

[PAUL CUMMINGS, WILTSHIRE FINE ARTIST](#)

'One may know a gentleman by his horse, his hound and his hawk.' (17th Century saying)

"Shamanism, or the expedition through the landscape of the inner world, brought me to portraiture. Realising how connected we are to animals, and how we share qualities, it was natural to capture such as if they were 'sitting' for a traditional portrait

For my human portraits, I purposely chose famous people so the viewer could qualify my technique. I chose the image purely on whether it portrayed the individual as I saw them. For example, the Rolling Stones are an enigma; so when selecting a pose for Ron Wood I wanted to capture the battle scars, both physical and psychological, of a life of rock and roll. The incline of the face, the sideways stare and the half lighting, portrays arrogance and menace suitable for rock royalty.

With 'HMP' (Her Majesty's Pleasure) I selected that image of the Queen after viewing portraits that all seemed to focus on the Crown. The Queen had been reduced to an icon. I wanted to capture her humanity, and portray her as her grandchildren would see her.

For my non-human works, I was unwilling to pillage a foreign culture, so I looked back into our European past to a time when culture was more 'pagan'. I found, within the mythology of the indigenous forest dwelling peoples of Northern Europe, a plethora of imagery, especially through the work of what we would recognise as Shamans.

Shamanic practices are the oldest way humanity has sought connection with spirit. Shamanism is an authentic spiritual experience far removed from the dominant religious institutions of the present, which have lost touch with the experience of spirituality. When a shaman draws the image of a creature, he/she is creating a link to the spirit world. The surface they draw upon is the otherworld from which the images are teased out of.

Thus my representation of woods are as mythological woods, forests of the mind, constructed from memories of woods. They are dark places because of the unseen potential they contain. Anything is possible. They are alive in the sense that our ancestors saw forests as alive, with spirits and potential dangers as well as benefits.

I work with unusual media because I am interested in transformation of materials both spiritually and physically. A degree in printmaking infused me with an interest in accidental mark making and experimenting with materials which ultimately, via abstraction, led to 'corrosion' printing, a form of etching incorporating patination."

See Paul's art [here](#).