

Large print guide

# Artists' Dorset

Please do not remove from  
the gallery and return it back  
to the holder



# Visitor Journey

Hello and welcome to Artists' Dorset. This guide will help you navigate around the gallery and contains large print introductory texts and object captions for each of the rooms you will pass through.

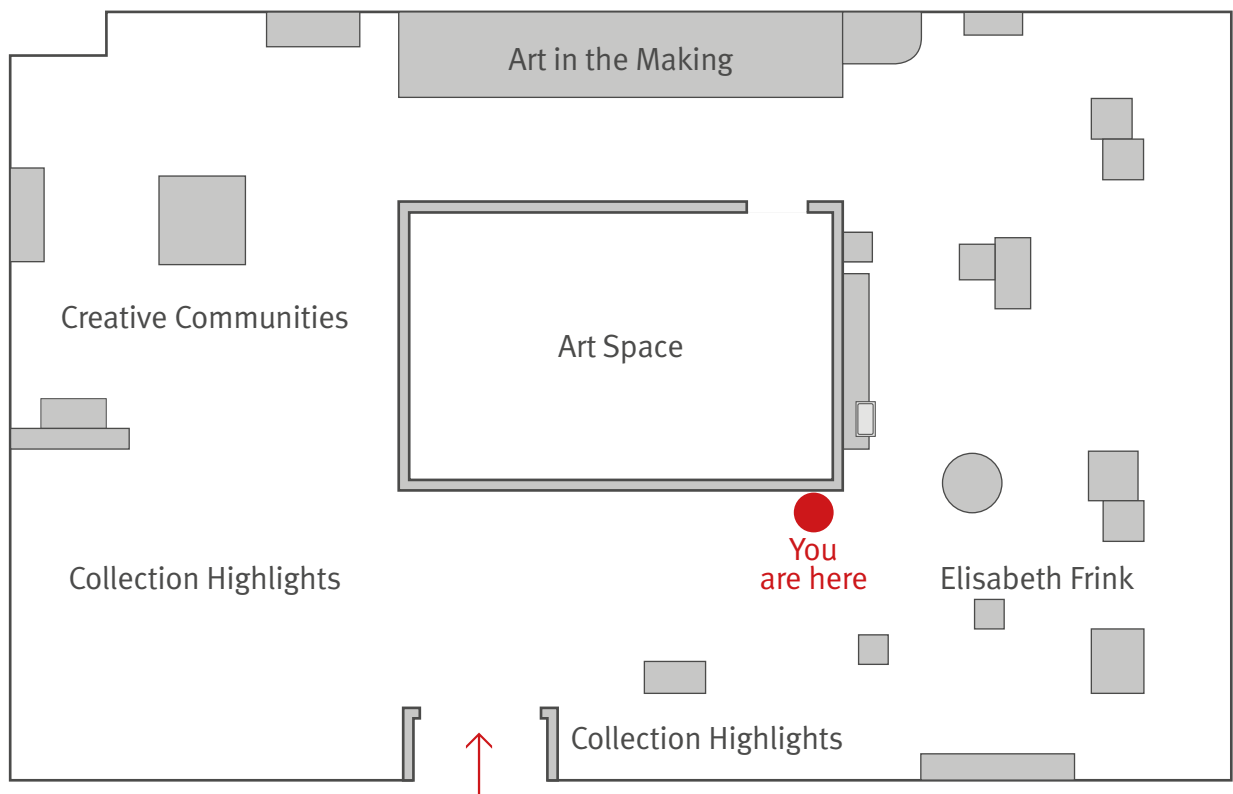
We apologise if some of the objects have been removed from display or they have changed. Manuscripts and textiles fade if exposed to too much light so we rotate them and replace with facsimiles when required.

There are no large print labels for the Art in the Making display space as these exhibits will rotate on a regular basis.



Sound point





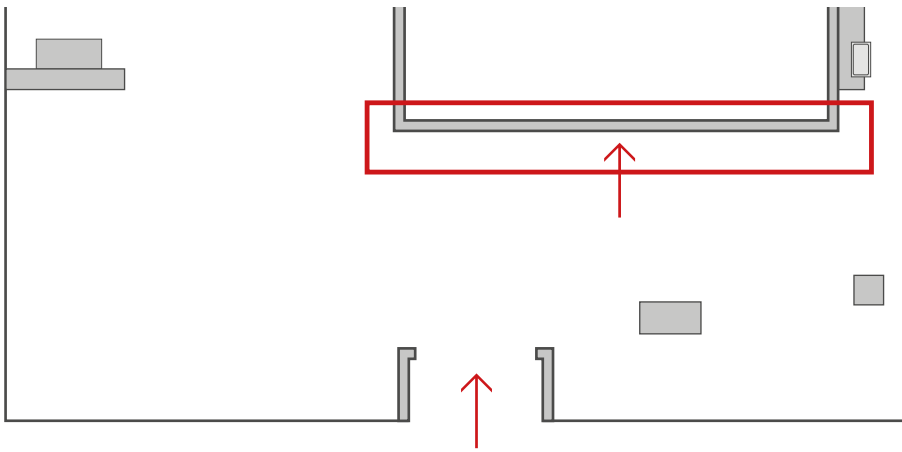
**Collection Highlights** – discover some of the treasures in the collection from a portrait by William Hogarth to Alfred Wallis’s paintings of fishing boats.

**Creative Communities** – find out about artists, sculptors and writers connected to the village of Chaldon Herring in Dorset.

**Elisabeth Frink** – lose yourself in the art and sculptures of Elisabeth Frink, one of the most significant British sculptors of the 20th century.

**Art in the Making** – a space for temporary displays of art, textiles and crafts, with environmental controls for light-sensitive objects.

**Art Space** – where art, engagement and research come together through workshops and study visits.



On the wall (at the start of the gallery):

# Artists' Dorset

With its dramatic coastline and rolling landscapes, Dorset has attracted many artists and lent itself to artistic ways of life. Here you can discover paintings, sculpture and objects that reflect the county's rich history of creating and collecting.

Many works tell a story about local people or places. Others were created by artists and writers living in the region. Some were donated by those who settled here and found peace, inspiration and sanctuary in the beautiful countryside.

Explore the Museum's collection in different areas of this gallery. Highlights include work by Georgian portrait painters, seascapes by Alfred Wallis, sculptures by Elisabeth Frink, and creations by Dorset's artistic communities and craftspeople.

The Art Space is open to visitors by appointment and during special events. Please ask at the Welcome Desk for more details.



Left

***Resurrection***

Sir James Thornhill painted religious and historical subjects on a grand scale and often worked in Dorset. He created *Resurrection* for a private chapel and it was later moved to Folke church near Sherborne.

Two of his most famous murals are in the *Painted Hall* at the Greenwich Old Royal Naval College and inside the dome of St Paul's Cathedral.

Thornhill was born in Melcombe Regis and later bought back his family's ancestral home in Dorset – Thornhill House.

Sir James Thornhill (1675–1734)

Oil on canvas

c.1700–1705

On loan from St Laurence Church, Folke  
LI.2019.10

Right, top

***The Drovers' Lane near Bisham Abbey, Berkshire***

Rolling hills, dappled shade and a shepherd with his flock create an idealised view of rural life. In this tranquil pastoral scene people have tamed the landscape and everything has its place.

Alfred Delamotte was the son of a French refugee living in Weymouth. His artistic promise came to the attention of George III on a royal visit to the Dorset seaside town. The King's support enabled Delamotte to study at the Royal Academy in London.

Alfred Delamotte (1775–1863)

Oil on canvas

1815

1938.46.1



Right, bottom

***East Stoke Mill, Dorset***

Nestled among trees and water meadows, East Stoke Mill between Wool and Wareham features in this inviting rural scene.

Painted by Frederick Whitehead it shows a stone mill, sluice gate and river bordered by rushes.

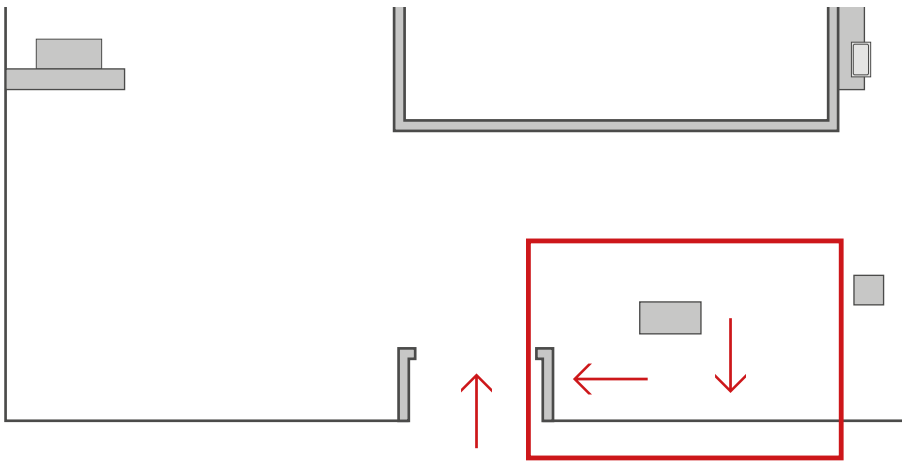
Whitehead was best known for his paintings of the Dorset countryside. He and his wife spent part of the year travelling around the county in a horse-drawn caravan.

Frederick William Newton Whitehead (1853–1938)

Oil on canvas

c.1900

ART.2422



On the wall:

# Alfred Stevens

## (1817–1875)

Stevens' life is a story of triumph and tragedy. He had no formal training but was once named the 'greatest artist of the 19th century' before dying alone in his studio with his most important work unfinished.

Born in Blandford Forum, Stevens explored and painted in Italy for almost 10 years before returning to Britain. He became a well-respected artist but had limited commercial success.

His hard work paid off in 1857 when he was awarded a commission to design a memorial to the Duke of Wellington – a huge monument in St Paul's Cathedral. It would have been the highlight of his career, but the project was delayed by payment disputes as well as Stevens' failing health and his perfectionism. When he died almost 20 years later the monument was still not complete.



## On plinth behind:

### *Truth and Falsehood and Valour and Cowardice*

These heroic sculptures show truth tearing out falsehood's tongue, and courage crushing cowardice with a shield.

They are based on the work Stevens did for his commission to create a monument in St Paul's Cathedral. It was a memorial for Arthur Wellesley, the 1st Duke of Wellington and also included a triumphal arch, horse and a reclining statue of the Duke.

There were all kinds of problems during the project and Stevens died before he finished it. The monument wasn't completed until 1912.

Alfred Stevens (1817–1875)

Plaster

1857–1875

2019.8.1-2

## On the wall:

### *Alfred Burning the Cakes*

Stevens was only seven years old when he painted this. It shows King Alfred burning cakes while distracted by his kingdom's problems. A local vicar called Reverend Samuel Best was so impressed by Stevens' talent that he raised money for him to go to Italy to study works of art.

Alfred Stevens (1817–1875)

Watercolour on paper

1824

ART.563

Left

### **Sketch of a column**

After Stevens came back from Italy in 1845, he taught architectural drawing at the Government School of Design in London. He left after two years to work on commissions including the doors for London's Geological Museum (now part of the Natural History Museum) and the ceilings of the Italian Court in the Crystal Palace.

Alfred Stevens (1817–1875)

Pen on paper

Mid-19th century

1999.42.11



Left, top

### **Study of torso, arms and hands**

Stevens created a feeling of movement and strength in these muscular arms. They are probably studies for a sculpture or a piece of interior decoration. While in Italy Stevens had learnt a lot by assisting sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen in the early 1840s. It was the closest he came to a traditional art education.

Alfred Stevens (1817–1875)

Pencil on paper

c.1860

1999.42.78

Left, bottom

### ***Jesus Chez Levi***

Stevens travelled to Italy when he was 16. He spent a lot of time in Florence, where he copied art to earn money while he learnt new techniques. He sold his copies of old masterpieces to dealers. This was probably a preparatory sketch for a copy of *The Feast in the House of Levi* by Paolo Veronese.

Alfred Stevens (1817–1875)

Pencil on paper

1830–1839

1999.42.9

Far left top and bottom

### **Sketches of figures**

Stevens often made preparatory sketches for his work as a sculptor and designer. These figures were probably for one of his interior house decoration schemes.

In the 1850s he produced award-winning designs for metalwork, terracotta ornaments and chimney pieces. At that time he was chief designer for the Sheffield metalwork manufacturer Hoole & Co.

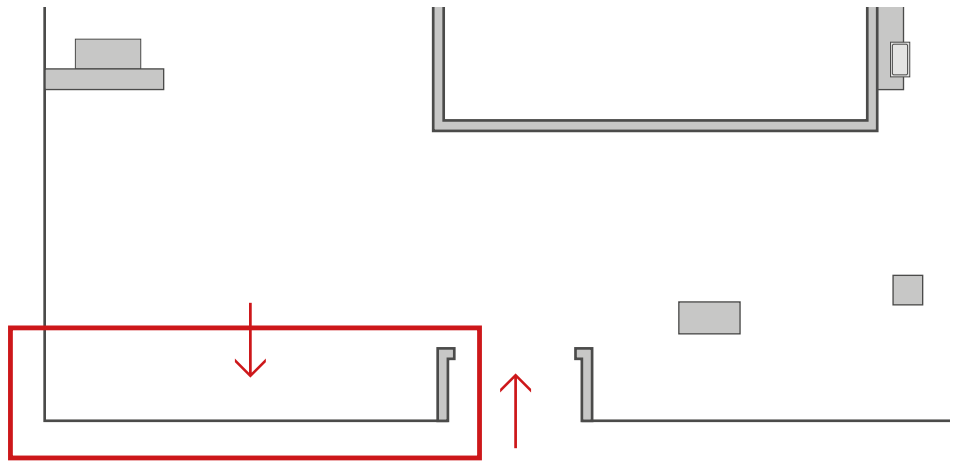
He also worked on a dining room ceiling and fireplace at Dorchester House in London. The sculptures he made for the fireplace drew comparisons with the work of Michelangelo, and are similar to these sketches.

Alfred Stevens (1817–1875)

Red chalk on paper

1850–1860

Far left 1999.42.80, left 1999.42.81



On the wall:

# The Art of Collecting

Many of the paintings and sculptures in this gallery are here thanks to the generosity of the people and organisations who gave them to the Museum.

Singer and artist David Brynley (1902–1981) owned these works by Alfred Wallis and Christopher Wood. Brynley was part of a bohemian community of collectors, writers, artists and sculptors who visited or lived in Dorset. He and his partner Norman Notley moved to a cottage near Corfe Castle after the First World War.

They were friendly with the artistic Spencer-Watson family at nearby Dunshay Manor, sometimes performing songs there. They also met Jim Ede, a curator and collector who promoted the work of Alfred Wallis and Christopher Wood. He gave the couple several paintings by these artists and Brynley bequeathed some of them to the Museum.

## Highlights from David Brynley's collection

### Christopher Wood (1901–1930)

Wood started drawing while he was recovering from septicaemia. He went on to study architecture at the University of Liverpool, then travelled to Paris to train at an art school.

There he mixed with other artists, meeting Augustus John, Jean Cocteau and Picasso and exhibiting his work in London and Paris. His style was influenced by Alfred Wallis after they met in St Ives in 1928.

Tragically he died young after throwing himself under a train.

Left, top

#### ***Still Life, Vase of Flowers***

*Flowers give me more pleasure than anything and still life is the thing I like painting the best.*

Christopher Wood, letter to his mother, 1923

Wood painted these flowers in the same year that he visited St Ives and met Ben and Winifred Nicholson. He became part of their group of young artists and sculptors, the Seven and Five Society. He and Winifred shared a passion for painting flowers, experimenting with colour, light, shape and expression.



Christopher Wood (1901–1930)

Oil on canvas

1926

ART.2302

Bottom

***The Seine at Passy, France***

The bustle of Parisian life is viewed as if through a window. Christopher Wood painted this scene while training at a Paris art school and it shows his keen eye for everyday events and ordinary people.

The writer and artist Jean Cocteau admired Wood's primitive style and straightforward approach stating 'Before the canvases you don't think, you live... A bunch of flowers is a bunch of flowers, smell it. A street is a street, walk down it'.

Christopher Wood (1901–1930)

Oil on canvas

1924

ART.2304.1

## Highlights from David Brynley's collection

### Alfred Wallis (1855–1942)

Known for his naive paintings of ships and seascapes, Wallis painted on anything that came to hand including driftwood and cardboard boxes.

Wallis lived in St Ives, Cornwall and worked as a seaman, scrap merchant and ice cream seller before taking up painting at 70. He began painting after his wife died and covered his Cornish cottage walls with pictures that reflected his experience of the seafaring world.

Other artists were drawn to the directness and childlike quality of his compositions. Simple outlines of boats and buildings dominate their surroundings and strong brushstrokes suggest different sea conditions.

Left to right, top to bottom

### ***Landscape with House and Trees***

Alfred Wallis (1855–1942)

Oil on canvas

1922–1940

ART.2301

***Fishing Boat with Two Masts and Yellow Sails***

Alfred Wallis (1855–1942)

Oil on cardboard

1922–1929

ART.2297

***Fishing Boat***

Alfred Wallis (1855–1942)

Oil on cardboard

1922–1940

ART.2299

***A Three-Masted Schooner***

Alfred Wallis (1855–1942)

Oil and pencil on cardboard

1922–1940

ART.2300

***Harbour St Ives***

Alfred Wallis (1855–1942)

Oil and pencil on cardboard

c.1936

ART.2298

On the wall:

## Portraits of Dorset

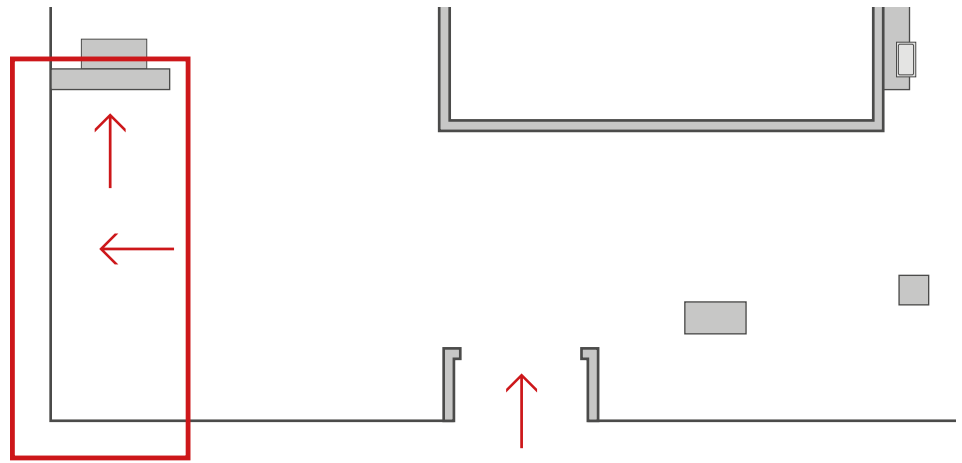
*...how fond the English are of having their pictures drawn.*

Jean André Rouquet, *L'Etat des Arts, en Angleterre*, 1755

Wealthy Dorset people invited well-known artists of the 18th century to paint their portraits. Thomas Gainsborough, George Romney and William Hogarth were popular choices.

Amid the widespread poverty of 18th-century Dorset, these people prospered and could afford luxuries such as paintings. Some had made their fortunes through trade, local industry and the land, others were already wealthy landowners. They showed their power, status, education and class by displaying art in their large country estates and town houses.

Many commissioned portraits of themselves, their families and pets, and paintings of their estates. Artists visited Dorset to paint their subjects in landscape settings, or families travelled to the painters' studios in cities including Bath and London.



Right

***Rebecca Steward (1766–1859)***

Steward's youthful spirit and the softness of her silk dress shine out of this painting. She lived until her nineties as a single woman and is buried in Dorchester. Her father Gabriel Steward was a Weymouth MP who commissioned Thomas Beach to paint portraits of his two eldest children.

Beach was born in Milton Abbas and studied in London under the portrait painter Sir Joshua Reynolds. He moved to Bath and often visited Dorset to paint wealthy clients.

Thomas Beach (1738–1806)

Oil on canvas

1783

ART.2348

Top

### ***John Bragge (1741–1784)***

Thomas Gainsborough demonstrates his skill as a portrait painter here, capturing John Bragge's features, the light falling on his hair and the perfect cut of his coat.

Gainsborough was a popular choice for a country gentleman like Bragge, who lived at Sadborrow House in West Dorset. He shows him as a man of status and importance with his fine clothes, intelligent gaze and confident manner. Bragge sat for this portrait while visiting Bath with his wife Elizabeth, who also had her portrait painted by Gainsborough.

Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788)

Oil on canvas

1767

2001.38

These paintings were purchased with the support of Art Fund and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund

Bottom

### ***Elizabeth Bragge (born Elizabeth Adney, d. 1783)***

Thomas Gainsborough demonstrates his skill as a portrait painter, capturing Elizabeth Bragge's fine features and the light falling on the silk ribbons around her neck. He was a popular choice for wealthy people and he highlights her status and the beauty for which she was famous.



Elizabeth grew up in West Dorset and married local landowner John Bragge in 1762. They lived at Sadbarrow House and she sat for this portrait while visiting Bath with her husband, who also had his portrait painted by Gainsborough.

Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788)

Oil on canvas

1767

On loan from Charities Aid Foundation America, thanks to the generosity of Delia Brinton

LI.2022

***Thomas Rackett the Younger (1756–1840)***

Here 12-year-old Thomas Rackett is about to cut a sprig from a hazel tree with a pruner. His hat and book lie on the ground.

George Romney painted this scene, which symbolises the boy's interest in botany, natural history and learning. Rackett never lost his fascination for plants. As vicar of Spetisbury he planted unusual trees in the vicarage grounds and promoted Dorset's natural history, archaeology and geology to leading scientists and academics.

George Romney (1734–1802)

Oil on canvas

1768

2008.20

Top

***Thomas Rackett the Elder (c.1725–1799)***

Rackett ran a London tailoring business. He lived a comfortable life in Covent Garden, so he could afford to have himself painted by one of the leading portrait artists of the day. The elegant brocaded waistcoat he wears suggests his trade and displays his wealth.

Rackett had made friendships and connections in Dorset as a boy at Milton Abbey school. When his son Thomas became a Dorset vicar he bought some land for him at Spetisbury.

George Romney (1734–1802)

Oil on canvas

c.1776

2008.21

Bottom

***Mrs Thomas Rackett (c.1734–1800)***

Mary Rackett's strong and confident personality comes across in this portrait and also in letters she wrote. She looks relaxed in her loose silk gown, with pearls threaded through her piled-up hair and a book in her hand.

Mary knew Dorset through her husband and son. She moved in influential and artistic circles and was close to the wife of David Garrick (1717–1779) – the actor the famous Garrick Club is named after.

George Romney (1734–1802)

Oil on canvas

1775

2008.22

These paintings were purchased with the support of Art Fund,  
The National Lottery Heritage Fund and many other generous supporters.

***Thomas Coombes of Dorsetshire aged 108***

The weathered features, grey-green eyes and pinched lips of this elderly Dorset man stand out among the elegant Georgian portraits of the gentry. He may have been a river boatman or a sailor.

Hogarth probably met Coombes through his wife Jane. Her father was the Dorset artist James Thornhill who had opened a home for ‘decayed seamen’. At the time there was an interest in people who lived to be over 100 years old, so perhaps Hogarth hoped to make money from this portrait.

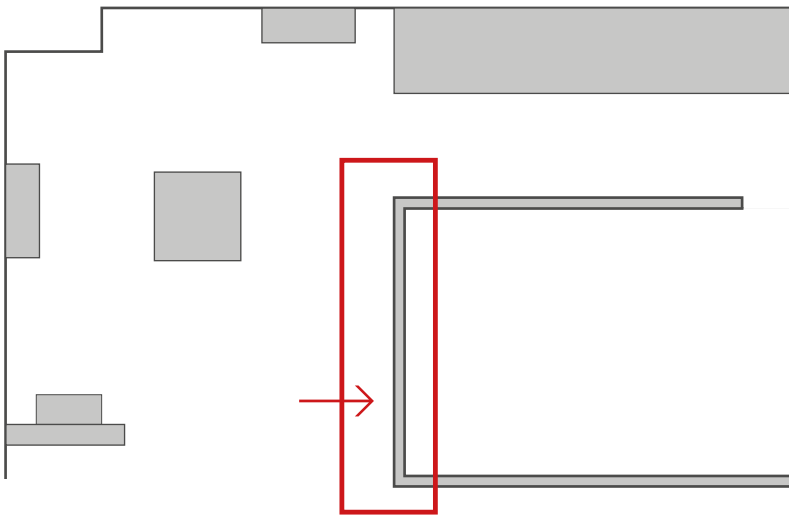
William Hogarth (1697–1764)

Oil on canvas

1742

Private ownership

LI.2011.7



On the wall:

## Chaldon Herring a creative community

*It was an extraordinary place: extraordinary things happened there and extraordinary people were to be found there.*

Valentine Ackland, *For Sylvia: An Honest Account*, 1985

Hidden away in chalk hills with the sea beyond, a quiet Dorset village called Chaldon Herring became home to a community of artists and writers in the 1920s and 30s.

It centred on the novelist Theodore Francis Powys, one of 11 talented siblings. Theodore moved to Chaldon Herring in 1904 to focus on writing. When his novels and short stories were published in the early 1920s, the village began to attract visitors. Some were writers and artists who stayed or settled there. Secluded rural Chaldon Herring offered them the freedom to live the way they wanted.

Discover the stories of some of the people who made it extraordinary, from the Powys family to Sylvia Townsend Warner, Valentine Ackland and Elizabeth Muntz.

## On the plinth:

### Head of Theodore Francis Powys (1875–1953)

Llewelyn Powys called his brother Theodore the ‘white melancholy head at East Chaldon’.

This monumental sculpture captures the feeling of these words in stone. The sculptor Elizabeth Muntz carved it in her studio garden using stone from a nearby quarry.

Theodore’s work includes novels and short stories with themes of life and death, good and evil, set in Dorset’s rural landscape.

Elizabeth Muntz (1894–1977)

Purbeck

1949

On loan from Bristol Museum & Art Gallery  
LI.2012.6

## On the wall:

Top

### *Katie on ‘Josephine’*

Katie (1886–1963) was a nickname given to the sister of the painter Gertrude Powys – she was also called Philippa. Katie used to roam the cliffs and downs near her home, walking or riding her horse Josephine. She wrote, but struggled to become as successful as her brothers.

Gertrude spent much of her life looking after her family because their mother had died young. She studied at the Slade School of Art in London and then in Paris. In the 1920s she moved to Dorset to live with Katie at Chydyok Farm near Chaldon Herring.

Gertrude Mary Powys (1877–1952)

Oil on canvas

c.1935

2019.7.2

Bottom

### ***Chydyok Dorset***

In 1931 writer Llewelyn Powys (1884–1939) and his wife Alyse Gregory moved to a cottage next door to his sister Gertrude at Chydyok Farm.

Llewelyn built a shelter in the garden and he spent most of his time there, writing and reading. He suffered from tuberculosis and was cared for by Alyse and Gertrude. While living at Chydyok, Llewelyn published a number of books including *Glory of Life* (1934), *Earth Memories* (1934) and *Dorset Essays* (1935).

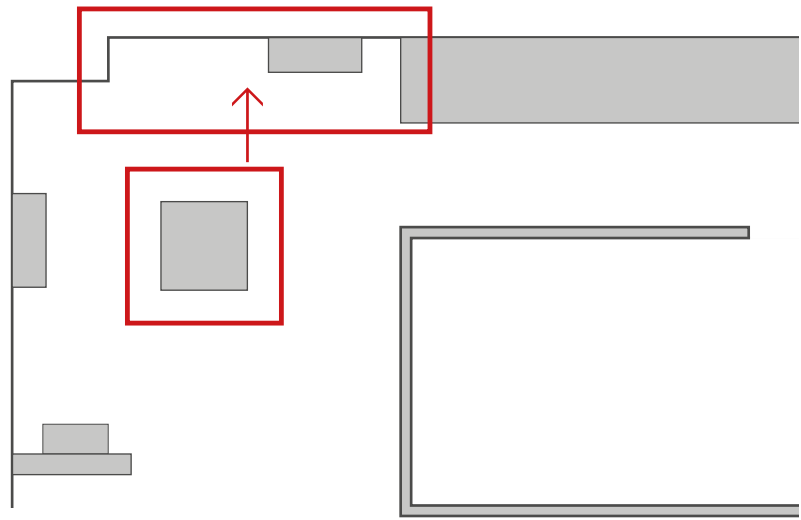
Gertrude Mary Powys (1877–1952)

Oil on canvas

1924

2019.7.3





On the wall:

## John Cowper Powys (1872–1963)

The eldest and most successful member of the Powys family, John was a novelist, lecturer, literary critic, poet and philosopher. He visited Chaldon Herring but never settled there, unlike his siblings Theodore, Gertrude, Philippa (Katie) and Llwelyn.

John was born in Derbyshire. He studied at Sherborne School in Dorset, and then went to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

Wessex, the setting for Thomas Hardy's fiction, inspired him. He wrote his own series of 'Wessex' novels based on the towns and countryside he grew up in – *Wolf Solent* (1929), *A Glastonbury Romance* (1932), *Weymouth Sands* (1934) and *Maiden Castle* (1936). His work was admired by other writers including JB Priestley, Angus Wilson, CS Forester and Hugh Walpole.

After working as a touring lecturer in America for many years he returned to Dorset with his partner Phyllis Playter. They stayed for a short time in 1934 and 1935 before moving to Wales.

### ***John Cowper Powys (1872–1963)***

Gertrude painted sensitive portraits of her siblings and other artists and writers who were part of the Chaldon Herring community. In this painting she highlighted the strong profile of her brother John by using shadow and a pale background. Perhaps the book in his hand symbolises his career as a writer.

Gertrude Mary Powys (1877–1952)

Oil on canvas

c.1934–1935

2019.7.4

### **In the showcase:**

Left to right

#### ***Wolf Solent***

This is the story of a man retreating to Dorset after he is sacked from his teaching job in London. Later in his life John described it as ‘a book of Nostalgia, written in a foreign country with the pen of a traveller in the ink-blood of his home’.

John Cowper Powys (1872–1963)

Macdonald & Co., London

1961

On loan from The Powys Society  
L.1978.199

### ***Maiden Castle***

When John returned to England in 1934 he rented a small flat in Dorchester. At the time the famous archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler was digging at nearby Maiden Castle, making discoveries that raised questions about its date and history. John was fascinated by the excavations and artefacts found there, and included them in his novel.

John Cowper Powys (1872–1963)  
Cassell, London  
1937

On loan from The Powys Society  
LI.2019.8.2

### ***Weymouth Sands***

John was living in America when he wrote *Weymouth Sands*. Set in a town that held special childhood memories for him, it spoke of his Dorset connections. The novel centres on Jobber Skald, a man who is obsessed with killing the town's magnate, and his love for a young girl.

John Cowper Powys (1872–1963)  
Simon & Schuster, New York  
1934

On loan from The Powys Society  
LI.2019.8.1

## ***Autobiography***

John Cowper Powys said ‘I have tried to write my life as if I were confessing to a priest, philosopher and wise old woman. I have tried to write it as if I were going to be executed when it was finished’. The result is both humorous and honest.

John Cowper Powys (1872–1963)

John Lane, The Bodley Head, London

1934

On loan from The Powys Society

LI.2019.8.3

## **Pen used by John Cowper Powys**

John always dipped his pens, never actually filling the reservoir with ink. He kept this Swan ink pen with its original box.

c.1950

2019.7.1

On the wall:

## Elizabeth Muntz (1894–1977)

Walking along the Dorset cliffs in the 1940s you might have seen the sculptor Elizabeth Muntz in a duffel coat, hard at work with her tool bag next to her. She rode her horse up to a place called White Nothe to carve lettering into a Portland limestone memorial commemorating the writer Llewelyn Powys.

Muntz was born in Canada and studied at the Ontario College of Art, then in Paris and London. She discovered Chaldon Herring through Stephen Tomlin, a sculptor she met when she was studying in London. She bought a cottage there and built a studio in the garden where she made sculptures for exhibitions in London and abroad.

One of her most famous creations is a large head of Theodore Powys carved from local stone. It shows her understanding of modernist ideas in sculpture and architectural principles of construction.

### Land and seascapes

Elizabeth Muntz's oil sketches share subjects and working methods with her sculptures. When painting or sculpting children, she focused on form and movement rather than detail.

Muntz loved to work outdoors and was often seen on the Purbeck downs riding her horse to work, or inspiring her students as they sat on the hillside overlooking the sea. She painted the Dorset landscape – capturing the long line of a beach with a few brushstrokes, sometimes using jabs of charcoal in her work to give form to scudding clouds.

Top to bottom

#### *Landscape*

Elizabeth Muntz (1894–1977)

Oil on board

Mid-20th century

1993.285.227

#### *Children by the Shore*

Elizabeth Muntz (1894–1977)

Oil on canvas

1930–40

ART.2461

***Figure on a Beach***

Elizabeth Muntz (1894–1977)

Oil on board

Mid-20th century

1993.285.281A

**On the central plinths:**

***Child with Dove***

Elizabeth Muntz's work was often inspired by children, who loved to play in her cottage garden. This sculpture evokes the gentle and special relationship between child and nature.

Elizabeth Muntz (1894–1977)

Wood

1963

1993.285.303

***Erda***

Elizabeth Muntz wrote to the poet Robert Trevelyan describing how his 'oak tree' poem had inspired this sculpture. She recalled sitting on the grass with a baby on her lap 'all curled up like a leaf bearing plant'.

Elizabeth Muntz (1894–1977)

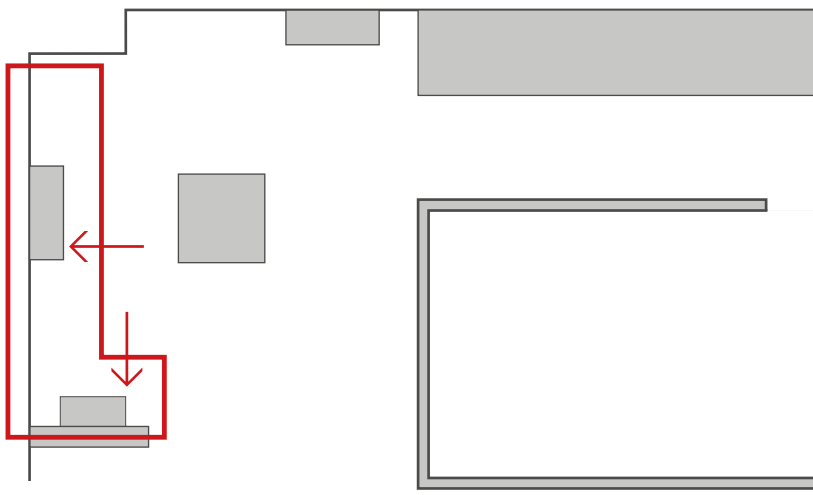
Bronze

1931

On loan from Manchester Art Gallery

1933.14





On the wall:

## Sylvia and Valentine

Sylvia Townsend Warner (1893–1978) and Valentine Ackland (1906–1969) championed individualism and creativity and expressed themselves through writing. In the 1920s Townsend Warner published several successful novels and Ackland wrote modernist poetry.

The couple began a deep and long-lasting relationship in 1930, often writing to each other even when they lived in the same house. Their joint poetry collection *Whether a Dove or Seagull* (1934) was groundbreaking in its open description of lesbian love and its collaborative style.

They became members of the Communist Party in 1935. The following year they went to Spain to work with a British Red Cross unit in the Spanish Civil War. Ackland's alcoholism and infidelity, as well as clashes over their differing levels of success strained their relationship, but they lived together until Valentine died in 1969.

## In the showcase:

### Valentine Ackland's patchwork jacket

Townsend Warner made this jacket for Ackland using 'crazy patchwork' techniques and lined it in red silk. It wasn't her first patchwork creation, as she had made colourful cushions and a bedspread for her London flat.

Sylvia Townsend Warner (1893–1978)

Silk, cotton and other fibres

c.1930

1981.5

### Travel suitcase

'Molly' Turpin (born Ackland) arrived in Chaldon Herring in November 1925. In the freedom of the Dorset countryside, 'Molly' began to explore her identity. She adopted the gender-neutral name, Valentine, and her new initials are embossed on this travel case. She went on to form a lasting relationship with the writer Sylvia Townsend Warner.

c.1935

STW.2012.125.4186

## On the wall:

### Sylvia Townsend Warner

Townsend Warner first visited Chaldon Herring in 1922 when the sculptor Stephen Tomlin introduced her to Theodore Powys. They became close friends and she moved into a cottage in the village in 1930.

Her first literary success was the novel *Lolly Willowes* (1926). Over her five-decade career she wrote short stories, poems and other novels, including *The True Heart* (1929) about Cupid and Psyche, and *The Corner That Held Them* (1948) set in a medieval nunnery.

### Valentine Ackland

Ackland is best known for her modernist poetry. Interest in her work revived after she died, with the emergence of women's studies and growing awareness of lesbian literature.

After a short and unhappy marriage she reinvented herself, changing her name from Mary Kathleen Macrory to Valentine Ackland. She challenged gender conventions by dressing in traditionally masculine clothes, and influential artists noticed her individual style. She first visited Chaldon Herring after being invited by a friend, Rachel Braden, and moved there in 1925.

Left

***Valentine Ackland***

Valentine Ackland mixed in creative circles and modelled for the sculptor Eric Gill during the 1920s. Gill wrote in his diaries that life, work and family ‘should all be in the soup together’. This unboundaried approach and the sexual abuse of his daughters makes it challenging to separate his art from his life. His work often evokes a divided response – it can appear brilliant and sublime, but at the same time his behaviour towards his family makes it difficult to evaluate.

Eric Gill (1882–1940)

Pencil on paper

c.1926

STW.2012.125.4722.1

Right

***Valentine Ackland***

Slicked-back hair and a waistcoat were part of Ackland’s distinctive style. Her eyes are cast down onto her reading to show her intellectual interests. Ackland met Gertrude when she first moved to Chaldon Herring, and was friendly with her brother Theodore.

Gertrude Mary Powys (1877–1952)

Oil on canvas

1925–1930

2019.7.5

## In the showcase:

Left to right

### Diary kept by Valentine Ackland

Ackland's emotionally charged diary spells out her daily life in rich detail. Like Townsend Warner's journal, it contains sketched out poems. They include *On High Chaldon* describing the sea and landscape near her home where 'spirits like deep-sea fishes are sweeping by'.

1930

STW.2012.125.2546

### Valentine Ackland

The love note found with this photograph was written by Elizabeth Wade White, an American who visited Dorset in 1938 and fell in love with Ackland. Wade White's initials are engraved on the frame. She was Townsend Warner's friend too and the three exchanged letters for decades.

1940

STW.2012.125.4728

***For Sylvia: An Honest Account***

Ackland wrote her memoir *For Sylvia* in 1949. In it she talks about her difficult childhood, coming to understand her sexuality, her troubled marriage and her alcoholism. It was published in 1985 after her death and is now seen as a pioneering account of early 20th century lesbianism.

Valentine Ackland (1906–1969)

Chatto & Windus, London

1985

STW.2012.125.4698

**Valentine's card**

Townsend Warner and Ackland often wrote to each other. They also loved to buy each other gifts and celebrate holidays and anniversaries. This card from Townsend Warner to Ackland is decorated with paper doilies and a poem.

11 October 1930

STW.2012.125.4711

## Diary kept by Sylvia Townsend Warner

Townsend Warner began keeping a diary in 1927 and wrote almost continuously until her death in 1978. In her quick-witted and vivid style she captured the spirit of rural life in Chaldon Herring. This diary records her relationship with Ackland and the visitors and friends who came to their home.

1930–1931

STW.2012.125.4719

## *Opus 7*

After the success of *Lolly Willowes* in 1926 and the publication of two other novels, Townsend Warner stopped writing for a while. Working on *Opus 7* renewed her passion and creativity. A narrative poem about a woman called Rebecca who grows beautiful flowers and sells them to buy gin, it explores themes of rural life, poverty and addiction.

Sylvia Townsend Warner (1893–1978)

Chatto & Windus, London

1931

STW.2012.125.4700

## **Sylvia Townsend Warner**

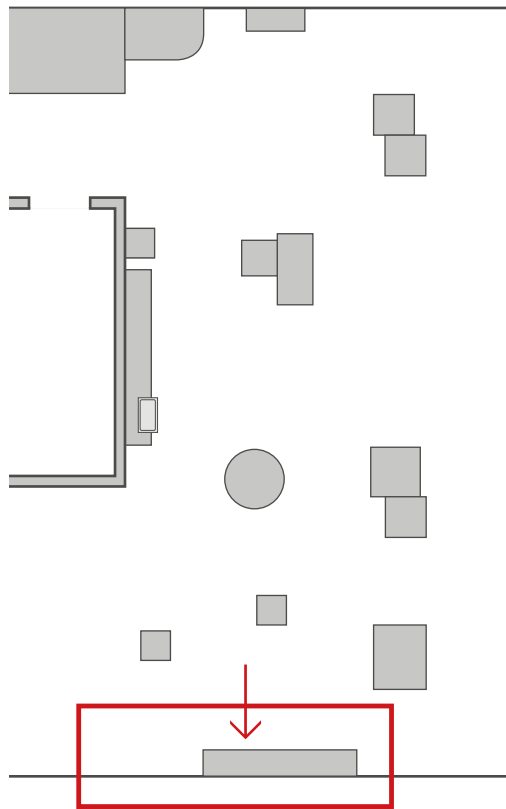
Townsend Warner met the fashion and portrait photographer Cecil Beaton when she lived in London. She recalled escaping with him to a cloakroom at a party and reading aloud from a book. Beaton took several photographs of her posing stylishly and seriously against the shiny backgrounds he used.

Cecil Beaton (1904–1980)

1928

RD.2524





On the wall:

# Elisabeth Frink

## (1930–1993)

Dame Elisabeth Frink RA, one of the most significant British sculptors of the 20th century, lived in Dorset from 1976 until 1993. She dealt with themes that reflected upon human existence. Drawing and printmaking played an important part in the development of her ideas.

Born in rural Suffolk in 1930, the background of war shaped much of her childhood. She studied art at Guildford and then at Chelsea where she focused on sculpture. Frink received acclaim early in her career – her sculptures were included in major exhibitions, she was awarded prestigious commissions and her work was bought for public and private collections.

Although participating in the artistic social scene of post-war Britain, she was fiercely independent. Physically strong and disciplined, she explored ways of working with plaster and the potential of figurative shapes that were then cast in bronze. This hands-on approach meant she never employed assistants.

Frink worked within a set of themes throughout her career – conflict, vulnerability, uncertainty and solitude. The motifs she used were inspired by human, animal and avian shapes, but were never wholly realistic.

### **The Elisabeth Frink bequest to Dorset Museum**

On Frink's death her home at Woolland passed into the care of her son, Lin Jammet. The house and grounds were sold, but the artworks and archive remained in Dorset, and were used for exhibitions and educational purposes.

In 2017 her son died, leaving the Frink Estate and Archive to public museums and galleries in the UK. This included a bequest of around 30 sculptures and over a hundred prints and drawings to Dorset Museum in 2020, many of which are on display in this gallery and other spaces throughout the Museum.

Dorset Museum is grateful for the generous support and expertise of Annette Ratuszniak, who led the curation of this display.

Find out more about Elisabeth Frink in the short film on your left.

**1930**

Born Thurlow, Suffolk

**1941**

Evacuated to Exmouth, Devon

**1947–49**

Guildford School of Art. Studies drawing, painting, sculpture

**1949–53**

Chelsea School of Art. Studies sculpture

**1951**

First London gallery exhibition

**1953**

Awarded prize in The Unknown Political Prisoner competition

*Bird* purchased by the Tate Gallery, now known as Tate Britain

**1954**

*Seated Man* shown in London County Council open-air exhibition

**1955**

Marries Michel Jammet and starts her visits to Ireland

**1957**

First public commissions. *Blind Beggar and Dog*, Bethnal Green Borough Council; *Wild Boar*, Harlow New Town

**1958**

Birth of Frink's son, René Lin Jammet

**1959**

First solo exhibition in New York

**1960**

First documentary, *Monitor*, BBC

**1962**

*Eagle Lectern* commissioned for Coventry Cathedral

**1964**

Marries Edward Pool

**1967**

Moves to Corbès, France

**1973**

Returns to London. Works on major commissions and creates *Tribute* heads

**1974**

Marries Alex Csáky

**1976**

Moves to Woolland, Dorset

**1977**

First female artist elected Royal Academician for sculpture

**1981**

*Walking Madonna* acquired by Salisbury Cathedral

Elisabeth Frink

**1982**

Appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire

**1985/6**

*The Dorset Martyrs* commissioned for Dorchester

**1992**

Completes *Risen Christ* for Liverpool Cathedral while undergoing treatment for cancer

**1993**

Elisabeth Frink dies on 18 April

Artist copyright in images kindly approved by Tully and Bree Jammet. Every effort has been made to seek permission to reproduce the images used in this display. We would be grateful to be notified of any omissions.

## **In the showcase:**

Left to right

### ***Bird***

*Most of my early pieces started with being brought up in the country, where I was surrounded by birds. I got very interested in ravens and crows as a shape.*

Elisabeth Frink

Aggressive, thrusting, sharp-beaked birds of the 1950s evolved into bird/beast shapes with menacing, heavy slab-like forms and crushing beaks that imply repression.

Bronze, edition of 7

1966

2020.1.13

### ***Small Bird I***

The changing of one life form into another – bird/animal/fish/human – so that they ‘seemed to become one thing’ became a way for Frink to explore the anxiety of the period. Working fast and intuitively, incorporating debris from earlier plasters, she created sculptures and drawings that evoked menace and vulnerability.

Bronze, edition of 9

1961

2020.1.7

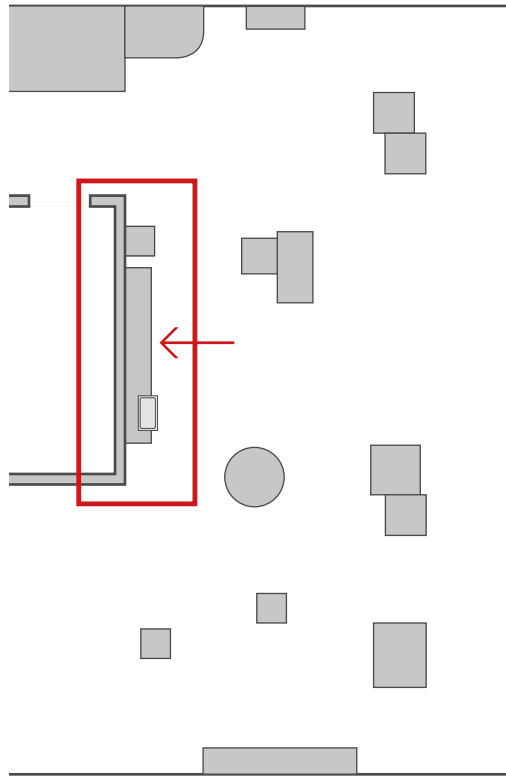
### ***Horizontal Birdman I***

Images were created inside Frink’s head and through her hands but were fed by other sources, including photojournalism. A page torn from *Life* magazine about Leo Valentin, the ‘Birdman’ who fell to his death at a Liverpool airshow, inspired a series of sculptures that symbolise the fallacy of absolute confidence.

Bronze, edition of 10

1962

2020.1.8



On the wall:

## Making art

*Sculpture is a tactile art. You can feel what you are doing as you do it.*

Elisabeth Frink

Early in the morning Frink would go to her studio, where she could explore ideas and work.

Using plaster, a soft semi-liquid material, enabled her to build a shape with just her hands. Layer by layer, plaster would be added to a support made from metal or wood and chicken wire. Strips of cloth, shards of wood, even bits of old plaster would be incorporated. She continually refined the shape and surfaces using cutting and scraping tools.

Originally Frink liked to use very wet plaster, creating rough surfaces and angular shapes. Responding to the stronger light of southern France she started to make broader, smoother surfaces, brought alive through delicate incised marks and lines. In Dorset she often allowed the plaster to fully dry so that she could use chisels to carve rhythmic marks that at times covered entire surfaces.

Plasters were taken to the foundry to be cast in bronze. In the 1980s Frink became interested in brighter colours. She experimented by painting the sculptures, but found that processes using a range of chemicals were more effective.

## On the plinth:

### *Self-Portrait*

Portrait busts of friends and famous people were made during sittings in Frink's studio. She generally used clay to build up a likeness that was emotive and captured a sense of character. This is her only known self-portrait sculpture.

Bronze, edition of 9

1987

2020.1.20



## In the showcase:

Left to right

### ***Dog***

Frink often supported charities by giving artworks to events. She also created specific sculptures that could be sold to raise funds. *Dog* was made for Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, London. It is affectionately known as GOSH Dog.

Bronze, edition of 50

1992

2020.1.29

### ***Small Standing Buffalo***

Bronze, edition of 9

1988

2020.1.22

### ***Small Lying Down Buffalo***

For several years, a pair of full-size water buffalo sculptures resided beside the lake at Woolland. Commissioned to make two monumental water buffalo for Exchange Square in Hong Kong, Frink recalled studying a living pair for a long time, imprinting their image on her mind prior to making them in plaster. She also made a number of smaller studies.

Bronze, edition of 9

1988

2020.1.21

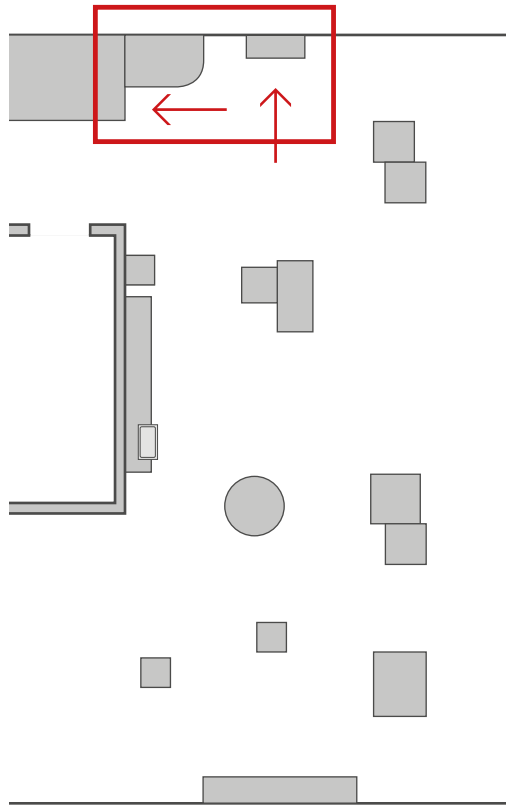
### ***Horizontal Birdman (Study for Manchester Airport)***

To commemorate the first non-stop transatlantic flight by Alcock and Brown, a sculpture, *The Ascent of Man*, was commissioned for a new airport in Manchester. Frink made a large-scale version of a birdman for the arrivals terminal, inspired by smaller pieces. The non-conventional image made it controversial, and it can still disturb.

Bronze, edition of 9

1962

2020.1.9



On the wall:

## Life at Woolland

*Living in the country means being nearer the elements, the climate and the changes of the seasons – it is a constant source of ideas.*

Elisabeth Frink

Frink moved to Dorset with her third husband Alex Csáky, purchasing a property in the village of Woolland near Blandford. Here she immersed herself in work and a full and active family and social life. The years in Dorset were creative and productive with constant exhibitions, commissions and a growing reputation.

The buildings and courtyards at Woolland, set among lawns, clipped hedges, lakes and woodland, provided the perfect environment for Frink to make sculpture and explore ideas. John Csáky, her stepson, designed a studio that

became an intimate part of the grounds, where she arranged sculptures against different landscape settings.

The studio provided a sheltered space where Frink sculpted human figures and animals. Woolland fed her interest in playing with scale, shape and colour as she reflected on humanity, the complexity of existence and our relationship with the natural world.

## **On the plinth:**

### ***Leonardo's Dog***

On a visit to the Loire, Frink came across a stone dog at the entrance to Leonardo Da Vinci's house that inspired this work. Her animal sculptures evoke an inherent resilience – loyalty and dignity – traits that she admired, and felt were often lacking in humans.

Bronze, edition of 6

1990

2020.1.26

## **In the showcase:**

Left to right

### ***Horse in the Rain VI***

Horses, dogs and sheep were part of life at Woolland, and this close contact with animals was an important source of ideas.

Frink's drawings and sculptures of animals are semi-realistic and represent her feelings about the essential spirit of life.

Bronze, edition of 10

1985

2020.1.18

### ***Small Male Figure***

Male figures had always been used by Frink to represent wider humanity. At Woolland she was able to make large-scale sculptures and arrange them in the landscape. She composed groups of figures – *Dorset Martyrs*, *Riace* warriors – that have narratives. At the same time she created societies of smaller figures bound by similarities, not differences.

Bronze, edition of 10

1986

2020.1.19

### **On the wall:**

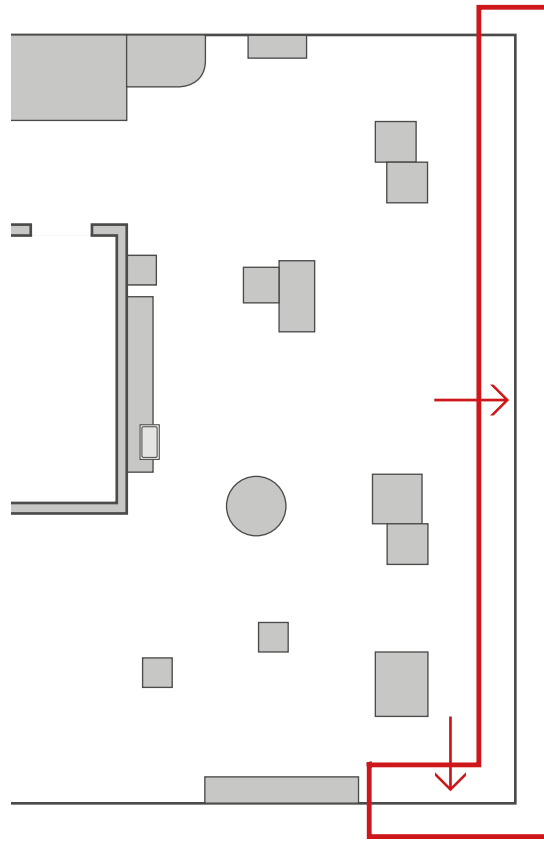
#### ***Dog in Woolland Landscape***

Dogs, including Vizslas and terriers, were faithful companions of Elisabeth Frink and her husband Alex in their Woolland home.

Watercolour on paper

1979

2020.1.80



**All artworks hung on the perimeter wall in a clockwise direction:**

***Man and Baboon***

At the heart of Frink's animal imagery is the interdependency of all species. Towards the end of her life she made several drawings of a man and baboon sitting as if in conversation. She said 'It's almost a criticism of the man by the baboon that I want to imply.'

Gouache and charcoal on paper

1990

2020.1.84

Elisabeth Frink

***Wounded Horse***

Gouache and charcoal on paper

1987

2020.1.83

***The Three Riders***

Lithograph in three colours, drawn on grained zinc and aluminium, edition of 100

1974

2020.1.109

***Green Man***

Charcoal on paper

1991

2020.1.85

***Head***

Charcoal on paper

1964

2020.1.36

### ***Beast Head***

Frink's drawings are those of a sculptor. She used them to develop ideas, to think about shapes in space and marks on the surface. They were intrinsic to her way of working.

Watercolour on paper

1959

2020.1.33

### ***Spinning Man***

Ink on paper

1960

2020.1.32

### ***Man with Bird***

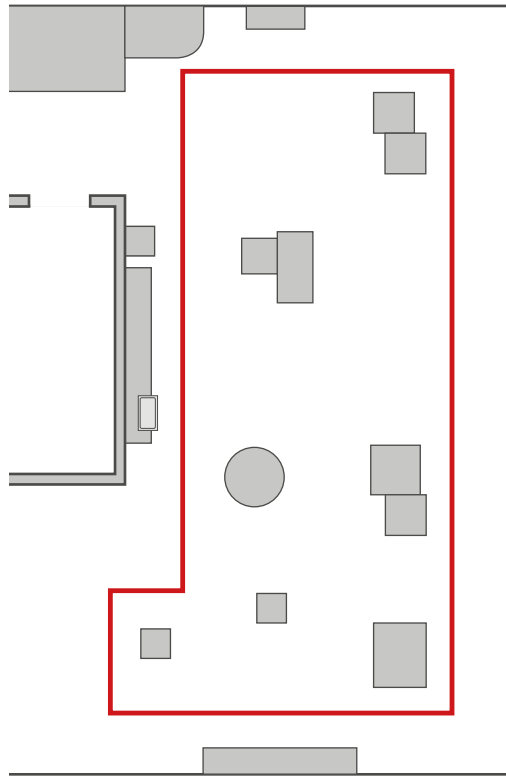
The drawing relates to a plaster maquette of a seated male figure with a bird on his wrist. It was selected for The Unknown Political Prisoner international exhibition, organised by the Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1953. The sculpture was shortlisted for an award and established the beginning of Frink's career.

Ink on paper

c.1955

2020.1.30





## All sculptures on the central plinths:



*Falling Man*

Military and political tension between Western and Eastern Bloc powers, intensified through the testing of nuclear weapons and the space race, created a time of uncertainty with potential for unimaginable destruction. Frink became absorbed by thoughts of flight and falling; fear and the fragility of all life.

Bronze, edition of 6

1961

2020.1.5



### ***Warrior II***

Betrayal and physical attack throughout times of human conflict began to interest Frink. The result was a series of male images including *Dying King*, *Judas*, *Assassins* and the *Warriors*. These figures, caught up in acts of violence, are portrayed as both scarred and anguished.

Bronze, edition of 8

1964

2020.1.12



### ***Dog***

*Dog* was inspired by *Blind Beggar and Dog*, which was created for bomb-damaged Bethnal Green in London. These works mark the start of her interest in the interdependency of humans and animals. Further commissions for urban and sacred spaces followed.

Bronze, edition of 4

1958

2020.1.2



### ***Fish Head***

‘Just being’ and solitude as states of existence were preoccupations that underpinned many of Frink’s sculptures, including the abstract heads. Working alone in a studio filled with drawings and sculptures built in plaster, her inventiveness was fed by the ability to work on themes that could stretch across decades.

Bronze, edition of 6

1961

2020.1.4



### ***Head***

Using animal heads as a starting point Frink played briefly with abstraction, altering and exaggerating shapes, focusing on the void of the mouth while leaving out or minimising other features. These experiments helped to develop a meaningful visual language not based on accurate representation.

Bronze, edition of 6

1959

2020.1.3



### *Carapace I*

Sculpture is about illusion. In the *Carapace* heads, rugged and deeply pitted surfaces catch and play with light, implying movement and tension. The mass acts as counterpoint to the teeth and eye socket. Frink takes us beyond the outer shape and image into a world that feels timeless, even prehistoric.

Bronze, edition of 6

1963

2020.1.10



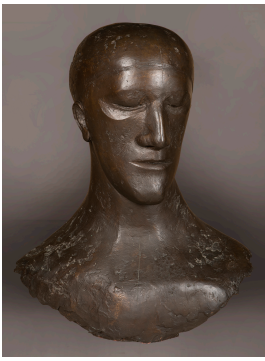
### *Head*

The form of the human head was used to reflect upon challenging areas of human nature, offering none of the reassurance of traditional portraiture. Working in the strong light of southern France, Frink simplified shapes and surfaces, creating disturbing images – thugs with heavy jowls, close-fitting helmets, eyeless or with concealed eyes.

Bronze, edition of 6

1967

2020.1.15



### ***Tribute II***

The immorality of war and oppression led Frink to think about freedom and the violation of basic human rights, and another sort of hero began to emerge. The *Tribute* head series pays homage to people who have survived these horrors. They affirm the principle that every individual is entitled to unconditional rights and freedoms.

Bronze, edition of 6

1977

On loan from private owner

LI.2012.3



### ***Horse and Rider (Robed)***

Images of horses are depicted in cave paintings and ancient artefacts. The interdependency of humans and animals takes us back to our earliest existence. Frink was always fascinated by this relationship, and made her first horse and rider in 1950, revisiting the theme many times. This

sculpture has a Dorset affinity with TE Lawrence, who was known as Lawrence of Arabia.

Bronze, edition of 9

1985

2020.1.17



***Chinese Horse I (Rolling)***

Thoughts of how colour could be incorporated into sculptures began to take shape for Frink after trips to Hong Kong and Australia. She started by drawing abstract, rhythmic marks with metal paints on finished bronzes. Unhappy with the results, she experimented with chemicals to create coloured bronzes that differed from the standard brown finishes.

Bronze, edition of 8

1989

2020.1.24



### ***First Horse***

At the time of the first Gulf War in 1990, Frink decided to make a war horse, 'a strong chunky animal, just standing there, almost as if it was wounded, but not plunging round'. Her animal-inspired images became full of mystery and stillness, questioning many of our assumptions about human supremacy.

Bronze, edition of 6

1990

2020.1.30



### ***Easter Head I***

Throughout her working life Frink received many commissions for sacred spaces. However, *Easter Head I* and *II* do not directly refer to the Christian story. They represent wider ideas about regeneration and new life that are shared by many faiths across cultures and time.

Bronze, edition of 6

1989

2020.1.23

64



***Seated Baboon***

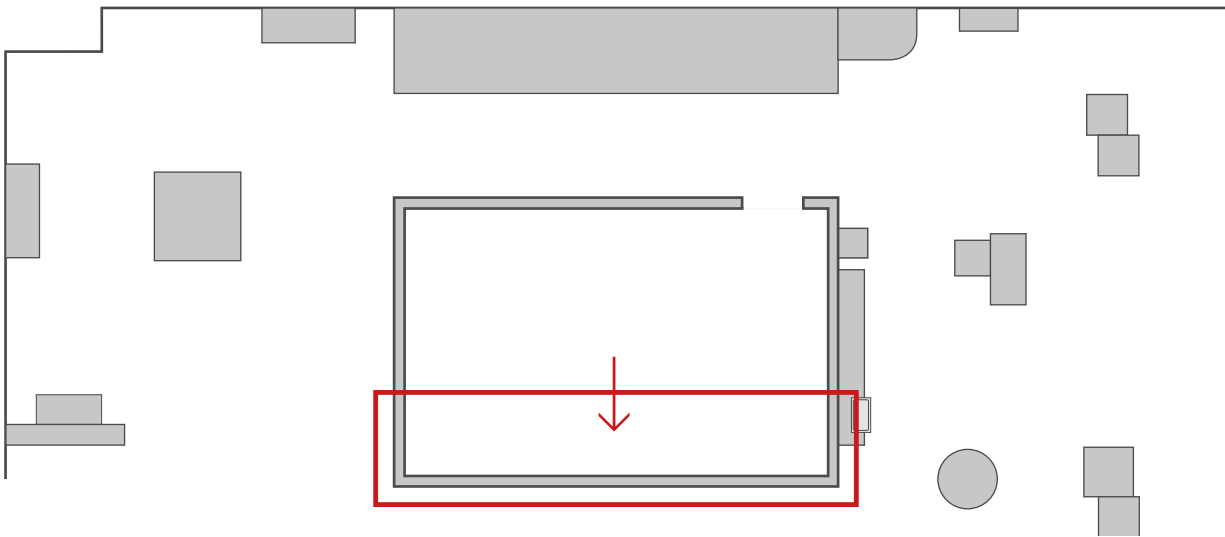
At times Frink was asked to make medals, awards and trophies – among these was *Baboon* (1976) for The Zoological Society of London. She read widely about these primates and more than a decade later returned to this image with a very different idea in mind – to question the concept of hierarchies that support human primacy.

Bronze, edition of 9

1989

2020.1.25





**Left to right inside**

## **The Anthony and Judith du Boulay Art Space:**

### ***Osprey (Birds of Prey series)***

Etching with aquatint in colour

J Green paper

Printed with Nigel Oxley at White Ink

Edition of 50

1974

2020.1.131

### ***Cyclops (The Odyssey series)***

Lithograph in colour drawn on aluminium

Mould made paper

Printed with Stanley Jones at Curwen Studio

Artist proof

1974

2020.1.102B

***Red Dog***

Screenprint in three colours

Arches Crème paper

Printed with Kip Gresham at Curwen Chilford Prints

Edition of 70

1990

2020.1.169

***Green Man (Blue)***

Screenprint in ten colours

Somerset textured paper

Printed with Kip Gresham at Curwen Chilford Prints

Edition of 70

1992

2020.1.173