

The Real Venus

The continuing story of Alison Lapper:
Directed by Bente Milton (Duration 1 hour flexible)

When heavily pregnant with her son, the armless artist Alison Lapper posed naked for a sculpture which is about to take pride of place in the heart of London.

The work - entitled "Alison Lapper Pregnant", by Marc Quinn - has now been selected to fill the empty fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square next to Nelson's column, the country's tribute to its great naval hero!



It is a work which celebrates all that is important to Alison Lapper; single motherhood, acceptance of disability, and her own body as a thing of beauty.

As Alison herself says: *"I love the fact that it has got the UK talking and that it gives disability a platform for debate. It's a positive image of womanhood, though it's not going to appeal to those who wanted the Queen Mother up there!"*

Alison was born in 1965 with phocomelia, a congenital condition similar to that caused by Thalidomide, Alison stands at just 3ft 11ins, having cast off the artificial limbs she wore as a child. For much of her life, Alison believed she would be unable to bear children, having been told that she was too disabled to have a safe pregnancy. When her belly began to swell in 1999, she encountered yet more prejudice.

"When a woman gets pregnant, people usually ask things like 'boy or girl?' With me, it was 'is he going to be disabled like you?' What's wrong with people?"

In January 2000 Alison gave birth to a healthy baby boy. She named her son Parys, the same name as the



prince whose love for the beautiful Helen caused the battle of Troy. Another character seduced by the physical ideal.

Parys' father is no longer on the scene - "and, yes, he is able-bodied. Why does everyone ask that?" Alison wonders. "Why shouldn't I be able to have a sexual relationship with an able-bodied person?" It is to counter just such attitudes that Alison is proud to have her naked body immortalised as a work of art.

In this documentary we witness Alison letting a new man into her life, and the resulting complications. Alison's life seems to reach a new low point. Until she receives a letter from Buckingham Palace informing her that she is to receive a medal of honour from the Queen!

Alison's Baby

Alison and her son Parys will be familiar to viewers of Bente Milton's Award winning documentary "Alison's Baby" in which we follow Alison through her pregnancy and witness the birth of her son Parys. The film was selected for theatrical run at Doctober Screenings in the USA, and nominated for IDA awards in 2001 - and it also won a prestigious prize at PRIX ITALIA in 2002.

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