

PRESS RELEASE

Barry Flanagan 'Works 1966-2008'

17th March – 17th April 2010

Monday – Friday 10am-6pm

Saturday 10am-1.30pm

PRIVATE VIEW 6-8 pm, Tuesday 16th March



Harebell on Portland stone piers 1983
Bronze, edition of 5 plus 2 artist's casts
95 1/2 x 112 x 75 in / 242.6 x 284.5 x 190.5 cm

Waddington Galleries is pleased to announce an exhibition of works by Barry Flanagan, dating from 1966 to 2008. From his early sand and cloth pieces to the stone carving and cut out steel work of the seventies, to his development into bronze and the hares so synonymous with Flanagan's art; all are represented in this exhibition.

Through his career, Barry Flanagan was resolute in his commitment to exploring new directions in sculpture: 'I was a fully fledged sculptor from the age of 17. I stepped right into it and embraced the physical world, and I'm committed to manipulating it or using it to excite the 3-dimensional site'. In early works such as *Neither Growth nor Structure, A* (1979), Flanagan found new, unconventional ways of making sculpture. By taking a two-dimensional surface such as a piece of hessian, folding it and stitching it, and applying plaster, it could be transformed into a three dimensional shape. He found this an exciting and 'elegant solution' to creating form.

Flanagan used sand, hessian, plaster and wood, and some of these materials were not durable. In 1972, he produced a sculpture using fibre-glass, for the Peter Stuyvesant City Sculpture Project that was installed at Laundress Green, Cambridge: the sculpture received harsh criticism and was eventually destroyed by vandals. Moved by this incident, Flanagan sought different directions in his practice. He became attracted to permanent materials and in 1973 he travelled to Pietrasanta, Italy to learn stone carving: he produced works such as *Tantric Figures* (1973) and *Bollard* (1979) where blocks of Beer stone and granite are incised with fluid lines that appear drawn onto the stone rather than carved.

Flanagan described himself as a modeller not a carver, and 'If you want to make the cast from a modelled piece more permanent, bronze is the thing. Bronze is a very fine material, a beautiful material.' He had learnt bronze casting during his studies at Birmingham College of Art and Crafts. In bronze he found a process that allowed him to create shapes and forms that were robust and long lasting. In works such as (*Moulded Tower*) and (*Direct Tower*) (2005) he was able to repeat the shapes and surface granularity of his early hessian works in a much more stable form.

Of all Flanagan's work in bronze, he is probably most well known for his monumental hares. Often engaged in human activities, whether dancing as in *Nijinski Hare* (1996) or performing a handstand as in *30ft Acrobats* (2003), sometimes playful, sometimes melancholy, they are expressive and full of vitality. 'The idea of the hare as an alter ego evolved,' Flanagan said. 'It wasn't inevitable when I started. But once you abstract from the human like that, it opens a window in the mind, it allows your imagination to roam.'

Barry Flanagan was born in Prestatyn, North Wales in 1941. His first solo exhibition was held at the Rowan Gallery, London in 1966. Thereafter he exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions, both in Britain and abroad, and in 1982, he represented Britain at the Venice Biennale with an exhibition of stone carvings and bronzes. In 2002, a major exhibition of his work was shown at the Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, Germany, and toured to the Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Nice. In 2006, the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin and Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane held a major retrospective of his work, which included ten large-scale bronzes installed along O'Connell Street and in Parnell Square. On 31st August 2009, Barry Flanagan died in Ibiza. His work can be found in public and private collections worldwide.

A fully illustrated colour catalogue, with an introduction by Jo Melvin, accompanies the exhibition.

For further information or images please contact Leonie Grainger at leonie@waddington-galleries.com.