



## Barry Bish: Made in Woolwich

18 November — 17 December 2017

### LIST OF WORKS

- |                            |                             |                     |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Wolfgang                | 36. Barrow Boys             | 71. Face            |
| 2. Burlington Bertie       | 37. Not Really Like Her     | 72. Bryllcream Boy  |
| 3. Face                    | 38. Black Orb Over Woolwich | 73. Gunboat         |
| 4. Old Soldier             | 39. Exit                    | 74. Face            |
| 5. Albert Dock             | 40. Ooh Er Madam            | 75. Happy Day       |
| 6. Happy Hitler            | 41. Tequila                 | 76. Face            |
| 7. Face                    | 42. On The Edge             | 77. Somewhere       |
| 8. Cowboy                  | 43. New Mars                | 78. Row Boat        |
| 9. Red-Headed Woman        | 44. Convoy                  | 79. Shrewsbury Park |
| 10. Actor                  | 45. Corner Shop Ali         | 80. River At Night  |
| 11. Long Wait              | 46. Pugilist                | 81. Long Road       |
| 12. Tate & Lyle            | 47. Devil At The Station    | 82. Starry Night    |
| 13. Woman                  | 48. Charmed                 | 83. London In Flux  |
| 14. Hank                   | 49. Bleeding in The Park    | 84. Sid             |
| 15. Silvertown             | 50. Man From The Pru        | 85. Tommy           |
| 16. Old Friends            | 51. Tree Of Life            | 86. Homeward Bound  |
| 17. Blue Days              | 52. X-Ray Spex              | 87. Burning Out     |
| 18. Woods In Fall          | 53. We Will Remember        | 88. Over The Top    |
| 19. Stella                 | 54. Bobby                   | 89. Jacks Parlour   |
| 20. Commuter               | 55. In The Key Of Z         | 90. Black Spot      |
| 21. Greenwich Park         | 56. Haircut!                | 91. Fleeting Fame   |
| 22. Clapham                | 57. Man & Machine           | 92. Alleyway Wall   |
| 23. Green Man              | 58. Pearly                  | 93. Crop Circle     |
| 24. Fishermans Friend      | 59. Banker                  | 94. Magonian Sky    |
| 25. Leadbelly              | 60. Queeny                  | 95. London Boys     |
| 26. Sarfside               | 61. Longshore Man           |                     |
| 27. Hollywood              | 62. Ted                     |                     |
| 28. Slum Goddess           | 63. Face                    |                     |
| 29. You Wanna Get Out More | 64. Delia                   |                     |
| 30. Face                   | 65. Victorian Pervert       |                     |
| 31. Pathos                 | 66. Mirror Mirror           |                     |
| 32. News Guy               | 67. The Field               |                     |
| 33. Thames Sunset          | 68. J.C.                    |                     |
| 34. Aunt Nelly             | 69. The Pug                 |                     |
| 35. New Hat                | 70. One More Go             |                     |

Barry Bish has a rich mix of talents. He has painted film sets and theatre sets, houses and boats, and people, but is happiest working on canvas and board in his studio. "It's a compulsion", he says. "It's the perfect pastime for dreamers and romantics: it's not so much the end result as the process of making them", he says. "If you enjoy the process of making and you're genuinely happy with the end result, then it is good art even if others disagree."

His work is about a London long-since past, of Teddy Boys, and Pearly Kings and Queens, of riding the Woolwich Ferry, fairgrounds, old tattoos, cigarette cards, old pubs, foggy nights, and the river, which he sees from his studio windows - born in Woolwich, Barry says that the river is in his blood.

He applies his paint straight from the tube. "I also use knives, lolly sticks and occasionally cigarette butts. Usually two or three paintings on the go at one time. It's a long process. I enjoy the feel of them like visual braille."

"I am interested in energy and vibrations and by the fact that everything moves, nothing is solid." Heavy surfaces ooze with energy, and tension, and vitality; it is as if there is something beneath the surface, something primal, visceral. "My style is definitely influenced by Vincent van Gogh", says Barry. "Nothing stood still, everything shimmered with life!" And there are reminders of Rouault, and Buffet too.

The distinctive palette adds to the sense of nostalgia for a long-gone, long-lost time of things half remembered or past down, or picked up at the flea market. There is a dream-like quality to the work: it's surreal, it has a sense of fantasy. His studio is full of his gently sinister paintings, which owe much to the fairground of his childhood; to the experiences and characters both real and imagined. "Faces fascinate me, eyes in particular. I often empathise with the characters and wonder what they might be thinking", he says. "I'm often in the paint amongst them. And my work is how I imagine energies to look, or vibrations to flow."

Barry spent the majority of the 1990s in Los Angeles, and has his work in the collections of an impressive array of famous Hollywood celebrities. He exhibited at the Out-Side-In Gallery, on Melrose Avenue, where he first encountered Folk Art, and later at Gallery 108, Ben Oakley, and Sylvester Fine Arts in London.