



Inv. no. B 460

JENS FERDINAND WILLUMSEN (1863-1958) &nbsp;  
MODEL OF THE BIRDS FOR THE OPEN-AIR THEATRE, 1910/1919  
BRONZE

H: 77.5; STAND W: 32; D: 32 CM

In the spring of 1910, the first Danish open-air theatre saw the light of day. It was located in Ulvedalene in The Deer Park north of Copenhagen, and J.F. Willumsen was the architect behind the outdoor stage. To flank its curved ramp, he created two torch-bearing bird sculptures standing approximately 5 metres tall, made of wood and clad in copper.<sup>1</sup> The David Collection's sculpture is a model of these birds, cast in bronze. However, it was created several years after the large bird sculptures were executed, being cast after a plaster model in 1919 in connection with an exhibition of Willumsen's works at Dansk Kunsthandel in Copenhagen.

Observing the bronze sculpture in The David Collection, one sees a dense, robust bird, its chest pushed forward and its wings raised to hold the brazier aloft. Despite the hard material, Willumsen has succeeded in capturing the texture of the bird's plumage, greatly reinforcing a naturalistic feel. Willumsen commented on the bird

sculptures at the open-air stage on several occasions, emphasising that they did not represent any specific species. Rather, he had sculpted them from his imagination, referring to them variously as ravens and pigeons.<sup>2</sup>

Following a thorough renovation, the bird sculptures are now located at J.F. Willumsens Museum in Frederikssund, where they are called *Ravens*.

<sup>1</sup> Lisbeth Lund og Anne Gregersen (eds.): *I symbolernes skygge. Skulpturer af J.F. Willumsen og Kaspar Bonnén*, J.F. Willumsens Museum, Frederikssund 2007, p. 78

<sup>2</sup> J.F. Willumsen, *The Ravens*, 1910, J.F. Willumsens Museum, inv.no. 1339.

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*Udstilling af skulptur, keramik, litografier, raderinger af Edith Willumsen - J. F. Willumsen*, Dansk Kunsthandel, Katalog 34, København 1919, cat. 23;

*Willumsen udstillingen, arrangeret af Den frie Udstilling i Anledningen af Kunstnerens 60-Aars Fødselsdag*, København 1923, 2. ed., cat. 285;

Erik Zahle: "Billedkunst" in *C.L. Davids Samling. Nogle Studier*, [1], København 1948, p. 208;

C.L. David: *C.L. Davids Samling*, København 1960, p. 23;

Leila Krogh in Kjeld von Folsach and Nana Lund (eds.): *Dansk kunst i Davids Samling – fra Philipsen til Saxbo*, København 1995, cat. 29, pp. 88-89;

Henrik Wivel: *Jeg er en anden: en biografi om J.F. Willumsen*, København 2024, Vol. 1, 1863-1914, fig. 190, p. 243;