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Press Release



Graeme Black Trunk Show

7 May – 19 June 2021
MESSUMS YORKSHIRE

Messums Yorkshire is hosting *Trunk Show*, the debut exhibition of **Graeme Black**. It will run from 7 May – 19 June 2021 at Messums gallery in 4-6 James Street Harrogate.

In 2016, Black executed a bold mid-career pivot, switching from designing womenswear for international luxury brands such as Ferragamo and Armani to painting nature in the tranquillity of the Yorkshire Dales. The show focuses on richly textured studies of the trees near Black's home and on the forest land he is rewilding. Based on close, year-round observation, Black's large-scale studies of trunks, branches, bark, moss and lichen on a background of raw canvas are simultaneously abstract and naturalistic, epic and intimate, monumental and warm.

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A radical change of lifestyle and career – Graeme Black connects to important global conversations about how we live now.

Bringing to bear his experience of producing major runway shows in fashion centres like Milan and London, Black will be curating the gallery space to display his artwork to best advantage. Leading interior designer Jonathan Reed is transforming the white cube gallery of Messums to create a warmer environment to harmonise with the earthy colours of Black's palette. The internationally renowned Yorkshire furniture craftsmen Robert Thompson's (otherwise known as the Mouseman of Kilburn) will be providing handmade oak furniture, including two of the earliest works and a new modern designed piece, to create a relaxed atmosphere. As the pandemic brings the future of the city centre into question, this sort of exhibition gives people a reason to abandon their screens, get away from their desks, leave home and immerse themselves in a unique multisensory experience beyond anything the online world can provide.

Johnny Messum says, "Graeme's work is a way of looking at nature that is unique. It is born from an ability to express through beauty what is in his heart and I am sure that like many who share an increasing awareness of landscape and the fragility of the environment they will represent a fresh way of seeing. We are delighted to be holding Graeme Black's opening show in our Yorkshire Gallery close to where he lives and works."

Graeme Black says, "These artworks are definitely portraits of trees. I like the sculptural feel of the trunk of a tree; its starkness and sense of majesty. In summer a tree looks beautiful but more interesting to me are the branches and the way it grows. I am not a botanist or biologist," he adds, "the pictures are more a visual response to what I see. A hawthorn bush is really sculptural; oak trees are full of great big textures. I want to create a sense of the tree, hence the scale."

To organise interviews and to obtain further information and high-resolution images please email press@messumswiltshire.com or call 01747 445042 for national press enquiries or Julia Lawson-Tancred for local press enquiries on 07787 561448

Graeme Black - *Trunk Show* 7 May – 19 June 2021
Messums Yorkshire
4-6 James Street, Harrogate HG1 1RF
enquiries@messumsharrogate.com
Open: Thursdays – Saturdays 10am – 5pm

Editor's notes: Graeme Black

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Born in Dundee in 1967 and brought up on a farm on the East coast in Carnoustie, Graeme Black studied fashion at Edinburgh College of Art in 1985. After finishing his degree, he worked in London, first for John Galiano, and then as a studio assistant for Zandra Rhodes. He then moved to Italy to take up the position of design assistant for Giorgio Armani rising to senior designer over a period of 7 years. He worked after for Salvatore Ferragamo as creative designer until 2005 when he set up his own fashion label while also acting as creative director for Hugo Boss. He moved to the Yorkshire dales to embark on a reforestation project and pursue a painting career in 2016. This is his debut exhibition.

See also Graeme Black's website: graemeblack.com

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 Messums 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 in its two-floor gallery space. One level is dedicated to artists in the North of England and the other to artists from every corner of the world.

A comprehensive list of past and future exhibitions can be found on our websites. messumsyorkshire.com. messumswiltshire.com. messumslondon.com