



Maquette for Crab

Bernard Meadows

Not on display

Title/Description: Maquette for Crab

Artist/Maker: Bernard Meadows

Born: 1951 c. - 1952 c.

Measurements: h. 312 x w. 298 x d. 130 mm

Accession Number: 50480

Credit Line: Accepted by HM Government in Lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to the university of East Anglia for display at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, 2011

This plaster maquette for 'Crab' by Norwich-born sculptor, Bernard Meadows, captures the essential characteristics of this familiar crustacean – the 'crabness' of a crab. When looking at its unstable angular legs, hollowed-out carapace, and heavy pincers, are we reminded of a person with arms raised skyward in surrender? Or does the crab's towering, armoured form fill us with unease?

When interviewed in 1992, Meadows described the 'fearsome' land crabs he encountered while stationed on the Cocos Islands in the South Indian Ocean as a Flight Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force between 1945-46. These large crabs had claws that could rip open coconuts and cut through table legs.

Attempting to analyse the emotion that inspired his animal sculptures, Meadows reflected: 'I think perhaps it's not fear, it's vulnerability, that one is always aware of the threat of spiders, of crawly things generally. Perhaps illogically, but it's a certain sort of threat, it's a certain sort of fear.' [1]

Vanessa Tothill, June 2020

[1] Bernard Meadows. National Life Story Collection: Artists' Lives, Transcript of Interview conducted by Tamsyn Woollcombe [Nov. 1992], p. 83.
