

MESSUMS WILTSHIRE

ART DESIGN PERFORMANCE EDUCATION

A Place Apart – Saving Elisabeth Frink’s Studio

4 July – 18 October 2020

Messums Wiltshire



The working world of Elisabeth Frink is coming to Messums Wiltshire this summer with the resurrection of her Woolland studio in our historic tithe barn. The studio, which Messums rescued from collapse in 2019, will be reimagined to display a collection of original plasters alongside tools and objects salvaged from Woolland, providing a never before seen insight into one of Britain’s foremost sculptors.

Elisabeth Frink lived and worked at Woolland, Dorset from 1977 up until her death aged 63 in 1993, and her studio there bore witness to over a decade of prolific drawing and sculpting. Partnering with renowned architects Stiff + Trevillion, the studio will be revived as an exhibition space displaying works from Frink’s studio and elements of her working practice and environment. As well as providing insight into her creative process, it will form a backdrop to a programme of events exploring creative spaces.

I could not work without a place where I am able to shut myself off... This is the place where I work, I have to keep it apart from everything else.

Elisabeth Frink

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'Dialogues' will run throughout the exhibition with a programme of film screenings, talks, panel discussions, performance and an architectural installation that gravitates around the concept of creative spaces. Sadler's Wells Young Associate Antony Matsena leads a performance response to Frink's work and in June the building will be filled with architectural models on the theme 'Living Within' – an architectural consideration of space from the point of view of how we choose to live.

A Place Apart is headlined by a remarkable body of photographs by Ian Chapman: *White Out of Dark - Saving Frink's plasters* (25 April – 31 May) documents the process of uncovering more than 80 original plasters that had been removed from her studio and held in storage between 2017 – 2019. Some were damaged, some mere fragments, but the sculptures bear the marks of Frink's hands and express humanitarian feelings and concerns. Their poignancy, strength, mastery and beauty are revealed through the images that Ian made over those two years.

The responsive nature of the work, and the hostility of the environment required an immediacy and flexibility that was best realised through the medium of a phone camera. Once recorded in this format each image underwent a process akin to my former darkroom practice and the photographs were exposed to digital techniques echoing the editing, dodging and burning that happen under an enlarger.

Ian Chapman

In collaboration with Dorset History Centre the studio will also act as a recording studio for the creation of a sound archive, recording the memories of those who knew Frink first hand as they recount their memories of her within the resurrected studio, and help to build an oral record of primary source recollections recalling the life and work of one of Britain's greatest artists.

Born in 1930, Frink is amongst the most notable sculptors of the last century whose works continue to be widely exhibited in public and private collections throughout the world. In 1969 Frink was awarded a CBE and in 1971 she was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy. During the decade of 1982-1992 she was awarded a DBE, had a solo exhibition at the Royal Academy and was awarded a Companion of Honour.

'A Place Apart' is adapted from a longer quote by Frink that includes the following words: 'I could not work without a place where I am able to shut myself off... This is the place where I work, I have to keep it apart from everything else.'

The exhibition has been made possible with the assistance of time and loans from The Dorset Museum, The Dorset History Centre, The Yorkshire Sculpture Park, The Ingram Collection, Annette Ratuszniak as well as private collectors.

Notes to editors:

A Place Apart – Saving Elisabeth Frink's Studio (25 April – 28 June)

Ian Chapman - White Out of Dark: Saving Frink's plasters (25 April – 31 May)

Preview, Friday 24 April, 6pm

Full events programme available on request.

Image credit: 'Hand from Risen Christ', Ian Chapman

Sound archive recordings: for further details email hannah.hooks@messumswiltshire.com

For all press enquiries please email press@messumswiltshire.com