

# TWO CITIES: ROMA – NEW YORK



*'Barberini'* 67 × 91 cms

**BARBARA FREEMAN**

**1987**

# TWO CITIES: ROMA – NEW YORK

## PAINTINGS :: DRAWINGS :: PHOTOWORKS

**Art Space Gallery, London — 7th–28th October 1987**  
**Solomon Gallery, Dublin — 19th January – 3rd February 1988**  
**Fenderesky Gallery, Belfast — Early 1988**

Barbara Freeman was born in London (1937) and studied at St. Martin's, Camberwell and Hammersmith Colleges of Art. (N.D.D. 1962). She has taught part-time in several colleges, and has travelled widely. She now lives and works in Belfast.

### Previous exhibitions include:

- 1964 Manor House Gallery, Ilkley (carvings and bronzes)
- 1966 Jefferson Place Gallery, Washington D.C. (carvings and bronzes)
- 1968 The University of Leeds (reliefs)  
Park Square Gardens, Leeds (constructions)
- 1971 The Traverse Gallery, Edinburgh (reliefs and drawings)
- 1973 The University of Bradford (paintings, constructions, reliefs)
- 1974 Cartwright Hall, Bradford (drawings)
- 1975 University of St. Andrews (drawings and constructions)
- 1975 Wolfson College, Oxford (paintings, reliefs, prints)
- 1976 International Exhibition of Photography, Piran, Yugoslavia  
International Exhibition of Women Artists, Zagreb, Yugoslavia
- 1977 'Bradford-Debrecen' exchange of exhibitions; Debrecen and Budapest, Hungary (sculpture, photomontage)
- 1979 Istvan Bathory Muzeum, Hungary (woodcuts)  
International Exhibition of Photography, Piran, Yugoslavia
- 1981 The Industrial Museum, Bradford (sculpture, prints, drawings entitled '*Annals of the Machine*')
- 1982 LYC Gallery, Carlisle (ditto)
- 1983 Imperial College, London (paintings and etchings)

### Recent group exhibitions

- 1984 'Four Artists from Belfast'. The University of Ulster, Belfast.
- 1985 Cork Art Society, Cork.
- 1987 'Irish Living Art', Dublin  
'S.A.D.E.', Cork  
(forthcoming) 'Magnetic North' The Orchard Gallery, Derry, then England, Europe and U.S.A.

### Recent solo exhibitions

- 1984 The Fenderesky Gallery, Belfast
- 1985 The Solomon Gallery, Dublin

- 1986 Art Space Gallery, London  
The Corridor Gallery, Lurgan  
The Fenderesky Gallery, Belfast

### Relevant publications include

- Tilless B.* 'Novekvo Strukturak': Muveszet (April 1976) Budapest.
- Freeman B.* 'Growth Structures': Leonardo (April 1975) Paris.
- Malina F.* ed. 'Visual Art, Mathematics and Computers': Pergamon Press. Oxford (1979).

### Awards, etc.

- 1972 S.P.A.C.E. Award (Arts Council of Great Britain)
- 1973 Arts Council of Great Britain Artists Bursary
- 1974 Yorkshire Arts Association Bursary
- 1975 Guest Artist: International Symposium, Prilep, Yugoslavia  
International Exhibition of Photography, Piran, Yugoslavia  
(Bronze Medal 1976)  
(Guest Artist and Silver Medal 1979)
- 1979 Guest Artist: Nyirbator Alkotohaz, Hungary  
1983, 1985, 1987 Guest Artist: The Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annaghmakerrig, Eire

### Work in Collections

- Private: in Great Britain, The United States, Ireland, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Kuwait.
- Public etc.: West Yorkshire County Council  
The University of Bradford  
Leeds City Council  
Greater London Council  
Yorkshire Arts Association  
The University of Debrecen, Hungary  
Mestna Galerie, Koper, Yugoslavia  
Allied Irish Investment Bank Ltd.  
Jefferson Smurfit Group  
Contemporary Irish Art Society  
Life Association of Ireland  
Allied Irish Bank Computer Centre
- National: National Museum, Prilep, Yugoslavia  
National Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, Hungary

This exhibition is dedicated to my son Matthew.

*Many of these paintings were begun at The Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annaghmakerrig, Co. Monaghan, Ireland.*



*Photoworks from A Manhattan Note Book*

# Excerpts from a letter to Declan McGonagle

... It is very difficult to say what 'influences' really are at work. Over the years one has admired and learnt from many different artists for many different reasons, and one makes references and connections which to someone else might seem quite arbitrary, but which are mostly to do with the problem faced at certain moments in the working process.

I think there is a continuous general influence of constructivism, not so much as a style, but for the example it gives of a willingness to tackle any medium, and the attitude to reality that goes with it.

If one begins with the assumption of a non-figurative art, one is still not free of the problem of representation; of how things map back onto the world.

I am trying to explore an area in which the reality to which the work refers is the problem of how we know our own life. We do this through reconstruction of memory, through very precise sensations recalled – which include, noise, temperature, the state of your own body. You don't remember in grand totals, but in concrete details. At a deeper level I would like to be able to show that we all construct our own reality, and ask what tools are available for the job. This is an active, constructive process; and it is a problem of epistemology. This is probably true of all my work now – the two activities of painting and photography run parallel, with the

photography being the more informal, notebook activity.

I am dealing here with problems of representation. I wouldn't dream of painting a leg or a foot! I am looking for visual forms that are representational without being pictorial. I want something existentially based in what the world feels like rather than what it looks like. Painting is a material art; its about sensation in a way that literature can never be – about the movement of the hand as well as the eye. About our sense of location or movement in space. Every one of these paintings is based on a very precise moment (e.g. walking across the Borghese Gardens in the rain, or meeting a lone skater whilst crossing Central Park). They are initiated by exact memories and minute particulars. But the process of painting demands degrees of generalisation in order to make it communicable. In this respect, painting is no different from any other formal language. Yet general statements are rather like ideals – barren without material particularity. A formal language needs the continuous contact with particulars to keep it in tune. It's in the tension between the general and the particular that you know your own life.

Am I sharing or am I telling? There's a moment in one of Beckett's plays where someone is buried in sand, and she keeps worrying about her toothpaste running out.

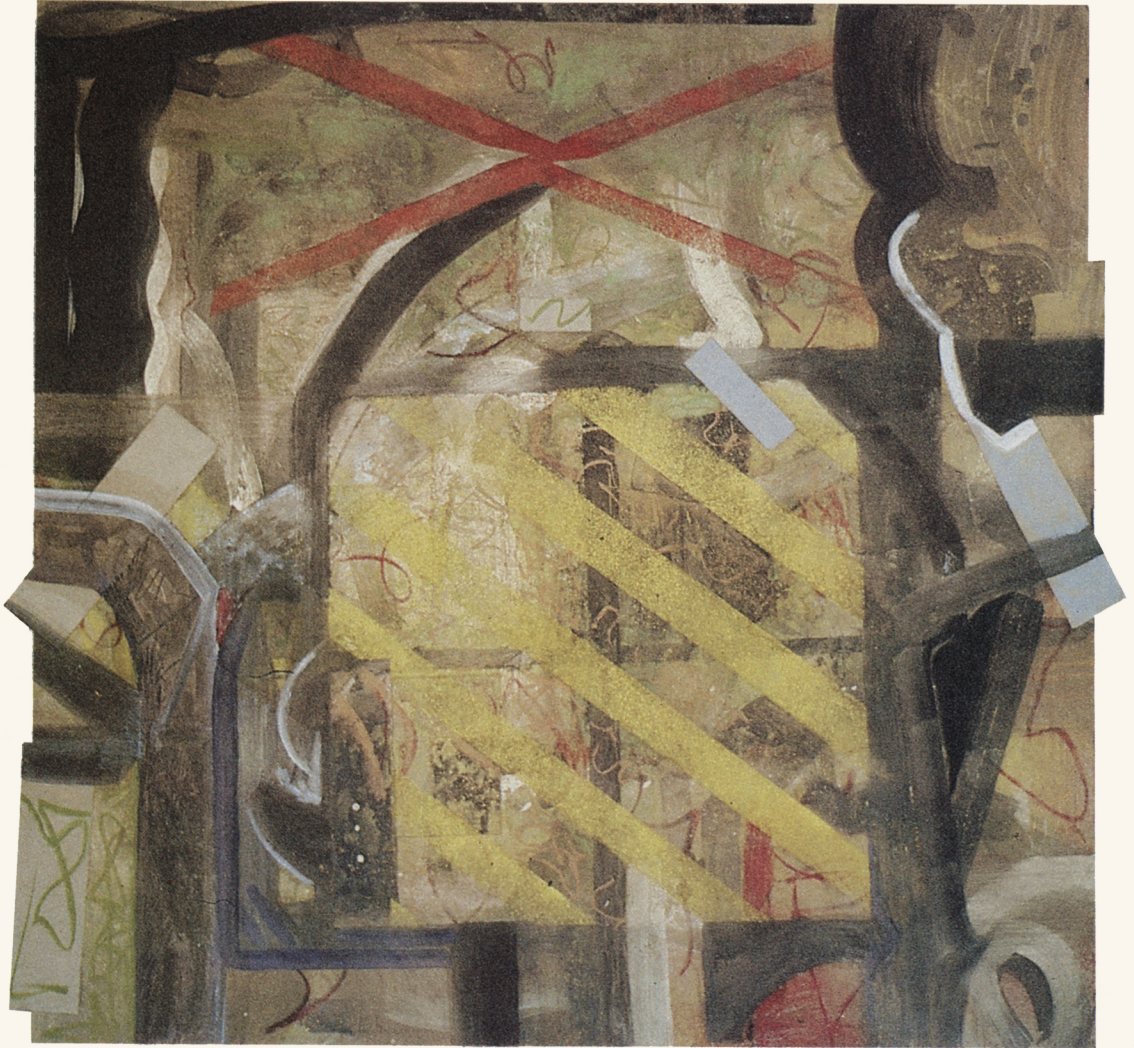
If I sometimes use photography it is because it provides a residue of picturing which anchors the work in some actuality that anyone can identify.

But I think a great deal about modern music, and tend to look to it for principles of construction. How, for instance, one holds together utterly different elements – as in Stockhausen's 'Hymnen' where some of the material is 'given' in the sense of being already well-known, and yet it is embedded in a completely abstract structure, so that fragments of the 'real' world emerge out of waves of sound and dissolve back into them.

This is related to what I find in Giotto, who has been in my mind continuously in the past two or three years. There is an intense particularity of detail – of dramatic detail – set in a frame of generalised architecture and ideal drapery. I'm thinking, for instance, of the scenes of the life of St. Francis such as 'The Renunciation of Worldly Goods', in which there are two structures at work – a structure of abstract form and space as set out by the architecture, and within that the very precise drama of hands and glances – a structure of signals.

The reason I no longer make sculpture is that I can see no way of bringing doubt and irony into three-dimensional form; sculpture is too assertive for this sort of exploration . . .

**Barbara Freeman**



*'Grand Central'* 76 × 82 cms



'Galilei' 63 x 91 cms