

Remarks by Sandra Shaw for the unveiling of the Ayn Rand portrait bust
October 14, 2011

My gratitude goes out to John and Mary Ann for conceiving of this project and for donating it to the Institute, which is so right and an inspired idea. And I think more importantly my thanks goes out to John, Mary Ann, Doug, and Greg for creating an environment in which this piece could be made. They made for me a mini Renaissance culture in which I could work. It was an environment of high expectations -- but somehow without any pressure; I don't know how they did that -- high values, benevolent patience, humor, thoughtful feedback, constructive criticism. It was an utter joy to work on this piece in that kind of environment. And I don't think it is a coincidence that that environment was created by Objectivists. And if that's any indication as to what kind of culture we have in store for us in the future when Objectivism is the dominant view, we're going to see a lot of great art.

With that being said, my thanks also go out to Anu, Julie, Jeff, and the various staff members here who helped out. We got some terrific ideas about the color of the wall and the pedestal, and lovely details like that, and it all worked out tremendously. I feel very good about leaving her with you, amongst her champions.

I want to let you know that I typically don't like to have members of the public touching sculpture, because it affects the patina surface, so if members of the public or press come here, please tell them not to touch her; but I want everyone here to know that you are very welcome to touch her! Anyone who works at the Institute is welcome to touch her, and I have to say personally that it is a very gratifying experience to touch her. I get to do that at home and it's wonderful. You can say, "Good morning," and "Good night," and "You would have just loved what I did today." You won't hurt the patina if you make sure your hands are dry and clean -- as long as you're not rubbing her nose. Her cheek and the drapery are lovely places to touch her, so you're very welcome to do so.

For the future I'm going to pursue the possibility of this portrait going out to public locations. I'd love to have her on university campuses across the country and perhaps around the world. It would be lovely for students to experience her on their campus on their way to class.

With that, I'd like to give the floor over to the man who will be giving the toast for this occasion of the first casting being donated to the Institute: the founding Executive Director and Co-Chairman of the Ayn Rand Institute, Dr. Michael Berliner.

Sandra Shaw