

Book. Review

The kindest cut of all - Lida Lopes Cardozo Kindersley



Meeting ones heroes is often not a good idea. How so often they can disappoint. How so often they are not as anticipated. Fortunately my daughter Laura met hers a couple of years ago in the majesty that is Lida Lopes Cardozo Kindersley and I must admit, I too was enthralled.

Does the name sound familiar? Lida was featured on the front cover of the March 2003 BIFD Journal and a 3 page article introducing her workshop; the feedback was the most positive I had received as editor over an article and I am delighted to say that she sent some signed copies to the Journal of her newest work, "The Kindest Cut of All" - about the making of gravestones in the Kindersley Workshop. Many of the engraved stones produced at the Kindersley Workshop are gravestones and memorial plaques, commissioned by the living to commemorate the dead. In this book the creative process is examined which engages the energies of the triad - the workshop, the client and the material (stone) - in the very special context of death and bereavement. The aim is both to describe this practical process and reflect upon the spiritual and emotional significance.

Famed for transforming slabs of rock into memorials marking many of Britain's great people and



buildings, from Archbishop Runcie's headstone to the gates of the British Library, she is an incredibly talented and warm person. But whilst Lida is creating lasting memorials to those who have gone, she is facing up to her own mortality after a life threatening illness. She has just appeared on the BBC 2 programme in a half an hour episode dedicated to her called "A Passion for Churches". I have also seen a marvellous article in the Country Life magazine about her work and life. Recently, Lida has written a couple of fantastic books, one called "Apprenticeship" with the Foreword by HRH The Prince of Wales.

Each section begins with a commentary by Lida, whose words are printed in roman type. Michael Wheeler then offers his reflections, printed in italics, on what Lida has said. It becomes as if one is sharing a conversation, and works magnificently.

At the end of the webpage promoting the BBC documentary, Lida is quoted as saying that

what is important to her is, "This life, this bundle of energy of what I am is used to full effect. Human beings by nature need to commemorate, we need to make little markers. And that is quite an intimidating feeling as you've got to make a beautiful mark and it's got to last."

If you were not lucky enough to receive a book as a contributors token, copies are available from The Cardozo Kindersley Workshop, 152 Victoria Road, Cambridge CB4 3DZ (www.kindersleyworkshop.co.uk). Priced at £7.95 (plus £2.00 p and p) it shows in 56 pages of full colour, many different headstones and the process of fixing them.



