

Charles Burns

THE LAST OF THE SILHOUETTISTS

Charles cut his first silhouette in 1989, starting with his then-six-month-old daughter. Since then, silhouettes have grown from an absorbing hobby, to a means of earning a living and finally to an all-encompassing passion.

Charles left art college with a first-class degree in Fine Art and a determination to earn a living as an artist. He began by working as a street portrait artist in London's Covent Garden, which was where he sold his first silhouettes. Unaware of any living silhouettists he quickly realised that almost nothing is known today about this lost art. He taught himself to cut by studying the duplicate albums of Hubert Leslie (who cut silhouettes on Brighton Pier between the wars), now kept in the archives of the National Portrait Gallery in London.



150,000 Silhouettes

Over nearly two decades Charles has cut his shadow portraits in all kinds of venues, from a lorry park in Basildon to The Ritz in London!

His own duplicate albums now contain over 150,000 silhouettes, including two portraits of the Queen, one of President Clinton and a whole host of TV personalities, writers, artists and sporting celebrities.

Films and Books

Charles is the author of "Mastering Silhouettes" (which looks at the techniques of silhouettists from the 1760s to the present day) and the presenter of "Silhouette Secrets", an entertaining TV documentary about the practice and history of silhouette cutting. This recently-released film has so far won a number of awards, including "Best Documentary" in both Houston and Barcelona, and is currently seeking a UK Premiere.

For further information about Charles' work as a silhouettist today please visit: www.roving-artist.com

