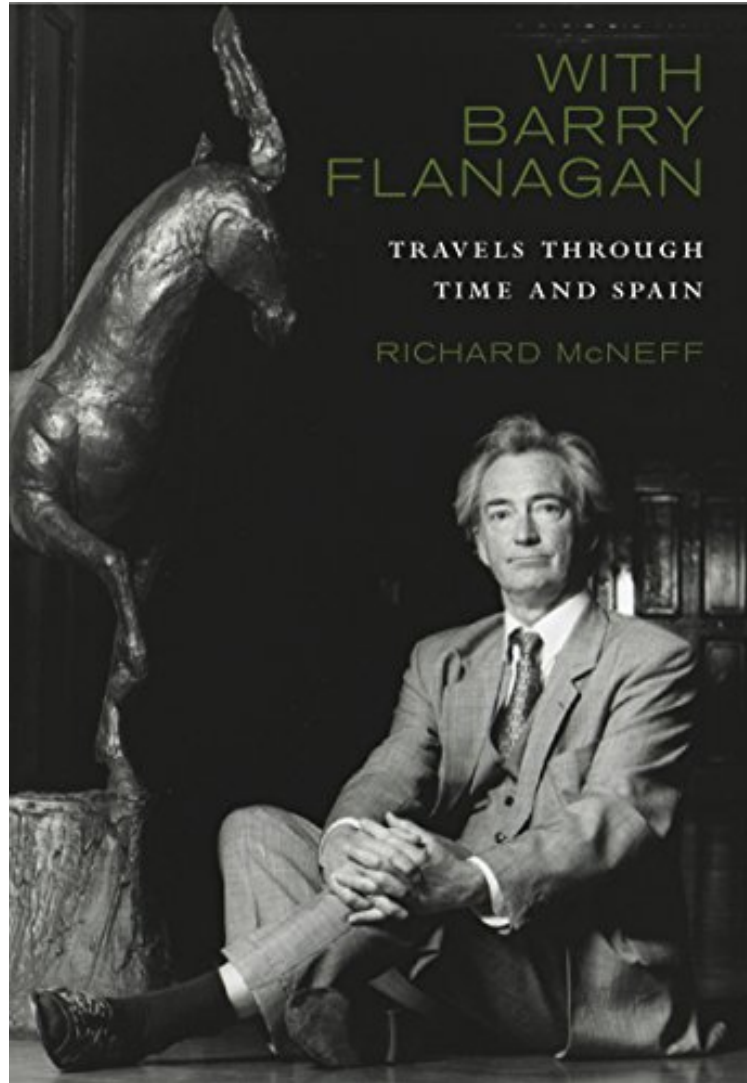


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With Barry Flanagan: Travels Through Time and Spain

Richard McNeff

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Richard McNeff : With Barry Flanagan: Travels Through Time and Spain before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised With Barry Flanagan: Travels Through Time and Spain:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Portrait of a Sacred Monster . . . or Doctor Who?By Martin DaviesA cracking memoir - funny, informative, elegiac and thought-provoking. Barry Flanagan cast leaping leporines, spent his final years on Ibiza and was born in Prestatyn (where I attended a wonderfully 1930s prep school), but these bare factoids are also connected with the fundamental laws of the Universe. He was actually a magician with words and ideas, and his playful probing into public minds and private lives was worthy of Gandalf himself. Ibizaholics will delight in McNeff's expert skewering of island life and mores, while the artist's hilarious two-step with museum directors and local hacks is sheer joy. The journey into Flanagan's Jarryesque modus operandi is art writing at its best,

the self-deprecating prose turning every page into a delight. Lilliput Press have risen magnificently to the occasion with pruned-back design, a sensible typeface, nice, creamy paper plus a sprinkling of helpful illustrations. This collector's item is like a glittering vernissage you can't possibly afford to miss. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating Account of Renowned Sculptor's Life By Richard McNeff Fascinating Account of Renowned Sculptor's Life By Louise Ward Format: Hardcover This beautifully produced book which contains many drawings and photographs is an account of the friendship and working relationship between the author and Barry Flanagan, the Welsh sculptor and artist who is best known for his bronze hare statues. A student of St. Martin's School of Art in the sixties and subsequently a teacher there, he represented Britain at the Venice Biennale in 1982. He was made a CBE in 1996. From the mid-1990s Flanagan lived and worked in Dublin and Ibiza and had become an Irish citizen. In 2008, the Hugh Lane gallery organised an outdoor exhibition of ten of Flanagan's sculptures along Dublin's main thoroughfares. This co-incident with a major exhibition in the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Barry Flanagan died of Motor Neurone disease in 2009. His work can be seen worldwide and a retrospective show was held at the Tate Britain at the end of 2011. This year fifteen of his works were displayed at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire in a Sotheby's sale. The end sheet presents twelve shots of Flanagan which immediately reveal his playful character as he tips his hat or hides behind a sculpture. The cover is telling- a well-dressed Flanagan sits on the floor wearing a three-piece suit but with bohemian open-toed slippers on his feet. The book covers the time when the author first met Flanagan in 1987 to his death in 2009, with particular focus on an exhibition put on in 1992 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Ibiza where they both lived. Born in 1941, his three elder siblings had been evacuated the year before to America, arranged by his father's employer Warner Brothers. This meant that he was an only child until he was five, when they suddenly returned. According to his mother "he never got over it". An artist of international repute, the author first saw Flanagan at a wedding but did not meet properly until at a literary reading in San Juan. Meeting afterwards in the author's home, he realised he was in awe of him and silenced, a unusual state for a man who described himself as 'garrulous in nature'. Flanagan's strong and sometimes difficult character comes through in stories such as on losing his license and needing a driver how he had the car modified so the horn was on the passenger side and 'had no compunction about using it and did so frequently, ...narrowly avoiding a fight...on one occasion. It was his way of staying in charge.' Flanagan saw the "tortured artist" as a cliché; and 'deliberately took the romance out of his calling by describing himself as a tradesman and his practice as a trade.' His eccentric way of dealing with people led to one appointment with a photographer being sent instructions by a phone call (before mobiles) to "Kindly get on with it...The birds, what else?", which referred to a sketch of three birds on the wall, which were duly photographed, then made into an etching and an edition of eighty prints. This book is chock full of 'Flanagan anecdotes' and as a reader I felt like I was being let in on a secret of these bohemian artists who had lived in Ibiza and their hippy and boozy lives. It is a fascinating account and whether you are familiar with Flanagan's artistic work or not, this is an extremely interesting biography which is a great read that will leave you more knowledgeable about the artist as well as entertained by the stories. Comment |

With Barry Flanagan is a vivid account of a friendship that evolved into a working relationship when Richard McNeff became spontaneous fixer' (Flanagan's description) of the sculptor's show held in June 1992 at the Museum of Contemporary Art on Ibiza, where they were both living. McNeff was to gain a privileged insight into the sculptor's singular personality and eccentric working methods, learning to decipher his memorably surreal turns of phrase and to parry his fascinating, if at times unsettling, pranksteresque quirks. In September 1992 Flanagan and McNeff took the show to Majorca, resulting in a lively visit to the celebrated Spanish artist Miquel Barcelo. The following year McNeff was involved in Flanagan's print-making venture in Barcelona and in his Madrid retrospective. Flanagan rescued him from a rough landing in England in 1994 by commissioning a tour of stone quarries there. Subsequently McNeff ran into a fourteen-year-old profoundly deaf girl who turned out to be his unknown daughter. She had a talent for art and the generous sculptor was instrumental in helping with her studies. Late in 2008 Barry was diagnosed with motor neurone disease. By June 2009 he was wheelchair-bound. Two months later he died, and McNeff read the lesson at his funeral. Fleshed out with biographical detail, much of it supplied by the sculptor himself, this touching memoir is the first retrospective of a major Welsh-born artist. Photographs of him as well as of his drawings and sculpture fully complement the text. With Barry Flanagan captures the spirit of this remarkable Merlinesque figure in a moving portrait that reveals a true original.

About the Author RICHARD MCNEFF was born in London, where he now lives. His father was a repertory theatre actor who went into film and television. His mother is a poet. After reading English at Sussex University, he wrote for the International Times. He subsequently lived in Barcelona, Amsterdam, the Basque country and Baku, settling on Ibiza where he stayed for several years. His articles and reviews have appeared in Fortean Times, Boulevard Magenta and The Guardian. His novel, Sybarite among the Shadows (2004), is set in London's bohemia of the 1930s.