



Fairhurst

Gallery & Framers

Press release - for immediate release

Gallery to showcase the life and work of celebrated Norwich-based artist as she turns 80

WOMAN OF STEEL: A retrospective of the life and work of Ros Newman



19 February - 30 March 2019
The Fairhurst Gallery, Norwich

A Norwich-based sculptor will be celebrating her 80th birthday with a solo retrospective exhibition at the Fairhurst Gallery in the city.

Ros Newman, who has lived in Norwich for more than 40 years, has recently dismantled her studio and has been working with the gallery to catalogue her works for this insightful exhibition.

A contemporary of Elisabeth Frink and Barbara Hepworth, Ros first exhibited her work in 1969 and mounted her first solo show in 1971 at The Alwin Gallery in London. It was a sell out and she used the proceeds to buy an old barn in Fakenham in 1972.

Surrounded by a family of artists, Ros' uncle Sir John Rothenstein was director of the Tate (1938 – 1964) and her grandfather was Sir William Rothenstein, an English painter, printmaker, draughtsman and former Principal of the Royal College of Art (1920 – 1935) where he mentored Henry Moore.

Ros said: "My family has been dominated by artists and creatives. My Grandfather, Sir William Rothenstein was a painter. Over 200 of his paintings are held in the National Portrait Gallery and he inaugurated the War Artists following a request he made to the King."

Ros began her studies at Chelsea Art School at the age of 16 but, finding it wasn't for her, she left and taught at a progressive school before attending Hammersmith College of Art where she discovered her love for welding.

Ros said: "I was entranced, this was exactly what I was looking for!"

She developed a unique method of oxy-acetylene welding to use steel as a modelling material. Her first piece was a standing soldier made of bits of metal she found on the floor of the workshop.

"I continued to use this technique to capture the movement of the human and animal form which I love so much" said Ros.

Initially creating works on a domestic scale, Ros later began making large outdoor installations in stainless steel as well.

She moved to Norwich in 1979 and soon after started teaching evening art classes at Wensum Lodge where she met her husband Chris. A prolific artist, Ros has always worked ceaselessly on her art both from her studio in Norfolk and during her time overseas in Tabago and Taiwan.

In 2001 the Norwich Contemporary Art Society raised funds to erect Ros' *Flight of Birds* sculpture at the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital – a dramatic sculpture featuring flights of stainless steel birds.

Ros said: "Most of my work is conceived to deceive the eye into seeing much more than is there; a part of a face becomes a whole; a silhouette of a bird, when bent and polished, takes flight. Through one's eye, the brain fills in the parts that are not there."

Fairhurst Gallery director, Dulcie Humphrey, said: "I first met Ros when I was a nine-year-old girl living in Taiwan. Ros was living and working there too and became a close family friend. I would spend time with Ros making jewellery and was fascinated by her workshop and sculptures.

"I remember as a girl attending the opening of a show at the Pan Pan gallery in Taiwan where Ros was invited to show alongside eight leading Taiwanese sculptors. Ros was always creative and a free-spirited, successful woman. There is no doubt that she was a huge influence on me - which led me on the path to pursue a working life in the creative industries."

"So, for me now, it is the highest of honours to celebrate Ros' life's work within the gallery."

Ros is a member of the Royal Society of Sculptors, the Norwich 20 Group and the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society.

Chairperson of the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society, Keith Roberts, said: "I am really looking forward to this exhibition.

“Ros Newman nearing her 80th birthday, and closing down her workshop, gives us this timely opportunity to see a broad, retrospective selection of the distinctive and delicate, airy figurative steelwork that she has produced for more than half a century.”

Ros said: “I have lived in Norwich for over 40 years and continue to enjoy the vibrant art scene. Though I am no longer working, I can look back at an incredibly rich, exciting and rewarding career. Steel found me and I embraced her with all my passion.”

The Fairhurst would like to thank the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Art for kindly donating plinths for the exhibition, artists Rachel Long and Patrick Goodall who are helping to finish, polish and mount a number of works and Keith Roberts chairperson of Norfolk Contemporary Art Society.

Private View: Saturday 16 February, 12 noon - 4pm

For more information visit www.fairhurstgallery.co.uk

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Notes to Editors:

Ros Newman



Ros Newman in her studio



Ros Newman with her sculpture *Flight of Birds* at Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital



Ros Newman in her studio



Ros Newman with horse



Work by Ros Newman

About Fairhurst Gallery

Tucked away in the Norwich Lanes, once a 17th century skittle alley and formerly the Cat Trap jazz club, the Fairhurst is a unique gallery space, hosting regular exhibitions.

The Fairhurst Gallery champions contemporary fine art, bringing variety and brilliance to the city of Norwich. With a view to developing the careers of new professional artists and helping established practitioners reach new audiences, The Fairhurst repeatedly show inspirational work of the highest standards.

The Fairhurst Gallery also offers a traditional framing business as well as a bespoke restoration service, with clients including stately homes around the region, Norwich Cathedral, Norwich Castle and the Sainsbury Centre.

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