

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Claire Barclay

In her sculptures and installations, Claire Barclay explores different modes of making related to craft and industrial production, arranging everyday and precious materials in an intuitive, poetic way.

Claire Barclay was born in 1968 in Paisley, Scotland and she now lives and works in Glasgow.

Barclay is a leading figure in a generation of graduates from the Glasgow School of Art in the 1990s, a group of young artists studying in the city who rose to the fore of the contemporary art world. She has since been the subject of numerous solo presentations including Tate Britain, London (2004); Camden Art Centre, London (2008); MUDAM, Luxembourg (2009); Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2010); Tramway, Glasgow (2017) and The MAC, Belfast (2022).

Barclay will have a solo exhibition at Cample Line, Thornhill, Scotland in July 2024, with a new site-specific installation. In 2020 the artist was commissioned by Tideway, London to create a series of artworks for the new public realm site at Putney, London, which was unveiled in 2023. Barclay presented new work as part of Glasgow International, Scotland and the 2016 Gwangju Biennale, South Korea. She represented Scotland as part of the Scottish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, Italy in 2003.

Barclay's hybrid sculptures are centred on the physical and the psychological tensions that exist between contrasting materials. They are at once recognisable and foreign, acting as a surreal reflection of the world around us by toying with formal associations. One of the key influences in her working practice is an ongoing fascination with historical and anthropological artefacts.

Fiona Bradley, Director of Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, writes "Claire Barclay's work is large in scale and interventionist in ambition, typically taking the form of installations made in situ and in response to the space in which they are shown. Yet these large works depend for much of their meaning on the small, highly-crafted objects that occur and recur throughout them. Metal spikes, wooden crystalline forms, thrown pots, leather-clad hoops, turned wooden poles, truncated brush-like forms, cut sheepskins, hand-stitched leather caps, dream-catchers, bows, bowls and blades move through her work, drawing its themes together from one installation to the next. These small objects are the elements with which and in which a work takes shape. They are begun a long time before the installation itself and are what remains after it has been dismantled."

In recent years, printmaking has become an increasingly important part of Barclay's practice, with the artist viewing a direct correlation between the print process and the intuitive way in which she makes her sculptures. Characterised by a bold simplicity of design, Barclay's prints hover between the geometric and the organic. Between 2018 and 2019, Barclay undertook a Residency at Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland. Previously unseen works from this residency were exhibited alongside other recent prints at Stephen Friedman Gallery in July 2021. Barclay explains: "My sculptural mindset has very much influenced these works; layered cut-out shapes and objects seemingly float within the boundaries of the paper whilst attention is drawn to the material quality of ink built up on their surfaces."

Other notable solo exhibitions include 'Claire Barclay', Sculpture Court, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh, Scotland (2019); 'Deep Spoils', Mission Gallery, Swansea, Wales (2018); 'Claire Barclay: Overworkings', Touchstones Rochdale, Lancashire, England (2015); 'Claire Barclay, Another Kind of Balance', Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland (2013); 'Reading off the Surface', Skulpturi, Copenhagen, Denmark (2011); 'Claire Barclay', Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland (2009); 'Fault on the Right Side', Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany (2007).

Barclay's works are included in prominent collections including; Scottish National Galleries, Edinburgh, Scotland; Arts Council Collection, London, UK; British Council, UK; Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow, Scotland; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; Tate, London; MUDAM, Luxembourg and Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, USA.