

Clay self-portrait done in my studio, December 2013, after attending Alan Stott's part time sculpture course at Camden Arts Centre. My 'method', if it is a method, is not one taught at Alan's course - he used a full size plastic skull.



First I took a couple of photos which I pinned to wall as reference.



The finished sculpture, self-portrait. The following pics show how it was done.



First, using bits of scrap polystyrene foam board and glue and steel pins, the general shape of the head was formed around a timber stick held firmly in a bench vice.



Another view of foam assembly



Bits of crunched up aluminium foil then added between and on top of foam assembly to get more accurate 3D profile, and held in place by tape and cling film. The cling film acts as a release agent so you can get foam out on completions. Has to be reasonably firm, not spongy, to support clay layer.



Layers of clay 4mm thick rolled out using domestic rolling pin and then laid over face of former and pressed into shape as shown in photo (the eye socket depressions and nose can be seen). Several areas of clay added to cover front and sides of former and joints moulded into one. Clay ball eyes added later from inside. Features formed by fingers and simple clay cutting/forming tools. The green cloth appearing as a hat in pic is simply very damp flannel to stop clay drying out between sessions.



Discovered polystyrene packing too high on one cheek bone so had to remove the clay and dig out some foam



Head moulded and cut into shape, leaving back of head 'open' so that former could be removed later and preformed clay 'eyes' added from behind. Ears (a difficult job) were made as separate pieces, although ideally they should be formed from the head clay so whole clay mass is homogeneous.



The finished sculpture after firing in the kiln at Camden Arts Centre. Interesting experiment. Now part of land fill somewhere.



View from rear

End of doc. Jan 2014