

ART & CUT

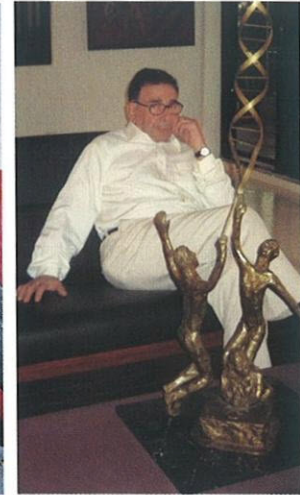
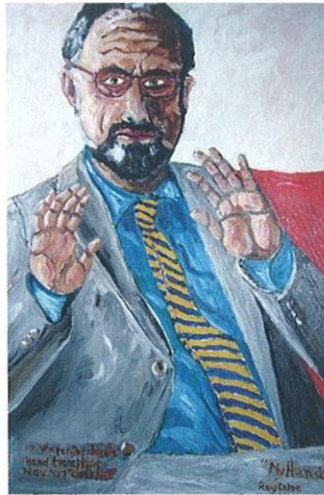
Oil and water can mix, if done properly. So does science and art, as **Tahir Alhamzah** discovers in the works of transplant surgeon/artist Sir Roy Calne.

The left brain, right brain issue is, perhaps, the excuse we like to believe in to explain why we didn't do well in our mathematics class. However, human beings are more complicated than that. Just because a student scores straight As in science and mathematics does not mean he will not do well in arts, history or language, and vice versa. A rocket scientist could, conceivably, create a different kind of pyrotechnics with Beethoven on the piano. It all, actually, boils down to interest. Take, for instance, Sir Roy Calne, a former professor of surgery at the University of Cambridge and one of the leading figures behind the development of organ transplantation, who is also an artist.

Aside from his research in the medical world, Calne has other, wide-ranging interests, including painting, drawing and sculpturing. His paintings, which depict images of his clinical work, have been exhibited worldwide to help promote awareness of organ transplantation. In 1994, adding to his roster of textbooks on surgery and transplantation, he wrote *Too Many People*, which warns of the dangers of the continuing, rapid growth in world population. Calne, 78, was educated at Lancing College and received his medical training at Guy's Hospital, London. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1973 and was knighted in 1986. This eminent British transplant surgeon/artist, who had been nominated twice for the Nobel Peace Prize, will be exhibiting his new works for three days this month at the KLCC Convention Centre before moving to Shalini Ganendra Fine Art, The Private Gallery until the end of June. The exhibition will include works on paper, oil on board and bronzes, which reflect the strength of Calne's three dimensional perspectives. *The Peak* catches up with this man of science and art.

Question: Your journey in art has come a long way. Can you tell us a bit about that journey? What were the key events that gave you the identity as the artist that you are today?

Answer: I was taught by a very good artist at school called Russell Flint, son of the great William Russell Flint. The next main help and change in my art was John Bellany RA, the Scottish artist, when he had his liver transplant 20 years ago.



Q: You spent a vast amount of time pursuing your passion for art. How did it influence your outlook towards art as a form of expression?

A: I have always thought in terms of images rather than words so being an artist is a natural form of expression for me.

Q: Give us a little background about yourself as an artist. Did you try exploring other types of art form?

A: Apart from a little guitar playing in my youth and the joy of listening to classical music, my interest in art has been defined through painting, drawing and sculpture.

Q: Do you have conscious underlying themes in your work? If so, what inspired you to choose this theme as your main form of expression?

A: I have always been interested in portraying things visually by drawing; and the idea of painting my patients, my colleagues and other people who have contributed to organ transplantation has been the main theme of my artistic work for more than 20 years

Q: As an artist, I'm sure that your personal style has evolved over time. Whom would you cite as the main influence of your works? How did you derive your style as an artist from this person?

A: I certainly learned a great deal about the use of colour and I have always felt that art was an extremely important way of expressing all aspects of life. Bellany amazed me with his personal artistic expression of what it was like to have a liver transplant, so much more eloquent than words.



Similarly, I have admired all great artists of the past but my top choice would be Goya because of his use of art to express the frailty and cruelty of human beings.

Q: What has been the most trying experience in your career? How did it change you as an artist?

A: Life is a continuous trying experience. I supposed the one worst thing has been bureaucracy and that hasn't really changed my art except, occasionally, making me angry.

Q: What makes you and your paintings unique and different from other painters?

A: Painting organ transplantation from the point of view of a surgeon performing an operation.

Q: Some of your artwork now has taken residence in art galleries and exhibited in different countries. How was that experience like? How has the response of the audience in those parts of the world been like for you?

A: It is always nice to have your work appreciated and, of course, many patients have had an appreciation of their art because I have painted them or expressed in paintings of other patients how I perceive their courage and suffering.

Q: Is there anything else that you love doing besides painting?

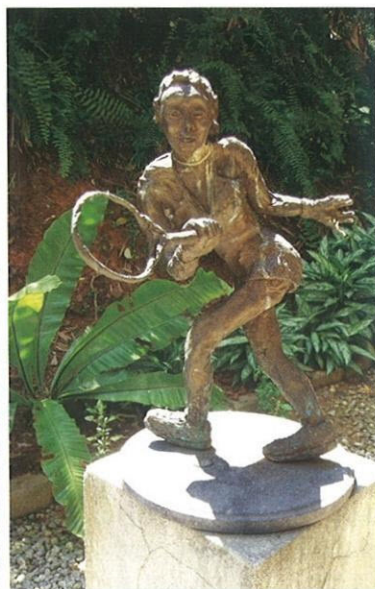
A: Tennis, squash and skiing

Q: What is your next work going to be about?

A: Probably a marble carving based on a recent terracotta sculpture that I have finished.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to share with art enthusiasts out there?

A: I supposed the most important thing about art is, as I perceive it, that no matter what you would like to do, you will never achieve that goal, so one can always try harder to get closer to it. ▲



Solo exhibition of new works by Sir Roy Calne will be held at the KLCC Convention Centre (May 5 – 8) and Shalini Ganendra Fine Art, The Private Gallery (May 9 – June 30). The exhibition will include works on paper, oil on board and bronzes which reflect the strength of Calne's three dimensional perspectives. Most sales proceeds to benefit the Malaysian Transplant Society. For more information, t: 03-7958 2175 or visit www.shaliniganendra.com or www.thepivategallery.com.