



MESSUM'S

DAVID MESSUM FINE ART - EST 1963

2025
5 - 28 FEBRUARY 2025
AT DAVID MESSUM FINE ART LTD.



Front cover: Guy Taplin in his studio (Credit: Michael Branthwaite)

Above left: Twelve Roseate Ibis, Carved and painted driftwood, 82 x 145 x 34 cm

Above right: Guy Taplin, Nancy Taplin, and Robina Jack at home in Wivenhoe (Credit: Michael Branthwaite)

David Messum Fine Art in is delighted to be staging a major exhibition of works by the celebrated sculptor, Guy Taplin. The show will be held at David Messum's gallery at 12 Bury Street, St James's between 5th - 28th February 2025.

Guys studio is a cornucopia of items that serves as a record of the ebb and flow of the life of the coast. Inside the low succession of rooms is chock-a-block with extraordinary things: oversized wooden sculptures, model ships, flags, plates and paintings jostle for space and light. It is a place that has been driven by his creative impulse, powerfully and engagingly driven on an unstoppable white-water journey of making, that surrounds him every day in a constant process of discovery, trial and error, and invention.

Guy Taplin's hugely sought-after sculpture are instantly recognisable. Grace-filled birds mindfully constructed from driftwood collected with great dedication along the coasts and estuaries of his home. They are pieces which possess a collective memory of the landscape - single birds and flocks, hedgerow birds and waders, rarities and common sights. Some echo old decoys in their naivety, some – in the arrangement of their beaks and wings – have the sophistication of a snatch of baroque music.

Artist, Nancy Taplin, on Guy's Studio:



Above left Four Turnstone, Carved and painted driftwood, 46 x 46 x 25 cm

Above right: Doves, Carved and painted driftwood, 25 x 20 x 30 cm

Every surface of the two storey sail loft Guy uses as a workspace is mantled in sawdust. The dramatic winged forms of his sculptures jostle against the eclectic array of curios he's collected all his life. Wanted posters liberated during his decoy hunting expeditions in America sit side by side with a hologram of a weeping Jesus and a faded family photo found in a derelict house. His ability to create such fragile beauty in an environment so seemingly chaotic is perhaps due to the embodied awareness he learned during the zen training he received in his thirties. It was during this period that he also began sculpting birds and I've always found his pieces to have a meditative quality, even in their sometimes vivid evocations of movement.

About Guy Taplin:

Born in London's East End in 1939, Guy Taplin has lived on the Essex marshes since 1985. Following a near-lethal spell in the army, he careered through endless menial jobs, and found brief fame designing and making buckles in London, before hitting upon his vocation by happy accident. It is now almost a legend that, while caring for the ornamental waterfowl in Regent's Park, the Bird Man began on a whim to whittle crude, decoy-like images of his charges in wood, and then never stopped. His works are held in several major national collection in England and Wales Tate Gallery; the Arts Council of Great Britain; the Contemporary Art Society; ZSL London; Royal Bank of Scotland; National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; Society of Wildlife Artists, and internationally.

About David Messum Fine Art Ltd.

Since first opening in 1963, David Messum has continued to be an active influence in the British art market, establishing his gallery on its pioneering research and promotion of British artists. From the gallery at 12 Bury Street, St. James's, the company continues to build on its heritage of dealing in high quality traditional and contemporary British painters.

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