amount of their time, support, advice and most amazingly the use of all their tools!

Throughout the year the Zilver Galerie de Watertoren have given Elizabeth the opportunity to exhibit her work with them in house, and at a number of show and exhibitions. The highlight of



James'. He is the first in a series of work based on this theme of scarring and can be seen at Silver Styles, Hungerford where it is on display as part of British Silver Week 2010

Elizabeth Auriol Peers has spent the year working with three silversmiths in the town, moving from one workshop to another. She says she feels honoured to have been fortunate enough to have worked in such an environment; "it is quite unlike anything in the UK". De Watertoren, where Elizabeth was based with Paul and Titiaan is a beautiful building, full of history. It is a converted water tower, which houses three



these will be in November when they will take it to the PAN, Amsterdam.

Since starting on the residency Elizabeth has seen her work grow in confidence. This is owed to the time and dedication that she has been able to give it, which has stemmed from the financial support that she has received from such foundations as Stichting Stokroos, NL and The Gane Trust, UK. Their beliefs, as well as those of the silversmiths, have meant that she can concentrate on her design work and give her silversmithing her full attention. Elizabeth has been able to spend quality time developing her design philosophy and has honed in on what she feels most important:

*'The human form, character and persona are what I seek to express in the curves, bulges, folds and undulations of my pieces. My work is strongly influenced by scarring and facial disfiguration. I consider these markings to hold beauty and intrigue. I want to translate what people perceive as 'unnatural or repulsive'; their self-thought flaws, into something beautiful. How it should be perceived. I have always believed that silverware should be held and caressed, just as those with misfortune should be loved and admired. The owner of a piece of mine should imbue a little of themselves within that piece and treasure it.'*

James (pictured above) was the first of the pieces that Elizabeth created in Schoonhoven, with this new philosophy in mind.

Elizabeth's research has led her to form a close connection with the charity Changing Faces. Their mission is to help those that have been facially disfigured, supporting them and their families. As Elizabeth's research and hobbies have merged over time, she has felt very close affinity with the charity. She therefore finds herself running the Berlin Marathon for Changing Faces this coming September and would like to ask for benchpeg reader's help by way of sponsorship.



*An extract from 'Alice Through the Looking Glass' by Lewis Carroll;*  
*'Goodbye, till we meet again!' Alice said as cheerfully as she could.*  
*'I shouldn't know you again if we did meet,' Humpty Dumpty replied in a*  
*discontented tone, giving her one of his fingers to shake: 'you're so exactly like other people.'*  
*'The face is what one goes by, generally,' Alice remarked in a thoughtful tone. 'That's just what I*  
*complain of,' said Humpty Dumpty. 'Your face is the same as everybody has - the two eyes, so' (marking*  
*their places in the air with his thumb) 'nose in the middle, mouth under. It's always the same. Now if you*  
*had the two eyes on the same side of the nose, for instance - of the mouth at the top - that would be some*  
*help.'*  
*'It wouldn't look nice,' Alice objected. But Humpty Dumpty only shut his eyes, and said, 'Wait till you've*  
*tried.'*

If you feel that you would like to help and join Elizabeth in 'the race for facial equality' she is looking for sponsorship in the form of donation. Please email Elizabeth your interest, questions or donations to:

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