(O for orange U for you: poem for the lips) by Barry Flanagan © The Estate of Barry Flanagan, Courtesy Plubronze Limited.

Poems written in response to the exhibition Barry Flanagan: Silâns

by

The Bealtaine Writers Group

April 2012
Harebrained

Flanagan lifts up a body
this hare is dead

all that mad boxing over
all leaping silent

the sculptor remakes
a body in clay

gives new life in bronze
larger than life

he sets them round the world
dancing, boxing, leaping.

Bewitched by hares
Flanagan’s spirit prances the streets

By Marguerite Colgan

Barry Flanagan
Bronze
Installation view
O’Connell Street, Dublin
September 2006
1
the sculptor looks at white space
chooses his nouns
cloth rope sand,
adds colour to the Hessian maybe
slices the sisal in phrases
rhymes them on the floor
hefts in sand, dribbling, slipping,
lets it do, lets it be,
scans with eye with lens
his concrete poem

2
sometimes
he folds the Hessian
adds stiches and
stuffs the sacks with sand
piles them
against the corner
rounding out angles
a narrow window
measures daylight
lets sun
touch the sacks
slow-read
curves and line

By Marguerite Colgan
Barry Flanagan Visits

a few lines
black on white
and
the family dogs
reveal themselves
all
noses, eyes, ears
turn
to greet me

Drawing of a Dog by Barry Flanagan
On loan from a Private Collection

© The Estate of Barry Flanagan, Courtesy Plubronze Limited.

By Marguerite Colgan
Tunnels in the Sand

the artist names
photographic prints
Hole in the Sea
1 – 2 – 3

Puzzled I ask
my scuba-diver son
where these holes
might be

the only sea-holes
he knows are
black smokers
geyser on the
sea-floor
2000 meters
below sea’s
surface

formed by
hydrothermal
vents hosting
marine life

giant clams
tube-worms
limpets, one-
eyed shrimps

scientists believe
vents may be active
on Jupiter’s moon
Europa

spent ones
found on the
red planet
fiery Mars

I study the prints
black holes look
more like rock
cavities

than smokers
in deep seas.

By Rosy Wilson
Holes in the Sea

dolphin dipping
mackerel leaping
porpoise diving
iceberg rising
cruiser sinking
woman jumping
meteor falling
cormorant fishing
tornado spouting
off Bray Head

By Rosy Wilson

Hole in the sea private view card
1969
Drawing
5 ¾ x 3 7/8 inches, 14.6 x 9.8cms
© The Estate of Barry Flanagan, Courtesy Plubronze Limited.
Horse Mirrored

after Barry Flanagan

O spirit shall I call you deity or but a wandering being from the ocean of the night transcending to what you will.

Lover of the deep you canter waves of seething spray, rear to a blood red moon struck by lunar ecstasy.

Let me drape you with a wreath of wild olive leaf fly to Phideas in Olympus and sing the odes of Pindar.

By Maureen Perkins

Horse, Mirrored: Sheep Boys: Cow Girls
1995
Bronze
(Sheep Boys) 146.7 x 106.7 x 40.6 cm
(Cow Girls) 154 x 105 x 40.6 cm
Gift of the artist, 1996
Collection: Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane
The Space Between

After Barry Flanagan

Light on light on sacks and stone
on every blooming thing.

As Neolithic man paints a deer
in a cave, you sketch a mermaid
cradling a hare.

Then fantasia spread to your
leaping antic hares, lean bodies
as supple as Nijinsky's,
all ears, eyes and angles.

By Maureen Perkins

Diagram August '67 by Barry Flanagan

1976
Drawing
7 3/4 x 10 1/4 inches, 19.7 x 26 cms
© The Estate of Barry Flanagan, Courtesy Plubronze Limited.
**Wolf pack re Barry Flanagan dog sketches**

Like shadows, waiting
alert, silently watching,
close, close,

scent on the breeze,
in the grass,
on the leaves,

patiently wait, wait,
scent on the breeze,
thunder of hooves,
closer they pound,
all around sound,
creep, creep, slink, slink
low to the ground, thunder of hooves,
around, around,

weak singled out
caribou calf staggers momentarily hesitant,
leap into action, strike, jaws snap close on neck,

one last squeal shriek,
pack grab in unison,
drag to ground,

scent on the breeze,
in the leaves,
on blood spattered scrub.

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**Drawing of a Dog by Barry Flanagan**

On loan from a private collection.

© The Estate of Barry Flanagan, Courtesy Plubronze Limited.

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**By Elizabeth O’Carroll**
A Company of Dogs re Barry Flanagan

It couldn’t be, not our Shep
docile as a lamb, he is
could not, would not do harm,

Christ, he has been with us
since Sean there was new born
no, no it can’t be...

where was the harm,
leaving him free outside in his kennel,
on guard, that’s allowed isn’t it
the times that are in it,

let me tell you Missus
here’s how it is,
your dog joined in a rampage last night
on yonder hills,

bodies are strewn, headless, bloodied,
ravaged, gouged,
my flock pack pillaged – they were my pride
I worked many’s a day, nights too
all the hours God sent me to bring those ewes to lambing,

so bring him out missus,
I’ve tracked him right through,
I cannot delay, bring him out smartly,
one bullet will do.

By Elizabeth O’Carroll
Love You re: Barry Flanagan’s poem for the lips

like baby dribble chasing,
or tears plop, plop, plopping
on piano keys,
finger touch wet,
striking black and white
now that all is grey,

he wants to scream, shout,
it’s so unfair, so many plans.
so much to do, had climbed mountains
gained some independence at sixteen,

now, reduced to new born status, tearful,
realisation of dependency dawns
incoherent angry tears water awareness.

I watch, unable to hug away his pain.

By Elizabeth O’Carroll

(O for orange U for you: poem for the lips)
Barry Flanagan
1965
Drawing
23 x 20 cms

Included in Silâns magazine (June 1965) © The Estate of Barry Flanagan© The Estate of Barry Flanagan, Courtesy Plubronze Limited.
The Beginning

In 1958, self confident he decreed
“That he was a fully fledged sculptor”
He resented his relative poverty declaring
“It was dreadful the way in which
money punishes art”
Hi early foray into art was
supported by short term workings
with bakers, frame makers and builders.

Among his co-artists he was
considered a deep thinker whose work
was surprising and likely to remain challenging.

Attracted by the concrete poets gathered
In London he co-authored a college
magazine “Silans”
In an early edition of the magazine
he described his youthful sculptures
“as challenging in a negative way.”

By Gerry Sheridan

Rowan Gallery contact sheet
Barry Flanagan
1967
Print
8 1/16 x 10 1/4 inches, 20.5 x 26 cms
©The Estate of Barry Flanagan, Courtesy of Plubronze Limited.
Finality

With fearful step
he descended into
the awful grip of Motor Neurone Disease.

To escape the
creeping darkness
he made his seasonal
outings in a vintage
camper van, accompanied
by a kindred spirit,
Jessica Sturgess.

To lift his failing
spirit he sought
the relief of
London bars.

In August 2009
he slipped into
the silent darkness
of death.

By Gerry Sheridan

june ‘68
Unique
Paper collage
1968
Drawing
7 7/8 x 10 1/4 inches, 20 x 26cms
© The Estate of Barry Flanagan, Courtesy Plubronze Limited.
The Hare

Invited to work in
A and B sculpture casting
he modelled in brass a hare
bought from a local butcher,
and inspired by a sighting
of an animal slew in the Sussex Downs
he used as a reference a book
“The Leaping Hare.”

His use of Bronze was at odds
with his previous humble materials,
sand, sticks and Hessian used
in previous works.
His hare sculptures adopted the energies of humans, their
facial expressions ranging
from insouciance to melancholy.

By Gerry Sheridan

Barry Flanagan
Bronze
Installation view
O’Connell Street, Dublin
September 2006
Barry Flanagan’s Hares

He saw beauty in a death unmarked
one last leap for freedom suspended
stretched in the ditch
stored in a freezer laid out examined
every pad and paw long ears long legs long feet
moulded and cast bound into new life to balance
on pyramids boulders helmets and bells
Nijinski dancer, thinker, left-handed drummer puncher, leaping or poised
in city ponds and parks
the bronze trixter prances

By Judy Russell
The hare’s corner

Leave me a patch of fieled
with corn marigolds, red clover

whether headland or centre
around the brambled rath,

I live above ground,
no burrow for cover

strong legs, keen ears
my only protection

a reputation for witchery
won’t save me from the dog men

the blood red trail
leading into the kitchen

Must you track us down, leave
no ragged weeds un-poisoned

boxed in by sharp stubble,
tarmac, engine’s roar.

By Judy Russell
Barry Flanagan: Silâns

An in-focus display of works by Barry Flanagan was on view in Gallery Eight of Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane from February-June 2012 to coincide with the recent launch the facsimile edition of Silâns magazine, the influential publication produced and edited between 1964 and 1965 by Barry Flanagan and his fellow students Alistair Jackson and Rudy Leenders in St. Martin’s School of Art. The Silâns editions – the title is taken from the phonetic spelling of silence in French – are a valuable insight into a period of significant artistic creativity, experimentation and enquiry in London. In a letter to Anthony Caro during this period, Flanagan writes: “The Friday evening classes were good meat for my imagination. The classes prompted the writing of poetry, a play, film scripts, songs, the purchase of cine equipment and work on a means to translate movement and atmosphere into music. I might claim to be a sculptor and do everything else but sculpture. This is my dilemma.” In the first issue, distinctions in the unseen are defined and characterised. An epigraph from Joyce’s Ulysses “everything speaks in its own way” is followed by “A prelude to a sculpture that has never been seen” and “A prelude to a sculpture that has never been seen before”. In 2006, The Hugh Lane organised an outdoor exhibition, Barry Flanagan on O’Connell Street, comprising ten of Flanagan’s famous hare sculptures placed along Dublin’s main thoroughfare. In 1996 the artist donated Horse Mirrored: Sheep Boys: Cow Girls to the Hugh Lane.

The poems here were written in response to Barry Flanagan: Silâns by The Bealtaine Writers Group and read in Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane as part the Bealtaine Festival: Celebrating Creativity as We Age 2012.

About The Bealtaine Writers Group

The Bealtaine Writers Group were formed in 1999. Their members today include Rosy Wilson, Bernie Kenny, Margaret Colgan, Peter Clarke, Gerry Sheridan, Anna Quinn, Elizabeth O’Carroll, Maureen Perkins, and Mamo McDonald among others.

The group have had workshops with leading poets including Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill and Macdara Woods and have also had residencies at The Tyrone Gutherie Centre, Annaghmakerrig and the Patrick Kavanagh Centre.

In addition to responding to Barry Flanagan: Silâns, the Bealtaine Writers Group have collaborated with the Hugh Lane’s Education department previously when they wrote poems in response to the Hugh Lane’s collection and also Francis Bacon: A Terrible Beauty.

For further information please contact Jessica O’Donnell, Curator of Education and Research or Sarah Johnston, Art Education Assistant, Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, Charlemont House, Parnell Square North, Dublin 1, Ireland.
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