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Bridget McCrum The Conference of the Birds

5 September – 24 October 2020
MESSUMS YORKSHIRE

Messums of Harrogate's new exhibition presents Leeds born artist Bridget McCrum's most recent drawings *The Conference of the Birds* alongside a collection of bronze and stone sculptures. Still working with intensity, Bridget McCrum has made her career in England and this show is the 86 year old artist's first in Yorkshire.

Bridget McCrum (nee Bain) was shipped to the west country from a home in London to avoid the war: there she found horses, landscape, art, and above all friendship with a young Elisabeth Frink. This exhibition, which coincides with the display of Elisabeth Frink's studio in the Messums Wiltshire barn gallery, brings together Bridget McCrum's recent works with some of her earlier pieces. It looks at how McCrum, like Frink, found ways to break free from the restraints of artistic precision.

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McCrum's work is a fusion of the ancient and the modern. Inspired by the ancient Mesopotamian artefacts she discovered during her youthful travels in the Middle East, and by the work of Brancusi, Hepworth, Moore and Frink, McCrum's approach to sculpting is a reductive one, removing mass from a block of stone, using carving and sanding tools. The basis of her work is a lyrical abstraction of living forms, a process after which only the primary elements of her animals and birds remain identifiable. She arrives at stylised shapes that play with light and weightlessness, as with many of her birds which may be taking off, alighting or in flight. In her charcoal drawings her favourite subject of birds suits her desire to depict speed and movement. Her simplified forms capture the weightless of the birds' bodies suspended in mid-air.

Johnny Messum says "We are delighted to be holding Bridget McCrum's first Yorkshire exhibition in our new Harrogate Gallery. We have shown Bridget's works in our galleries in London and Wiltshire and it is very fitting that her sculpture and drawings should be introduced to art lovers in the county where she was born."

For further information and images please contact press@messumswiltshire.com

Notes for Editors:

Bridget McCrum was born in Horsforth, Leeds in 1934 and went on to train as a painter with Lesjeck Musjynski at Farnham School of Art in the 1950s. Encouraged by her childhood friend and mentor Elisabeth Frink, from 1980, she began to work primarily in stone, having learned her craft from John Joekes and Andrea Schulewitz on the South Downs. McCrum also works with bronze, a metal she uses to cast many of her stone pieces. Today she divides her time between her studio near the village of Dittisham in South Devon and her home in Gozo, Malta.

For further information about Bridget McCrum see www.bridgetmccrum.com

An illustrated **exhibition catalogue** with an essay by BBC arts editor Will Gompertz is available at www.messumswiltshire.com/private-bridget-mccrum/

To view **Messum's short documentary film portrait** of the artist and her work - **Finding the Essence - Bridget McCrum** www.bridgetmccrum.com/press.

Filmed, directed and produced by Mark Kidel, the documentary takes an inside view of one of our greatest living sculptors. Visiting her Dittisham home and studio, Mark films and interviews Bridget as she embarks on her latest projects including a return to two-dimensional work.

To listen to the podcast with Peter Murray CBE, founder and director of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park on A Place Apart: **Elisabeth Frink's Studio**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUrJhrcLMqk&feature=youtu.be>