

**Allen Jones**

**Video Interview Transcript for the Portrait Explorer in the IT Gallery**

Supported by Deloitte

**How was the full-length format and pose chosen?**

I was given complete freedom as how to deal with the portrait and I chose the pose. It took me a long time to come to the conclusion which you see in the picture because it is not part of my normal working habit to paint somebody in particular, and it wasn't until I had become familiar with her that I was able to make a breakthrough and that came when I had taken my work to the country, the drawings and sketches and was sort of mulling over it and realised with that sort of detachment that the standing figure with the lower half in profile and the upper body turned to the audience would best characterise Darcey Bussell.

**What fascinated you on portraying the sitter on points?**

It seems that Darcey Bussell was taken with the idea that I was impressed by her legs on points because through the leg into the pose was the same as a person wearing a high heeled shoe, which is true. The stylization of the figure, the unnatural posing of the figure, which happens in both cases, is something that attracts me.

**What is the role of drawing and photography in your work?**

I use photography as well as drawing to familiarise myself with the figure that I am going to have to paint, that is a portrait I am going to paint. And I find that drawing is a way that seems to be socially acceptable of staring at someone intently. I don't keep those drawings or have any regard for them, they tend to be just a working thing. The importance really is being able to gaze at someone and scrutinize them closely and if you've got a pad on your lap and you're doing that, it somehow gives the reason for doing it in the first place. The photography has to be used very carefully and sparingly, in my opinion, because the photograph is itself making decisions, graphic decisions, according to what lens you've got, according to what the light is, according to how you move the figure. If in fact one uses photography without drawing first then I think that one simply embellishes the photographic interpretation.

**The painting is noted for its colour. Can you tell me about your approach?**

The philosophy of colour, which I subscribe to, really came out of my early interest in the Bauhaus and the colour wheel that was used at the Bauhaus with yellow at the top and violet at the bottom and therefore, made a tonal range that if you were going from black to white you went from the light, top to bottom. There was no room in the colour wheel, in the Bauhaus, for black, which was a non-colour. I have developed the idea, or subscribe to the idea, that the entire spectrum is likened to the entire world. The world contains everything and so does the spectrum and therefore, I would often choose a colour change rather than a tonal change to differentiate between one area and another. It sometimes gives a painting that might appear a bit colourful and a bit uncomfortable, but I prefer to live with that. The theory of opposites in colour is very much an important part of the work. Often, if I'm having a problem with a painting I will make a little diagram, a little wheel and mark out the points of the compass with the yellow, violet, red, orange, green and blue. Then I will fill in on that colour wheel the major segments already existing in the painting. Sometimes by doing that, I can see that there is an equal distribution of all the colours that are in the painting around the spectrum or sometimes I can see that they are all concentrated in one area and it gives me a

rational way forward - at least a kick start to a solution to whatever it is that made me stop at that point.