NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

FACULTY OF DESIGN
DEPARTMENT OF CRAFT DESIGN (CERAMICS)

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL: THE WORK OF GLENYS BARTON AND JILL CROWLEY

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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN AND COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES IN CANDIDCY FOR THE DEGREE OF BDes. IN CRAFT DESIGN

1994

CONTENTS

LIST OF PLATES

11. Glenys Barton - "Head with Relief Figures" 1977.

12. Glenys Barton - "Self Portrait" 1981.

13. Glenys Barton - "Monte Alban II" 1977.

14. Glenys Barton - "Monte Alban II" 1977.

15. Quetzalcoati at the Heart of the Citadel in Teotihuacan, built before 100 A.D.

16. Glenys Barton - "Times at Yagul" 1977.

17. Glenys Barton - Sky Plateau II" 1977.

18. Glenys Barton - "Jungian Shadow I" 1977.

19. Glenys Barton - "Jungian Shadow II" 1977.

20. Glenys Barton - "Dark Clown" 1989.

21. Glenys Barton - Head with aerial photographs 1986.

22. Glenys Barton - "Green Warrior" 1990.

23. Glenys Barton - "Green Warrior" 1990.

24. Glenys Barton - "Green Warriors" 1990.

25. Richard Long - "A Line in Bolivia" 1981.

26. Christo - "Running Fence" Calfornia 1972-76.

27. Glenys Barton - "Green Warrior" 1990.

28. Richard Long - "Arizona" 1970.

29. Jill Crowley - "Hand" 1989.

30. Jill Crowley - "Man with a Floral Tie" 1977.

31. Jill Crowley - top "Spotty Lady" 1980, left "Tom" 1975, right "Man for a Showcase" 1979.

32. Jill Crowley - "Liberity Cat" 1979.

33. Jill Crowley - "Hand" 1992.

34. Jill Crowley - "Hand" 1992.

35. Jill Crowley - "Hand" 1992.

36. Jill Crowley - "Hand" 1992.

37. Jill Crowley - "Hand" 1992.

38. Peggie Radford - "The Ice Cream Lady" 1984..

39. Katya Coupland - "Exploding Handbag" 1984.

40. Joan Wakelin - Women in Greenham Common carrying out a demonstration 1984.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank both Glenys barton and Jill Crowley for enabling me to gain extra material for my thesis. Barton sent me a large number of photocopies with details of her career and illustrations of her work. She sent a detailed letter to answer some questions which I needed to ask her and took time on the telephone to explain details about her work and the ideas and theories which influence her creations. Crowley spent time describing her own work and answering the questions which I felt were necessary to raise in order to understand her thinking. A special thanks is due to Paul O'Brien who helped and advised me while I wrote my thesis.

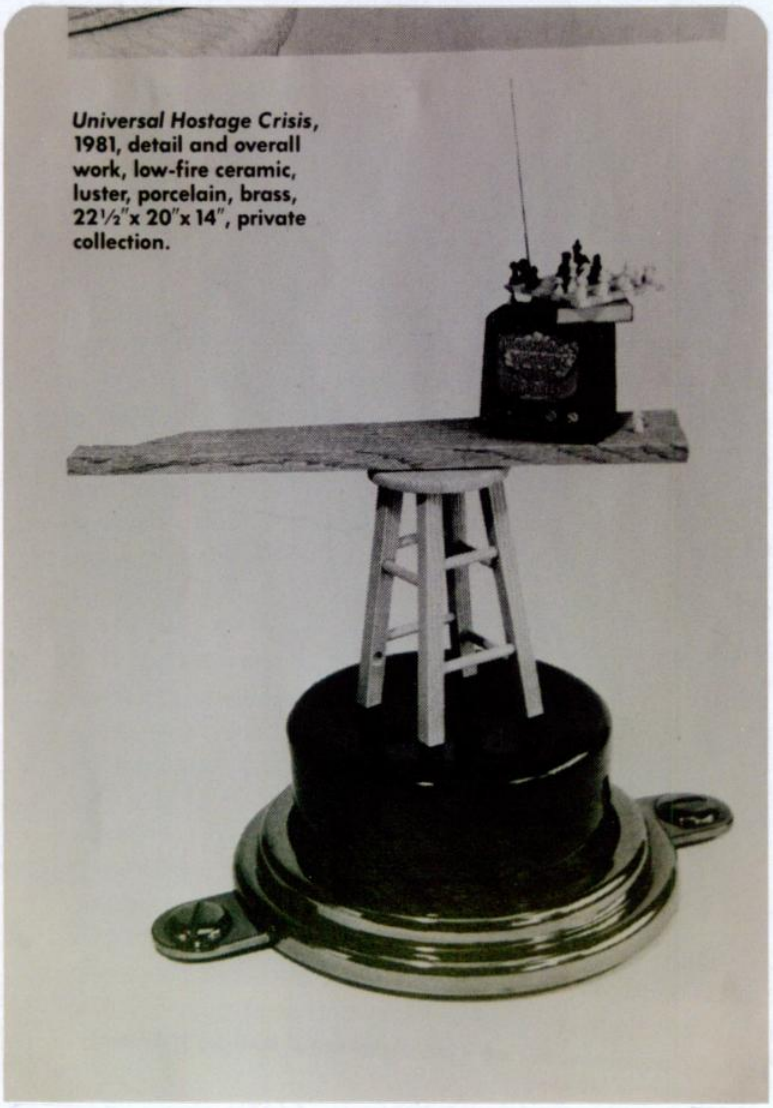
1. Pablo Picasso - "Guernica" 1937.

2. Rene Magritte - "Titanic Days/Les Jours Gigantesques" 1928.

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL: THE WORK OF GLENYS BARTON AND JILL CROWLEY

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Many artists of various disciplines have used their work to communicate ideas they felt were important to them. Some have taken on political issues, others have concerned themselves with social problems, while more have preferred to deal with personal matters. I have always felt that in the case of some artists, it is not just how they put their work together or the aesthetic appeal of their art, it is what they are trying to say which matters whether of a personal or a politicial nature-and there is often a link between the two. Picasso (1881-1973) created his mural 'Guernica' in 1937, inspired by the distruction of the Basque town by Hitler's bombers during the Spanish Civil War. It expressed his horror of war and unlike the "Battle Pictures" of earlier times, it conveys what war feels like rather than what it may look like. Magritte (1898-1967) painted his 'Titanic Days / Les Jours Gigantesques' to highlight the question of rape and sexual violence against women. His use of collage in this painting is as violent and dramatic as the subject matter, which is a sexual assault. Part of the aggressor's body has been superimposed like a shadow on the female victim.



3. Richard Notkin - "Universal Hastage Crisis" 1981.

4. Adrian Arleo - "Afloat" 1989.

In the area of ceramics, Richard Notkin (1948-), an American ceramicist, makes small tableaux pieces like 'Universal Hostage Crisis'(1981) or 'Cooling Tower Teapot Variation # 5' (1983) which deal with political and environmental issues. Adrian Arleo (1960-), who is also American, produces simple figurative work like her 'Afloat' (1989) or her 'House II' (1990) where she concerns herself with relationships between people (both in the body and soul) like pregnancy or marriage.

I have chosen two female ceramicists who I feel are excellent examples of artists who attempt to give expression to their ideas. Glenys Barton sees herself as a sculptor who concerns herself with universal themes like loneliness and people's relationship to their environment. She explores the human condition in her work and feels that the themes which preoccupy her also effect the whole human race. Because she is interested in how we relate to our environment, she has become very concerned with environmental issues in recent years. Jill Crowley, on the other hand, thinks of herself as a craftsperson who deals with more personal or immediate ideas, as for example her use of hands and feet inspired by observing her daughter when she was a baby. She reflects her experience of motherhood in many of her pieces and is interested in how men and women are regarded. Because of her preoccupation with gender, the personal inevitably takes on a political dimension, and she has become concerned with how women are viewed in the media and in pornography.

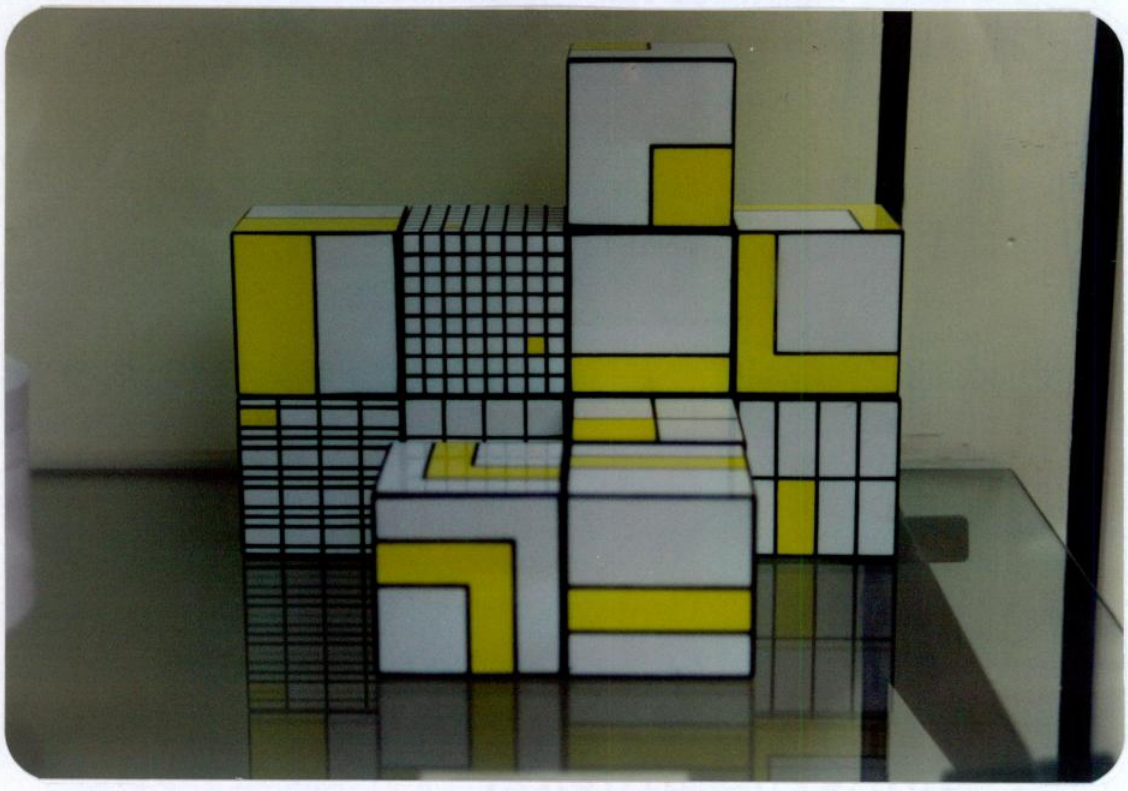
CHAPTER TWO: GLENYS BARTON

A Short Biography

Glenys Barton was born in Stoke-on-Trent in 1944. Her father was a coal-miner until he was disabled in a pit accident. With the compensation he received, he brought a newsagents business shortly before Barton was born. She had one brother, 13 years older than herself, who became a coal-miner like his father and grandfather. Her mother did some hand-painting at a factory when she herself was very young. Barton was able to gain a background knowledge of clay and how it is worked during her frequent trips to the pottery factories that surrounded her father's shops. He called around to these factories to collect money from the workers who were his customers as they saved with him in his 'Christmas Clubs' to accumulate money to buy toys at Christmas. Her father expanded his business by opening two more shops, a toy shop and newsagents, but died when she was almost eleven.

She went to the training college in Bristol and continued on to study at the Royal College of Art in London

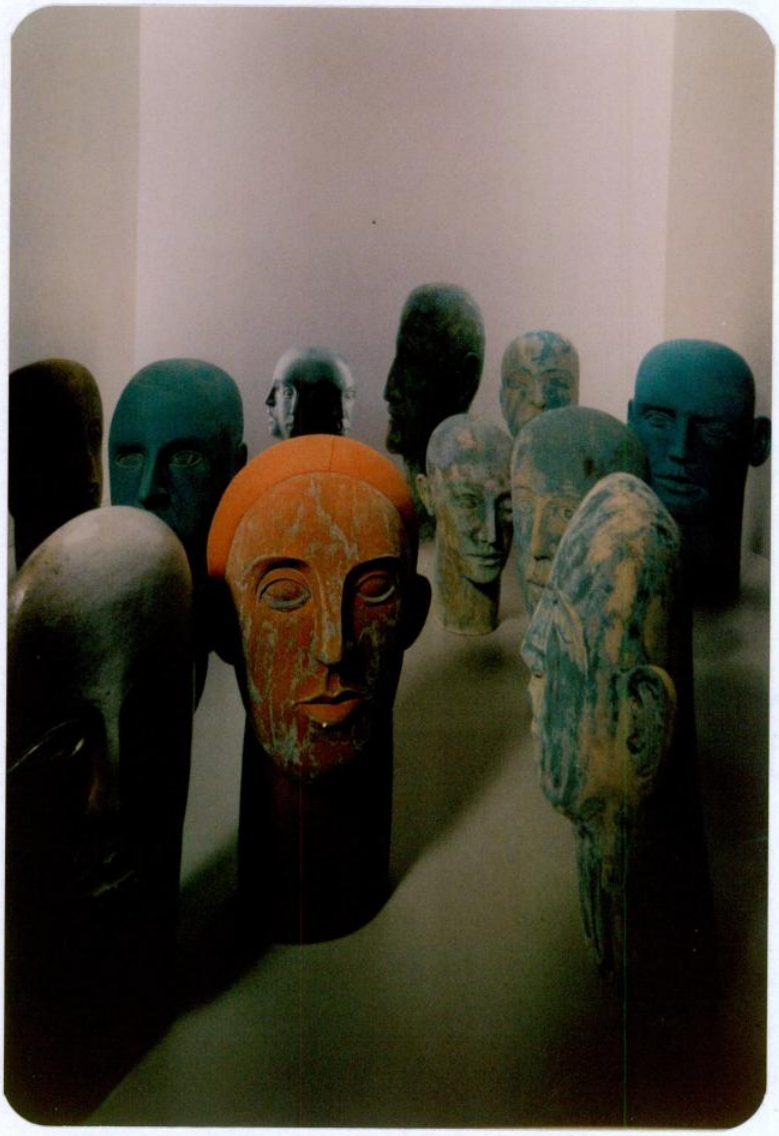
Gladys Bartlett 17-8-1992
Twelve Sonnets
Lorenzo (Rio de Janeiro)
U.S.A.



5. Glenys Barton - "Telve Cubes" 1971.

from 1968-71. At first, she wanted to move away from the ethos of mass-production and the industrial world to what she felt to be a more desirable way of working. Yet she did not enter the world of the studio-potter as she discovered that she preferred the conception and communication of ideas to the making of objects. Many of her ideas were best communicated through the mass-production techniques which she had tried to avoid. She spent a year at the Royal College, London, exploring the possibilities of industrial techniques while under the tutelage of Hans Coper. While still at the Royal College, she won a Design Award for a range of stacking china which sold through the Conrad chain of Habitat shops. After leaving college, she set up a workshop under one of the railway arches of St Pancas with Jacqueline Poncelet-a fellow ceramicist. They complemented each other's work during this period. Barton made precise geometrically-shaped objects, while Poncelet produced non-functional vessels.

In March 1973, she held her first one-person show at the 'Keramiske Bytteklodster' Museum of Decorative Art in Copenhagen which received critical acclaim. She achieved recognition during the 'Crafts revival' in the 1970's, which was produced under the auspices of the Crafts Advisory Committee. Her early work consisted of precisely-constructed geometric-shaped objects like pyramids and cubes, decorated with commercial glazes which she designed herself. She moved on to add small,



6. Glenys Barton - A collection of heads 1990.

carefully-modelled figures to her repertoire.

In the early 1970's, she travelled to Mexico and visited the Pre-Columbian pyramids at Monte Ablan. From 1976-77, she was resident artist at the Wedgwood factory in Barlaston in Staffordshire. Her visit to Monte Ablan had an impact on some of her work at Wedgwood as she communicated many of the ideas she saw in Mexico through her designs.

In the Mid-1980's she moved from South London to Essex. There, she began to work more directly with clay, both out of a belief in the God-like qualities of humankind, and because she had been left without a studio or a kiln from the inconvenience of moving to a new home. In the intervening time between these two events, she flew to Canada and the U.S.A. to see the Rockies and other untouched tracts of nature. Recently, she has been working on a series of large-scale drawings and free-standing profiles in relief.

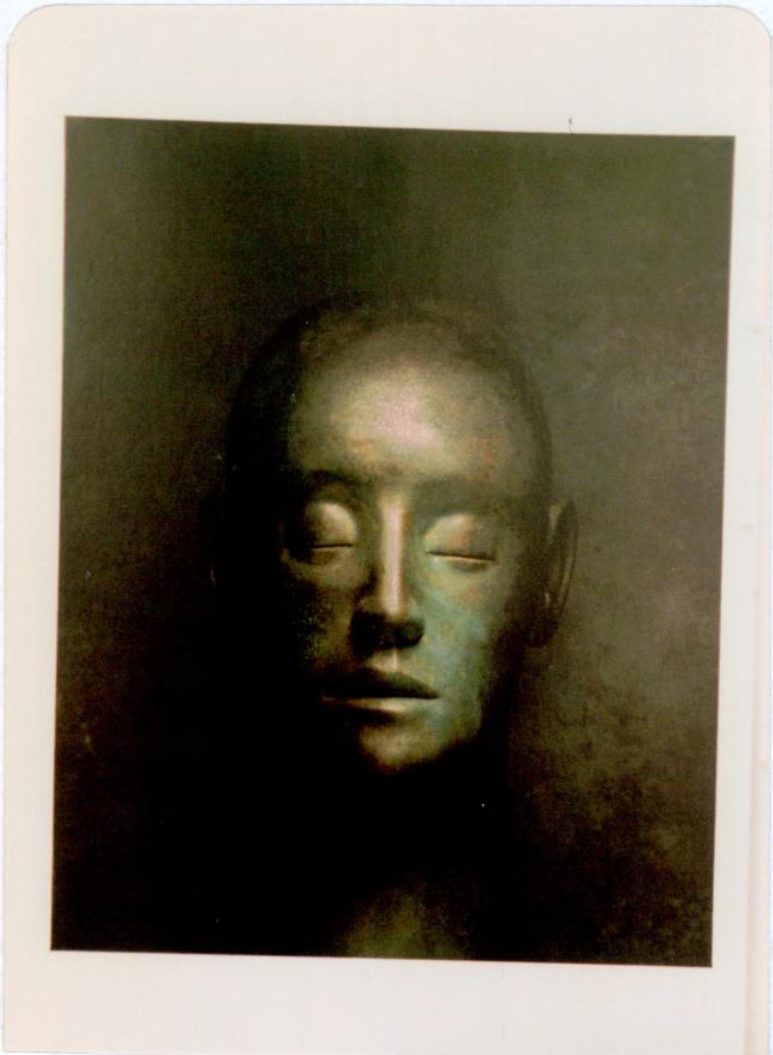
7. Glenys Barton - "Duchamp" 1990.

CHAPTER THREE: THE WORK OF GLENYS BARTON

Part One: Antiquity, dancing and science fiction

Barton gets much of her inspiration from the sculptural tradition of antiquity. Her interest in colour stems from a study Egyptian Art. She has a great admiration for Egyptian painting and sculpture, and finds artifacts that have been dug up from the ancient past very beautiful. When visiting museums, she likes to look at items from the period when alkaline metals tended to be a turquoise colour. She herself has managed to devise a way of recreating these turquoise ancient-looking surfaces, giving some of her pieces the appearance of being unearthed after being buried in the ground for thousands of years. (Barton, 1987, P2)

A good example of this influence is the large number of reliefs she has produced over the years, like her piece 'Inside 1983' which she showed in the Angela Flowers Gallery in London in 1984. This is a relief based on the female form posed in such a way as to make her sex unimportant. It was cast in bone china, had a raku glaze



8. Glenys Barton - "Madonna" 1988.

9. The Great Amita Buddha at Kamakura, Japanese Mid 13th Century, Bronze Casting.

applied to it and was sand-blasted to reveal a fine network of crazing. This gives the relief an ancient and classical feel, despite its being a modern piece. In addition, her love of Egyptian art comes out in a piece she entitled 'Egyptian profile'. This is one of the heads that she made for an exhibition which she held in the same gallery two years later. The head has been designed to be seen just in profile as it is only two inches thick. It looks more like as Egyptian tomb painting than sculpture. For the same exhibition, she created another head which she called 'Pink Madonna'. What makes this sculpture stand out is its smooth hairless head, closed eyes and slightly smiling lips. These features give it the appearance of being like Buddha as he is portrayed in statues. (Beaumont, 1986, P50)

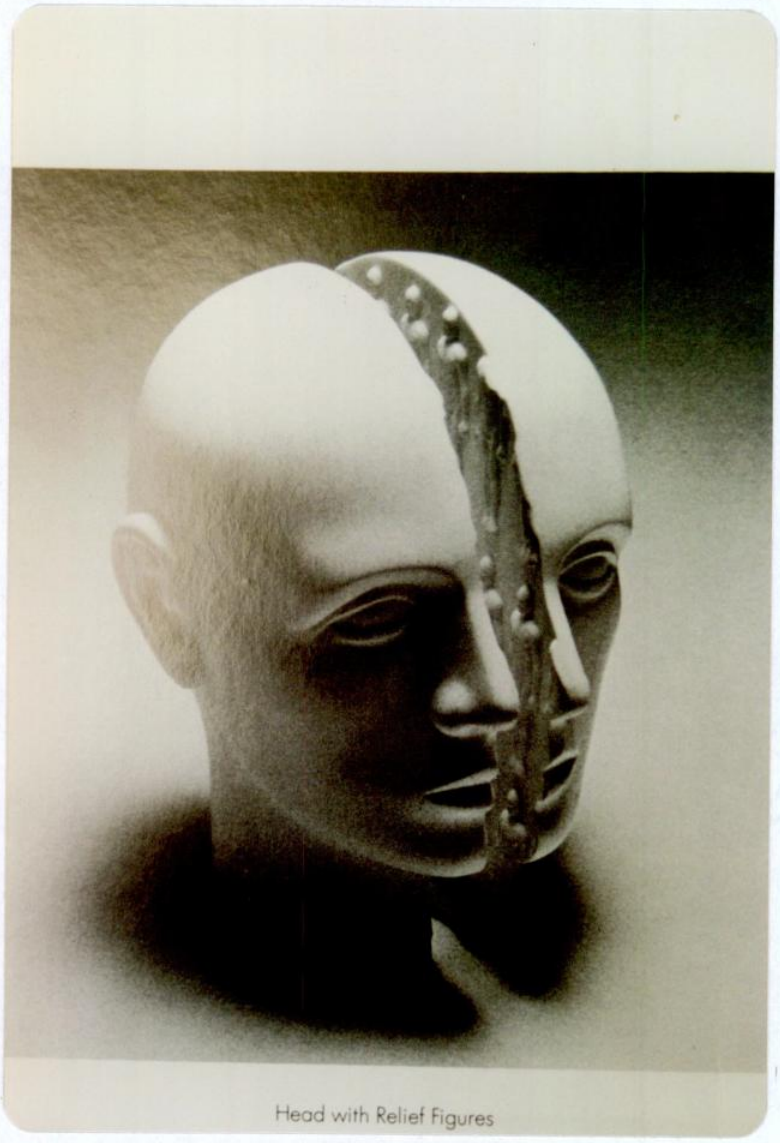
The art of dancing is another of her interests which comes through strongly in her work. (Lucie-Smith, 1977, P2-3) It has influenced her all through her career and continues to do so. (She worked as a teacher of dance in a comprehensive school before she went to the R.C.A.) Her favourite choreographer is Marce Cunningham, but other such artists whose work have made an impression on her include, in particular, Pina Bausch and Maurice Bejart. She is interested in the more abstract forms of dancing where the movement is pure and uninhibited by the use of costume and story, as in "dance for dance's sake." (Letter from Glenys Barton to the author, 5-10 Jan 1993, P3)

10, Glenys Barton - "The Rite" 1987.

One piece which I feel really demonstrates Barton's fascination with dance is 'The Rite' 1987. It was shown in an exhibition called 'From 16 Artists Process and Product' which was held at the Turnpike Gallery, Manchester in 1987. This piece is made up of six ceramic figures crouching in a circle, where each figure occupies a triangular-shaped area of space. The inspiration for this piece arose out of her interest for many years in the ballet 'The Rite of Spring' by the Russian composer Stravinsky. While using video recordings of various presentations of the ballet, she finally focused on Bejart's interpretation. She based her drawings around the idea of a circle of figures performing an enigmatic rite. Commenting on 'The Rite', Barton observed.

> 'The thing that interests me is the human figure and the human condition and in particular the spirituals side of things. It's just a year-by-year fascination that builds up until you're locked into this endless study. In Bejart's interpretation he starts with the animal in man growing from the earth from four legs into two. The first thing the dancers do is to fight and then go in search of women. Bejart himself sees it as a very beautiful, dramatic and spiritual dance. My figures are looking towards the ground in a position reminiscent of worship, they are intent on this state of ritual' (Barton, 1987, P2)

Barton has taken a specific theme out of a ballet and illustrated it in a ceramic sculpture. She combines her interest in dancing, the spiritual side of life, the human condition and how people relate to their environment in this piece. Her preoccupation with the spiritual shows itself in the title 'The Rite', and the fact that the six figures

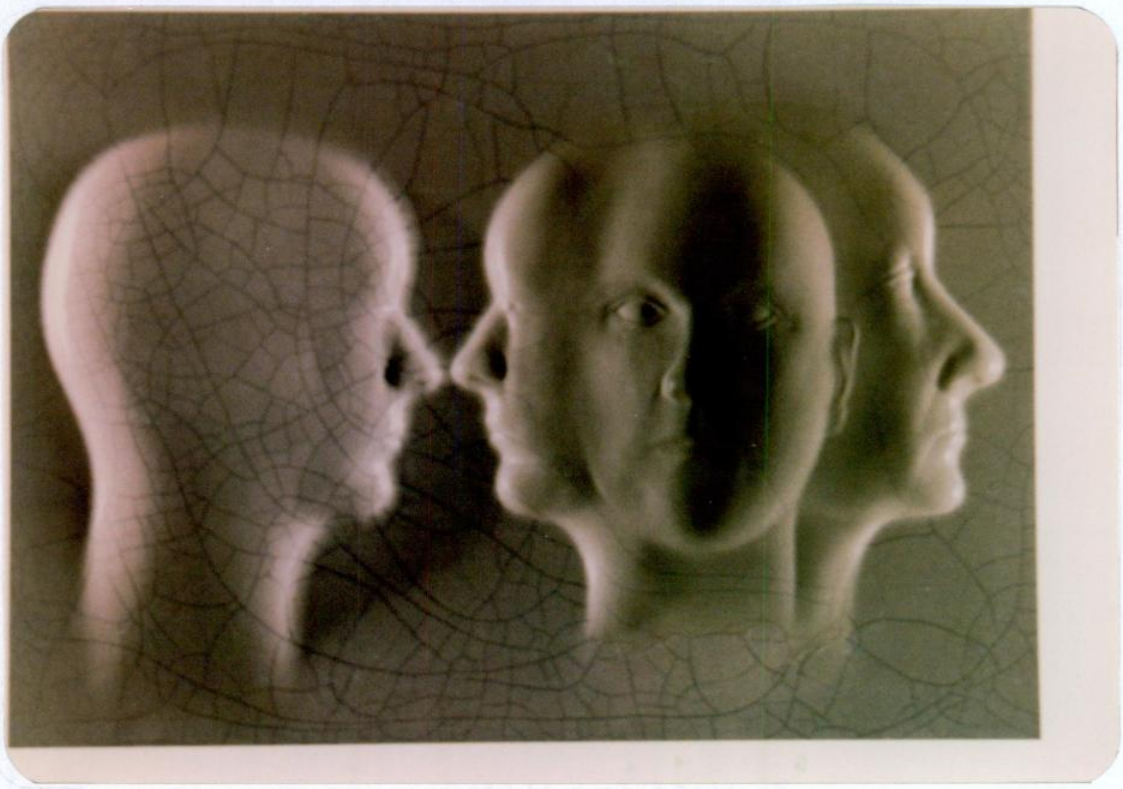


11. Glenys Barton - "Head with Relief Figures" 1977.

seem to be engaged in a private ritual, while her concern for the environment comes through in the way the figures are crouching and peering intently into the ground. This suggests that whatever ceremony they are engrossed in, involves their relationship with the earth and Nature. Her love of dancing presents itself (as pointed out before) in the manner in which she conceived her idea from a ballet. Barton communicates the freedom and movement of dance in many of her creations.

Dance has influenced her work in other ways. For instance, it helped her work out the proportions of her pieces while she was resident artist at Wedgwood. 'The Rite' most graphically illustrates Barton's interest in the art of dancing. At this point one should note some of the sculptures she created at Wedgwood. While at Wedgwood, her work exhibited a constant awareness of space. Space for the dancer is the distance which can be covered by so many steps or leaps before they return to the centre of their arena to elaborate on a new pattern. The idea of a dancer's arena can be seen in the plaques or bases on which the figures have been set. Another way in which her knowledge of dancing shows itself is in the heads that she has created. These have been divided vertically in half with rows of figures in relief on their two inner faces as when one cuts an apple in half to reveal rows of smaller apples inside. This symbolizes the dancers' awareness of their bodies and their bodies' capabilities.

Barton was very interested in science fiction in the Seventies, particularly in the work of J.G.Ballard. She based several of her pieces on his short stories, for example 'Terminal Beach'. (Letter from Glenys Barton to the author, 5-10 Jan 1993, P2) The central character in this story is a man called Travern who represents Humankind. Travern suffers many traumas and deals with these problems by retreating into himself. He become a single human being locked in a bleak landscape inside his head. This was Barton's favourite story as it strongly reflected her preoccupations with isolation and the relationship a person would have with the world around them. The other reason why she was particularly fond of this story was that it dealt with survival and the natural inner strength within all of us. This is what we fall back on whenever we face a crisis. J.G.Ballard was born and grew up in India but moved to England in the Fifties. This was at the time when to have electrical appliances in the home like a washing machine or vacuum cleaner was beginning to become widespread. He started to write after living in England for a while because he was intrigued by all this change. Feeling that he had arrived at an exciting time, he wanted to predict what the world would be like if everybody had these appliances in their houses along with a car, and what effect this technology would have on society in general. What he and Barton have in common is that they deal with how people live and the circumstances in which they find themselves in the ever-changing world of today. I believe



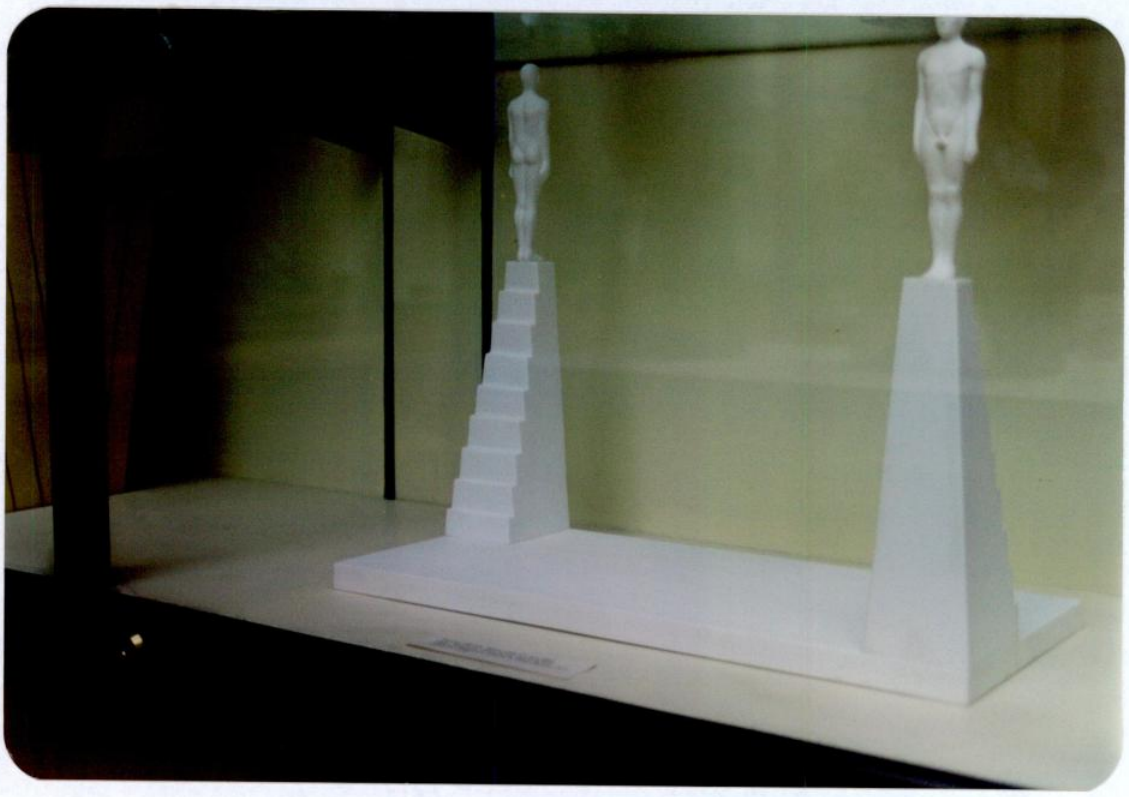
12. Glenys Barton - "Self Portrait" 1981.

that is why his writing, rather than that of other authors, has made the greatest impact on her work.

Barton is fascinated with antiquity, because she finds it a fertile source of inspiration, feels that there is much to be learned from it and loves to look at objects that have been buried in the ground for thousands of years. This influence shows itself most strongly in the fact that she glazes the surfaces of many of her pieces so that they look as if they are from an earlier era, to imbue them with an antique and classical feel. She does this because she wants to give these pieces the appearance of being "timeless" statements about our contemporary society. Because we are all human, we have much to identify with the people who have lived in the civilizations that have proceeded ours. As for her love for the art of dancing, she believes that it is the purest form of artistic expression and finds it very useful as a vehicle for the communication of her ideas. Her fondness for science-fiction stems mainly from her interest in how we live in our dynamic world and what it might be like in the future. She wants to convey the notion that no matter how crazy the world may become, human beings will never be changed by it. If there is one reason why she is interested in the future (as opposed to simply being interested in science-fiction), it is because she wishes to ensure that her creations will stay intact long into the future so that generations to come can perceive whatever messages they can from them. Her creations, made out of ceramics, will

stand the test of time and unlike many other mediums of art, they may survive through war, disaster and whatever may occur in the future. She uses the influence of dance to clarify the ideas that she communicates in her work.

Glenys Barton 17-8-1992
Monte Albán 1977
Ceramic (Bone China)
U.S.A

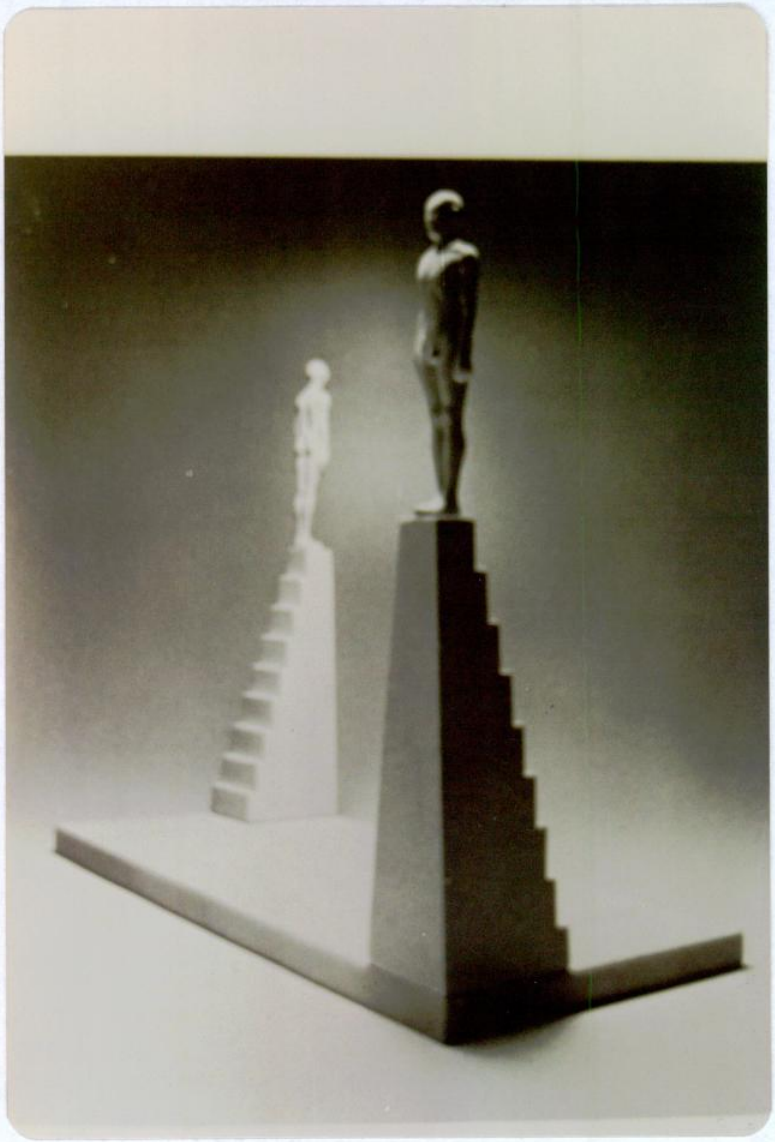


13. Glenys Barton - "Monte ALBAN 11" 1977.

Part Two: The Human Condition

For Barton, ceramics has always been primarily a medium for sculpture which is used for the creation of forms, which in turn embody abstract ideas such as isolation, loneliness and people's relationship to their environment. (Lucie-Smith, 1977, P1) When one talks to Barton about her work she tends to use words like 'geometry', 'units' and 'blocks', giving the impression that she continues to search for order and geometry in her work. Despite this, her use of the body, hand or even eye shows a concern for humanity at the centre of her thinking. Her work comments on the timelessness of the human condition in our contemporary society. (Cooper, 1984, P11) I intend to discuss Barton's interest in the first two ideas that were mentioned and in the human condition in general while leaving her concern about the environment until the next part of this chapter.

Before she went to Wedgwood, Barton travelled to Mexico where she saw many of the temples, pyramids and other sites of ritual there. She found them very strange and lonely places and this greatly influenced her work at Wedgwood. These places made a lasting impression on her because she felt that they fitted in with her preoccupation with loneliness. 'Monte Aban II' (1977), 'Time at Yagul' (1977) and 'Sky Plateau II' (1977) are three good examples



14. Glenys Barton - "Monte Alban 11"
1977.

15. Quetzalcoatl at the Heart of the Citadel in
Teotihuacan, built before 100 A.D.

of this work. Her 'Monte Alban II' is most striking as it is one of her pieces which best symbolizes loneliness or isolation. One can see this piece in the ceramics section at the Victoria and Albert museum in London. It is a small-scale sculpture consisting of two figures standing on two tall towers set at opposite corners of a rectangular plaque. The two figures are facing in opposite directions, and there is a good deal of space between them. The high steps which lead up to the top of the towers are similar to the steep and stepped-quality of the sides of the pyramids at Monte Alban. What I see in this piece is the idea of two people living together who in their minds are yet far apart. The fact that they have been positioned to look away from each other and set on such tall bases presents one with the idea of the two people caught up in their separate worlds. I feel that it may represent what has happened, or can happen to many couples in our modern world.

The inspiration that she got for 'Time at Yagul' stems from an Aztec arena which she visited at Yagul in Mexico. This arena is rectangular in shape and has been banked up on either side. The Aztecs used this arena for games where the losing team was sacrificed. 'Time at Yagul' is made up of a figure and three small monoliths set on a rectangular base. The clouds on the three monoliths have been screen-printed. Since Barton knew that people had been sacrificed on or near this arena, she found it an eerie place. Although the rectangular base reflects the

16. Glenys Barton - "Times at Yagul"
1977

17. Glerys Barton - "Sky Plateau 11" 1977.

shape of the arena at Yagul, the sculpture itself does not capture the "spookiness" of this site. Because of the small base and the three monoliths, it has the appearance of being more like one of the sculptures derived from J. G. Ballard stories. Still the three monoliths behind the lone figure could represent three different periods of time. The monolith nearest the figure recalls the time when Barton saw the Aztec site at Yagul, the second monolith represents the era when the arena was in use while the third monolith recounts the eons before the arena was even built. Since the arena was obviously both man-made and part of the landscape, she felt that one could sense both the time when the sacrificial games were played there and the era before it was constructed. It was as if these three periods in time were closely linked and this place in particular had it's own story to tell.

'Sky Plateau II' conveys a sense of the place that inspired it in a stronger and more direct way. This sculpture consists of a lone figure standing at the centre of a disk. Barton based this piece on a high plateau she visited which had a strong religious significance for the Aztecs. Because of this, she was under the impression that she was somehow closer to the sky. The Aztecs chose this place as a prime ritual site most probably because they felt that when they ascended this plateau, they were closer to the heavens and to the realm of their deities. One gets a strong sense of a high-up, lonely place from 'Sky Plateau II' The round disk in 'Sky Plateau II' which

has had clouds screen-printed on it gives the figure the appearance of being up in the heavens in a place that does not wholly belong to this world.

Another piece which I feel must be mentioned is 'Head with Relief Figures' (1977). This is one of the vertically-divided heads which she made at Wedgwood. The two inner faces of the head covered with rows of relief figures is a representation of all the thoughts, ideas and potential for making choices inside a person's head in a similar manner to a dancer having a knowledge of their body and what it can do. This may be just a personal reaction to this particular piece, but Barton has always seen the human race as having God-like qualities. We are able to make decisions about what the future will be like for us, what will happen to our planet, all its resources and so on, unlike all the countless species of animals sharing the Earth with us.

18. Glenys Barton - "Jungian Shadow 1" 1977.

Her three sculptures 'Jungian Shadow I' (1977), 'Jungian Shadow II' (1977) and 'Dark Clown' (1983) deal with the head or mind in a different way. Unlike 'Head With Relief [illegible] the unconscious. [illegible] head and a plaque [illegible] sion on the flat s[illegible] as that found on [illegible] the only differen[illegible] face appears to be [illegible] on the horizontal [illegible] on like a blown [illegible] Regardless of [illegible] they find themselv[illegible] is there, their [illegible] ious minds is there [illegible]

'Ju[illegible] into head, bisected [illegible] of the piece hav[illegible] a face. The he[illegible] to uncover a hidd[illegible] sees the outer pers[illegible] ality or the unconscious at the same time. If one were to push the two half-heads together, the profiles would no longer be visible and one would perceive the head as one unit.

Whereas 'Jungian Shadow I' presents one with the idea of the unconscious shadow in someone's life, 'Jungian Shadow II' suggests the notion of the persona being peeled

back to reveal the unconscious. The fact that the rest of the bisected head and the edge of the profile in 'Jungian Shadow I' and the vertically-divided head in 'Jungian Shadow II' have been left undecorated makes the inner surfaces in both pieces most striking. They express the idea that what goes on inside a person's head can be more interesting than the facade that they present to the outside world. One's eye is automatically drawn to the profiles on the inner surfaces of these two sculptures.

The third sculpture I referred to, 'Dark Clown', has a different feel about it. This piece is basically a full-frontal portrait but has a profile of another face coming out of the side. It most likely presents one with the idea of the alter ego or dark side in everyone. With people, one may see the person but their alter ego is lurking somewhere underneath the persona one deals with. Carl Gustuv Jung (1875-1961), the Swiss psychiatrist on whose ideas the work was based would have been interested in the concept.

Jung was the first to coin the words 'persona' and 'shadow'. He invented other terms such as 'introvert' and 'extrovert' which are widely used in the world of psychology, but Barton has just concentrated on the persona and the shadow. The persona is the facade that we present to the outside world so that we fit in with how society wants us to appear It is a collective phenomenon as it is a facet of the personality which could easily belong to somebody else. For example, the actor or artist

Glenys Barton 14-8-1992
Dark Clown 1989
Ceramic
Angela Flowers Gallery

20. Glenys Barton - "Dark Clown" 1989.

with long hair and casual clothes is looked on as a 'personality', but in reality, he has simply adopted the dress and habits of all the other artists of his group. The shadow is the other side of our personality which is an element of our personal unconscious. It is what we like to see as the inferior being in ourselves, the one who wants to do all the misdemeanours that we do not allow ourselves to do. This side of the personality is the primitive and uncontrolled part of ourselves. It manifests itself when we take a dislike to someone for no apparent reason. We may be disliking a quality of our own which we see in the person. To accept this side of the personality takes courage and often the abandonment of cherished ideals. These ideals may have to be revised because they have been set too high or were based on an illusion. When we try to make out that we are better and more noble than we really are, we involve ourselves in an endless cycle of hypocrisy and deceit. (Fordham, 1961, P47-52) The undecorated bisected head in 'Jungian Shadow I' is the persona, while the profile on the flat side of the head is the shadow and the second profile on the plaque beside it is its influence on the person's life. In 'Jungian Shadow II' the persona is represented in the polished whiteness of the vertically-divided head, while the profiles on the flat inner surfaces are the shadow. Meanwhile, in 'Dark Clown', the persona is shown in the full-frontal portrait while the shadow manifests itself in the profile coming out of the side of the piece.

Part Three: Green Issues

In the Mid 1980's, Barton moved from South London to Essex with her young son six months before the disaster at Chernobyl. She was then shocked to discover that the building of a nuclear waste dump was being proposed at Bradwell, just 14 miles from their new home. The plan was to dig up 200 acres of land so that the dump could be constructed and put into operation. Even though Barton does not consider herself an environmental activist, she joined many other protestors in blocking off the road leading into Bradwell. They would often sit on the road to prevent the bulldozers from getting to the area of land where work was to commence. A caravan was parked at the side of the road so that there would always be someone on watch 24 hours a day to keep an eye out for the people who were to carry out the work on the site. Their job was to rush into Bradwell, alert the local residents to their arrival and rouse them into action. These demonstrations lasted for six weeks and the plans for the site were eventually dropped. Her deep involvement in the fight against the proposed site had a strong effect on her work. In the intervening time between her moving to Essex and the Chernobyl disaster, she flew to Canada and the U.S.A. to see the Rockies and other untouched tracts of nature. This experience caused her to reflect on the progress of

21. Glenys Barton - Head with aerial photographs 1986.

civilization, on the holes people dig and an the buildings that they build. On returning to England, she transferred her thoughts and feelings with great speed into a large collage head, about four feet high, darkly and densely composed of fragments of aerial photographs. (Bumpus, 1986, P30) This is possibly the most environmentally-conscious piece she has produced. Barton covered this head with these photographs to represent the impact people are making on the countryside and the way we are changing what it looks like for future generations. Where there was once untouched rolling landscape, now the terrain is covered with houses. She explores the human condition at the same time in this piece due to the fact that it is another head. The combination of its form and its decoration presents us with the idea that we are living at a time when people are making the most significant mark to date on the landscapes around them. With the progress of technology, we have now reached the stage when we have to care for our planet if we are to ensure that the generations to come are to have a decent environment. (Incidentally, she has never sold this piece and it is still in her studio). The head was made as a personal exercise rather than a piece to be sold. She created it to sort out all her feelings about her involvement in the fight against the building of the nuclear waste dump at Bradwell and the lasting impressions made on her by her travels around the U.S. and Canada. There she savoured the views and fresh air of the Rockies along with other

22. Glenys Barton - "Green Warrior"
1990.

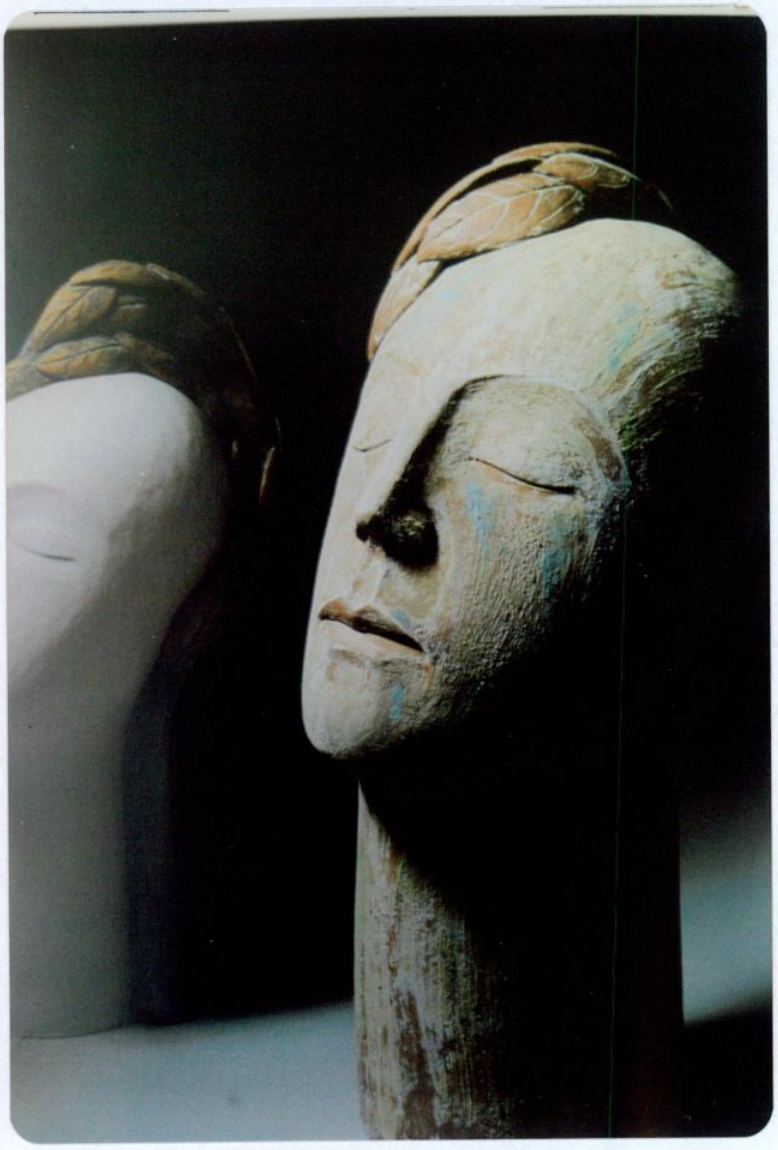
unspoilt areas of landscape in contrast to the more polluted atmosphere of London and Chicago. One wonders what she would have included in the piece if she produced it after the Chernobyl disaster.

Barton is an organic gardener, conservationist and a member of 'Friends of the Earth'. She has two acres of garden and has planted half an acre with trees. (Letter from Glenys Barton to the author, 5-10 Jan 1993, P4) 'Friends of the Earth' is a pressure group in much the same way as other organizations like 'Greenpeace'. The changes that they want include getting people to use the railway system instead of driving their cars and cutting down on intensive farming. Although Barton likes to see herself as an optimist by nature, she believes that peoples' attitudes to the environment are not changing fast enough and she is not very hopeful for the future. She does what she can for the environment and despite living in the country, she does not use her car unless there is a good reason for it.

In January 1990, Barton and her husband went to Thailand on holiday. She had left several finished pieces beside a large window in her studio which looked out on to the garden. While she was away, there was a hurricane. The big window was blown in, all the pieces were smashed and several trees were blown over. Her favourite tree, a Weeping Pear was been torn up out the ground. When they returned home, she was devastated. Shortly afterwards she started

23. Glenys Barton - "Green Warrior"
1990.

creating her series of 'Green Warriors'. She made them because she wanted to identify with the trees that had been lost and to replace the sculptures which had been broken. The 'Green Warriors' series is also based on her observation that people who wish to see environmental issues highlighted and addressed have to fight for everything that they want. These sculptures are a tribute to these campaigners and to their spirit and dedication. Their dry gritty green-washed surfaces are covered with laurels made out of terracotta. The laurels are arranged either as tendrils which grow upwards and curl themselves around the head or act as frames down one side of the face. Laurels are a sign of victory and success and they refer to the softer and more sensual side of these heroes. (Cooper, 1990, P51) Yet the people that these sculptures have been based on have a long struggle ahead of them if they want to see the agenda that they have created become government policy and widespread practice. The use of the laurel is indicitive since it denotes the defeat of formidable enemies in great battles or the overcoming of huge difficulties. Instead of communicating the notion that environmentalists have achieved what they have set out to do and that their work is nearly finished, they suggest the idea that if environmentalists keep on at their struggle, they have the potential to bring about great changes. What the 'Green Warriors' series convey is that while some battles have brought victory, the war has still to be won. The idea that environmentalists are



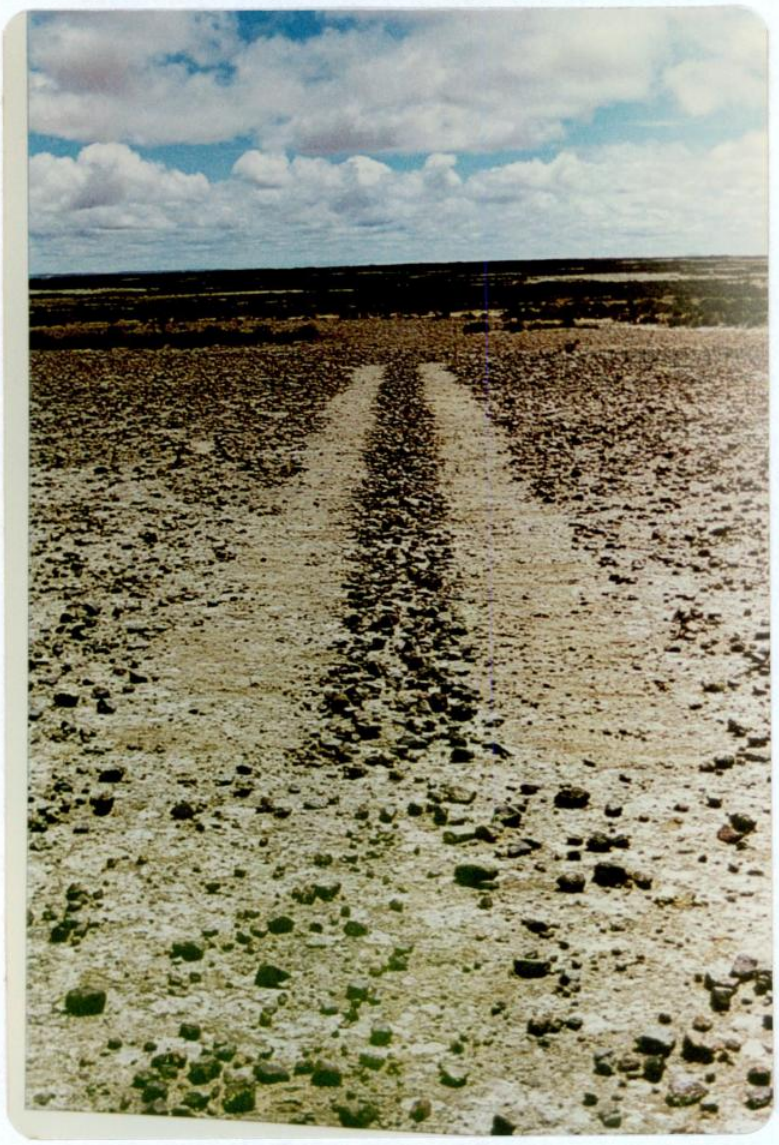
24. Glenys Barton - "Green Warriors"
1990.

fighting their campaigns one step at a time is a new and original way of looking at green issues. Rather than accepting the way we are damaging the environment with our rubbish and waste or how we are misusing the resources of our planet, Barton chose to emphasize the fact that our attitudes to the environment are not changing fast enough. This message is a quiet yet definite indictment of the apathy that politicians and society in general have towards addressing environmental problems. The people who care enough to do something, have to engage themselves in a constant struggle to ensure that these issues are dealt with. As political sculptures, they would possibily communicate their message in a more direct way if some of the pieces could represent what these warriors are actually fighting.

Many other artists in Britain and America have involved themselves in Environmental or Land Art. What Barton and these artists have in common is their interest in the 'spiritual' dimension. The difference between Barton's work and their creations is that Barton's pieces tend to be of a modest scale and are made for indoors, while the installations of the Environmental artists are generally very big and are designed to be put in a landscape. It is important to mention that Environmental artists have two very different approaches to their work and so fall into two categories. The first category of artists work with a great respect and reverence for nature and build their creations simply to add to the particular landscape they chose to work

in. These include such artists as Nancy Holt, James Pierce and Richard Long. Holt had four large concrete pipes placed in an open X formation to create her 'Sun Tunnels' in the Great Salt Lake Desert. Pierce produced a number of works including his recumbent 'Earthwoman', inspired by the prehistoric Venus of Willendorf in Vienna at Pratt Farm on the Kennebech river in Maine (O'Brien, 1990, P23). Long constructs minimalist sculptural walks with whatever he finds in the environment that he visits (O'Brien, 1990, P24). The second category of artists has a 'Promethean' approach to the environment as their work is about the "heroic conquest of nature." Such artists include Robert Smithson, Micheal Heizer and Christo. Smithson's 'Spiral Jetty' and Heizer's huge excavations and structures involve the use of elaborate technological intervention in the landscapes where these creations are installed. Christo's pieces such as 'Valley Curtain' and 'Running Fence' entailed the use of vast quantities of material which interfered with the local ecology of the places where they were set up (O'Brien, 1990, P24). Barton's work is in sympathy with the ideology represented by the first tradition.

The spiritual element in the work of Environmental artists is most apparent in its emphasis on creating 'primitive' work in remote locations and its rejection of the consumerism of contemporary art. (O'Brien, 1990, P23-24) Barton communicates her interest in the spiritual side of life by keeping the details in her pieces down to a minimum. In her heads, she tries to convey the soul of the person or



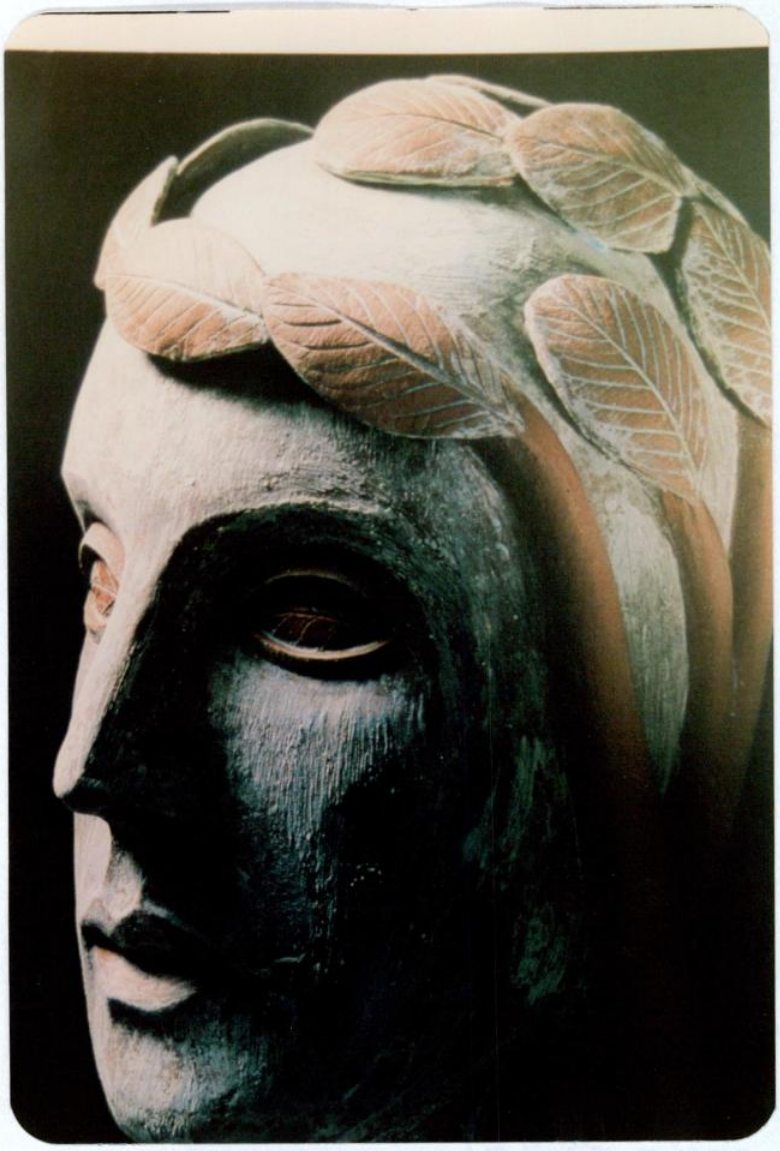
25. Richard Long - "A Line in Bolivia" 1981.

26. Christo "Running Fence" California 1972-1976.

the people that she wants to portray instead of just representing them. She does this in a subtle but effective way by giving the faces generalized features and leaving the heads hairless. Another way in which their work differs is in the reasons why they create it. Whereas Environmental artists have the intention of either adding an extra element to or changing the appearance of a landscape, Barton explores how we relate to the environment in general. What Barton and these artists have in common in their desire to combine art, spirituality and nature in their work.

When summing up the themes behind Barton's work, a good piece to start with would be 'The Rite'. As pointed out before in the first part of this chapter, 'The Rite' exemplifies her preoccupations with the spiritual side of life, the human condition, peoples' relationship to their environment and dancing. The six figures in 'The Rite' reflect Barton's fascination with the spiritual dimension as they are all engrossed in a private ritual and because this ritual apparently has something to do with how they interface with their environment, the piece recalls her interest in the relationship people have with their environment. Her love of dancing is epitomized in this sculpture due to the fact that it was directly inspired by a specific scene from a ballet. The interest in the human condition stems from the six dancers in this particular scene representing what she felt was the animal in humankind growing from four legs into two. After the dancers stand up they fight and then go in search of women or in other words, someone to be close to. What Barton is

really trying to tell us through her creations is that people were and always will be the same deep down. We have always had the same preoccupations and desires and so long as there are people, nothing essential will change. At some stage in our lives, most of us experience loneliness and we have an instinctive need to love and be loved. She communicates this in her work through her interest in antiquity and science-fiction. On one hand, she glazes many of her pieces to imbue them with an ancient and classical feel while on the other hand, she has based several pieces on Ballard's short stories. Her preoccupation with the theme of loneliness is exemplified in her sculptures like 'Monte Alban II' and 'Sky Plateau II'. The other message she tries to convey in her work is that humankind is a part of nature and always will be no matter how far we may venture into outer space in the future. Her series of 'Green Warriors', 'The Rite' and and the head which she covered with a mosaic of aerial photographs best convey this message. In 'The Rite' Barton depicts six people engaged in their worship of Nature. Her 'Green Warriers' reflects both her desire to identify with the trees which she lost during the hurricane which struck in Janaury 1990 and to highlight our need to take more care of our planet if we are to ensure our own welfare. The head with aerial photographs communicates her concern about the effect that our modern world is having on the environment. Barton uses her love of dancing to help communicate and clarify her ideas. The central themes behind her work is that despite



27. Glenys Barton - "Green Warrior" 1990.

28. Richard Long - "Arizona" 1970.

29. Jill Crowley - "Hand" 1989.

Jill Crowley 17-8-1992
Hand c 1969
Ceramic (Stoneware)
V & A

the fact that our world is always changing, there is a consistency in human nature and our need to be close to nature.

CHAPTER FOUR: JILL CROWLEY

A Short Biography

Jill Crowley was born in 1946 in Ireland and lived here until she was eight. Her father was a psychiatrist while her mother and grandmother were both painters. While in England, her family would move every three years or so as her father changed his employment from one mental hospital to another. This moving around and being one of six children helped her develop a sense of self-reliance. When she was four her family went on holiday to Vallauris in France and she met Picasso whose work made a big impression on her. This was in the Early Fifties when he was at the height of his ceramic production there. She had her first experience of working with ceramics at eleven when workmen dug up some clay suitable for pottery in the hospital grounds. Her mother Installed a potter's wheel in her father's waiting room and they thought themselves how to throw.

Her interest in ceramics continued and she did a foundation course at the Mid-Warwickshire College of Art. Bob Flexon, a ceramics tutor had a great influence on her and she was encouraged to study ceramics. She proceeded to attend Bristol

Polytechnic where she received a disciplined training in pottery and was mainly influenced by her tutor, Gillian Lowndes. The wide course there enabled her to try her hand at different branches of art especially photography which had always interested her. She developed her techniques during the next three years at the Royal College of Art in London where she was taught by Hans Coper. On leaving, she discovered that ceramics was the best medium for the expression of her ideas. John Dickerson, an expert on raku ware, helped her establish her technique and she went to the U.S.A. for three months on a scholarship to learn more about this form of pottery. In 1976, she won the Ravenna Award in the Faenza International Ceramic Competition. Since then, her reputation has grown in Europe partly because of her participation in several major exhibitions. She now teaches Adult education groups at Morley College, London and is a part-time lecturer at Bristol and Portsmouth Polytechnics. The rest of her time is divided between attending life drawing-classes, her family and her studio work.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE WORK OF JILL CROWLEY

Part One: Gender

Although Crowley does not see herself as a "feminist", one of her main preoccupations is the perception of gender. She is an artist who does not consciously think about her work when she is producing it and finds it difficult to write or speak about her creations. Her busts of old men are among the pieces for which she is best known. (Harrod, 1988, P30) These busts were inspired by memories she had of the hospital patients she was acquainted with during her childhood. (Johnson; Pamela, 1992, P41) These characters are often plump, bulbous-nosed and cast a thoughtful, suspicious eye on the person looking at them. They have been satirically observed as their forms are exaggerated and absurd which makes them resemble cartoon characters. (Ceramic Series, 1985) Being crackled, pitted and pock-marked with occasional cindery patches in the lustrous colours, these pieces clearly portray the damage caused by experience. The characters themselves appear to have achieved a sober, Buddhistic calm that belies their distorted faces and the ordinary trappings of their ties, flat caps and pinstripes. They look as if they are graduates from the School of Hard Knocks - they are bashed, pimpled and generally bald. (Harrod, 1988, P30) Her men epitomise maleness with its

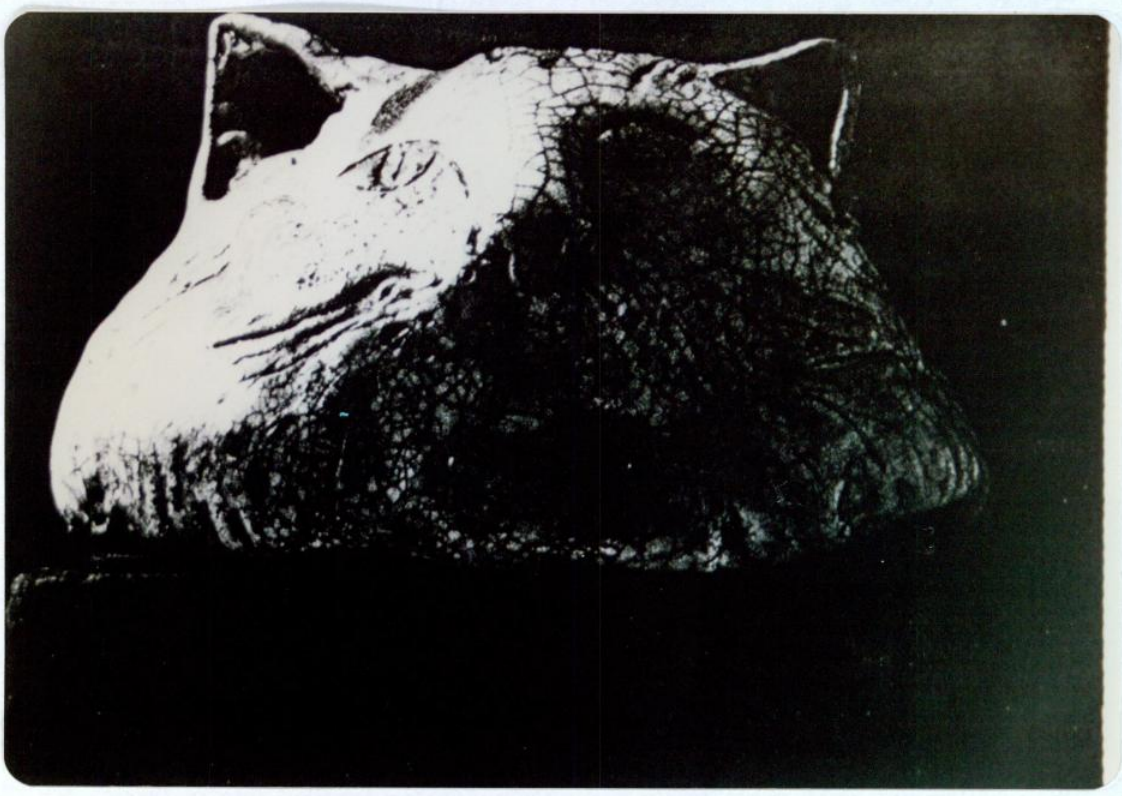
30. Jill Crowley - "Man with a Floral Tie" 1977.

confused qualities of aggression, helplessness and non-communication. (Reid; Christopher, 1982, P30) The portraits have been produced with perception and humour. Crowley has communicated her observations of men in a quiet, funny and sensitive way.

In addition, she produced a series of cats' heads with exagerated details which are usually mounted on sinister black blocks. A sense of ambiguity lies in these pieces as they maintain the expressiveness of a typical pet cat, yet because the heads are cut off at the neck, they give one the feeling that they are the victims of decapitation. (Reid; Christopker, 1982, P26) Her cats' heads portray men in much the same way as her male portraits. (Harrod; Tanya, 1988, P30) They suggest the idea that even though many men are sweet and sensitive deep down, their social conditioning makes it difficult for them to express the softer side of their natures. The fact that they portray men is not very apparent in these pieces as they simply consist of the heads of cats mounted on blocks. One cannot see much evidence that they have a connection with men. On the other hand, Crowley's cats' heads convey an attempt to deal with the problems of cruelty to and the neglect of animals and animal experimentation. If cats, dogs and other pet animals are supposed to be so adorable, then why do some people treat them with such disrespect and indifference?

Following the birth of her first child, Crowley produced a series of wall plaques about a foot in area

31. Jill Crowley - top "Spotty Lady" 1980, left "Tom" 1975 right "Man for a Showcase" 1979.



32. Jill Crowley - "Liberty Cat" 1979.

which she called her 'Ladies'. These female portraits are torsoes which have been decapitated, have no limbs and are flattened out, giving prominence to the breasts, navel and sex organs. She tried to create a female version of her male busts but found that they all looked too anguished. Crowley used to make her own clay and loved to draw on the clay while it was still drying on plaster bats. This was how she concieved the idea for her 'Ladies'. Pieces from this series were either taken straight off the plaster bat after modelling or rolled out. She says she wanted to explore where modelling began and drawing ended. They are luridly coloured and gratuitously spattered with the addition of bright pigment. They are complex creations in that they have the air of being pornographic fetishes or specimens and mutilations. (Reid; Christogher, 1982, P26)

The 'Ladies' were mainly based on the women who lived in her neighbourhood. She feels that her making of the series is connected both with the idea of women being seen as fertility figures and the way they are depicted in the media. Much of the thinking behind them is tied up with what she calls the 'youth cult' and the pressure on women to look well, where people feel that they have to appear young for ever and where women are not supposed to have drooping breasts. Personally, I believe that there is more to be seen in these pieces. They are reflections of how women are often portrayed as mindless "bimbos" in television advertising and even how they are viewed as sexual objects in pornography. Her 'Ladies' epitomize

what happens to women when they are regarded as second-class citizens without needs or minds of their own, whose only purpose in life is to cook, clean and tend to the house. Women are now moving into their rightful place in the workforce and are playing an increasingly important role in society. Unfortunately, an archaic attitude still pervades the television commercials where women are shown 'over the moon' because their new washing powder cleans 'whiter that white' and in the pressure on women to look beautiful. The attitude also manifests itself in the problem of agression against women whether in rape, domestic violence, or in pornography and video nasties. Pornography promotes the idea that women enjoy whatever men want and reinforces the attitudes that many men have about masculinity and femininity. Men are shown as the source of active desire while women are presented as being responsive to these desires and willing to please. (Betterton, 1987, P177)

Early in this century, a branch of science called sexology, developed by men provided the 'scientific proof' that male sadism and female masochism were natural and part of human nature. While some men have a tendency to inflict pain on the women they love, women allegedley delight in experiencing pain inflicted by a lover and are eager to submit themselves to their will. This is the theory behind male sexuality as pornography depicts it. The resistance of women to male 'passion' is seen by men as a manifestation of the woman's need to be conquered.

At the beginning of this century, women who resisted male sexuality were thought of as frigid,while today these same women are accused of 'having difficulty achieving a high level of arousal'. (Betterton, 1987, P179) Unlike erotica which simply depicts sex, pornography reduces women to objects of gratification without thoughts or feelings.

As for the pressure on women to appear beautiful, this is powerfully reflected in advertising. There are many ads on television, radio and in magazines encouraging women to buy perfumes, shampoos, hair conditioners, hair colouring, hair removing devices, creams for day care and so on. This advertising is based on the manipulation of areas of women's bodies to assist in marketing. It is to do with giving parts of the female body previously not defined as sexual, sexual qualities; for example eyes: lips, legs, hair, teeth and skin. The messages that these ads communicate is that these parts of the body are capable of simulation and excitation. They need care and attention if women are to be sexual and sexually desirable to men. (Betterton, 1987, P54-55)

When she showed her 'Ladies', some people found them too strong for their taste. Women in particular were repelled by them and as Crowley put it 'everything went very quiet'. (Harros;Tanya, 1988, P30) Crowley, herself has seen people run straight out of galleries after studying these pieces. She may have touched some nerve when showing her 'Ladies'. These plaques capture the essence of the attitudes people hold, which allows them to

condone the exploitation and abuse of women. Some men may have avoided looking at the 'Ladies' because they felt that they had been confronted with their insensitivity towards women, while women on the other hand were reminded of the instances when they had been treated unfairly by men and of how they had accepted this treatment. It could easily be argued that the 'Ladies' are a strong and hard-hitting feminist statement on the condition of women in today's society. I think she graphically illustrated her concern for the drudgery of women and for the media's portrayal of women in creating these busts in the form of wall plaques. Because of their form which is normally associated with domesticity and cosiness, they communicate their message in a simple and direct way. Being ceramic wall plaques which are usually very ordinary and familiar objects, they convey the idea that the exploitation of women by men is going on all around us and that its various guises like advertising are a part of everyday life. At the moment, she is making a series of larger and more brightly-coloured 'Ladies' and hopes that people will find them less overbearing. She hopes that her new work will communicate the ideas behind them in a gentler and less forthright manner. When Crowley produced her 'Ladies', she entered the political arena in the same way Barton did when she created her 'Green Warriors'.

In creating her figures, I believe that Crowley is trying to communicate the concept of men and women being locked into defined roles despite her denial that she is a

feminist. Men are expected to be strong and in control all the time. Women, on the other hand, are supposed to be weak and submissive. In the past, men were brought up to be the warrior, soldier and breadwinner, while women were reared to be the home-maker and child-minder.

33. Jill Crowley - "Hand" 1992.

Jill Crowley 14-8-1992
Hand 1992
Ceramic
V&A

Part Two: The Domestic Sphere

Crowley is one of many women artists who are beginning to explore the domestic sphere. This is braver than one might imagine since the pressure on women artists to avoid this area of life is great. Examples of Crowley's exploration of her experience of motherhood are a piece based on a cast of her daughter's foot, a plate titled 'Measles', and a series of hands and feet inspired by observing her elder daughter when she was a baby. She has encouraged her daughter to contribute bits of decoration to her work, particularly in her piece entitled 'Measles'. (Harrod, 1985, P50) She developed an abiding fascination with hands, and to a lesser extent feet, as she watched the gentle movements of her daughter's hands. It was the fullness of the palms and fingers creasing in straight lines as the hands closed on themselves which intrigued her. She observed the same lines at the wrists, ankles, elbows, knees and even on the neck. The meeting of different surfaces has been a recurring theme in her work. This is best expressed in her depictions of hands inserted into sleeves. (Lewenstein, 1992, P16) The hands convey the tentative, vulnerable quality which one associates with the hands of a new-born child. A small

34. Jill Crowley "Hand" 1992.

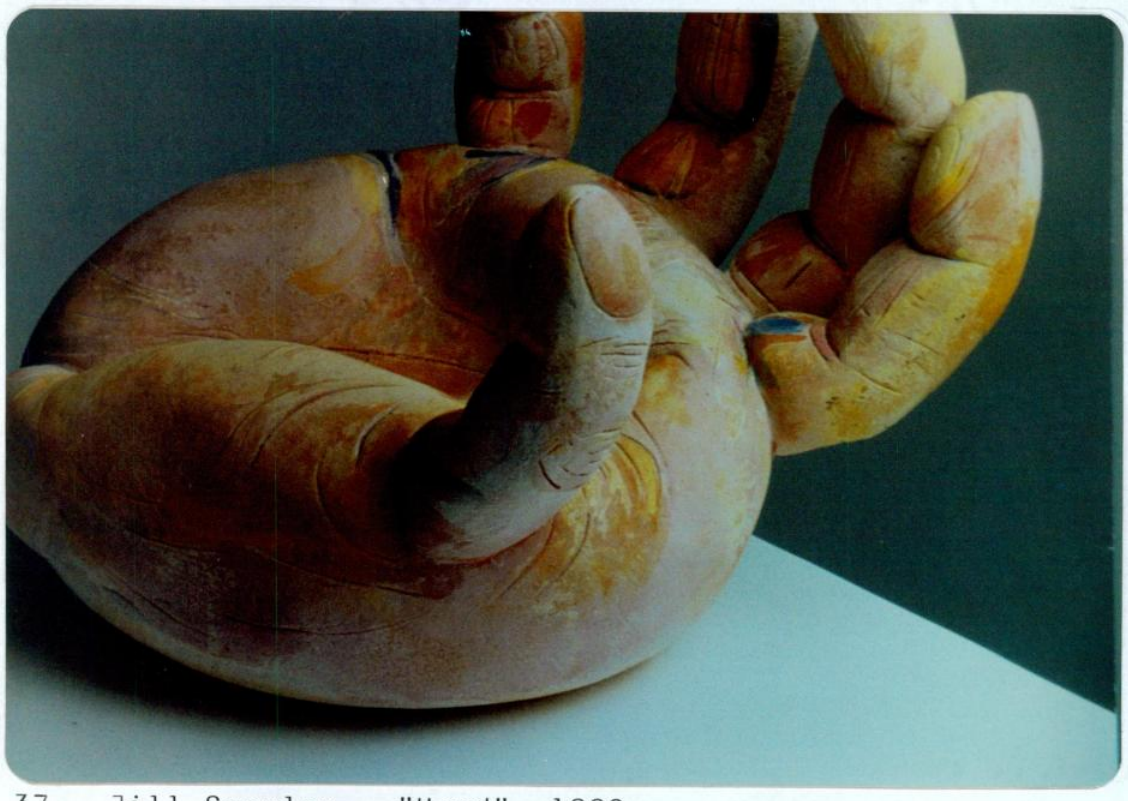
35. Jill Crowley - "Hand" 1992.

Jill Crossley 8-1992
Hand 1992 1/5
Ceramic
V&A

number of them have fallen into repose, yet most of them appear to have been cut off in the act of writhing or clenching. In some versions, they look like udders (swollen hands and tenuous fingers) while other pieces are meagre hands and bloated fingers. (Reid, 1982, P30) Crowley produces her hands in the same way as she would make a teapot. She sees the choosing of the proportions of the fingers in relation to the palms as similar to selecting the size of the spout in relation to the teapot on which it is to be placed. Because of this, her hands come in an interesting range of shapes and sizes.

Crowley does not want to limit her attention to the hands of infants, she wants to explore hands in general and what they express. Apart from our faces, hands are the most expressive part of our bodies. We learn to hide our facial expressions, but forget that our hands whether they are twitching or still, tense or relaxed, can reveal far more to people than we realize. Hands are not just highly expressive, our lives and characters have their effect on them. Many professional people like doctors or lawyers place great emphasis on the study of hands in interpreting character. A good example of the expressiveness of hands is the phenomenon of people working in the political sphere putting their hands in front of their faces when they are telling lies. They may be able to keep their facial expressions under perfect control, but they inadvertently place their hands in front of their face just in case some clue to the fact that they are lying would

36. Jill Crowley - "Hand" 1992.



37. Jill Crowley - "Hand" 1992.

Jill Crowley 17-8-199[illegible]
Hand 1992 - Ea[illegible]
Ceramic
V & A

show. Unfortunately it is their hands rather than their face which uncovers their misdemeanour for the observant person to see.

(30) Disembodied hands without any trace of an arm are not usually represented in our culture. By separating the hand from the arm either by leaving it by itself or inserting it into a sleeve, Crowley focuses our attention on the hand. A hand attached to an upraised arm can be pleading if the fingers are outstretched but menacing if the fist is clenched. The marble hands of Queen Victoria's children which can be seen at Osborne House are clearly cut above the wrist. Lying in repose, they do not pose any threat to the person looking at them. The rogue hand in Terminator II which prowls with wrist in tow can frighten and disturb. Crowley's recumbent hands are open and relaxed as if ready to receive or accept, to give or to grab, depending on how the observer sees them. (Lewenstein, 1992, P15)

Presently, she is producing hands and feet by applying her glaze with a greater freedom resulting in a more brightly coloured finish than the previous ones, and feels that she has a compulsion to give her sleeves blue and white stripes. Recently she has taken part in an exhibition in the Barbican centre in London in which 30 ceramicists have shown their work. She also held a one-person show in Birmingham and has contributed a small number of hands to a special exhibition for the blind in Norwich, England. This exhibition was called 'Touch' and

was held at the end of January this year. Since she believes that hands are for touching, she found that putting hands into this show was very appropriate because they were being touched. Her hands and feet are a delight to look at as they have been produced in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. They also capture the tenderness of an infant's hands and feet in a distilled and sensitive way. The point behind Crowley's hands is that she took her inspiration directly from her life as a mother. Instead of looking at adults' hands, she based these pieces on the hands of her daughter when she was a baby.

After the birth of her first child in 1980, Crowley went into 'Superwoman mode'. She entered her work into eleven group shows and undertook country-wide teaching commitments as she dreaded being "written off". By the time the second child was born, she felt less of a need to prove herself, realizing that her children were very important to her. Even though she now has a studio in her home, she pays someone to look after her children. She finds that when someone else is looking after her children for her, it concentrates her mind and she works faster and her work is more to the point. (Johnson, 1992, P41)

She tried to make a series of pieces of her daughter learning how to swim, but had to abandon the idea because she found it difficult to devise a way of modelling water and the way it behaves in an accurate and convincing manner. To help her overcome this problem, she looked to other cultures for ideas and took a particular interest in

how the Chinese depict water in a stylized fashion. (Harrod, 1988, P30) She went to China on holiday and took photographs of the many different ways in which water is interpreted in Chinese art, whether it is still, moving in waves or being splashed about. Although she never managed successfully to produce any of these pieces, the idea behind this series epitomizes her willingness to explore her experience of motherhood. Many people, especially women, would identify with her joy at watching her child learning how to swim.

From 1970 onwards, there have been many changes in attitudes towards women artists. The impact made in society by the Women's Movement and Linda Nochlin's book, 'Art and Sexual Politics' published in 1970, have greatly contributed to this. In her book, Nochlin asked the provocative question 'Why have there been no great women artists?' As a response to this question, new attention was paid to the work of artists who were underrated by society such as Artemesia Gentileschi and Sofonisba Anguisola and contemporary artists like Georgia O'Keefe and Alice Neal.

From this time, a period of autobiographical work began and the phrase 'the personal is political' galvanized many women into action. The clothes they wore, the dishes they washed, the poverty women suffer, the lack of choice for women and the lack of value attached to their work as women became valid subject-matter for the visual arts, literature and theatre. The 'Feministo' show which was

38. Peggie Radford - "The Ice Cream Lady" 1984.

39. Katya Coupland - "Exploding Handbag" 1984.

held in the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London in 1978, which had the subject of the artist as housewife as its central theme was a good example of this new burst of activity. This exhibition consisted of work on a small-scale which female artists sent to each other in the post. The show demonstrated to the public the difficulties that female artists have when they are confined to the home and are torn between caring for their families and the need to continue with their work. (Morreau, 1984, P19-200)

Three examples of women artists communicating a woman's view of the world are Peggie Radford with her sculpture 'The Ice Cream Lady', (Calvert, 1984, P60) Katya Coupland and her series of 'Exploding Handbags' (Calvert, 1984, P56-57) and Joan Wakelin and her photographs of the women of Greenham Common carrying out their protests. (Calvert, 1984, P90-92) All three women showed these pieces in the exhibition 'Pandora's Box' which was held in 1984. Radford's sculpture which is mixed media, conveys her horror and revulsion of war. 'The Ice Cream Lady' is a women wearing a revealing dress, fishnet tights and high-laced boats and is holding a tray of ice creams modelled in the shape of gas masks. She realizes that disasters like pestilence and famine are out of the control of humankind, but believes that war can be controlled if the will exists. Coupland's 'Exploding Handbags', produced in oil on canvas, explore the idea of women having to take overall responsibility for the family and the next generation. Wakelin's photographs are records of the demonstrations

40. Joan Wakelin - Women in Greenham Common carrying out a Demonstration 1984.

that the women of Greenham Common organized for their campaign to highlight the dangers posed for society by nuclear armaments.

What these creations and Crowley's work have in common is that they communicate the female perception of the world. The only major difference between the work of Radford, Coupland, Wakelin and Crowley is the mediums in which they produce their pieces and the particular issues and ideas that they concern themselves with. Otherwise they are artists who want to produce work in which they look at the world around them from a woman's point of view.

When summing up Crowley's work, one must realize that she is an artist who gets her inspiration from what she knows in her day-to-day life. Yet when one takes a closer look at her pieces, one finds that there is more to her work. What Crowley tries to communicate through her work is that men and women have been locked into defined roles and both the domestic sphere and the experience of parenthood are just as worthy of comment as any other aspect of life. She looks at men and the role they have been brought up to play in society in her male busts. Because these charactors are business men wearing pinstripe suits, they present men as the breadwinner. In her 'Ladies', on the other hand, she deals with women and how they are regarded. She explores her experience of motherhood and the domestic sphere in her depictions af hands and feet. Through her 'Ladies', she wants to highlight the fact that many men still hold negative

attitudes towards women and that this problem has to be addressed. These negative attitudes are most graphically manifested through pornography. Her 'Ladies' have no limbs or heads and they have been flattenned out to give prominence to their sex organs. These pieces epitomize the idea of women being seen as sexual objects without minds of their own whose only purpose is to satisfy the meeds of men. Unlike the women artists who took part in the 'Feministo' show in 1978 to emphasize their difficulties in carrying out their work as female artists, both Barton and Crowley just got on with their work. They proved that despite having families and homes to look after, they are just as capable of producing work to the same standard and with the same creativeness as any male artist.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY

Barton preoccupies herself with universal themes such as loneliness, the spiritual dimension, the human condition and people's relationship to their environment. She uses the sculptural traditions of antiquity, the art of dancing and science-fiction as her references in the production of her work. Barton communicates through her work the idea that because we are all human, we are all the same deep down and all have the same problems and preoccupations. She also wants to impress on us that we all must take action on environmental problems and take better care of the world we live in. Crowley's concerns are to do with the perception of gender, the domestic sphere and attitudes towards women. The source of her inspiration comes from people that she has associated with, her experience of motherhood and the ideas she sees expressed in the media. Barton'a points of reference are separate from the ideas that she wants to convey in her creations and she uses them to help her decide on the compositions of her pieces and how they are to be glazed. Crowley conveys through her creations the idea that men and women are seen differently from one another and proves that the domestic sphere and the experience of parenthood are just as worthy of comment as any other aspect of life. In making a political statement, she would like to emphasize how women are seen in a negative light and that for the sake of society, this problem has to be addressed.

The exploration of the human condition demonstrates the difference between Bartons's and Jill Crowley's approach to the creation of their work. When Crowley deals with the human condition, she is more interested in how men and women are perceived while Barton prefers to explore how we relate to the world around us and our inner thoughts and feelings. The hands that Barton has produced (for a number of exhibitions in the past) are very different from Crowley's hands. Whereas Crowley's hands are modelled from the hands of a baby, Barton's hands are based on the hands of an adult. Crowley's hands open and close by themselves while Barton's hands are outstretched in a formal manner and are grouped together in formations. (Cooper, 1984, P11) Where Crowley likes to look at the expressiveness of hands, Barton prefers to deal with what hands can symbolize. The whole subject of hands, like the human condition, exemplifies the different approaches Barton and Crowley have to the creation of their work. While Crowley concentrates on the particular and what is close to home, Barton encompasses the general and universal. Barton embodies her ideas and experiences in her sculptures. Her creations are composed in a clever and subtle way and appear to have had a great deal of thought put into the production of each piece. Some of her pieces require a great deal of study if one is to glean their meanings from them. This does not imply that Barton is bad at communicating her ideas, it just means that her sculptures need to be viewed for a period of time

if they are to be fully appreciated. When she turns her hand to political art (as in her 'Green Warriors'), I feel her sculptures could convey their messages in a more direct way if some of these pieces also dealt with issues like intensive farming or atmospheric pollution. Crowley's sculptures capture the sources of their inspiration in a sensitive and perceptive manner. In her series of hands, for example, it is easy to get a feeling of the tender qualities of a baby's hands. Her 'Ladies' as political work convey their message in a simple but powerful way. On the other hand, her cats' heads fail to portray men in a covincing way. Instead, they explore the whole question of how we treat the animals which we keep as pets. Both Barton and Crowley approach the creation of their work in very different ways. Barton encompasses the universal and general while Crowley concentrates on the personal and familiar. In addition, they both deal with very different preoccupations in their work. Barton concerns herself with the human condition and ecological problems, while Crowley deals with the domestic sphere and feminist issues. What Barton and Crowley have in common is that they use their work to communicate ideas which they feel are important to them. Even though these ideas and issues may be personal to them, they are also political because they effect everybody in the world today.

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