

DAVID BEGBIE

- 5 *Nudd* 2011 steel mesh 51.5 x 16.5 x 12.5 cm
- 6 *Tufold* 2011 steel mesh 50 x 35.5 x 12.5 cm
- 7 *Udu* 2011 steel mesh 50.5 x 18 x 12.5 cm
- 8 *Venus* 2008 steel mesh 120 x 60 x .15 cm ed 9/9
- 9 *Luda* 2008 steel mesh 92 x 26.5 x 20 cm
- 10 *Panangel* 2007 steel mesh 52.5 x 54 x 7 cm
- 11 *Icon IV* 2011 steel mesh 156 x 44 x 36 cm

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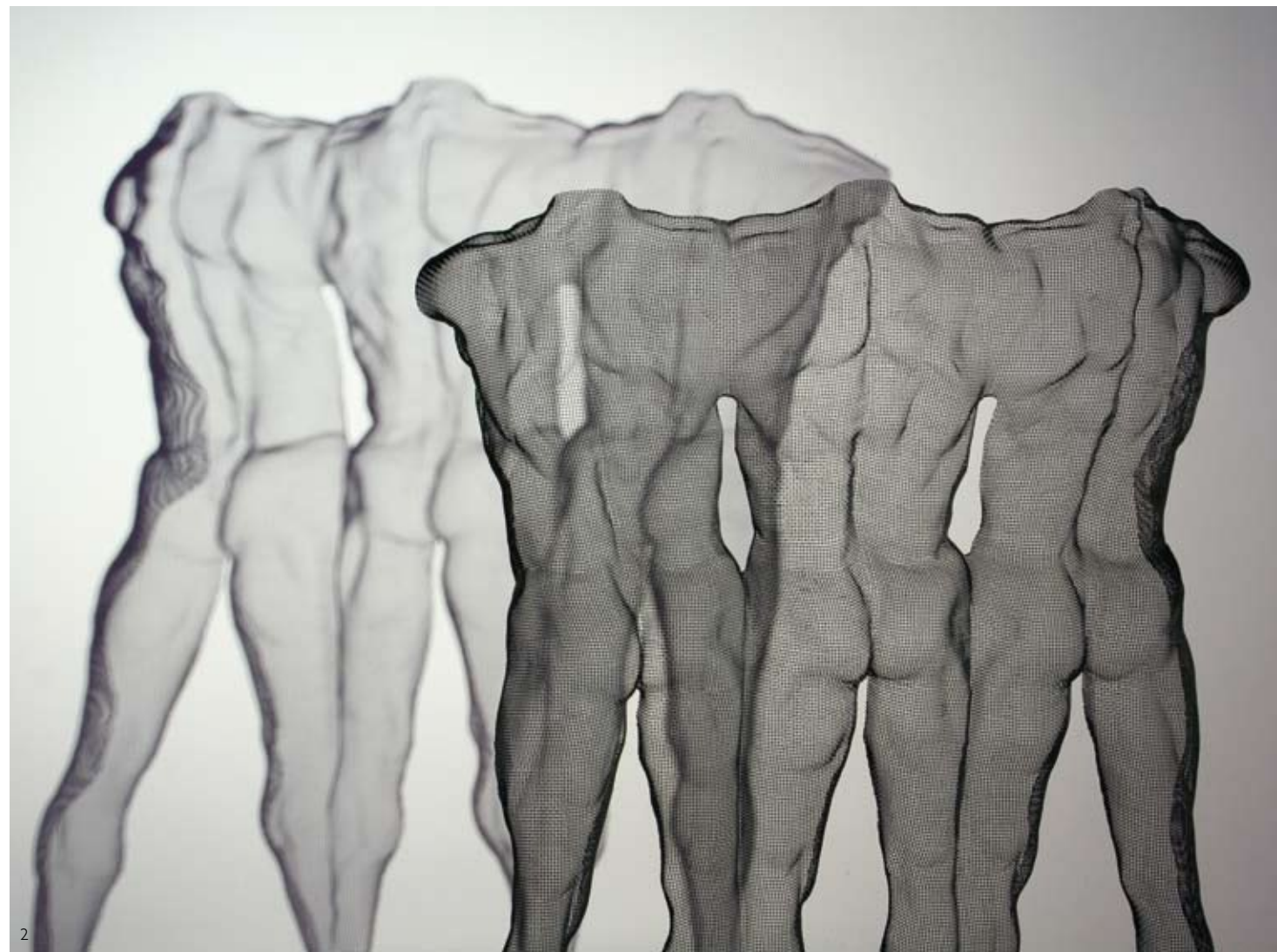
GENUS

GLENMORE ROAD • SYDNEY  
 19 MAY - 11 JUNE 2011

DERBY STREET • MELBOURNE  
 28 JUNE - 17 JULY 2011



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Cover: *Genus* (detail) 2011 steel mesh 93.5 x 72 x 20 cm

- 1 *Nubal* 2011 steel mesh 75 x 38.5 x 14 cm
- 2 *Manomanoman* 2011 steel mesh 50 x 43 x 12.5 cm
- 3 *Mirrii* 2008 steel mesh 93 x 66 x 20 cm
- 4 *Scorso* 2010 steel mesh 79 x 38 x 15 cm

## GENUS

David Begbie uses very simple means to magical effect. His steel mesh figures use an industrial material to give life to bodies that are the direct descendants of those we see in Greek and Roman art.

A main theme of his work derives from Gnosticism, a religious belief system that posits that there is not just one, but two co-equal divine forces that govern the world – one absolutely good, and one evil. This belief is the inspiration for the multiple figures of Begbie's *Genus* series, and also for single figures that offer darker shadows of themselves when illuminated. The fact that the mesh figures offer both positive and negative shapes is also part of their message.

In the most ambitious work in the series there are three figures rather than two. A male figure and a female figure flank a third that is androgynous, offering both male and female characteristics.

Begbie's work is interesting not only for its technical inventiveness but because of its relationship to the classical tradition. Post Modern art, and particularly Post Modern architecture, has continually flirted with classical forms, but sculptors in particular have found it difficult to work in this idiom without seeming to be academic. At the same time, Modernism has left sculptors both with a commitment to industrial materials and also, very often, a fascination with effects of light. The sculptures Begbie makes fit this pattern, but also make use of classical forms – that is, they are very obviously successors to the work of Rodin and Maillol.

Rodin, it will be recalled, was keenly interested in rendering effects of movement. So too, though in a different way, were early 20th Century Futurist sculptors and painters such as Umberto Boccioni, who rejected the classical tradition altogether. Begbie offers movement whenever there is any shift of light, so much so that these pieces can sometimes have an interactive element. He has now found a way to push this technique further: The mesh sculptures are made into flat transparent panels. When light is transmitted through these, the sculptures reconstitute themselves as shadows on the wall. The shadow-images seem so real and three-dimensional we get the impression that we can reach out and embrace them.

The weightless quality of these figures makes them particularly attractive to current sensibilities. In a world where everything seems to be in flux, there is an instinctive prejudice against the weighty and the monumental, amply demonstrated by the failure of so many contemporary attempts to make convincing commemorative monuments. Begbie offers something completely contrary to this – a kind of art that is instinctively elegant without any sacrifice of visual legibility or fullness and completeness of form.

The Gnostic element that is part of the inspiration for these sculptures seems especially appropriate since Gnosticism, as a belief-system, was essentially about eating one's cake and having it. Here is a kind of art that pays tribute to the values of the past, but that nevertheless firmly remains a creation of our own epoch.

Edward Lucie-Smith  
Art Historian, Critic and Writer

## SELECTED BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

- 1955 Born Edinburgh, Scotland
- 1975 Winchester School of Art, England
- 1977-80 Gloucestershire College of Art and Design BA (Hons), Cheltenham, England
- 1980-82 The Slade School of Sculpture Postgraduate (H.D.F.A), University College, London
- 1993 Associate of the Royal Society of British Sculptors (A.R.B.S.), England

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2011 'Genus', Australian Galleries, Derby Street, Melbourne  
'Genus', Australian Galleries, Glenmore Road, Sydney  
'Archetypes', Moorhouse, London  
'Skindeep', Ode to Art, Singapore  
Van Loon en Simons, Netherlands
- 2010 'Thin Air', Air Gallery, London  
'Aria Sottile', Vecchiato Arte, Padua, Italy  
'Unud', AM Gallery Roquetas Del Mar, Almeria, Spain  
'Iconii', Chapter House, Canterbury Cathedral, England  
'Skin Deep', Ode to Art, Singapore
- 2001-2010 Gallery Different, London
- 2008 Albemarle Gallery, London
- 2007 Galleria Il Ponte Contemporanea, Rome  
Galerie Van Loon en Simons, Vught, Netherlands  
'Antibodies', Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, Vancouver, Canada
- 2005 Catto Gallery, Hampstead, London  
Etienne & Van Loon, Oisterwijk, Netherlands
- 2004 Hotel Linde, Mariaworth, Austria
- 2003 Camino Real Gallery, Boca Raton, Florida, USA  
Magidson Fine Art, Aspen, Colorado, USA  
'Online', Platform for Art, Gloucester Road, London  
Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, Vancouver, Canada  
Galerie Bernd Duerr, Munich, Germany
- 1992-2000 Gallery Differentiate, London
- 1997 The Festival of Erotica, Olympia, London
- 1996 Artopia, New York, USA
- 1995 Magidson Fine Art, Aspen, Colorado, USA  
Posner Fine Art, Santa Monica, California, USA
- 1994 Joel Kessler Gallery, Miami, Florida, USA  
Fire Station Gallery, Sydney, Australia  
The Emporio Armani, Special Collaboration, Brompton Road, London
- 1993 Catto Gallery, Hampstead, London
- 1990 Wates City Tower, London
- 1987-1991 Salama-Caro Gallery, Cork Street, London
- 1988 'Crucifix', Installation at Winchester Cathedral, England
- 1986 Forum, Zurich, Switzerland  
Navy Pier, Chicago, USA  
Savacou Fine Art, Toronto, Canada  
Simpsons of Piccadilly, London
- 1984-1986 Brompton Gallery, Knightsbridge, London

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

- Bede's World Museum, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear, England
- Citibank, London
- Faith Zone, Millennium Dome, Greenwich, London
- Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome, Italy
- Hanover Grange, Montego Bay, Jamaica
- Hyatt, Hamburg
- Millennium Sculpture, St Mary the Less, Chilton, Winchester, England
- Museum Beelden aan Zee, Den Haag, Netherlands
- National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada
- National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
- Natural History Museum, London
- Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines
- Southwark Bridge, London
- Wimbledon (The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, Centre Court)
- Wimbledon, England