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For immediate release

**Flock Project**

**Installation of bird sculptures opens at the Horniman**

An installation of clay bird sculptures developed by artist Julie Nelson in collaboration with members of the Grounding Project, a specialist service for people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, opens at the Horniman Museum and Gardens on Sunday 27 May 2023.

**Flock Projec**t was inspired by starling murmurations where resident and migrant birds form organic shapes together in the sky. Conversations and ideas between Julie and Grounding Project members emerged around migration, evolution, species diversity, the environment, nature, clay and the process of creating.They made bird shapes from memory in clay, each representing countries from which they have travelled and their journeys of hope.

In this display**,** 25 of the sculptures are presented as bird specimens from the Horniman collection, featuring the colours and designs of historical labels seen in its Natural History Gallery.

Julie has also studied the created birds and produced a new set of drawings to record the project. Numerous marks on paper make up each image, similar to the gathering of birds in the sky.

Accompanying the sculptures and drawings is a video by filmmaker Andy Dunn. The work shows a starling murmuration alongside the process of making a bird from clay.

Julie Nelson says: ‘No animal is more mythic or rich in symbolic or cultural associations than the humble bird. Important in every culture, birds speak of freedom and flight, migration and longing, independence and togetherness.’

**Flock Project** is on display in the Horniman’s Natural History Gallery from Saturday 27 May 2023. Entry to the Horniman, and to see **Flock Project**, is free.

To find out more about **Flock Project** and hear from its participants visit [flockproject.co.uk](http://flockproject.co.uk).

Pictures attached show:

* Detail of ceramic bird from Flock Project
* Study of the Flock Project birds

For further images or information contact: Horniman Press Office - press@horniman.ac.uk

**Ends**

**Notes to Editors:**

* **Julie Nelson** is a British ceramicist who uses the materiality of clay as a means to explore the natural world. Her work focuses on the elemental and she crafts in a series, often exhibiting objects in groups that both contrast and interrelate. Her collections, based on biology, botany and landscape, express the visual regularities found across nature, exploring pattern and entropy, whilst highlighting the connectedness of everything. For more information about Julie’s work visit [julienelson.co.uk](https://www.julienelson.co.uk/)
* For more information on **Flock Project** visit[flockproject.co.uk](http://flockproject.co.uk)
* The **Grounding Project** is funded by SLaM (South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust).
* **The Horniman Museum and Gardens** has won [Art Fund Museum of the Year 2022](https://www.horniman.ac.uk/story/horniman-wins-100000-art-fund-museum-of-the-year-2022/), the world’s largest museum prize.
* **The Horniman Museum and Gardens** opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to ‘bring the world to Forest Hill’. Today the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. Its galleries include natural history, music and an acclaimed aquarium, alongside a World Gallery of anthropology and a flexible arts and exhibition space, The Studio. Indoor exhibits link to the award-winning display gardens – from medicinal and dye gardens to an interactive sound garden, Butterfly House and an animal walk – set among 16 acres of beautiful, green space offering spectacular views across London. [horniman.ac.uk](http://www.horniman.ac.uk/)
* **Coronavirus impact: Every month the Horniman was closed cost around £150,000 in lost income** from ticket sales, memberships, the shop and café. In recent years, the Horniman has increasingly relied on this vital income to help care for the Gardens, animals and Aquarium residents, to run events and to look after the collections. The support of returning visitors, our supporters and their generous donations are more needed than ever. [horniman.ac.uk/support-us/](https://www.horniman.ac.uk/support-us/)
* The **Horniman Museum and Gardens** is core-funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust, registered charity no. 802725.
* On 29 July 2019 the **Horniman Museum and Gardens declared an ecological and climate emergency**, pledging to place carbon reduction and environmental issues at the heart of its work. The declaration – and the subsequent **Climate and Ecological Manifesto**, published in January 2020 – is a consolidation of existing work and a commitment to renewed ambitions to reduce the Horniman’s environmental and pollution footprint, increase biodiversity, and inspire others to do so. Find out more about the Horniman’s manifesto commitments and progress so far at [horniman.ac.uk/climate](https://www.horniman.ac.uk/about-the-horniman/climate-and-ecology/).