

Sculpting Lives podcast transcript

Series 1, Episode 2: Elisabeth Frink

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[music]

Simon Martin: She was doing something which was internationally significant and does deserve more appraisal.

Cathie Pilkington: A lot of her work seems to resonate in such a contemporary way.

Annette Ratuszniak: She is her own woman.

Elisabeth Frink: I was quite ambitious to be a good sculpt. I went from having very good write-ups way back and I felt very alienated by all that. I haven't had very happy experiences with critics for the last two decades.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Welcome to *Sculpting Lives*. A podcast with me, Sarah Turner.

Jo Baring: Me, Jo Baring.

Sarah Victoria Turner: This episode is all about the sculptor, Dame Elisabeth Frink. I think I should probably just hand straight over to Jo right now because Jo can talk about Liz Frink's work until the cows come home. Tell us why you're so interested in Frink's work?

Jo Baring: Well, I really like Frink. Frink was born in 1930. She dies in 1993. Throughout her career, there's a real single-mindedness in terms of what she wants to do with the work, so she remains figurative at a time when there was a huge vogue for abstraction. She sticks resolutely to bronze when other people were investigating new materials. She sees early success in her career, the Tate buy her work from her first solo show after graduation. Then it tails off in the 'art world' in inverted commas. I'm quite snuffy about that. Even now there's a sneeriness about the work of Elisabeth Frink, and I think she's been totally underrated. In this podcast, we're going to be reappraising her, aren't we?

Sarah Victoria Turner: Well, you're going to have to convince me a little bit. I think I've perhaps stereotyped her a little bit in the category of dogs, horses. That's what I think of when I think of her work but I'm sure there's a lot more to find out. One thing is, just to have such a long and sustained career is something that I find really fascinating and how an artist does that and actually retains popularity with the public as well.

Jo Baring: She gets a huge amount of public commissions. You talk to people who aren't in the art world, and they love the work of Elisabeth Frink. There's a dichotomy there between how she's viewed by the art world and how she's viewed by the public. We went to see Simon Martin, who's the Director of Pallant House Gallery in Chichester to find out what he has to say about Frink's reputation and why he thinks it is as it is.

Simon Martin: For me, Frink has always been an artist I've been aware of. I remember when I was doing art at school in the early 1990s, our art teacher made us watch a documentary about Frink installing the statue of Christ in Liverpool Cathedral. It must have been around the time she died, I think. It's amazing how moments like that can have a lasting awareness.

For me, even since being a teenager, I've been very familiar with her work and of course, then seeing pieces in Salisbury and others and of course, following exhibitions in other galleries, but Frink, in terms of the wider art world, has never quite had the same reputation of some of her peers, which is sometimes I think, a little bit baffling. Perhaps it's because so many of her works were all kept within the estate? I think one of the things, of course, is actually as a figurative sculpture, there's sometimes almost a sniffiness about it.

Actually, I think recent exhibitions particularly I think, there've been exhibitions of course at the Djanogly Art Gallery in Nottingham. A few years ago, there was the exhibition at Albert Hall in Blackwell, and of course, the Sainsbury Center more recently. Each of those I think, have actually helped place Frink in a different context and actually draw out different aspects of her work. I think the exhibition at Hauser & Wirth, particularly with its focus on the birdman, bird figures in the '50s. Seeing that exhibition, really made me think of Frink in relation to artists such as Germaine Richier, and Giacometti and others.

I think actually, the moment you start looking at Frink in that context, you realise that she was doing something which is internationally significant, and does deserve more appraisal. I think also with Frink's work because there are these distinctive bodies of work and there are lots of different possibilities as well.

[music]

Jo Baring: Obviously, this is a podcast about gender. Frink, it's interesting in that during her lifetime, she totally shut down any conversations about gender, anyone who tried to ask her about the impact that it had on her private life had.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Why do you think she had to do that?

Jo Baring: Well, I think there's a number of reasons which you could potentially think about. First of all, she's from quite a posh background and I think there's still that 20th-century stiff upper lip, don't talk about personal things. She also is quoted as saying that the work speaks for itself. She isn't the person that will be writing artistic statements about what she wants people to read into her work.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Her biography is quite irrelevant to the work and somehow took away from the seriousness which I can sympathise with that. It is easy to get caught in these traps of trying to explain people's work away through their biography.

Jo Baring: There is someone who knows more about Frink than me-- amazingly-- and that is Annette Ratuszniak who is the curator of the Frink estate. Actually we asked her what she thought about Frink and gender.

Sarah Victoria Turner: From what we've deduced from the literature, she's very reticent to talk about that and she shuts down all those conversations. Do you get that same sense?

Annette Ratuszniak: Yes. I think I've come to a feeling that she doesn't want to be defined by that. She is her own woman and what she's interested in is humanity. Her concerns, in a way, are about who we are as human beings, what we do, not just to each other but to the whole planet. What it means to be human. If you're perhaps exploring that, then if you are perhaps defined by feminism, that feels slightly restricting, I suspect. She had no problems with being a woman at all. She is very vibrant. People loved her. Absolutely adored her. That was the first thing I discovered in the first few years of actually how people just loved this woman. They love being with her and that wasn't because of just for herself, as much as her work, the friends that she had. She could have found it difficult to feel that she needed to be defined by anything, whatever it was, but in a way isn't that a great bit of feminism?

In 1995 I was curator of Wiltshire Art Collections and based in Sainsbury and I used to walk past the Frink's sculpture. I was really interested in it partly because I thought it's a really interesting sculpture. Also because of how people reacted to it. I just thought this little figure with the cathedral held that space so extraordinarily, so I wanted to find out more about her.

Sarah Victoria Turner: You're talking about the *Walking Madonna* sculpture?

Annette Ratuszniak: Yes. It was quite difficult to find out that much about Frink or to go and see more of her work. Actually, what I wanted to do was to see more of her work. I thought, well, I'll put on an exhibition. I discovered that Woolland and the studio and house was still there and that her son was living there. I contacted Lin [Jammet], and I went over to see him and it was really quite astonishing because there was so much presence of her. Although I had never been to Woolland when she was there, just the place was just full of the presence of Liz Frink.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Was it like she just left the room?

Annette Ratuszniak: Like if she was still in the room actually. From what I gathered from-- then I started talking to people but also when I got to Woolland, Lin was obviously still reeling from his mother's death and trying to work out what on earth to do. It's a big thing when you inherit your mother's artistic estate as well as everything else. Liz's mother Jean was still alive so I spent quite a lot of time chatting to Jean. Then basically what I had to do was I start to do, if I was going to do an exhibition, I need to just sort out what was at Woolland. I went into the house, into the studio and I just started going through all the materials there, thinking, finding the story that I wanted to tell.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Did you get a sense when you started working with the estate, when you stepped into Woolland, that Liz had been thinking during her lifetime of her legacy?

Annette Ratuszniak: No.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Not at all?

Annette Ratuszniak: Not really. I think she was so constant-- she was so focused on making the work. She had bought some pieces back. She did buy some examples of the work back and she was having artists copies cast so that she had her own versions because it will end the whole point about being in Woolland was that or the appeal of Woolland, I think to her was that it was this bigger environment which she could work with beyond the studio. When you went to Woolland you drove up these little lanes, you'd turned through a very ordinary-looking entrance and there was a high bank on your left and as you came around on your left above where the *Dunstable Flying Figures* and then over to your left, over to your right, you just looked across Blackmoor Vale and then as you drove in to park up in the courtyard at Woolland, there were just sculptures everywhere and you looked across and those sculptors standing--

Sarah Victoria Turner: Sculptures in the landscape?

Annette Ratuszniak: Sculptures in the grounds which had been playing with that Lin hadn't-- Sculptures inside the courtyard before you went into the house and in that way, that was what I came to associate with Woolland. They were mixed up with garden

tractors, children's toys, chickens, the whole thing. It was just this amazing environment and when you went into the house, she was a great cook. She loved entertaining and cooking. Although later on, she had, particularly she became ill. She had someone to help with the cooking side but she and Alex liked entertaining.

Again, there was this wonderful mix. The house was full of her artworks that she had bought from other people, or exchange with friends. It was just this amazing environment to get a life-work balance with her husband and then child. She needed to be disciplined because otherwise it's so easy for other things to appear to be more important, or ought to be. She did respect herself and to give herself that time to work on those things and think it was okay. That's pretty obvious, and I think she got that quite early on from when she was at art college. She took herself seriously and she took the work seriously because of the nature of the work in a way. She knew what it was that she wanted to explore. That was her way of living in the world, I think.

Jo Baring: Is there anything in the archive and letters or communication that you've come across that talk to explicitly about that? That idea that she had to carve out time for herself, that she had to separate family life from the work.

Annette Ratuszniak: I think, there aren't that many letters. I think it's the volume of material that shows that she, and talking to Lin, Lin knew his mom as this disciplined mum who would go into the studio, would go in early. The first thing in the morning she'd go in and then she would work through to a late lunchtime. Then it was domestic time and that was the routine and she stuck to that routine. Obviously, things change when you're doing exhibitions or you've got a commission or you're doing certain things but she was quite disciplined like that.

[music]

Sarah Victoria Turner: Frink has often been isolated, I think, from her social background and her context in which she grew up in and which she was trained as an artist. I think it's really important to put that back in the mix and see her as being formed by the changing circumstances of Britain in the war and post-war.

Jo Baring: It's so true. She's born in 1930. When she's nine or ten, the second World War breaks out. Her dad's in the army. It's impossible to underestimate the impact that would have on her.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Those themes that she pursues through her life, the Birdman, distorted human forms. Do you think that was shaped by war?

Jo Baring: Absolutely. She always says what she's really interested in is humanity, heroism but also vulnerability, about brutality, about what a human is able to do to one another. Those are the things that she's thinking about. I think that has to be formed in childhood. With the impact of the war and all the newsreels that she would

have been seeing. She grew up near an army base, as well an airbase, and she says that she saw planes falling from the sky crashing burning. She says that her and her friends used to go in and inspect the wreckage the morning after like little 'ghouls', she called them and I think that must've had a huge impact on her.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Then she goes to London to train and she is again, part of a post-war set in London of art students.

Jo Baring: She's in Soho in the '50s, she's at Chelsea College of Art. We all think of her as this really posh horsey army woman but actually, she's there in Chelsea with people like Francis Bacon, Lucien Freud, the jazz-singer George Melly. She's really at the heart of it and this gathering of the avant-garde of modernism of excitement, post-war excitement, isn't she?

Sarah Victoria Turner: I think putting it back within those contexts is really crucial to not isolate her anymore.

Jo Baring: She also, at that time, she goes to Europe. As a student, she went to Venice and she talks about the impact that had on her seeing things like the horses in St. Mark's square, but in Paris, she's seeking out people like Giacometti as well.

Another strand which I think has been ignored from the writing about her about an interpretation of her is an Irish connection. Her first husband, Michel Jammet, was a French Irishman and his parents ran this pretty cool restaurant, quite a famous restaurant called Jammet's in Dublin which was the center for Irish culture and literary meetings, gatherings, talkings, and it's something that we spoke to Annette about and she was really interesting actually about the impact that that had on Frink's work too.

Annette Ratuszniak: When she was married to Michel Jammet, he was French-Irish and his family ran this amazing restaurant called Jammet's in Dublin and that this started when they started being together when they were married. She went there, they went there quite a lot because it was his family home but it meant that she was exposed to the sort of-- because it was the place as well that writers and poets, people with strong political thoughts, filmmakers gathered at Jammet's and she was exposed to that at quite a young age in a way probably she wasn't exposed to it quite the same way in Chelsea, although there would be some of that but certainly in Dublin, it would be big.

That affected her, and that is from that period, there are these series of drawings about Cuhullin- I'm not quite sure if I pronounced that correctly but anyway- this very important Irish mythological figure. The thing about Cuhullin is he destroys himself because he will not stop going to war, but what he does is he realises that at the last minute when his horse, who was seeing him through all these battles, he has been to

war, he's gone there into battle on his horse, Liath Macha, and then his friends and the people who love him try and stop him going to war but they can't do it and he goes back to war. What happens is that Liath Macha dies, is killed, and at that point, he realises what he's done but it's too late.

She does these series of drawings and other things around that. It's the only myth she actually describes and writes and uses those words. You've got Cuhullin with the tears coming out of his eyes. You've got him and you've got the horse as well, and then later on when she's Woolland, she does a whole series of wounded horses. There's a real resonance between that and you can see that continuum of thought and how she's now expressing it.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Frink's commitment to bronze has perhaps made her seem quite a traditional sculptor in many ways because it's such a historic material. It makes you think about classical antiquity, but in so many ways she really experimented with that medium and with those materials.

Jo Baring: It's so true. If you think about how she actually created those bronze sculptures, she's looking to Europe. When she first comes out of art school, who she's been taught by, who are the godfather of British sculpture at the time is someone like Henry Moore. He is using very traditional techniques to make those bronze sculptures in that he's using clay to mold them.

Actually, Frink finds clay really heavy and quite hard-going and it doesn't give her that immediacy that she wants. She wants a real connection to the material, so as that she looks to Europe to people like Giacometti, and Germaine Richier, and what they're doing is they're building up the models in plaster. Frink, she builds up the armatures, it's basic things even like chicken wire, puts it out, and then she can get this wet plaster and she gets her hands dirty, and she's just molding, moving, and it dries so quickly that she just has to create it. There's such an immediacy there, isn't there?

Sarah Victoria Turner: You can feel those drips and pause. I was thinking it's almost like action painting in sculpture.

Jo Baring: Exactly, it's so true. Then once it's dried, she then carves back, she puts more. I think if you get a chance to get up close and personal with a Frink sculpture, you actually see her fingerprints in the finished bronze.

Sarah Victoria Turner: So that immediacy was really important to her.

Jo Baring: Absolutely. The real physicality, and that's why she didn't use assistants, which is something that's really important to point out. Maybe later on she might have needed some assistants when she was doing larger pieces help with the armature, but when it came to putting the plaster on, that was all her.

Sarah Victoria Turner: There's another area of her work, which perhaps hasn't been explored in depth, and that is her intersection with contemporary events and the political context of her time. Can you tell us more about that?

Jo Baring: Yes. She I suppose maybe it was a thing where 20th century artistic thing that she felt, that as an artist, she felt she had a moral obligation to draw people's attention to what was going on in the world. Not only as we talked about earlier, the brutality of humanity in terms of the Second World War, but things like she was reading about the Algerian wars and things such as that and she was making work in response to those. So contemporary events she made works about martyrs and she was really--

Sarah Victoria Turner: Like the troubles in Ireland.

Jo Baring: Exactly, and that was something that she was quite overt about being influenced by.

Do you feel that she had a political responsibility? She's obviously a member of various political groupings?

Annette Ratuszniak: Yes. Well, she shows that again through her deeds. She supports Amnesty International. She creates quite a lot of work that she gives to various charities. She creates work for fundraising, for charities. She sits on the board on the British Museum. The volumes that we have from terms of charities, fill a few boxes, they filled a filing cabinet. She did have a strong moral sense I think, in that way, in terms of our responsibility as a human being. Again that doesn't matter whether you're male or female does it?

Her friends, she has friends, a lot of friends who are also telling those sorts of stories as writers, Michael Morpurgo, Brian Phelan, people like that. You've got to remember that with Royal Academy, she is the first woman to be appointed, to be taken into that fold *for* sculpture. I think that's probably respect from other artists.

Sarah Victoria Turner: I think perhaps her links with an earlier generation that you mention-- you mention [Willi] Soukop and people like that-- those emigre sculptors that the RA was a home for them, and I think they were probably very supportive of her work and her kind of work.

Annette Ratuszniak: They probably got it. They got the radicalism of it.

Sarah Victoria Turner: I think that idea of him commenting on difficult subjects about humanity again, that was what they were interested in. I'm thinking, "Well, what's the future of sculpture? What's the future of sculpture in the Royal Academy?" By all accounts, it sounds like she was tipped to be perhaps the first female president, although that didn't happen.

Annette Ratuszniak: No. I can't remember whether, because I still haven't gone through in-depth all the archives. There will be maybe things about that, but my impression is from somewhere, that also she didn't want to do that because she wanted to concentrate on work.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Frink was tirelessly committed to depicting the human and the animal body; but, Jo, do you think that commitment to figuration has somehow hampered her reputation or the critical assessment of her work in some way?

Jo Baring: I think that we can't interpret Frink without looking at the wider context of what was going on. If we think about the 1950s, when she's coming out of art school, that was a time when there was a really influential art critic called Herbert Read. He coined this phrase about a group of basically predominantly, were all white male sculptors called the 'Geometry of Fear' and they were dominating British art at that time.

Actually, they were beating Giacometti to the sculpture by the Venice Biennale so internationally significant, but really what they were doing was it was very much a response to the second World War, and it was figurative, but it was spiky and difficult and tricky, and was very still traumatised by those experiences.

Frink was a generation younger and didn't quite fit into that, but then in the '60s, the bright shiny '60s comes along with a whole or what's called the new generation of sculptors so people like Anthony Caro, Philip King and these guys are painting steel and putting it on the floor--

Sarah Victoria Turner: Working in an abstract way.

Jo Baring: Completely. It's abstract, it's bright and you can see why the the old Geometry of Fear sculpture, it almost just got pushed aside straightaway. No one wants to look backwards anymore.

Sarah Victoria Turner: It seems of another time, doesn't it? It's very much conditioned by the experiences of war, and abstraction is showing a way forward, like say a bright new future.

Jo Baring: Exactly. For Frink doesn't fit into that either.

Sarah Victoria Turner: She's caught in the middle in a way.

Jo Baring: She's caught in the middle and we all love to pigeonhole people. We love to put people in their boxes, and I think the problem with Frink is that she doesn't fit in anywhere.

Sarah Victoria Turner: She doesn't want to fit.

Jo Baring: She doesn't want to fit, absolutely. She goes to France to get away from it from what she calls the 'dogma of abstraction', but what I think is really interesting is that is getting a contemporary sculptors input on Frink and that the difficulty that she had, juggling, figuration abstraction and what do you do as a sculptor? Do you move towards abstraction or not?

Sarah Victoria Turner: Yes, we went with Cathie Pilkington, who is another Royal Academician. With Cathie we stood by one of Frink's sculptures. I'm outside on a very busy street in London as all the motorcycles and builders and all the kind of hubbub of London life is happening around us. We just really look carefully at the surfaces of Frink's horse and rider together and just talked about those material processes and how Cathie interprets Frink's work.

Cathie Pilkington: It seemed like the work was at this really crucial moment when she moved off to France and started to make her *Goggle Heads*. She was moving away from what was happening at Central Saint Martins with Caro and the anti-figuration.

Jo Baring: What she called the dogma of abstraction, didn't she?

Cathie Pilkington: Yes. Of course, figuration can always be relevant, but it's what you do with it. I think what she started to do with the *Goggle Heads* was really exciting. It's almost like she's moving towards pop arts because the way she talked about them was still in this-- she's talking about them in terms of heroism and the past. Actually, I'm looking at them thinking, is he a menacing character or is he a dude by the pool with his shades? If you look at those in a contemporary way, what was really fascinating about that was that there was this self-contained object with shiny shades on. The shades is from a really contemporary--

Jo Baring: Photograph from a newspaper.

Cathie Pilkington: Yes, it was from a photograph but as an object in itself, regardless of where it came from. It's bringing in things from the contemporary world from now and putting-- from fashion-- putting them on a classical bust. The viewer is then reflected in those as well. She's starting to have a contemporary discussion about the object, and the subject, and the viewer, and the context, and the history, and also letting-- allowing-- things like cartoon imagery and pop culture to come in, which I think is absolutely crucial if she was going to take that figuration forward. My feeling is that then she retreats back to the safety of a classical statutory and makes this work.

Jo Baring: What we're looking at now, a male figure on a horse.

Cathie Pilkington: She starts to engage with the problems of it in a critical and contemporary way, and then she retreats back to this safety of something that actually is problematic to me. I think at the end of the biography, there's a sentence that says,

"The English embraced her sculpture. There was nothing to be frightened-- there was nothing to fear, nothing to question. They embraced it happily."

[music]

Jo Baring: In the 1960s Frink moves to France, possibly to get away from what's going on in London and also the wider-art world and just to give herself some time and some space to make new work. Actually, we asked Annette Ratuszniak about the impact that that move to France had on the work that she's producing.

Annette Ratuszniak: When she gets to France the light is different and she talks about that, and of course, she's got more space. She's not in this closed-in, well, this smaller studio, she's big open space, a huge amount of light and therefore, a huge amount of glare. You can't see surfaces with a glare or else you just get this horrible light, dark jaggedness coming back to you. That's when she starts to smooth off the surfaces. Therefore, to smooth them off and to apply more subtle lines and to create very subtle surfaces on these bigger volumes. Also, I think when you go up in volume, if you've got a very jaggedly surface, you've got too much to read. If you consider take that down so you've got some rhythm. You've got very active surfaces, you've got very calm surfaces, there's this wonderful balance between them. That means she has to take the plaster slightly drier to get that.

She was in a place where there was a lot of raw energy from animals and birds and thinking-- she does have first-- well not her first, because there's a fairly early horse and rider from student days, but we've only got evidence of that in photographs. She does her absolutely fabulous horse and rider, she's riding herself. I think all those things are of going on and really important and when she's confident enough and another marriage breakdown, she comes back to Britain, but then she moves to Dorset. She doesn't stay in London.

Jo Baring: What Frink is probably best known for now in terms of her legacy are the public commissions that we can see on our streets, towns, and our churches. Don't you think, Sarah?

Sarah Victoria Turner: Yes. I think she's very committed to making sculpture for public life and putting works in places that ordinary people could encounter it. You can find her work in Harlow, in Belfast, and also abroad. I think she had a really major gig in the US?

Jo Baring: She actually got the J.F.K. Memorial. She did the J.F.K. Memorial in Dallas, which is incredibly impressive.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Another area of sculpture display that really interested her was the idea of creating a sculpture park where your major works could be displayed outdoors.

Jo Baring: Yes. She was really into the idea of sculpture in landscape, and we went up to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park one of her favorite places to go and talk to the director of programming there Clare Lilley about what she had to say about the importance of Frink.

Clare Lilley: Elisabeth Frink is a really important, another really important artist here, because Elisabeth Frink was really keen that there was a sculpture park in England or in Britain, and she was in the early '80s involved in a move in South Wales to establish a sculpture park there which didn't quite happen. Peter Murray met her and she came here. She was a really amazing champion of the sculpture park, and he did a show with her in I think '83 and as a result of that, she gifted some work. We've always had a presence of Frink here.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Such a productive and busy career obviously builds up such a body of work and at her final home and studio, Woolland in Dorset, Frink built up this incredible collection, not only of her own work but the work of other artists that she was interested in. She was also collecting works from Africa, from Oceania as well, and this built up an incredible legacy, which when she died, was left behind.

Jo, I know it's something that you've been thinking about, particularly as the issue of artists estates and how they build reputations.

Jo Baring: I'm so interested actually in the impact that artists' families have on artistic legacy and reputation. If you think about it, Frink dies in 93 she has one son, Lin Jammet, from her first marriage and he inherits everything. You've got this huge house, Woolland, it's stuffed to the gills with everything. There's sculpture and the landscape, there's two different studios, I think. There's two granny flats, there's so much to go through, and also if people are dealing with the death of a parent, there's huge emotional turmoil and also a responsibility. What do they do? Who do they go to? I think quite a lot of it was simply left, and actually that's where Annette came in. Annette, over the last, I don't know 20 to 25 years, she's actually been going through that huge archive and what's been left at Woolland.

Very sadly, Lin died quite suddenly and in the few months that he was able to make decisions about what he wanted to do with his mother's estate he had a number of conversations with Annette, and the decision was made to gift the Frink estate to the nation, which is an incredibly generous gift. They had to think very carefully about which institutions work should go to and the archive. The archive actually went to the Dorset History Centre because of those links with Dorset. We went down to speak to the director there, Sam Johnston, about the impact that having such an incredible archive will have on what he's able to offer. Then we also asked Annette about the hopes that Lin had for Frink's estate.

Sam Johnston: It's a hugely important collection for us to have here. It raises our profile in all kinds of ways: We're aware of connections we have with institutions, certainly within the UK, but beyond, and through Annette, largely, I've become much more aware of what we might be able to do with this collection. It's been a long process of slowly acquiring it here. It's coming in quite a few different separate accessions. Photographic material came in first, but then as Annette worked her way through the Frink legacy, the estate and its holdings, more and more material came to light. Works of art on paper, all material that you'll eventually come to see as it's cataloged.

Annette Ratuszniak: I sat with Lin, and he was able to express-- because he was in a very bad way-- that he wanted that material to go to the nation. He and I were able to just about talk through how to do that. We came up with a context where-- because you're talking thousands of things-- One of the helpful things is it already started to move some of the papers and photographs into the History Centre as part of the National Archives here in Dorchester because they needed better environmental conditions and you can store bronzes and drawings, and particularly the photographs. We were able to build on that with the idea that there will be a spread of her work across England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Jo Baring: What a hugely generous gift.

Annette Ratuszniak: It's fantastic. I think it is the best thing. It's so sad that Lin's died, but it's the best thing for Frink because now there are these strong collections of work; really a vast amount of work by her can be seen by the public alongside all the work that they love and know on the streets. It's a fantastic opportunity also, for the thing that is missing from her work, which are the academic studies: The opportunity for PhD students, for undergraduates, for people who are writing books, for anybody who's looking at that to actually really get a close to her work and to see it.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Jo, you've been working on Liz Frink for quite a while in your capacity as director of the Ingram collection, you hold quite a number of her works.

Jo Baring: Yes. We've got 28 works by Frink in the collection and we've lent them to a huge number of exhibitions over the years. I've definitely seen a sea change in the way that people are presenting Frink.

Sarah Victoria Turner: You know those works really well, but you obviously still feel that there's more to find out.

Jo Baring: I definitely do. Even talking to you, I think that she's sometimes seen as someone who doesn't fit in to the narrative. The traditional narrative of British art, but actually, if you see her in the context of European modernism, that's when she really begins to make sense, doesn't she?

Sarah Victoria Turner: Definitely. I think doing this episode has helped me see her in a much more expanded field of sculptural practice, and that has been really enriching.

Jo Baring: Join us next time where we'll be looking at the work of the sculptor, Kim Lim.

Sarah Victoria Turner: We'd like to thank everyone who has helped us with this episode, to our interviewees and particularly to the Artists' Lives project at the British Library, which allowed us to use the recordings of Liz Frink.

Jo Baring: We'd also like to thank our sponsors, the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British art, and all the works by Frink that we talked about in this episode are available to view on our Instagram page, which is [@sculptinglives](#). Thank you and goodbye.

Sarah Victoria Turner: Bye.

Speaker 1: This podcast was written and presented by Sarah Victoria Turner and Jo Baring produced by Claire Lynch, with research assistance from Isabelle Mooney.

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