

Barry Davies Critical Analysis

Using early Renaissance techniques, Barry Davies coalesces artistic, historic and scientific considerations with innovative explication and erudite execution that possesses a transformative quality, through which the visual and cognitive worlds magnificently collide. The artist's sincere affinity with his medium corrals an intense perception of emotion with a sense of mystery and intrigue, which casts a new and profound meaning upon his subjects and provides the viewer with a wealth of stimulating possibilities to celebrate.

Davies' interest in the anatomical capabilities of animals is particularly evident in his phenomenal bronze horse, in which layers of the animal's dermis appear to have been stripped back in order to reveal the muscle tissue beneath allowing the viewer an experience preternaturally intimate while also maintaining a biological distance as one examines the subject. In this academic practice, Davies' work simultaneously conjures images of Damien Hirst and Lynn Chadwick, who each share Davies' demonstrative understanding of the skeletal and muscular elements of an animal. Davies assertively unites the boundaries of art and science through his sculptures; their delicate study reflects a scientific fascination comparable with Gunther von Hagens' practice of plastination. However, Davies' work ceaselessly reminds the spectator that these are not purely modern traditions, but they in fact stem from historic practices; indeed, Davies combines ancient and extant attributes with an inherent and fundamental perspective that seems to herald

shared philosophical intentions with Auguste Rodin. Certainly, Davies and Rodin display a common interest in anatomy, both human and animal, and place a strong importance on muscular function and the body's physical reaction to movement at the forefront of every one of their entrancing creations.

When observing Davies' sculptures, it is impossible to dismiss the reference to Baroque art, particularly that of Antoine Coysevox and Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini whose figures share an authoritative perspective that entralls the viewer. Further connections can be seen in the exquisite quality of line in the hairs and lacerti tissue depicted, whilst his ability to capture the essence of the subject's soul in a simple gesture conjures somewhat modern thoughts of Elisabeth Frink and Ralph Brown. Davies' prominent understanding of art history is demonstrable throughout his oeuvre; his instinctive ability to bring together intellectual thought from a diverse selection of sources with such graceful finesse resonates across a vast myriad of scholarly realms.

Through deep analysis of Davies' sculpture, bonds with the work of Georg Ehrlich and Winifred Turner can be perceived; certainly, each of these sculptors convey an intense emotion and complex narrative through their assiduous attention to posture, even as slight as a tilt of the head. This element of Davies' individual process harbours further connections with Antoni Gaudi's renowned work at La Sagrada Familia; the brazen expression of the human form is highlighted in Davies work with comparably evocative elements to the spinal structures of the depiction of Jesus' flagellation at the west entrance of the Cathedral. Profound philosophical parallels between Davies and Gaudi can be denoted in their proclivity for ancient forms of art combined with a fervent desire to incorporate a personal interpretation and intrinsic originality.

Davies' penchant for finding and displaying the aesthetic beauty in palaeontology reflects his tender ardour for the preservation of history, which he exhibits via representations of prehistoric life forms. His assimilations and recreations of fossils possess an extraordinarily powerful propensity for storytelling, while their stunning textures create visual ties with Alberto Giacometti and Alexander Calder. The elegant simplicity of Davies' use of line and sophisticated understanding of shape strikes perceptible consonance these artists who, like Davies, illustrate an avid interest in theriomorphic anatomy via an astute and poetic level of detail throughout their works.

Davies' artworks demand a reverence akin to Guido Reni while his exemplary dexterity engenders thoughts of Donatello. The acute erudition that Davies communicates through his sculptures transcends the worlds of art and history, and ascends to a unique position that unites the chronicles of the past with an innate and connatural contemporary point of view that brings together artistic paradigms and intellectual thought with sentimental poignancy.



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