

EXCERPTS BY

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**DAVID
BURNETT**

'KRISTA BERGA CAME TO SCULPTURE THROUGH DRAWING. FOR HER, DRAWING IS THE CONDUIT TO INTUITION AND AN ALMOST VISCERAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE VISIBLE...[HER] PRACTICE RELIES AS MUCH ON DENYING THE IMMEDIATE AS IT DOES ON SEEKING AN ESSENTIAL DIMENSION OF HER SUBJECT. BERGA'S BRONZE SCULPTURES EMERGE FROM THIS SEARCH FOR ESSENCE...

WHILE DRAWING MAY BE THE ORIGIN OF BERGA'S BRONZE FORMS, HER WORK ALSO ESTABLISHES A DIALOGUE WITH ARTISTS SUCH AS RODIN, BACON, GIACOMETTI, AND BOURGEOIS—ARTISTS WHO HAVE CHOSEN, OR PERHAPS SALVAGED, FIGURATION AS A MEANS TO MOVE BEYOND APPEARANCES. IN HER SCULPTURES, BERGA CONFRONTS THE HUMAN FORM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ITS ANIMALITY. FLESHY, FLEXIBLE, AND EMPHATICALLY SEXUAL, HER WORK DOES NOT SET OUT TO IMITATE, IDEALISE, OR SET THE HUMAN APART FROM ITS ORIGINS.

IN THEIR TWISTING AND CONTORTED GESTURES,

BERGA'S FORMS BETRAY A KIND OF ANATOMICAL ANARCHY, WHERE GENITALIA COULD JUST AS EASILY BE A SPINE, OR AN EAR, OR A RODENT'S TAIL... FEROCIOUSLY FECUND, POWERFUL AND ALMOST SELF-AWARE, THEY BEAR THE TRACES AND SCARS OF TIME AND MORTALITY, 'THE THOUSAND NATURAL SHOCKS THAT FLESH IS HEIR TO' (SHAKESPEARE, 'HAMLET', III, I, P.59)...THEIR OVIDIAN MORPHING OF ANIMAL AND HUMAN INTENTIONALLY REFERENCES THE GROTESQUE AND A KIND OF ABHORRENCE, IN AN EFFORT TO RECLAIM WHAT IS INTRINSICALLY AND UNDENIABLY PART OF WHAT WE ARE.'

**JESSICA
CAMPBELL**

'BERGA NEGOTIATES THE POTENTIAL OF THE IDEAL HUMAN FORM WITH A MORE CYNICAL TAKE ON THE PROJECT OF FIGURATION. [HER] WORK CONVEYS THE SENSE OF TIME RECKONING BETWEEN THE RATIONAL CONTROL OF THE HUMAN ON THE WORLD AND THE SPONTANEOUS, IRRATIONAL BODY. ULTIMATELY, A GROTESQUE, ANIMAL-LIKE , UN-BEAUTIFUL FIGURE EMERGES IN BRONZE – TRADITIONALLY THE MEDIUM USED IN CELEBRATORY PUBLIC SCULPTURE – A REMINDER THAT TRADITION IS NOT REDUCIBLE TO THE IDEAL, NOR DOES IT LEAVE THE HUMAN BODY UNSCATHED.'

**LOUISE
MARTIN-
CHEW**

'BERGA IS A WRITER AND AN ARTIST GIVEN TO IN-DEPTH OBSERVATION OF THE PSYCHE, TO EXPOSE THE ESSENCE...[TO] THE PASSION, ANXIETY AND EMOTION...[TO] THE ANGST, PAIN AND FISSURES OF THE JOURNEY...THERE ARE FEW ARTISTS AS VERSATILE, WHOSE WORK TRAVERSES TERRITORY AT ONCE LITERARY, POETIC, AND VISUAL.'

DAVID L.
CLARK

'BERGA'S SURFACES THRUM, RESTLESS WITH LIFE BELOW AND WITHIN. THERE IS A PALPABLE SENSE OF TRUNCATION, TEARING, AND BLUNTING—AND WHETHER THESE SHEARING FORCES COME FROM WITHIN OR FROM OUTSIDE REMAINS TANTALIZINGLY INDETERMINATE...THESE FORMS MOVE, RENEW, RE-FORM BEFORE MY EYES; AND I AM MOVED WITH THEM.

...IT IS REMARKABLE TO SEE THE PROCESS BY WHICH THESE SHAPES ARE FORMED, AND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY ARE TRANSFORMED INTO WORKS MORE MONUMENTAL IN SIZE. AT SMALL (HUMAN) SCALE, I AM STRUCK BY THEIR COMPLICATED RESTRAINT; BUT CAST AT MONUMENTAL SCALE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SPECTATOR AND THE SCULPTURE UNDERGOES A TRANSFORMATION. IT IS ME, NOW, THAT IS THE SMALLER FORM? IT IS AS IF IN PROXIMITY TO THE MONUMENTS THAT I FIND MYSELF NOT SO UNLIKE THE SMALLER WORKS WHICH I ONCE VIEWED AT AN IMAGINED SAFE DISTANCE...'

'HEMMUNG A WORD FROM THE GERMAN MEANING INHIBITION, RESTRAINT, SUSPENSION, BUT AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURIES TOOK ON NEW MEANING—INHIBITING FORCE, SELF-CONTRACTING OR CANCELLING IMPULSE THAT WAS SOMEHOW PRODUCTIVE, AS IF BY WITHHOLDING ONE ALSO CREATED, AS IF BY WITHHOLDING ONE DID NOT STOP A THING FROM WORKING, BUT PERFORMED A TYPE OF WORK IN A NEGATIVE MODE.

BERGA'S WORKED PAGES REMIND ONE OF HEMMUNG, OF THAT WORD—THAT WORD THAT WAS ONE OF FREUD'S WORDS FOR REPRESSION. IT WAS FREUD'S INSIGHT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY THAT FORGETTING IS NOT THE NEGATIVE REMOVAL OF A MEMORY, BUT A 'POSITIVE' AND PARTICULAR FORM OF REMEMBERING—IN THE MODE OF FORGETTING. FORGETTING IS A FORM OF REMEMBERING, AN INHIBITION OF A MEMORY THAT IS MEMORY'S WAY OF BEING REMEMBERED: TO FORGET IS TO REMEMBER IN THE MODE OF

**FORGETTING; THAT IS WHY FREUD INVENTED
PSYCHOANALYSIS—AS A MEANS BY WHICH TO
MAKE REPRESSION LEGIBLE, TO RECOGNISE
IT AS A WAY OF COMMUNICATING. AND WE
RECOGNISE IT HERE IN BERGA'S HEMMUNG.'**

AMELIA
GUNDELACH

'...OF HOPE AND FEAR, [BERGA'S WORKS] ARE UNEASY, UNNERVING, THE VOIDS AS IMPORTANT AND VITAL TO THEIR COMPREHENSION AS THEIR BLUNT MESSAGES—OF THE NON-ACCEPTANCE OF 'WHAT, WHERE AND HOW WE ARE', HIGHLIGHTING WHAT SHE SAYS IS THE INEVITABILITY OF...HUMAN WEAKNESS—THE RETREAT INTO 'THE DISTRACTION OF WHO WE ARE.'

**ALISON
KUBLER**

'...BERGA'S WORKS ARE FIGURATIVE; AS STUDIES OF THE HUMAN FORM, HOWEVER, THEY DEVIATE FROM TRADITIONAL BRONZE FIGURATIVE SCULPTURE. THESE ARE NOT SO MUCH HEROIC FORMS OR DELICATE NUDES, AND INDEED THEY ARE NUDES, BUT RATHER WITH THEIR MISSHAPEN LIMBS AND MALFORMED TORSOS THEY ARE AN HOMAGE TO IMPERFECTION AND A DARKER VISION OF THE LARGER HUMAN CONDITION. HARKING BACK TO THE ARTIST'S BACKGROUND AS A PAINTER AND INFORMED BY A DEEP INTEREST IN LITERATURE AND POETRY, BERGA'S FIGURES ARE CAUGHT IN THE PROCESS OF EVOLVING, OR BECOMING. THE FORMS ARE ABSTRACT, BUT ULTIMATELY HUMAN, AND OVERTLY SEXUAL.

SCULPTED IN WHITE CERAMIC CLAY BY BERGA, AND RUBBER-MOULDED AND CAST BY UAP, THE FINAL WORK IN BRONZE IS A BLACK MIRROR OF BERGA'S ORIGINAL CLAY FORM. THE PROCESS SUCCESSFULLY IMBUES THE RIGIDITY OF BRONZE WITH A FLUIDITY NOT INHERENT TO THE MATERIAL. ONCE THE BRONZE IS PATINATED BLACK,

***THE FIGURES—THESE REDUCTIVE, FEATURELESS,
HOPELESS, ANTHROPOMORPHIC CREATURES—
STILL BEAR THE TRACES OF THE ARTIST'S HAND;
BERGA'S FINGERPRINTS CAN BE SEEN THROUGH
THE INKY PATINA...'***

**CHRIS
WORFOLD**

'THE MUSCLES OF HORSES: A FAT WOMAN WITH BIG BREASTS AND BIKE SHORTS WALKS HER HORSE AROUND THE PARK. THE ANIMAL IS SO BEAUTIFUL. IT'S A TALL ROAN MARE. ITS HINDQUARTER CATCHES THE MID AFTERNOON SUN AND YOU WATCH THE MUSCLES OF THE HORSE TENSE AND RELAX, TENSE AND RELAX, TENSE AND RELAX...

THE TOUCH OF PLASTER: THERE IS A BUST SOMEWHERE IN A LIBRARY, ON TOP OF A PIANO... IT DOESN'T SEEM TO MATTER. IT'S HEAVY AND DENSE AND COOL. THE FEATURES FEEL LIKE RIDGES, THE NOSE, THE HAIR AND THEN THE CHEEK. IT'S SOFT LIKE THE BELLY OF A BABY COVERED IN TALCUM POWDER. YOU RUN YOUR HANDS OVER IT AND OVER IT AND OVER IT...

THE TENSION OF MEAT: THERE ARE SHANKS ON A WOODEN CHOPPING BOARD. THE FLESH IS TAUT AND FIRM. IT FEELS LIKE A WET RUBBER BALLOON THAT WON'T BREAK. THE MUSCLE

**TAPERS TO THE TENDON AND THE TENDON
SPREADS AROUND THE BONE. ITS SO STRONG.
YOU LIFT UP YOUR OWN LEG AND FEEL YOUR CALF
DOWN TO THE HEEL. YOUR HAND MOVES UP AND
DOWN, UP AND DOWN, UP AND DOWN...**

**THE SMELL OF SPIT ON SKIN: THE BED SHEETS
ARE CLEAN AND COOL. THEY FOLD AND CASCADE
LIKE MUFFLED WAVES. THERE IS SOMEONE'S
BODY IN YOUR ARMS. WET KISSES STICK TO THEIR
NECK, THEIR BREASTS, THEIR STOMACH. THE
SHARP TANG OF YOUR SALIVA REACHES YOUR
NOSE AS YOU RE-KISS THE PLACES YOU HAVE
KISSED BEFORE. MILLIMETERS FROM THEIR SKIN,
THEIR BLOOD IS WARM UNDERNEATH AND YOU
BREATHE IN AND OUT, IN AND OUT, IN AND OUT...**

**WHITE FLESH IN THE DARK: IT'S LATE. THE MIND
ROLLS OUT OF SLEEP, DREAMS SEEM TO FOLLOW
INTO THE ROOM. THE WINDOWS ARE OPEN. THE
NIGHT IS QUIET. THE BRAINS SLOWS QUICKLY AND
THE DREAMS RETREAT.**

**THE BODY YOU LOVE LIES NEXT TO YOU, THEIR
BACK LIKE PORCELAIN IN THE MOONLIGHT. TO
TOUCH IT WOULD MEAN TO BREAK IT. SO YOU
WATCH IT SLOWLY, GENTLY, RISE AND THEN FALL,
RISE AND THEN FALL, RISE AND THEN FALL...**

**THE DIFFICULTY IN DYING: YOU'VE BEEN TOLD A
STORY ABOUT THE DIFFICULTY OF DYING. IT'S A
HOT SATURDAY AFTERNOON AND THE CEILING
FAN IS ON HIGH. A PIGEON FLIES IN THE WINDOW.
THERE IS A DULL THUD, A RED RIBBON AND THE
BIRD'S HEAD FALLS ONTO THE FLOOR BOARDS. ITS
BODY LIES IN A HEAP ITS FEATHERS ARE FLAPPING
IN ODD CONVULSIONS LIKE THE PAGES OF A BOOK
CAUGHT IN THE WIND. YOU SIT AND LISTEN AS THE
PAGES TURN OVER ONE BY, BY ONE, BY ONE...**

**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: BENDING OVER IN THE
SHOWER WASHING YOUR THIGHS, THE PLASTIC
CURTAIN KEEPS STICKING TO YOUR LEGS. YOU
PUSH IT AWAY, YET IT KEEPS RETURNING TO
STICK TO YOU. THE STEAM MAKES THE AIR THIN.**

**WRAPPED IN THE PLASTIC YOU FEEL YOU'RE BOTH
SUFFOCATING AND EVOLVING. AND AS YOU TURN
THE WATER OFF YOU KNOW BOTH CHANGE AND
REPETITION AWAIT.'**

**WILLIAM
WRIGHT**

'KRISTA BERGA'S BLACKENED NOCTURNALISM STANDS IN STARK RELIEF IN AUSTRALIA, A LAND WHICH HAS LONG CHARACTERISED ITS PAINTING THROUGH THE TRADITION OF A LIGHT FILLED PALETTE. SHE HAS FEW PEERS IN AUSTRALIAN ART—SURPRISINGLY FEW HAVE CONCENTRATED THEIR FOCUS AS SHE HAS: HER WORK IS OF THE SCOTOPIC VISUAL REALM: HERE, BOTH OBJECT AND PARADIGM ARE TENEBROUS, LIGHT ISSUING ONLY FROM WITHIN A PERVADING DARKNESS. DARKNESS IS ITS BASE CONDITION; AND DARKNESS IS THE INCEPTION... COMPOSITION IN THE CONVENTIONAL SENSE HAS ALMOST NO ROLE IN THE WORK. BERGA'S MODUS IS A PROCESS OF PAINTERLY EMERGENCE— OF THE PRESENCE-IMAGE FROM WITHIN THE IMPENETRABLE BLACKNESS OF THE SURFACE; FROM WITHIN (IN ITS METAPHORIC EQUIVALENT) THE VOID-UNCONSCIOUS...

I HAVE HAD THE EXPERIENCE OF SITTING FOR A PORTRAIT PAINTED BY KRISTA BERGA,

**WATCHING HER WORKING, AS I HAVE WATCHED
INNUMERABLE OTHER ARTISTS OVER THE LAST HALF-
CENTURY. WHILE SHE HAS CONSUMMATELY ADOPTED
THE TECHNIQUES OF EUROPEAN PORTRAITURE, SHE
HAS ADAPTED THEM DISTINCTIVELY TO HER OWN
ENDS: WHEN SHE PAINTS, BERGA DELIMITS THE
PERCEPTIBLE FIELD OF PAINTERLY DEPICTION;
SHE NOT SO MUCH RENDERS HER SUBJECT AS
INTIMATES IT. THE PAINTING EVOLVES, THROUGH A
PROCESS OF CONSTANTLY SHIFTING APPLICATIONS
AND REVISIONS IN A TIME-OPEN WORK CONTINUUM;
SHE PERFORMS INNUMERABLE INTENSELY FOCUSED
INTUITIVE ADDITIONS, ERASURES, AND FURTHER
ADDITIONS; THE SUBJECT FORMS, DISINTEGRATES
AND INEXORABLY RE-EMERGES...BY THIS PROCESS
OF EMERGENCE AND RE-EMERGENCE, FROM WITHIN
THE MUTABILITY OF THE PITCH-VOID, SOMETHING IS
SENSED OR SENSES...**

**THE HISTORY OF THE ARTS IS THE HISTORY OF THE
TRANSFORMING CAPABILITIES OF EXCEPTIONAL
INDIVIDUALS, THOSE WHO HAVE BROUGHT SINGULAR**

**INSIGHT TO THE PROCESS OF MAKING AND RE-
MAKING THOSE OBJECTS OF SENTIENCE THAT, IN
OUR CULTURAL SEGMENT, CONSTITUTE THE VISUAL
ARTS. KRISTA BERGA A YOUNG ARTIST OF SUCH
SINGULAR PREDISPOSITION, AND ABILITY, ONE
WHO IS CLEARLY IN FULL PROGRESS TOWARDS
A SIGNIFICANT CREATIVE LIFE AND PRESENCE
IN THE VISUAL ARTS.'**