

# MESSUMS

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## Linda Sormin

5 March - 1 May 2022

The Barn, Messums Wiltshire

Accompanying the landmark exhibition, **No Boundaries: Contemporary Canadian Ceramic** is a solo exhibition for **Linda Sormin**.

Linda Sormin is a professor at New York University, but no less Canadian for that. More than anyone engaged in the medium, over the last decades she has pushed ceramic into wholly new terrain, in which the vessel disappears to be replaced by networked clouds of coloured threads and pipes. She integrates into the clay components broken fragments of things, discarded and disowned detritus, and pieces of writing, to create linear, open sculptural works that resemble neurological structures. This is probably a most appropriate analogy: her process of searching, collecting, and assembling seems to be geared to the capturing of the ephemeral: incidents and moments that have gone, leaving behind only fragments of evidence. She describes her outlook:

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*“To make space for new discovery in any particular place or situation, how might I loosen my grip on language and methodology? Where is there opportunity to reshape my material, visual, spatial, conceptual and kinetic expectations? Research includes scavenging, collecting, disassembling and rebuilding fragments into new forms.”*

Through sculpture and site-responsive installations, Linda Sormin explores fragility, tension, migration, survival and change. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently at United Contemporary (Toronto, ON), Patricia Sweetow Gallery (San Francisco, CA) and Ferrin Contemporary (North Adams, MA). She was a participant at the European Ceramic Workcentre in the Netherlands this year, creating new work for three exhibitions: “Ceramics in the Expanded Field: Sculpture, Performance and the Possibilities of Clay”, at MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA; Peach Corner Gallery in Copenhagen, Denmark opening in 2022; and Messums Wiltshire.

Sormin lives and works in New York City, and is Associate Professor of Studio Art at New York University. She has taught ceramics at Emily Carr University, Rhode Island School of Design, Sheridan College and Alfred University. Born in Bangkok, Sormin moved to Canada with her family at the age of five. She has a BA in English Literature and worked in community development for four years in Thailand and Laos. She studied ceramics at Andrews University (BA, English Literature, 1993), Sheridan College (Ceramics Diploma, 2001) and Alfred University (MFA, Ceramic Art, 2003).



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## **About Messums Wiltshire**

Messums Wiltshire is a leading multi-purpose gallery and arts centre. It has become a platform for creative expression across artistic genre and a meeting point of minds to explore how art as a language is made, interpreted, resolved and shared.

The gallery opened in Autumn 2016 after a two-year restoration project to bring a thirteenth century tithe barn back to life as an exhibition and event space. The gallery's one year anniversary was marked with the opening of the Long Gallery, a former dairy that lies perpendicular to the main barn to present two-dimensional works of art and objects of scale as well as The Mess Restaurant. The exterior landscape was remodelled in 2020 with sculpture grounds and outside seating,

In 2020 a Membership Programme was launched to help support the ambitious artistic programming in Wiltshire, including international artist residencies, Contemporary Dance premiers and educational workshops. Messums Creative sees the act of physical making, often lacking in a digital world, brought back into focus via ceramic workshops, which have been running since Summer 2021.

This September the gallery is marking its five year milestone with a show of Elisabeth Frink's sculpture: Man is an Animal represents one of the most significant collections to be brought together in this country since the artist's death in April 1993 and runs until January 2022, and recontextualises the importance of figurative sculpture in the latter part of the 20th century. The gallery also launched a Photography Department with a presentation of Robert Capa's work at Photo London and an ongoing collaboration with leading contemporary photographers.

The gallery's ongoing Active Environmentalism programming, a series of talks from leading minds and thinkers, aims to inform individual thinking around collective decisions - thinking at the intersection of science and necessity sits closely with the problem solving inherent in the creative process. Underpinning all of this is an appreciation and respect for nature to which most artists and individuals would readily align.

Messums Wiltshire is an independent business run by a team led by Johnathan Messum with exhibition and event spaces in Cork Street London and Messums Yorkshire in James Street in Harrogate.