

Barry Flanagan's flying hares leap into Waddington Custot

The late sculptor's fantastical bronze beasts go on show at the London art gallery



Ball and Claw, 1981, by Barry Flanagan

WHERE TO FIND

Barry Flanagan: *Alchemy of the Theatre* 4 March to 28 April at Waddington Custot: waddingtoncustot.com

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This March, Barry Flanagan's leaping hares will return to London's Waddington Custot for an exhibition titled *Alchemy of the Theatre*. The show (which runs from March 4 to April 28) takes place exactly four decades after the late artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery in 1980, when his interest in bronze and the subject of hares – which he first conceived in 1979 – was in its infancy.



Hells Bells, 2005

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This event explores the theatrical nature of Flanagan's sculptures, brilliantly conveyed through the dynamism of his beasts, in part reflecting human experience. The cast-bronze hares run, dance, perform as troubadours, juggle, swing as acrobats and play cricket. As Flanagan once remarked, his sculptures carry with them "the conventions of the cartoon and the investment of human attributes into the animal world".



Flanagan said that the atmosphere of a bronze casting foundry was "as exciting as standing in the wings of a theatre". Image: The Estate of Barry Flanagan



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Works on show include *Cricketer* (1981, cast in 2003), an exultant hare with long bat-like ears standing on one leg; *Hells Bells* (2005), a hare portrayed running joyfully, exultant atop a gleaming steel pyramid; and *Ball and Claw* (1981), a strikingly dynamic artwork that captures the moment when the hare is about to jump, its slender arms stretched forward. The exhibited artworks are priced from £1,000 to more than £1,000,000.



The exhibition takes place four decades after Flanagan first showed at Waddington Custot in 1980. Image: The Estate of Barry Flanagan

The Royal Academician and leading figure of the avant-garde, who lived between London, Paris, Ibiza, New York, Dublin and Amsterdam, spent 30 years creating his animals in elongated stylised forms reminiscent of Italian modernist sculptor Alberto Giacometti. For Flanagan, the process was all about drama, having noted that the atmosphere of the bronze casting foundry was "as exciting as standing in the wings of a theatre".

