



Nathan David obituary

Ann David

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My husband Nathan David, who has died of cancer aged 87, was a sculptor who created bronzes of ballet dancers, including Rudolf Nureyev, Anthony Dowell, Antoinette Sibley, Natalia Makarova, Mikhail Baryshnikov and many others.

In 1980, Dame Margot Fonteyn unveiled the over-life-size bronze of herself that he was selected to create for her birthplace in Reigate, Surrey. There are editions of her portrait head at the Royal Opera House and Sadler's Wells.

Born in Deptford, south-east London, and brought up in Wood Green, Nathan was one of two sons of Herbert David, a master tailor and cutter, and his wife, Ada (nee Lazaroff), a milliner. Nathan was evacuated many times during the second world war. These disruptions to his education offered hours to spend drawing and observing life, giving him a lifelong love of the human body and its movement. He left Glendale grammar school at 16 to

work in commercial art studios in London, taking evening classes at Hornsey School of Arts (now Hornsey College of Art) in drawing, sculpture and painting.

Seeing an advertisement for a graphic design job in Canada, he sailed from Southampton for New York on SS United States, aged 26, and headed for Montreal by train. After a year, Nathan moved to New York to work at the ad agency J Walter Thompson. Returning to London in 1959, he joined Ogilvy Mather, and later freelanced on the Sunday Times colour supplement.

When an artist's studio in Bushey, Hertfordshire, became vacant, Nathan left graphic design to concentrate on sculpture, supplementing his income by teaching at Watford School of Art and later at the Sir John Cass Faculty of Arts (1975-90).

In 1964 he married the artist Tamara Katz; they divorced in 1976.

Nathan was made a fellow of the Royal British Society of Sculptors in 1980. Among his many public and private commissions were a bronze Mother and Child for Clare Hall, Cambridge; Cendrillon, a ballet bronze given to Diana, Princess of Wales; Nereid for Cardiff city centre; and 14 stations of the cross in terracotta for All Saints Church, East Sheen, south-west London.

We met when he was creating the Fonteyn sculpture. Although the famous British ballerina posed for the head, I was one of several models who sat for the rest of the body. We married in 1982.

That year he produced bronze fountains and terracotta gargoyles for a new walled garden designed by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe at Sutton Place, Guildford. Nathan was commissioned to make a lifesize bronze of the rugby player Nick Duncombe, who died aged 21 in 2003; it was installed the following year at the Stoop, the Twickenham home of Harlequins, Duncombe's club.

Nathan exhibited at the Royal Academy summer exhibition and at many other galleries in London and abroad. He also had one-man shows at the Royal Opera House, Sadler's Wells Theatre, Royal Academy of Dancing, Birmingham Hippodrome and The Orangery in Holland Park, west London.

He continued to work after his cancer diagnosis five years ago, and was latterly working again in terracotta, in abstract forms.

Nathan is survived by me, and by his brother, Ronald.