



Tribute I

Dame Elisabeth Frink

On display

Title/Description: Tribute I

Artist/Maker: Dame Elisabeth Frink

Born: 1975

Object Type: Sculpture

Measurements: h. 655 x w. 498 x d. 428 mm

Accession Number: 50829

Production Place: England

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Credit Line: Provided to the Sainsbury Centre in accordance with the wishes of the artist's late son, Lin Jammet

The Tribute and In Memoriam Heads that Frink made in the mid-1970s and 1980s represent the polar opposite of her celebrated Goggle Heads. They are the victims of acts of brutality or the martyrs to a cause; people who are prepared to risk their life for what they believe. They suggest something of an apology for the disturbing Goggle Heads that immediately preceded them. [1] Conversely, the Tribute Heads can be seen to represent victims and martyrs. Whilst representing suffering, she also hoped they demonstrated the capacity for human survival. She made them after becoming involved with Amnesty International, as a tribute to people persecuted in oppressive regimes. Frink created this archetype to express a profound empathy and compassion for victims. The sculptures are deeply moving and timeless. In a sense, Frink was a witness to man's inhumanity and suffering at the hands of his fellow man. Her imagination was fed by an upbringing shrouded in Catholicism, and the Christian doctrine was deep-rooted in her psyche, in particular scenes from the Passion as the ultimate expression of man's inhumanity to his fellow man.

Elisabeth Frink (1930- 1993) is one of the most important British sculptors of the twentieth century. Her expressionist sculptures address some of the more fundamental questions concerning aspects of human behaviour such as aggression and vulnerability. Known for both human and animal forms, she was also fascinated by the symbiotic relationship between humans and them. Frink made hundreds of sculptures, virtually single-handed (she rarely used assistants) she worked tirelessly at her craft.

Frink was born in Great Thurlow in Suffolk and spent her formative years in war-time East Anglia.

She studied at the Guildford School of Art (1946–49) and at the Chelsea School of Art (1949–53) and remained resolutely an expressionist figurative artist against the prevailing trends of her time. She died prematurely in 1993 at the young age of 62 and was widely admired in her lifetime, as a Royal Academician, a Dame and a Companion of Honour.

Calvin Winner, January 2022

[1] Calvin Winner (ed) Elisabeth Frink - Humans and Other Animals, Sainsbury Centre, 2018, p.38

Further Reading

Elisabeth Frink - Humans and Other Animals, Calvin Winner, Tania Moore, Annette Ratuszniak, Sainsbury Centre, 2018

Stephen Gardiner, The Official Biography of Elisabeth Frink, HarperCollins, 1998

Elisabeth Frink Catalogue Raisonné of Sculpture 1947-93 by Annette Ratuszniak, published by Lund Humphries, 2013

Elisabeth Frink: Sculpture, Catalogue Raisonné, Harpvale Books, 1984, Interview with Bryan Robertson
