

Ass-Whole

The Ass as the symbol of humility

Humility is described by Webster as being 'Selfless'

Selfless as non-separate

Non-separate as non divided

Non-divided as whole

Ass Whole

Ass as symbol of humility

Humility not as less than, but what you are

Steadfast in being what you are

To perceive yourself as less than what you are

Is not humility

Humility shows us what we are

Whole

I'm whole, you're whole

I'm an Ass you're an Ass

We are

Ass-Wholes

Ass

The dictionary describes the 'Ass', rather inadequately, as an animal of the horse family typically smaller than a horse but with longer ears. It also informally describes the use of the word "ass" as a foolish or stupid person.

This is not how I see it.

Growing up, a great deal of time was spent with our two Jerusalem donkeys, Samy and Beauty, each of whom had very different and eccentric personalities. However, although they were distinctly different they both had that typical attributed quality of 'stubbornness' so often the cliché. When you spend a lot of time with a donkey you realise that this commonality of trait is a truth that is IMHO (in my humble opinion) a misnomer and I see it as the basis of why they are also a symbol of humility. They are, not so much stubborn, but steadfast in doing or not doing exactly what they have a mind to do. They cannot be coerced, bribed, or moved without force, until they seem to decide that it is the right thing to do. They are as they are. If you get angry at them, it will make no difference, if you plead with them, it will make no difference, they will not *do* anything until it is within themselves to do it.

They appear to be completely immune to the fear of any consequence to their decision - or lack of decision as the case often is. They appear to be completely free of others' influence. They are themselves.

A convergent influence towards the inspiration for this work has involved listening to the recorded seminars called "Wake up to Life" by the spiritual teacher, Anthony De Mello. The seminars focus on self acceptance and acceptance of others as an essential step in waking up to the joy of life. One of my favourite quotes from the recordings is where De Mello says, "I'm an ass you're an ass we're all assess", and he laughs for the sheer comic joy of this truth - that we're all the same in reality. This is the essence of humility. Not to diminish one's self, but to *be One Self*.

These experiences, and others, have shaped this present body of work and I have tried to express this pool of inspiration as best I can below...