

Antony Dufort (1948 -)

MCC Bowler

Signed and numbered: *Dufort 3/20*

Conceived in 2012

Bronze maquette for the Lords 'Bowler'

Height, 11½ in - 29.2 cm

Overall, 14¾ x 6 x 6 in - 37.5 x 15.2 x 15.2 cm

Artist description:

Antony Dufort was born in 1948 and was initially trained as a painter by his grandmother, Doris de Halpert, also an artist who had studied under Walter Sickert. In the 1970s he studied at the Chelsea School of Art where he was awarded a diploma in art and design as well as a Masters degree in fine art. This training gave Dufort a strong grounding in draughtsmanship and as well as painting, he went on to work as a film storyboard artist and illustrator.

In the mid-1980s he developed a passion for sculpture and became an informal apprentice at the

Fiorini foundry in Battersea. He has sculpted numerous public figures since then including Queen Elizabeth II, Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Hume and David Cameron.

Arguably his most famous commission came in 2003 from the Speakers Advisory Committee for Works of Art, and the subject was Baroness Thatcher. The former Prime Minister chose Dufort having been particularly impressed with his work 'Free Miner', which had been commissioned by the Forest of Dean District Council in 2000. She sat for him in 2004, holding a pose based on her making a major speech. She was instrumental in the process of adding her particular character to the work and, when it came to the portrait, Dufort requested that she say a word beginning with the letter 'B'; she soon chose the word 'Britain'. The finished sculpture, which stands in the antechamber to the House of Commons, was unveiled in 2007 by Baroness Thatcher herself; following the unveiling she remarked 'I might have preferred iron, but bronze will do'.

Dufort lives in a converted Baptist chapel, in the Forest of Dean, which serves as his studio as well as his home.