

Horse and Jockey

ELISABETH FRINK (British, 1930-1992)

One of the leading lights of the post-war school of British sculptors, Elizabeth Frink achieved commercial success at a young age when, in 1952, Beaux Arts Gallery in London held her first major solo exhibition and the Tate Gallery purchased one work, entitled *Bird*. This marked the beginning of a highly acclaimed career in which Frink was awarded Honorary Doctorates by the University of Surrey (1977), Open University (1983), University of Warwick (1983), University of Cambridge (1988), University of Exeter (1988), University of Oxford (1989) and University of Keele (1989). She also received official recognition, being awarded the CBE in 1969, and in 1982 she was created Dame of the British Empire.

Frink's work is characterised by her scarred surfaces created by repeatedly coating an armature with wet plaster; each coating is distressed and broken, eliminating detail and generalising form.

Horse and Jockey was originally commissioned in 1974 by De Beers as the trophy (complete with diamonds) for the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes—Britain's most prestigious annual open-age flat race, which takes place at Ascot in July. Frink's affection for horses stemmed from her country childhood in Suffolk; her father was a brilliant horseman, a good polo player and an amateur jockey.

In an interview with her friend Laurie Lee, Frink said: *'I don't like reality in art—I have reality enough when I'm outside. I want to create my own fantastic forms based on my observation of human and animal form [...] I am interested that men and animals are confronted with combat in their lives, some sort of menace, and must defend themselves. Not only in war, but in the whole business of living [...] I admire strength under stress.'*