



**CLAIRE
BARCLAY**

Untitled Element from 'Shadow Spans'

**by Claire Barclay
2010**

Shellac, calico, fur felt
22cm x 18cm x height 24cm

From the installation work 'Shadow Spans' at The Whitechapel Gallery, London.

The installation reflected on the nature of liminal spaces on the boundaries of indoors and outdoors, for example, the porch, the entrance, windows and doors, the pavement etc. The sculptural components were in some way exploring aspects of the transitions we experience between private and public space. This hat-like form suggestive of a shift from formal to informal when removed at the point of entering a building. It is also abstracted from its familiar form and so made odd and dysfunctional.

CLAIRE BARCLAY

■ **Where are you based?**

Based in Glasgow - work in the Glasgow Sculpture Studios, Glasgow Print Studio, studio at home, work with other fabricators, engineering company, saddlers, fabric printing facilities.

■ **What is your definition / the definition you prefer of craft?**

Craft is present in all disciplines where hand skills evolve over time through the exploration of and fascination with particular tasks, whether practical or absurd, traditional or improvised.

■ **How does craft relate to your practice as an artist?**

I don't consciously think of myself as crafting while I am making, as I do not have a specific goal in mind. The materials and processes I use are determined more often by the context in which I am working. I try to use each project as an opportunity to learn more skills but if the skills needed are beyond my ability, I need to work in collaboration with experts in order to realize the work. In this case the hat-like object was made using traditional techniques by a hatters in London, Patey Hats Ltd.

■ **How did you acquire the skills required for your practice?**

Art School

Help from fellow artists

Using available facilities

Working in collaboration with crafts-people and fabricators

Trial and error

Attending classes



■ **Thoughts on the future of your area of practice?**

Continuing to learn new techniques and investigate the sculptural possibilities of materials and forms. Working with a wide range of materials and techniques there are always aspects of these I wish to explore and will always inspire and surprise.

■ **3 key opportunities you have experienced in your career?**

1 - Early in my career I had the opportunity to spend a year in residence at two art schools in Australia, in Canberra and Hobart. I was able to spend all that time focused on the development of my work with free access to any of the technical workshops at the schools. I made work using copper raising, glass blowing, leather upholstery, wood turning, cement casting amongst other things.

2 - The exhibition 'Openwide' at The Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh was an opportunity to evolve work over a substantial period of time in the lead up to the exhibition. I was able to experiment with materials I hadn't worked with before. For example, I made structures from rendered straw that I learned about through attending a short course in straw bale building.

3 - In 2010, I made a work for The Whitechapel Gallery in London, titled 'Shadow Spans'. The installation was an opportunity to develop work in the studio but also to work with other skilled fabricators and craftspeople to produce elements of the work. I collaborated with the London based hat makers Patey Hats Ltd for the first time and with the Glasgow based engineering company with which I have worked for the last 20 years.

The work also included fabric which was digitally printed by the Centre for Advanced Textiles at Glasgow School of Art.



Shadow Spans, detail from installation
The Whitechapel Gallery, London
2010

■ What does the work of Jacki Parry mean to you?

I very much like the piece that Jacki is showing in the exhibition. The two pillow-like forms, strongly pigmented, are compellingly curious. The density of the colour suggests weight but at the same time their puffed paper form contradicts this reading. The use of indigo is loaded with connotations of historical and cultural significance in the production, trade and use of the dye. Like many sought after raw materials, it is imbued with equal measure of beauty and horror.

*Download this booklet free from
<http://www.fcac.co.uk/event/craft-generation/>
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Shadow Spans, installation view
The Whitechapel Gallery
2010-11



Reading off the Surfaces, installation view
Skulpturi, Copenhagen
2011



Openwide
Fruitmarket Gallery
2009
Photo Ruth Clark



Cut in White
Machined brass, raw hide
2010

