

## Silhouettes - Classic hand-cut silhouettes



**Charles Burns** - will freely admit to anyone that his life is completely dominated by silhouettes! Obsessed with drawing from an early age, Charles is now widely regarded as the finest silhouette cutter practicing in the country today. He is constantly searching for new ideas and new markets for his art, and seeks to elevate silhouette cutting to the status of fine art.

Charles was featured in the BBC2 series "Tales of Tools" (in the episode about scissors!), and today has a busy schedule bringing his art to an extraordinary variety of events all over the UK and abroad.



There is a sense of magical wonder in cutting an accurate profile likeness from paper, and one glance at the way **Mike Herbert** uses his scissors will tell how he earned the name "The Magician"!

Mike is in fact a talented magician, but dissatisfied with conjuring tricks, he is keen to pursue a feeling of true magic and mystery in his performance as a silhouette artist.

From his background in architecture, Mike has gained a unique sense of proportion and linear style. Professing a fascination with line, he visualises a silhouette as being like a piece of string moved in around a shadow.

His quiet, professional approach will work wonders at any event.



**Alison Turnet** - is unique in coming from a long family tradition of silhouette cutting. Skilled in all things paper, she is also an accomplished paper folder & origami artist. Having studied graphics and jewellery design Alison has a strong sense of linear style. She enjoys working at weddings and fun days, while her silhouettes have a slightly nostalgic air, as if walking from the pages of history!

Alison's cheerful and friendly approach will add an intriguing appeal to any event.

The simplest and most classic silhouette is the rapid scissor-cut bust length portrait. The vast majority of the silhouettes we cut at functions are of this kind. It's hard to beat the simple beauty of an elegantly cut profile set into an oval or rectangle mount. In the hands of an expert, a silhouette of this kind can be cut out in as little as 60 seconds!

Half-length silhouettes holding glasses of wine are a popular addition,

"Look, he even got the glass in!"

Double silhouettes arranged in variety of poses always go down well, you can go head-to-head or back-to-back.

"A Smith & Jones or a Charlie's Angels?"

Some of our artists even use a side-by-side pose with one head cut out of the other. It can all get very complicated!

From time to time the artists are asked to get the long cards out, and make some full-length silhouettes. These take a little longer (as long as 3 or 4 minutes sometimes!) but the results are often spectacular. Just remember to take a deep breath before the artist starts cutting!

All our artists work at a wide variety of events, and there are many events which call for special treatment. A great treasure for a newly married couple is the full length silhouette cut out on their wedding day. Having seen it once, what couple would want to be without such a thing?

Costume balls are among the events they enjoy the most. Piled up wigs and masks offer a lot of scope for our scissors. Silhouette artists have been active in various guises throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. So we do have some claim to historical accuracy at a wide range of themed events. Georgian, Edwardian, and Victorian events. The 1920's and 1930's theme night. At the Black & White ball we're a must! French evenings, and American evenings, and especially the Wild West night. Their scissors will fit right in at them all.

