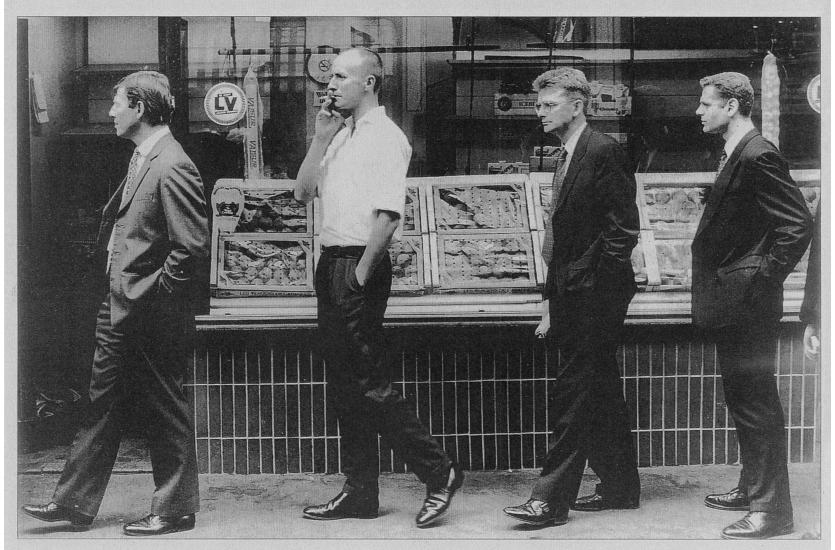
THE SITTER'S TALE

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

Grenville Davey



'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 queueing 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 II 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).