

**Remarks submitted to EDUCATION25 marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Robert Lenkiewicz's 17<sup>th</sup> Project – *Observations on Local Education*.**

**Name: Tommy Vosper** (Former pupil, Devonport High School for Boys)

**Painting exhibited as number: 041**

I encountered Robert on the Barbican at the age of 17 and after a brief dialogue, he asked me to pose for him on his *Day of Judgement* mural. I eventually posed for 3 portraits including *Hanged*. He initially booked me for 5 sittings but, I was in his studio for an entire year on a weekly basis.

*What book or object are you holding in your Project 17 portrait and what was its personal significance?*

Robert handed me a Union Flag and asked me to invent a pose. We agreed that the noose I tied was a powerful image and we went with that. Robert wanted to paint me in my school uniform. The personal significance is probably that I was very immature, psychologically, and needed to wait to gain some insight about myself.

*To what extent did Lenkiewicz make his own views on education known to you prior to or during the sittings?*

Ha! Robert was very open on his views on everything! He was subtle. He'd draw out my own views and then prompt his own alternatives. We apparently disagreed on a few points and often he'd take me out for lunch and we'd just talk. I don't recall him ever attacking my views.

*What did you think of his views at the time? And now?*

At the time, we'd debate and he'd alter the way he wanted to portray me accordingly. A couple of years after the project, I got into trouble and Robert helped me out financially. 25 years later, I went into HE at Art College and listed Robert as one of my major influences. Now, I don't care about his views... I care that his legacy is being ignored... Murals, etc.

*Re-reading your original essay, have any of your views on education changed and if so, why?*

I asked him to change the essay as soon as it was published... He offered me both books on the project and I refused because I knew I wouldn't be able to keep them. At this moment, I am about to become a teacher, but my views back then are not very much altered in the way that students should be treated. Robert was a fantastic teacher for me, in life and art.