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Press Release



Christie Brown
Untold Forms of Life

12 May- 12 June
Messums London and Online

A new exhibition of sculptures in clay by the acclaimed sculptor Christie Brown opens at Messums in London next month.

In addition to a group of sculptures inspired by European folklore and classical art, they demonstrate a new sensibility positioned more towards a more contemporary female figure.

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The collection of 29 works features 20 new ones done during Lockdown that are amongst Brown's most personal and poignant.

They are named after the imaginary laments of a group of fictional women – each named after Brown's evolving set of emotions during months spent alone. The first figure she made was *Hope*, but this gave way to *Solitude*, *Patience*, *Abjection*, *Anxiety*, *Nostalgia*, *Melancholy*, *Memory*, *Contemplation* and two *Sleepers*. There are also sculptures named *The Artist* and *The Poet* reflecting her principal forms of cultural sustenance.

"It's been a very difficult time; I live alone and struggled with anxiety in particular, but they are about the feelings that we have all gone through."

Of particular significance she said were the two sculptures entitled *Nemesis*.

'Nemesis follows Hubris, the downfall of arrogance. I felt we were being punished for the narcissistic world that had the likes of Trump as their king.'

Like all of Brown's works these new ones hark back to the Antique and the static Kouroi of the Greeks, but they also play on the nostalgia of childhood.

Like sentient toys they sit or stand as if ready for action, adopting poses that children might have formed them into.

Also in the show are a selection of works inspired by European folk stories and myths; often featuring hybrid animals and humans.

'These pieces make a plea for the rituals that unite us,' says Brown.

'While the recent work references the division and isolation caused by the global pandemic, these figures rooted in the legends of the past emphasise further the need for collaboration and community,' she says.

Much of Christie Brown's clay sculpture are inspired by museum collections, and hover somewhere between animism and anthropomorphism, imbuing an object with anything from the simple spark of life to a full personality.

The title of the show, *Untold Forms of Life*, comes from a quote in *The Street of Crocodiles* by Polish writer, Bruno Schulz:

There is no dead matter... Its inertia is merely an outward show behind which untold forms of life lie hidden.

'I like this idea of how humans project life into things whether it's their toys as children or their favourite mug for breakfast tea,' says Brown.

Notes to Editors:

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Christie Brown: In the Depth of Matter, Untold Forms of Life

12 May – 12 June 2020

**Messums London,
28 Cork st, London W1S 3NG**

For more information please contact: Press@messumswiltshire.com

Tel: 0207 4375545

M E S S U M S W I L T S H I R E is a leading multi-purpose gallery and arts centre set inside a restored thirteenth-century tithe barn and surrounding buildings with exhibition space, sculpture garden and restaurant.

M E S S U M S L O N D O N is a modernist gallery space on Cork Street where the family have had a presence since 1992.

M E S S U M S Y O R K S H I R E opened in early July 2020. The third Messums gallery to open in England, it hosts a rolling programme of exhibitions with a focus on clients and artists in the North of England.

A comprehensive list of past and future exhibitions can be found on our websites.