

Barry Flanagan 18 September – 24 November 2019



Barry Flanagan, *heap 3 '67* (1967) installation view,
one ton corner piece '67, (1967) & *heap 3 '67* (1967) at Cullinan Richards 2015,
© The Estate of Barry Flanagan courtesy Plubronze Ltd

This is a major survey of work by Barry Flanagan, one of Britain's most inventive sculptors, filling entirely Ikon's two floors of gallery space. It includes key pieces drawn from the Flanagan Estate, Tate, Arts Council Collection and Southampton City Gallery.

Curated by Jo Melvin, it will bring together a selection of Flanagan's iconic bronze sculptures (1980s – 90s) alongside earlier works, offering new insights into the interconnectedness of seemingly distinct aspects of his practice. Demonstrating an ongoing experimentation with materials and their properties and a symbiosis between abstraction and figuration, the exhibition will challenge the supposition that Flanagan's later works represent a marked shift in his approach to art-making. Rather, they represent the distillation of his decades-long fascination with ontology, movement and the physicality of the various materials with which he worked.

Flanagan enrolled at Birmingham College of Arts and Crafts to study architecture in 1957, transferring to the fine art department a year later, before moving to London in 1960. The exhibition will highlight his presence in the city, signified also by the placement of one of his bronzes, *Large Troubador* (2004) outside Ikon's premises in Brindleyplace.

Flanagan's first solo exhibition held at the Rowan Gallery in 1966 positioned him as a leading figure in what soon became known generally as conceptual art, although working sculpturally with sand, cloth, plaster, string and paper. At Ikon we will present a number of works from this time including *sand muslin 2* (1966), *2 space rope sculpture (gr 2 sp 60)* (1967), *heap 3 '67* (1967), *sand pour* (1968) and *Untitled twice* (1973).

In 1972 Flanagan bought a copy of the book *The Leaping Hare* by George Ewart Evans and David Thomson, an "anthropological study" of the hare combining legends from different cultures, superstitions and mythologies. Revealing the hare as a symbol of unpredictability, resurrection and renewal, Flanagan felt it resonated with the fundamental proposition of his work overall. Film works (*hole in the sea*, 1969, *bollards project*, 1970) and projected light installations (e.g. *daylight light pieces 1 & 2*, '69) in particular convey Flanagan's preoccupation with transience and fugitive phenomena, and the hares were embodiments of this. e.g. *Ball and Claw* (1981), *Leaping Hare* (1982), *Large Boxing Hare on Anvil* (1984), *Figure in the Trees* (1993) and *Juggler* (1994).

For Flanagan, sculpture was as much performance, sound, light as it was bronze and carving. The exposure of process and method is something he consistently performed in every medium he used throughout his career. He frequently used casts of objects as components in sculptures and allowed bits of the armature to show through stripes of clay or plaster, thereby exposing and recording the processes of its making. The durational nature of his films is translated into the bronzes, as we bear witness to the processes of casting. It is aptly contradictory then, that the fleeting hare should become a monument to time and duration, channelling the quixotic, mysterious propositions implicit in the early work.

The exhibition is supported by Brindleyplace. Key loans have been made possible through The Ferryman Project: Sharing Works of Art which is supported by National Lottery players through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the John Ellerman Foundation and Art Fund.

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For more information, high-res images and to request interviews please contact Sam Newman or Emily Luxford on 0121 248 0708 or email s.newman@ikon-gallery.org / e.luxford@ikon-gallery.org

Social Media Handles:

Instagram, Twitter and Facebook:
@ikongallery #IkonGallery #BarryFlanagan

Links: ikon-gallery.org / barryflanagan.com

Note to Editors:

1. Ikon exhibition opening: Wednesday 18 September, 6-8pm.
2. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by Ikon and available to purchase in Ikon Shop and online at ikon-gallery.org/shop.
3. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art. ikon-gallery.org
4. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. For the latest news and events follow @ikongallery on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
5. Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. ACE support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, ACE will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. artscouncil.org.uk
6. The Ferryman Project: Sharing Works of Art is part of the part of The Ferryman Partnership Programme inspired by the recent acquisition of William Stott of Oldham's Le Passeur (The Ferryman) 1881 for Tate's National Collection of British Art. It is supported by National Lottery players through The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the John Ellerman Foundation and Art Fund.

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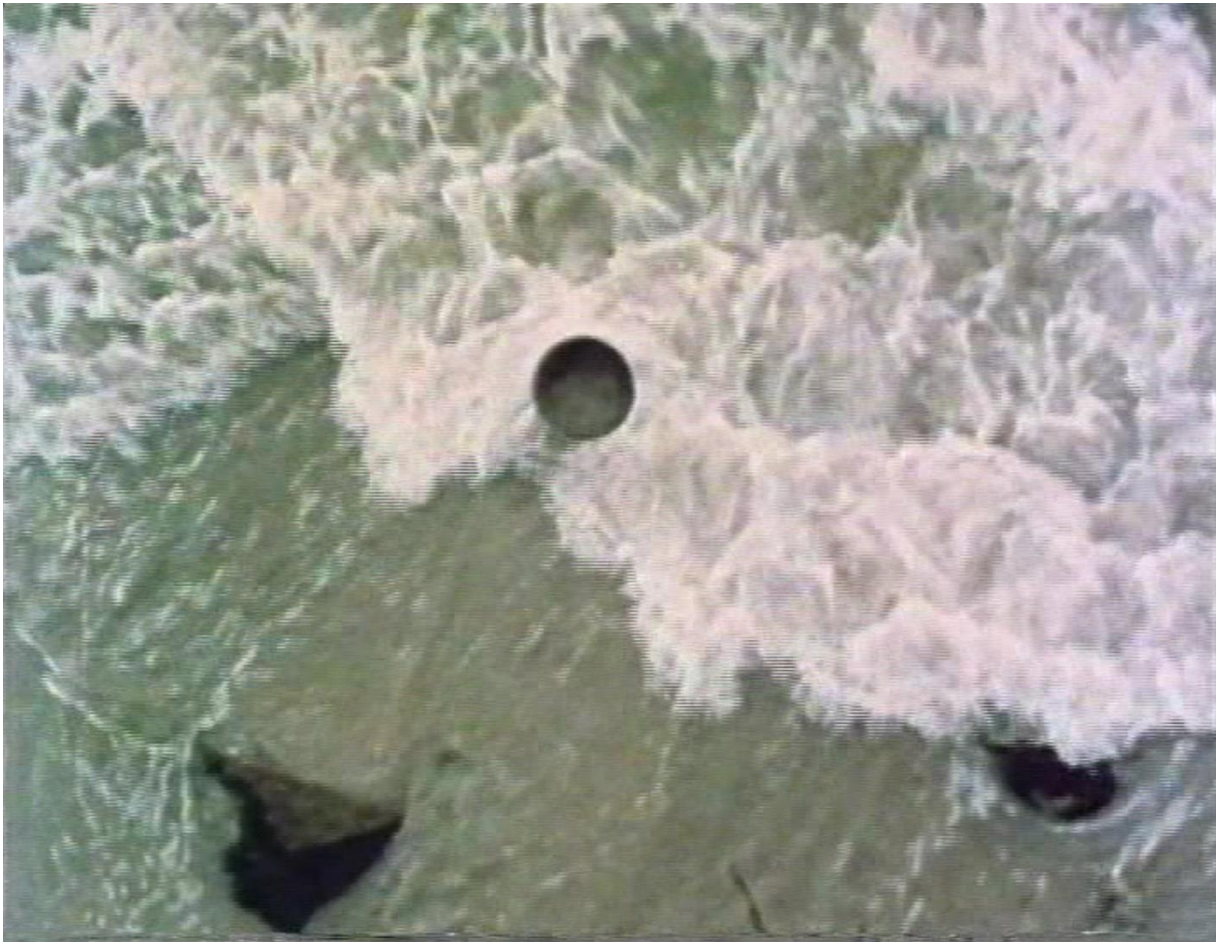
Ikon Gallery
1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS
0121 248 0708 / ikon-gallery.org
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Registered charity no. 528892



Barry Flanagan
Hare and Helmet II (1981)
© Tate, London 2019

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Barry Flanagan, *a hole in the sea* (1969)
16mm colour film, b&w, sound, 3:44mins
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Barry Flanagan
Large Troubadour (2004)
Photograph Clare Preston © Waddington Custot.
Courtesy Private Collection