



**HELEN DENERLEY:  
POSITIVE SPACE  
KILMORACK GALLERY,  
BEULY, INVERNESS-SHIRE  
AUGUST 9-SEPTEMBER 7**

Scottish sculptor Helen Denerley's huge female giraffe and her calf, which stand tall on the pavement at the top of Leith Walk in Edinburgh, have become landmarks since they were placed there in 2005. In fact, Denerley's distinctive work, mostly in metal and depicting animals or birds, is dotted all over Scotland, and can be found as far afield as Japan and South Georgia.

Like many artists working in three dimensions, the Aberdeenshire-based artist has long been fascinated by the negative space: the gaps which occur naturally in a piece of sculpture. This phenomenon is, she asserts, "as interesting as the metal itself, the eye seeing muscle and mass where there is only air".

Look closely at any Denerley sculpture and all you see is space. A small chaffinch has a gap between the top and bottom of its beak; a pheasant is lithe and light because its body is suggested by shapes around it. The rest is left to the imagination. In classical music, it's referred to as a "lacuna"; in art it is "negative space".

The title of Denerley's fourth solo exhibition at Kilmorack Gallery turns that into Positive Space, and features more than 50 new works, including large and small sculptures and works on paper. Like many sculptors, she draws like a dream and her paper works are exquisitely executed.

A highlight of this show is Hen Harrier Food Pass, pictured far left, a sculptural representation of a rare sight in nature where the male and female birds exchange food mid-air. "Male and female hen harriers understand exactly how close they need to fly if they are to succeed in a food pass," the artist explains. "For them, the edge of danger is the point of success. There is a similarly edgy place in making sculpture and that is where an artist creates."

JAN PATIENCE