

# THE SITTER'S TALE

New faces at the National Portrait Gallery: the Turner prize-winning sculptor infiltrates city life with the help of Gautier Deblonde

## Grenville Davey



I've known Gautier Deblonde for a while. He approached me and said he was doing a series of photographs of artists and would I mind having my photo taken; I didn't know much about his work before, but now I've seen the whole series, I like his unique approach to each person – some photos are flattering, some are dark – all are different.

To do the photo, we went for a walk around Leadenhall Market in the City of London. We

went to see what was possible. I walk around the city quite often – a few days ago I went from Charing Cross to Liverpool Street – and I often go for long walks to clear my head. I only remember doing one session for this. I wasn't queuing for anything in particular, I just joined the line – I think they were queuing for sandwiches. Gautier said, "go and stand over there, Grenville" – it's a bit of a cheat really. It wasn't a conscious pose though; I just stood in a line.

Being photographed among other people, it's like having a finger pointed at you.

What I liked about this photo when I first saw the contact sheets was the person walking into the frame on the right. I thought that might be a problem, but it works really well. I've got a really cheap and nasty shirt on – a £10 shirt from Brixton. I like that fact as they'll all have been wearing nice shirts for work, and I'm not, although you don't necessarily know this looking at the photograph.

I think it's an incredibly clever picture – it occurred quite naturally, or rather, it is a natural picture of me. Every photograph Gautier takes is very much of the person, about the person, not about himself. And that's the point.

**INTERVIEW BY CHARLOTTE MULLINS**

*Grenville Davey's 1995 portrait by Gautier Deblonde hangs at the NPG, London, WC2 (0171 306 0055).*