

Flock of clay birds set to take flight in special exhibition

16TH MAY ART ENTERTAINMENT



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A flock of clay birds is set to take flight in a special art installation.

Pupils from Beckley CofE Primary School in Oxfordshire created their own ceramic birds as part of a pottery workshop led by artists from The Art Barns at Bernwood Pottery in Horton-cum-Studley.

The artwork will form part of the Oxfordshire Artweeks exhibition running from May 9 to 17.



The ceramic birds (Image: Beckley CofE Primary School)

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Elizabeth Murphy, a ceramicist at The Art Barns, said: "Every year The Art Barns at Bernwood Pottery creates a curated exhibition of work by local artists who are passionate about what they do.

"This year for Artweeks we wanted to do something more than just show our work: we wanted to give back by engaging and inspiring the community with art. We are therefore very pleased to be collaborating with Mr Houston and his team at Beckley CoE Primary School to create a very special installation by the children to present during Artweeks."

On March 23, Ms Murphy and fellow artists Rachel Kelly and Charlie Leech spent the day at the school running a pottery workshop for all pupils, who each created a clay bird. The project was inspired by the natural murmurations of starlings over nearby Otmoor and the school's vision to "soar on wings like eagle".

Ms Murphy said: "Each child from Reception to Year 6 made their own bird out of clay. Though we led the children in how to make, every single one turned out completely different and as unique as the child that made it.

"Ranging from beautiful textures to elongated beaks to fighter jet birds to dashing birds in top hats, each and every bird has its own distinctive personality."

The clay birds will be fired and suspended as a murmuration-style installation at The Art Barns throughout the Artweeks festival.

Rick Houston, headteacher at Beckley CofE Primary School, said: "This project has been a fantastic opportunity for every child in the school to be engaged in a shared art work.

"Each bird had a similar starting design, which was then personalised by each child. This linked to themes we have been learning about in school; how each of us is the same and each of us is unique and different, and how both of these things can be true at the same time.

"We come together to form a larger whole as a school community which has the same ephemeral, ever changing nature as the starling murmurations over Otmoor."

After the exhibition, the installation will be dismantled and each child will receive their clay bird as a keepsake.

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