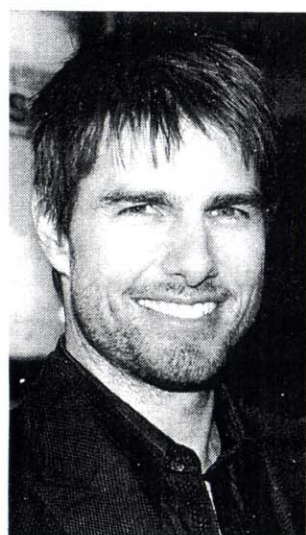
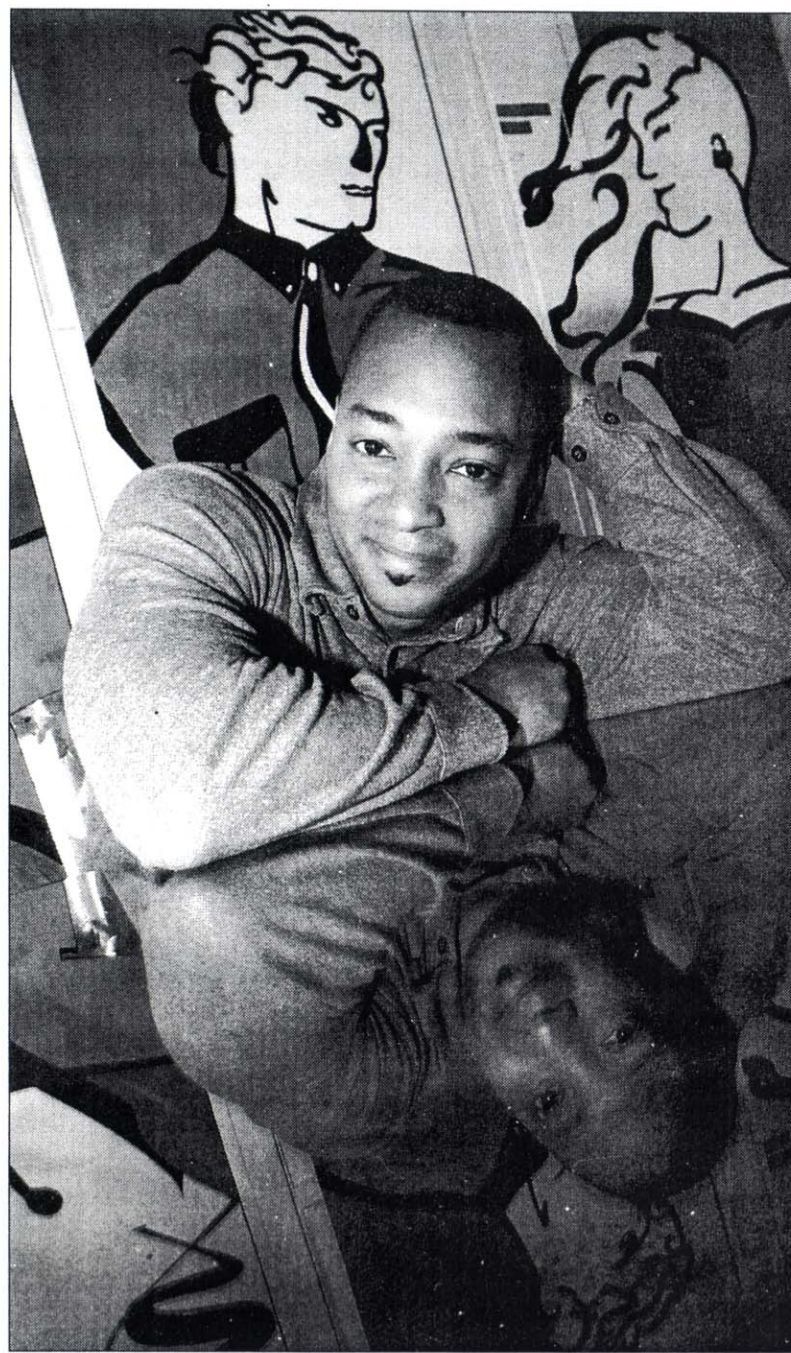


HE'S BEEN LIKENED TO PICASSO, BUT REMAINS MODEST ABOUT SUCCESS



HOLLYWOOD FAME... Albert with The Supremes (left) and Tom Cruise

Why I like gritty Brum - by artist to the stars



FORTUNATE... this is what I always wanted to do, says Albert Jackson

HE is an artist who can boast Hollywood superstar Tom Cruise and singing legends The Supremes as just two of his famous clients.

Now Albert Jackson, 40, who has exhibited in New York and Beverly Hills, is preparing for his first major British show - at Birmingham's Custard Factory.

Yet the modest artist and sculptor says he is still not comfortable with his success. "It is all a bit strange to me," said Albert, who was born in Colorado but grew up in California.

Image

"I always had this image of artists being struggling and starving and not being that successful.

"I tried my hand at many other jobs, including graphic design and photography, but I always knew this was what I wanted to do.

BY LUCY MILES
"So I realise I have been very fortunate."

His first show was at the New York International Film Festival where Bianca Jagger viewed his work.

"That was scary," he said. "The good thing about showing in New York is that they tell you exactly what they think."

"If they hate your art, they let you know in no uncertain terms. But in LA if someone calls your work 'interesting' that is their way of saying it is the worst thing they have seen."

"That is why I love working in Britain. I've travelled around a fair bit and I think it's fair to say that the people here in Birmingham say what they mean. There is no falseness."

"It is a gritty city as are the people. But I love it here and I would rather someone tells me that they either

hate or love my work than not to feel anything for it."

Albert works in all media, from small twisted steel sculptures to oil paintings and even large pieces of furniture. But all of his pieces are very carefully thought out.

"Some of the stuff around now that is called art is irritating," he said. "Like that dot on a canvas by Damien Hirst. What was that all about?"

Inspiration

"It's just a licence to print money." Complimentary critics have said Albert has taken his inspiration from Dali and Picasso but he says: "I am just me. I do what I feel is right. If someone thinks that my work is similar to one of the greats then that's fine by me."

● Albert's show runs at the Custard Factory in Digbeth, Birmingham from May 15 to 21.

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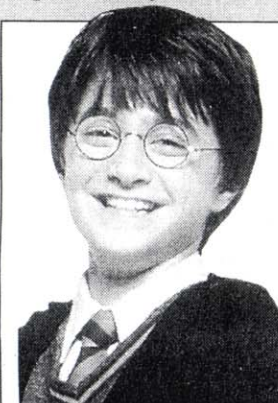
SUNDAY IN BRIEF

River body: Two held

A MAN and a woman have been arrested following the discovery of a man's body in the River Tawe at Swansea. A diver carrying out environmental tests discovered Paul Mainwaring, 46, from Swansea, whose hands and feet had been tightly bound.

Sell local

COUNTRYSIDE campaigners want supermarkets to increase the sale of locally-grown food. The Council for the Protection of Rural England wants stores to set a limit of 30 miles within which the main ingredient of local food must be grown and processed.



HARRY POTTY!

HARRY Potter fever swept the UK yesterday as parents and children flocked to buy copies of Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone on video and DVD, which were on sale for the first time. Retailers predict the movie will notch up sales of more than one million on its first day, smashing the record held by Titanic.

Good call

BRITISH Telecom has welcomed a decision by the Government to allow advertising on public phone boxes across the country. Planning minister Sally Keeble MP said advertising will be allowed without first having to apply for local planning consent.



SCULPTURE... a work called When She Sleeps