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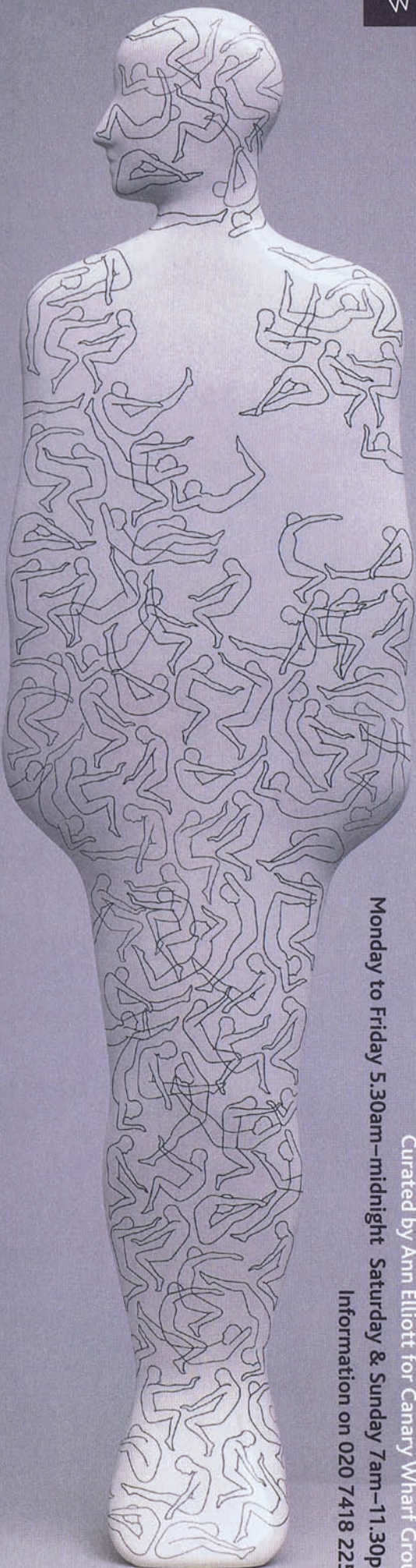
# Glenys Barton Sculpture

Lobby, One Canada Square 11 January to 19 March 2010  
Canary Wharf, London E14 5AB

Curated by Ann Elliott for Canary Wharf Group

Monday to Friday 5.30am–midnight Saturday & Sunday 7am–11.30pm

Information on 020 7418 2257





## Glenys Barton Sculpture

In the pursuit of the ideal form as her expression of humanity, Glenys Barton has the extraordinary gift of distilling the best. Looking through a résumé of her work made since the 1970s one sees full figures, portraits, figures in architectural settings, heads with figures inside or on the surface, figures contained and reaching out.

Hands are important, gesture too. Eyes are often closed, sometimes open. The palette is muted and an overall sense of absolute calm is conveyed, though underlying tension sometimes comes through. The need to look with care is paramount, lest we should miss a telling line or significant curve.

Glenys Barton's work in this exhibition dates from the early 1990s to pieces made especially in response to One Canada Square, which gave her the opportunity to see her drawings on a

spectacularly large scale, and some of her multi-ceramic pieces in new configurations. Most of her sculpture is made in clay; some, more recently, in bronze. Barton would like to realise a number of her sculptures at a truly monumental size.

Barton's portraits are not always commissioned, and have come about in a number of ways. The portrait, **Glenda with Hand** 1993, of actress turned politician, Glenda Jackson, however, originated as a commission from

the National Portrait Gallery. She made a number of versions, as she often does, and this slightly flattened piece, head tilted to one side with a cap of short hair and intense gaze, is alert and frank in its apparent simplicity of execution. Glenda Jackson sat for the portrait, positioned at a table. Artist and sitter talked about politics, and to emphasise a point, Jackson banged her hand on the table – a crucial moment that gave Barton the portrait.



Glenda with Hand 1993 Photograph Adrian Flowers

**Daysleeper III no. 3** 2000, a portrait of REM's lead singer, Michael Stipe, was made when Barton was listening to the 'Daysleeper' track on a disc that her son, Felix, was playing – the house at that time was full of REM's music. The sculpture represents her foray into Internet working: downloading images and videos from which she worked. Made in several versions, each realised



Glenys Barton's studio 2009 Photograph Glenys Barton

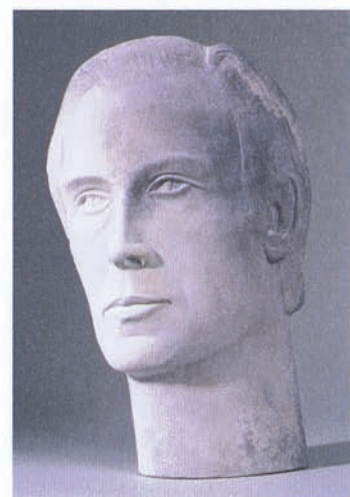
in differing finishes and glazes, **Daysleeper III no. 3** has a finely crazed, warm, buff-coloured surface. Stipe's eyes are fully open revealing that they are bright blue of near unnatural intensity.

Journalist Victoria Segal described Stipe as being '... the beautiful ascetic with the stained glass eyes ...'

Two further portraits in the exhibition are of the actors Bill Nighy and Daniel Craig: **Bill Nighy I no. 2** 2003, and **Daniel II no. 1**

2003. These were made for director Roger Mitchell's film 'Enduring Love', which was based on Ian McEwan's novel. In the book the character, Clarissa Mellon, a Keats scholar, is changed to Claire Morton, who in the film is a sculptor. The film also features a reconstruction of Glenys Barton's studio.

Barton's technical repertoire is highly developed and well tested. Passionate about the colours and finishes of



Bill Nighy I no. 2 2003 Photograph Anne Hardy



timeworn Egyptian sculpture, the intense blues of Egyptian ceramics and the subtleties in early Renaissance painting, found in works by Masaccio and Piero della Francesca in particular, she took these into her work. She also developed techniques using raku glazes on bisque ceramics, which were smoked and then sandblasted, creating a smooth and delicately matt crackled surface. Her employment of these carefully researched and recorded techniques extended her visual vocabulary enabling her to communicate her deeply held humanity and a timeless calm in her sculpture.

The series of pieces under the general title of **Within** are taking her concepts for sculpture further. The divided head, **Within 2001**, shows how Barton has covered the inner facets, flat profiles in effect, with relief images of the human form, curled, bending, intertwining. The outer calm of the



Daniel II no. 1 2003 Photograph Anne Hardy

immaculate features contrasts with the inner activity, a metaphor for stresses held within the mind that are more often than not at odds with the way in which the self presents to the world. Barton would like to see this head made so large that a person could walk between the two parts and be dwarfed by them.

In the three ceramic figures also titled **Within**, made in 2001 and 2002, Barton reversed the imagery. Here simply-fashioned standing forms were covered with line drawings of curling, diving, entwined and overlapping figures, applied in varying degrees of density. The earthbound, but

lightly standing hosts and their floating guests pose questions: 'Are we obscured by those around us?' 'Do we need to be surrounded?' 'Are others part of us?'

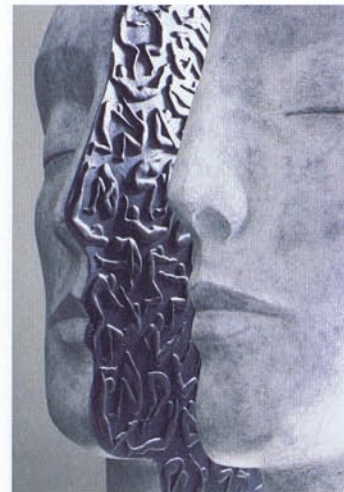


Shard portraits, in the studio Photograph Ann Elliott

Barton's new work in the **Within** series are four drawings shown as digital prints that cover four windows on the south side of the Lobby of One Canada Square. Made especially for this exhibition, these pieces may speak for those who work here, being motifs for humanity in their similarities and differences. These drawings relate to another one that Barton made in 1996 under the title **There is no such thing**. In that drawing the figures were more formally arranged on the surface of a single standing figure, the palms of the hands facing forward.

While working on the drawing Barton heard about a quote made by Prime Minister Thatcher in an interview for *Women's Own* magazine published on 31 October 1987 in which she spoke of the homeless: '... They're casting their problem on society. And, you know, there is no such thing as society ...' It is enough to say that Barton, being of left-wing persuasion, was infuriated by the remark.

The **Angel Head** pieces are another strand of Barton's work. 'At first I couldn't remember how my interest in Angels started except that it might have been way back when my son, Felix, was doing A-level Art and started to think about attempting a project on Angels.' Barton's interest in Angels grew; she began to notice them often, in churches and in paintings. 'Everywhere I looked I seemed to see Angels. How interesting their forms were: the shape of their wings, how the wings were used in the composition of the piece, around the form. How the wings could be used to support the form.'



Within 2001 (detail) Photograph Anne Hardy

Barton met dancers Antonia (Toni) Grove and Theo Clinkard through a commission she undertook for the new Hextable Dance, Kent's Dance Development Centre, in 2004. The dancers, working with leading choreographers, were developing a new piece for the opening of the Centre and Barton asked to sit in on their rehearsals. The experience not only informed the wall sculpture she made for the building but had an influence on much of her subsequent work. **Toni Angel Head III** and **IV**



Within II 2002 Photograph Anne Hardy

of 2006, **Theo II** 2007, **Toni and Theo II** 2007, **Toni Angel Head** 2007, and **Toni I** and **Toni II**, also of 2007, came about through this introduction, as Barton featured them separately and together in a considerable number of



works over a sustained period of two or more years. Their movements together and separately were so intensely observed by Barton that she felt the physicality of their movements in her own body. In part this was because of her own training in dance and work as a dance teacher early in her career before she took up sculpture.

The **Angel Head** pieces are portraits of Toni, with wings growing above or behind her ears or, as in the bronze version, wings growing over her head in place of hair. In sculptural terms, wings evoke further overtones. In Renaissance emblems, wings attached to objects indicated their supersensory intellectuality. Angels, spiritual intermediaries or messengers between God and humanity, appear and reappear in art over the millennia, in the last hundred years, in sculpture as diverse as that of Jacob Epstein and Antony Gormley.

#### Portraits **Theo II**

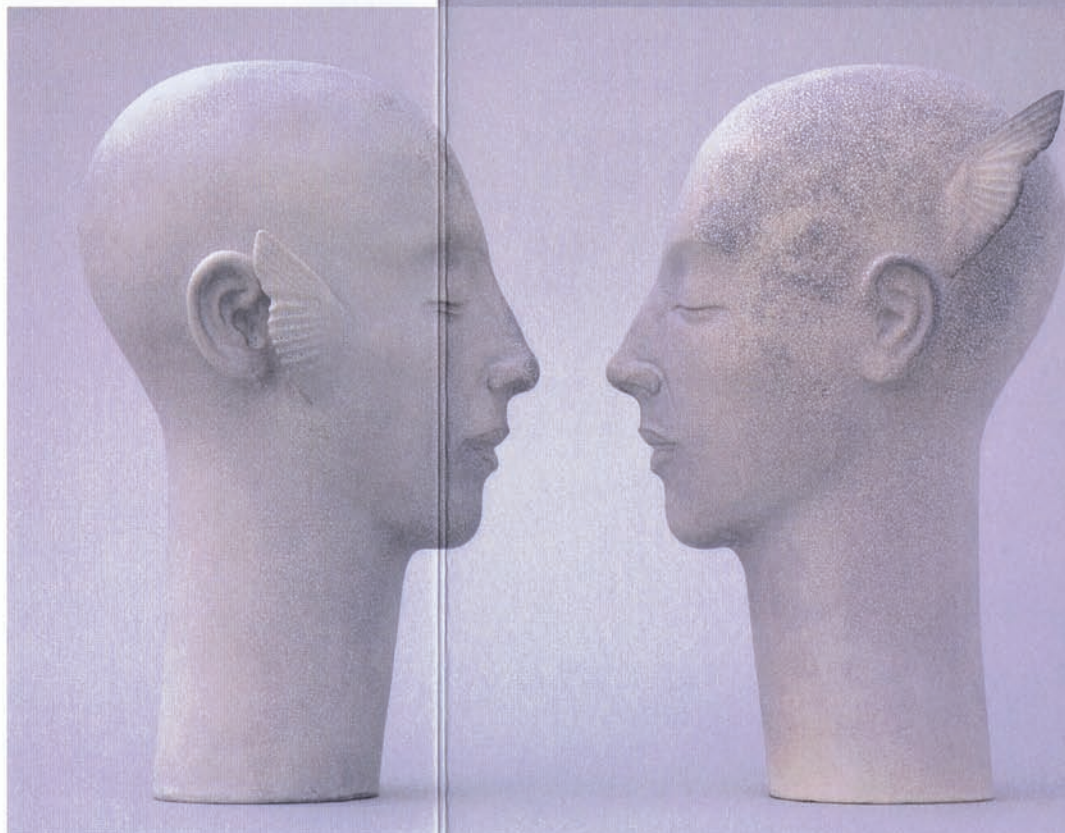
2007, **Toni I** 2007, and **Toni II** 2008 show the dancers using their hands and arms in related poses – these again come from Barton's observations of the dancers using their bodies and in particular their hands and arms to communicate emotion and mood. As formal sculptural devices they frame the head or complete a composition.

Taking the whole figure once more, and using both the head and arms as the means of indicating communication between individuals, Barton's sculptural

installation, **Reaching Out** 2008–09, can be shown in different ways. Before now, the figures have been arranged in checkered formation over an expanse of wall, but here Barton has chosen to exhibit them back-to-back in columns on two Perspex stands, rendering the work in three dimensions. The figures reach out, their movements mirrored, something which sometimes happens in dance.

Another installation piece, **Shard Portrait** 2008–09, has been developed by Barton in response to the

architecture of One Canada Square. In effect she has created well over 300 unique portrait heads, and has finished each individually using a raku glaze on bisque ceramic, which is smoke-fired then sandblasted. Each head is covered in fine crackle, and gives the appearance of having been excavated from ancient ground. The rims around each portrait are also individual: when the clay is



Toni Angel Head IV and III 2006 Photograph Chris Littlewood



Theo II 2007 Photograph Chris Littlewood

pressed into the mould, which is common to all these pieces, the moist clay curves round the edge of the mould in different ways, according to where the pressure is exerted. In life, we are all similar, yet profoundly different. Using the heads as a frieze around the stainless steel detailing of the Lobby, Barton has redefined the space, as her sculpture speaks of humanity and for the people who work in this iconic building.

The latest pieces in the exhibition are **Tattoo Head I, II and III** of 2009. Linked directly to the **Within** series of figures and drawings, Glenys Barton has covered the surface of each head with figures, some overlapping, others floating freely. I am sure she would add 'Not there yet,' in her search for the ultimate in her work, but significantly, Barton has said:

'My subject is always humanity: sometimes a specific human, sometimes human relationships, sometimes human society. The forms may be heads, parts of figures, whole figures or figures within figures. Heads and Hands particularly fascinate me.

'As I work I feel that I am directly linked with those who have tried to fashion the human form from the earliest times. My greatest achievement would be to create a timeless image.'

**Ann Elliott** 2009



**Glenys Barton** was born in Stoke on Trent in 1944.

Before training at the Royal College of Art 1968–71, she worked as a Laban-trained dance teacher, but sculpture became her prime concern. Her work has been exhibited widely, in Britain and abroad since 1973, and a group of her early pieces is now on display in the new ceramics galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Her work is in a large number of public collections across the country, as well as in Australia, the United States and Europe.

The National Portrait Gallery, London, holds her portraits of Jean Muir and Glenda Jackson.

A monograph on her work, **Glenys Barton** was published by Momentum in 1997, with a foreword by Charles Saumarez Smith, introduction by Robert Heller and essays by Robin Gibson and Edward Lucie-Smith.

Glenys Barton lives and works in Essex, and is represented by Flowers Galleries.



Reaching Out 2008–09  
Photograph Chris Littlewood

For more information visit [www.flowersgalleries.com](http://www.flowersgalleries.com)

#### EVENT Tuesday 2 March at 1.15pm

Curator **Ann Elliott** in conversation with the artist

Please call 020 7418 2257 to reserve a place

#### Some of the works are for sale

Contact Canary Wharf Public Art Office 020 7418 2257

#### List of Works (Dimensions H × W × D)

<b>Glenda with Hand</b> 1993 Ceramic 53 × 48 × 19 cm	<b>Toni Angel Head III</b> 2006 Ceramic 35 × 19 × 21.6 cm	<b>Reaching Out</b> 2008–09 Ceramic Dimensions variable
<b>Daysleeper III no. 3</b> 2000 Ceramic 35 × 20 × 22 cm	<b>Toni Angel Head IV</b> 2006 Ceramic 35 × 18.3 × 21.6 cm	<b>Shard Portrait</b> 2008/09 Ceramic Dimensions variable
<b>Within 2001</b> Bronze, edition 2/9 77.5 × 57 × 48 cm	<b>Theo II 2007</b> Ceramic 39.5 × 32.5 × 12.5 cm	<b>Tattoo Head I 2009</b> Ceramic 63 × 44 × 28 cm
<b>Within II 2002</b> Ceramic, AP 68 × 18 × 8 cm	<b>Toni and Theo II</b> 2007 Ceramic 51.3 × 45.5 × 16.5 cm	<b>Tattoo Head II 2009</b> Ceramic 50 × 35 × 24 cm
<b>Within II no. 4 2002</b> Ceramic, AP 68 × 18 × 8 cm	<b>Toni Angel Head</b> 2007 Bronze, edition 1/9 38 × 23 × 26 cm	<b>Tattoo Head III 2009</b> Ceramic 48 × 32 × 22.5 cm
<b>Within II no. 5 2002</b> Ceramic 69 × 18 × 8 cm	<b>Toni I 2007</b> Ceramic 57.5 × 43 × 17 cm	<b>Within Drawings I to IV 2009</b> Window installation, Digital print Each: 268.6 × 112.5 cm
<b>Daniel II no. 1 2003</b> Ceramic 40 × 27 × 13 cm	<b>Toni II 2008</b> Ceramic 68 × 36.5 × 15 cm	
<b>Bill Nighy I no. 2</b> 2003 Ceramic 37 × 22 × 9 cm		