



British Sculptors 1900-1950

Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_Epstein

Eric Gill (1882-1940) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Gill

Henry Moore (1898-1986) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Moore

Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_Hepworth

Important British Sculptors Not Considered

Frank Dobson (1886-1963) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Dobson_\(sculptor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Dobson_(sculptor))

- Dobson was a British sculptor who began as a painter influenced by Cubism, Vorticism and Futurism. After WWI he turned to sculpture in a more or less realist style.
- In the 1920 and 30s he was regarded as an outstanding sculptor and was one of the first to prefer direct carving rather than modelling a maquette first.
- He was influenced by African art and was Professor of Sculpture at the Royal College of Art from 1946 to 1953. He was elected to the Royal Academy in 1953.
- For the Festival of Britain site on the **South Bank** of the Thames in 1951, Dobson created **London Pride**. The sculpture was originally exhibited as a

plaster cast but was later, after Dobson died, cast as a bronze and placed in front of the Royal National Theatre in 1987.

- Brian Sewell recalled that after his death his widow destroyed much of his work including clay models and drawings because she considered them too erotic. Sewell's pleas to save them as great art were to no avail.
- While Dobson was one of the most esteemed artists of his time, after his death his reputation declined with the move towards postmodernism and conceptual art. However, in recent years a revival has begun. Dobson is now seen as one of the most important British sculptors of the 20th century.

Reg Butler (1913-1981) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reg_Butler

- He worked as a blacksmith during World War II as a conscientious objector and then worked as a technical editor from 1946 to 1950. He began to sculpt in 1944 without having had any formal training and did not hold his first one man show until 1949, when he was 36. He did not become well known until the 1950s and is therefore outside the period being considered (1900-1950).

Lynn Chadwick (1914-2003) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lynn_Chadwick

- Chadwick was an English sculptor and artist. Much of his work is semi-abstract sculpture in bronze or steel. His work is in the collections of MoMA in New York, the Tate in London and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. He was born in Barnes and because of his interest in art he trained as a draughtsman to become an architect. He served as a pilot in the war and after the war started by designing trade fair stands. He started making mobiles and 'stabiles' (ground supported mobiles) some of which he incorporated in his trade fair stands.
- He bought a dilapidated country house for the price of a three-bedroom house, built a studio and started putting his work in the grounds.
- He won several commissions including two for the 1951 Festival of Britain and in 1952 he exhibited at the 26th Venice Biennale. He won the International Sculpture Prize which immediately brought him international fame.
- He had no formal art training and began to weld in innovative ways. In 1954 he discovered 'Stolit', an industrial stone compound of gypsum and iron filings that could be applied wet and when dry sanded. This material was an important turning point in his development. By the late 50s he started to cast in bronze.
- In the late 60s he was overtaken by the interest in Pop Art but he continued to exhibit overseas. In 1989, Chadwick returned to working with steel for the first time since 1962. Using this method, Chadwick produced a series of "beasts", which varied in size and were often monumental. These works in welded stainless-steel sheets would come to be the final stage of

Chadwick's development of his unique technique. In 1995, he stopped working, claiming "There are only so many things to say and only so many ways to say them and I've done that now."

- He did not have his first one man show until 1950 and is therefore outside the period being considered (1900-1950).

Influential Continental Sculptors

Constantin Brâncuși (1876-1957)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantin_Br%C3%A2ncu%C8%99i

- Brâncuși was a French-Romanian founder of modern sculpture who introduced abstraction and primitivism for the first time. His works were as important as Picasso's paintings to the development of modern art. His simplification of form suggests spirituality, integrity and the innate beauty of materials but above all he pursued 'the inner, hidden reality'.

Alexander Calder (1898-1976) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Calder


- Alexander Calder (August 22, 1898–1976) was an American sculptor known as the originator of the mobile. Calder's monumental stationary sculptures are called stabiles. He also produced wire figures, which are like drawings made in space, and notably a miniature circus work that was performed by the artist.
- His father and grandfather were well-known sculptors in his home town of Philadelphia and his mother was a professional portrait artist. He moved frequently when still at school, first to Arizona, then California, back to Philadelphia and then New York from where he commuted to California. He graduated as a mechanical engineer but switched to art and in 1926 moved to Paris. In Paris he began to make mechanical toys and a miniature circus. A visit to Piet Mondrian's studio in 1930 'shocked' him into fully adopting abstract art. His mechanical kinetic sculptures are the first moving sculptures and they were followed by outdoor mobiles activated by the wind. He married Louisa James in 1931, she was the grandniece of Henry James and philosopher William James. While in Paris, Calder met and became friends with a number of avant-garde artists, including Fernand Léger, Jean Arp, and Marcel Duchamp. He settled with his wife in Connecticut and travelled to India for three months. In 1963 he settled in France in 1963 and died unexpectedly in 1976.
- Calder produced monumental works for JFK Airport (1957), UNESCO (1958) and the Mexico City Olympics (1968). Calder also studied printmaking and illustrated books and journals, painted aircraft and cars and made over 2,000 pieces of jewellery.
- He was a lifelong friend of Joan Miró, Georgia O'Keefe, the wife of Marcel Duchamp, the wife of Luis Buñuel and the wife of Marc Chagall.

Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberto_Giacometti

- Giacometti was born in Switzerland, the son of a post-impressionist painter. He started to draw, paint and sculpt at an early age and studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Geneva 1919-20 and in Italy 1920-1 and then moved to Paris in 1922. His first one-man exhibition was in Zurich in 1927. He went through a period of experimentation when he produced polychrome sculpture, cages, erotic kinetic objects, near-abstraction and other styles. He was an important sculptor in the Surrealist movement (1930-5) and then, in 1935, began to work again from the model, but each sculpture became smaller and smaller, and was finally almost always destroyed. He had no exhibitions between 1935 and 1947. From 1941 to 1945 he lived in Geneva, then returned to Paris. His characteristic style dates from 1947 when he started to make figures which were very tall and thin. He died in Switzerland in 1966.

References

<http://www.britannica.com/art/Western-sculpture/Modern-sculpture>



NEW WAYS OF SEEING: MODERN BRITISH ART

1. New Ways of Seeing
2. Impressionism, Post-Impressionism & Fauvism
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Constantin Brâncuși (1876-1957), *Maiăstra*, 1911, bronze on limestone base, 90.5 x 17.1 x 17.8 cm, Tate

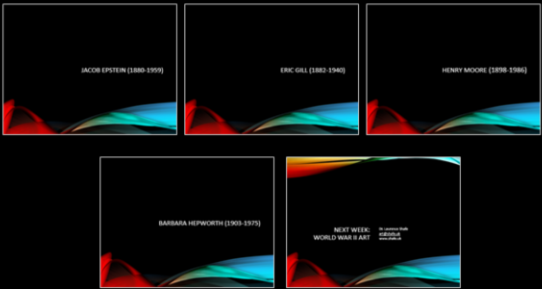
Constantin Brâncuși (1876-1957), *Maiăstra*, 1912 (?), bronze, 73.1 cm high, Tate

- Constantin Brâncuși was a Romanian sculptor, painter and photographer who made his career in France. Considered a pioneer of modernism, **one of the most influential sculptors of the 20th-century**, Brâncuși is called the patriarch of modern sculpture.
- This work evokes a **golden bird with miraculous powers**, which features in **Romanian folk tales**. He produced it while working in Paris in 1911 and it initiated a series of about **30 sculptures** of birds. The carved bird-like forms of the stone base relate to more rustic folk decoration. Maiăstra means 'master' or 'chief' in Romanian. Emphasising an idealised connection with nature, Brancusi originally set the whole sculpture on a high wooden column in the garden of its first owner, the photographer Edward Steichen (1879-1973), the first modern fashion photographer.
- Brâncuși wrote,
"There are idiots who define my work as abstract; yet what they call abstract"

is what is most realistic. What is real is not the appearance, but the idea, the essence of things."

Notes

- This highlights a dilemma that faces all artists and viewers of art. **What is reality?** Is it the **outward appearance** of things or is it **some idea**, some **idealised form** that represents the **essence of the object**. **Brâncuși pioneered the extreme simplification of forms**.
- He was born in a village in Romania and studied in Bucharest School of Fine Arts. He then set out on foot for Paris in 1903 and studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts 1905-7.
- He was influenced by Rodin, but in 1907 he began the process of radically simplifying his figures. Most of his subsequent marble carvings and bronzes consisted of variations on a limited number of themes such as heads, birds and fish. These were **simplified almost to the point of abstraction**, with smooth surfaces and an emphasis on pure basic forms such as the ovoid; his wood carvings were usually closer to African art and to the Romanian folk tradition of wood carving.
- His five works at the **Armory Show, New York, in 1913** attracted great attention. Part of one review read, "This freak sculpture resembles nothing so much as an egg and has excited much derision and laughter." The Armory Show led to his first one-man exhibition at the Photo-Secession Gallery, New York, in 1914, followed by three further US exhibitions, most of his sculptures entering American collections.
- In 1927-28 he won a legal battle against **US Customs**, after they had **refused to admit** one of his 'Birds in Space' as a **work of art**. This **victory** ensured the work could enter the country **duty free**. The ruling also established the important principle that "art" does not have to involve a realistic representation of nature, and that it was legitimate for it to simply represent an abstract concept – in this case "flight".
- He died in Paris and bequeathed his studio and its contents to the Musée National d'Art Moderne after it was refused by the Romanian Communist government.
- Brâncuși's piece "Madame L.R." sold for **€29.185 million** (\$37.2 million) in 2009, setting a record price for a sculpture sold at auction.
- In 2015 the Romanian Parliament declared February 19 "The Brâncuși Day", a working holiday in Romania.





JACOB EPSTEIN (1880-1959)

- Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) helped pioneer modern sculpture. He was **born in the US**, moved to **Europe in 1902** (aged 22) and became a British citizen in 1911. He **married** Margaret Dunlop in 1906 and had **many affairs** and fathered five children. His longest relationship with **Kathleen Garman** lasted from 1921 until his death. Margaret tolerated all his affairs except that with Garman **who she shot** and wounded in 1923. Margaret died in 1947 and **Epstein married Kathleen**. Their **eldest daughter**, also called Kathleen or 'Kitty', **married Lucien Freud**.
- He reacted against ornate and pretty art and often made **bold, harsh** and massive forms in bronze and stone. He often **shocked** his audience because of the **explicit sexual content** and his experimentation with **non-Western** sculptural traditions. His **male nude** over **John Lewis's** department store in Liverpool was called 'Dickie Lewis'.



Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), façade of British Medical Association building, Strand, London, 1908

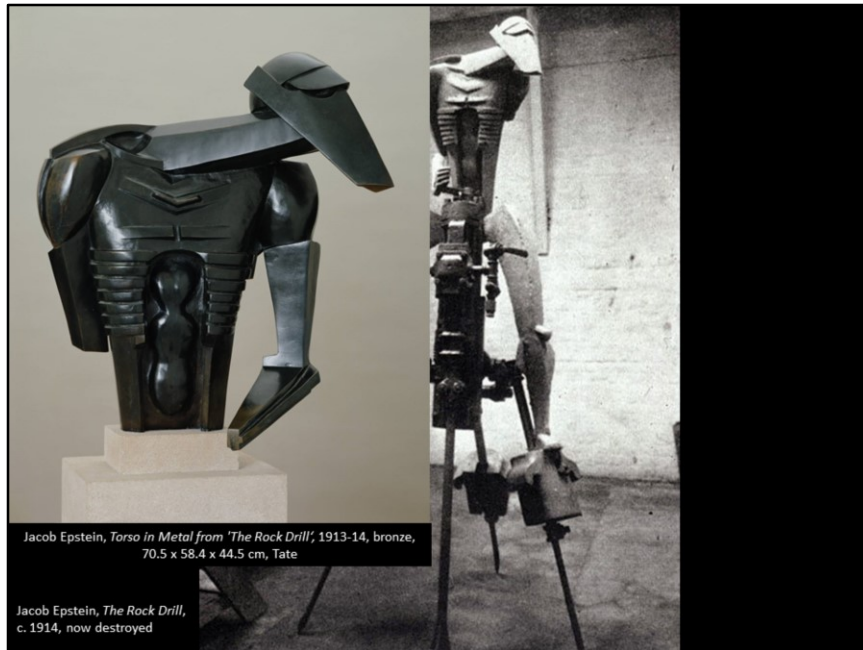
- His **first major commission** was **18 large nude sculptures** made in 1908 for the façade of Charles Holden's building for the British Medical Association on **The Strand** (now Zimbabwe House) were initially considered shocking to **Edwardian sensibilities**, again mainly due to the perception that they were over-explicit sexually. In art-historical terms, however, the Strand sculptures were controversial for quite a different reason: they represented Epstein's first thoroughgoing attempt to break away from traditional European iconography in favour of elements derived from an alternative sculptural milieu – that of **classical India**. In the **1930s** some **pieces fell off** the figures and they were all mutilated allegedly to protect the public but it is not clear whether it was from falling masonry or from the naked figures.
- Through Epstein's 1908 figures for the façade of the new British Medical Association building in the Strand, now Zimbabwe House, the British public had its first and formative encounter with a version of Modernism. The encounter was unsettling because it took place in a street and it combined classical nudity with

the eroticism of Indian sculpture.

- It was known that strange things had been happening in painting, but paintings were in galleries. Sickert painted some of his Camden Town nudes in the same year. The Epstein sculptures epitomised the modern. Their stripping away of an academic veil, not the subject-matter, made the reaction to them prudish. They might have been at the back of Toynbee's and Strudwick's minds a quarter of a century later. The BMA resisted the campaign for their removal. The Evening Standard warned that Epstein had erected **"a form of statuary which no careful father would wish his daughter, or no discriminating young man his fiancée, to see"**. Epstein wrote, 'The sculptor later wrote: 'Perhaps this was the first time in London that a decoration was not purely "decorative'.
- Jacob Epstein created 18 large, nude sculptures for the British Medical Association building in London. The sculptures caused an uproar, considered too raw and sexually suggestive. Epstein described it as starting a thirty year war and when thirty years later acid rain caused part of one of the sculptures to fall of the rest immediately had all their protruding pieces hacked off. This monument to vandalism can still be seen today in the Strand.

References

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_Epstein



Jacob Epstein, *The Rock Drill*, c. 1914, now destroyed

Jacob Epstein, *Torso in Metal from 'The Rock Drill'*, 1913-14, bronze, 70.5 x 58.4 x 44.5 cm, Tate

- Between 1913 and 1915, Epstein was associated with the short-lived Vorticism movement and produced one of his best known sculptures *The Rock Drill*.
- This is a photograph of ***The Rock Drill* in its original form**. This work appeared at the London Group exhibition in 1915. By the time of its second outing in summer 1916, however, he had dismantled it. He discarded the drill, dismembered the figure and cut it in half, leaving a one-armed torso which was then cast, initially in gun metal and ultimately in bronze. Epstein, it seems, took an expression of masculine aggression and then emasculated it. Obvious conclusions may be drawn from the fact that he is doing this at the time of the Battle of the Somme and the Battle of Verdun.
- Epstein later said "**Here is the armed, sinister figure of today and tomorrow. No Humanity, only the terrible Frankenstein's monster we have made ourselves into...** later I lost my interest in machinery and discarded the drill. I cast only the upper part of the figure."
- Epstein often produced **controversial works** which challenged taboos on what was

appropriate subject matter for public artworks. He also made paintings and drawings, and often exhibited his work.

- The figure is sharp-edged, its limbs square in profile, and its head is a long beak-like armoured visage. The torso has what looks like armoured ribs, and in the abdomen area is an indentation containing an **embryonic form**. The extraordinary thing about this mechanised abstracted human figure is that it sat on top of a **real miner's rock drill**, with the name of its American manufacturer emblazoned on its side. The whole assembled sculpture was **over three metres tall**, giving it an amazing brooding and threatening physical presence. Of course, with the enormous drill jutting out from the figure's loins, it has an **extraordinary phallic power** about it. Writing about the piece in his autobiography Epstein said: "**I made and mounted a machine-like robot, visored, menacing, and carrying within itself its progeny, protectively ensconced.**" (Tate)

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/blogs/story-jacob-epsteins-rock-drill>



Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), Tomb of Oscar Wilde, 1914, Hopton Wood stone, Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris

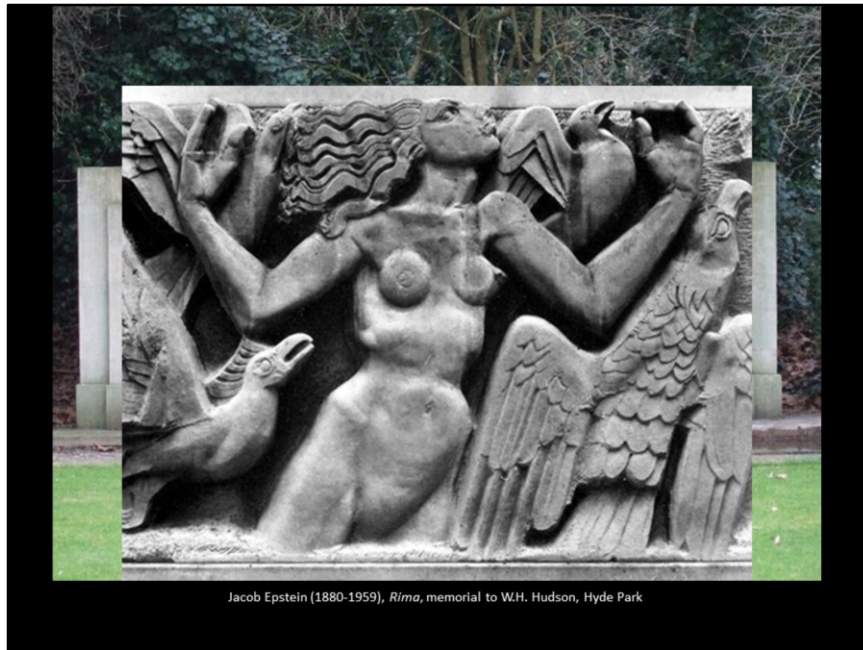
- This was **Epstein's second commission**. His original sketches, which he abandoned, show two young men mourning Wilde's death. new focus on Wilde's poem *The Sphinx*. However, a number of influences began to play on Epstein around this period, including that of fellow sculptor **Eric Gill**. The two artists were deeply interested in what they saw as the more **primal sexuality of Indian** and Egyptian art, as opposed to British art. Pennington refers to this period in the Epstein's work as the Sun Temple period and claims that, having been unable to follow this path with some of his works in Britain, Epstein transferred his new passion onto the Wilde tomb. It has also been claimed that the work was partly inspired by the **Winged Assyrian Bulls** in the British Museum.
- It began as a **single 20 tonne block** of Hopton Wood stone from Derbyshire. In Epstein's original sketches there are five figures in the headdress of the Sphinx, one with a crucifix, perhaps referring to Wilde's martyrdom and a small angel behind its ear. However, in the finished version there is just the personification of Fame being trumpeted in the Sphinx's headdress.
- When it was imported into France the **custom's officials rejected it as a work of**

art and imposed a punishing **£120** for the value of the stone. The **nakedness** caused the Parisian officials to **cover it with tarpaulin** and one evening Epstein found the **testicles** had been **covered with plaster** as they were considered unusually large. Eventually a **bronze plaque** shaped like a **butterfly** was placed over the testicles and it was **unveiled in August 1914** by the occultist and poet **Alistair Crowley**. Epstein was **furious** and refused to attend the opening. A few weeks later Crowley approached Epstein with the bronze butterfly round his neck and told him the tomb was now as he had intended. In 1961 the testicles were removed in an act of vandalism and in 2000 a silver replacement was made.

- A tradition arose that mourners (mostly women) should apply lipstick and **kiss the tomb** so in 2011 a **glass barrier** was erected to stop the stone becoming damaged.

Notes

- Hopton Wood stone is a very fine, marble-like limestone from Derbyshire, often used for tombstones.



Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), *Rima*, memorial to W.H. Hudson, Hyde Park

- Epstein threw himself into the task. Drawing inspiration from Hudson's most famous novel, a tale of a bird girl in the jungles of Guyana called *Green Mansions* (1904), he sketched numerous designs. A traveller falls in love with the forest-dwelling girl called Rima, Epstein fused elements of African, Asian and Polynesian art to create a sexually charged, avant garde vision of the fictional heroine.
- When Stanley Baldwin drew back the curtain in front of the memorial there were 'gasps of horror' from the audience. A media campaign followed that saw the Morning Post describe Rima – or "the **Hyde Park Atrocity**" as it was quickly dubbed – as "**Mr Epstein's nightmare in stone**", and the sculptor as "**the most famous example of a great sculptor who has sold his soul to the devil**". The sculpture was daubed in green paint. Epstein was baffled by all the fuss and visited Hyde Park a number of times to try to see what all the fuss was about.

Notes

- William Henry Hudson (1841-1922) was an author, naturalist and ornithologist. He was a founding member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.



Jacob Epstein, *Day and Night*, 1928, St James Street Station, 55 Broadway, London

- In 1929 his sculptures ***Day*** and ***Night*** above **55 Broadway**, St James's Park were considered indecent and his commissions for public works ended.
- Epstein believed direct carving respected the nature of the material. *Day* and *Night* skilfully respond to the shape and grain of the Portland Stone – formidable, unwavering and assertive.
- Deliberately abandoning a Classical aesthetic – Epstein found inspiration in India, Mexico, West Africa and the Pacific Islands. At a time when the **primitive** was linked to political anarchy his realist, avant-garde style **tested conventions** regarding 'suitable' subjects for public art.
- In 1924 **Frank Pick** commissioned **Charles Holden** to design the new headquarters for the London Underground. As part of the art deco design Holden commissioned seven sculptors to produce works for the exterior. Epstein produced *Day* and *Night* which were unveiled in 1928. They provoked **controversy and moral panic** and attempted defamation ensued, **campaigns were mounted** to have the sculptures removed.
- **Frank Pick**, the managing director of the London Underground, the leading force behind 55 Broadway, took full responsibility for the statues and offered to resign.

(Later, he privately admitted that the statues were not to his taste – but he stood up for his artist on principal). To resolve the matter Epstein **removed 1½ inches** from the **boy's penis and the protest died down**. Pick brought about the unified, simple and timeless design of underground stations all over London. His philosophy was,

- 'One day the ice will descend and blot out all traces of man's works. The earth will grow cold. Nature will return to her kingdom and spread her snowy pall over the last man, and there will be nothing but barren rocks again ... Man will have disappeared from the face of the earth with the world that he had made. His day will be done. And the evening and the morning were the eighth day. Will man be able to say, "and, behold, it was very good?"'

Notes

- *Day* depicts a seated patriarchal figure with child looking up at it. It is situated on south east facade of 55 Broadway.
- *Night* depicts a seated figure with a reclining figure across its lap. The sculpture is located on the north east facade of 55 Broadway.
- *Night* and *Day* suggest cannibalism, sacrifice and lust and opinions divided London.
- 55 Broadway is a Grade I listed building overlooking St. James's Park in London. It was designed by Charles Holden and built between 1927 and 1929; in 1931 the building earned him the RIBA London Architecture Medal. It was constructed as a new headquarters for the Underground Electric Railways Company of London (UERL), the main forerunner of London Underground. Upon completion, it was the tallest office block in the city. London Underground was due to vacate the building in 2015 for new headquarters, and 55 Broadway will be converted for residential use.
- Commissioned artwork:
 - *Day* and *Night*, [Jacob Epstein](#)
 - *North Wind*, [Alfred Gerrard](#)
 - *North Wind*, [Eric Gill](#)
 - *East Wind*, Eric Gill
 - *East Wind*, [Allan G. Wyon](#)
 - *South Wind*, Eric Gill
 - *South Wind*, [Eric Aumonier](#)
 - *West Wind*, [Samuel Rabinovitch](#)
 - *West Wind*, [Henry Moore](#)

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- <http://distortedarts.com/icons-jacob-epstein-night-day/>
- <http://www.thejc.com/arts/arts-features/genius-whose-art-was-put-a-freak-show>
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Jacob Epstein (1880–1959), *Albert Einstein*, 1933, bronze, 53.6 x 29.3 x 25.4 cm, 28 kg, Tate

Jacob Epstein (1880–1959), self-portrait, 1912, National Portrait Gallery

Jacob Epstein (1880–1959), *T.S. Eliot*, 1951, plaster cast of bust, National Portrait Gallery

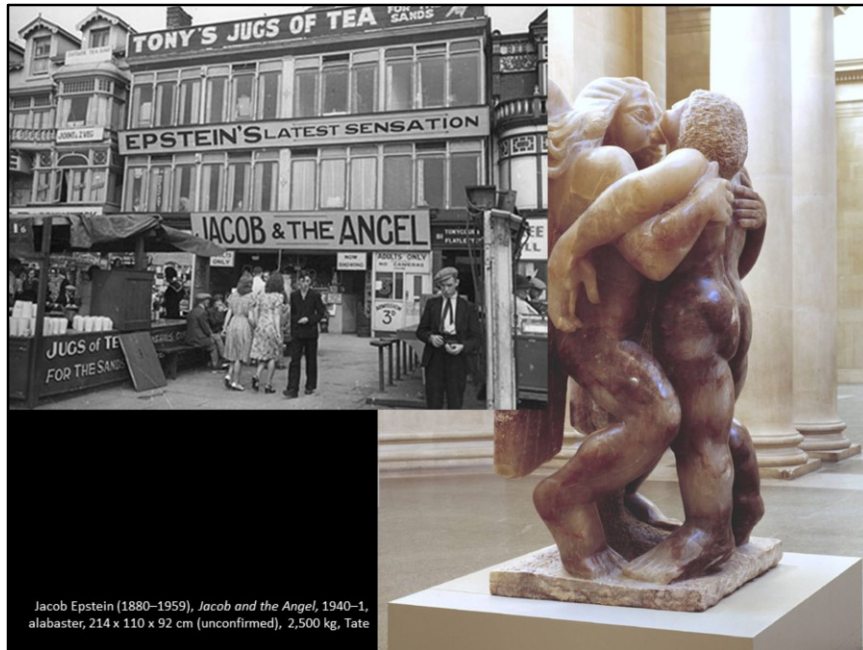
Jacob Epstein (1880–1959), *Joseph Conrad*, 1924, National Portrait Gallery

Jacob Epstein (1880–1959), *Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 1950, National Portrait Gallery

- In 1929 following the controversy surrounding his sculpture *Day and Night* his commissions for **public works ended**.
- He created **busts of many famous people** including **Albert Einstein** in 1933. Einstein fled Germany in 1933, and was staying in a refugee camp in Britain when Epstein made this portrait bust. However, Einstein left to take up a professorship at Princeton before it was completed. Epstein later described Einstein's 'wild hair floating in the wind' and wrote that '**his glance contained a mixture of the humane, the humorous, and the profound. This was a combination that delighted me. He resembled the ageing Rembrandt**'.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/epstein-albert-einstein-n04754>



Jacob Epstein (1880–1959), *Jacob and the Angel*, 1940–1, alabaster, 214 x 110 x 92 cm (unconfirmed), 2,500 kg, Tate

- This monumental group depicts an episode from the book of Genesis (Chapter 32, verses 24–32). According to the Biblical story, **Jacob was forced to wrestle** with an unknown assailant **through the night**. In the morning his opponent blessed him because he had not abandoned the struggle, and revealed himself to be an angel and messenger from God. Jacob gave thanks saying, 'I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved'. During the early 1930s Epstein had read and re-read the book of Genesis and executed a series of unconventional water-colours on Old Testament stories. The subject of Jacob and the Angel fascinated him and may have had personal significance, not least because of the fact that Epstein's first name was Jacob.
- Between the mid-1930s and 50s other works by Epstein (for example, this work *Jacob and the Angel*, 1940–41) were **exhibited at freak shows** and fun fairs alongside diseased body parts and Siamese twins in jars. His carving of *Rima* (1924) in Hyde Park was tarred and feathered. Epstein was **too poor to protest** and eventually they were displayed in **Blackpool's Tussaud's**. It was a time of increasing hostility towards the Jews and he received no more large-scale commissions.

- Epstein's art started to be sold all over the world and he became **highly influential** particularly on the younger artists **Henry Moore** and **Barbara Hepworth**.

Notes

- Before executing the large alabaster carving, Epstein made a watercolour entitled *Jacob Wrestling* which was included in his 1932 exhibition at the Redfern Gallery.
- In the carving, the night-long struggle between Jacob and his assailant is translated into a strangely ambiguous embrace between two colossal male figures. Jacob is depicted with his eyes closed and head thrown back; the angel is holding him in a tight grasp, as if squeezing his last breath from him. 'The Herculean proportions of the figures permitted the sculptor to generalise and balance the relationship of the masses while simultaneously maintaining the impact of their embrace. True to his usual practice in carving, the primary views reflect the mass the original block, but the interlocked arms also encourage the viewer to move around it. Some areas, such as Jacob's back and the angel's wings, can be read abstractly; Epstein's habitual relish for the subtle interplay of barely perceptible asymmetries manifests itself in the rhythmic cadence of back, buttock, thigh and calf.' (Evelyn Silber, *The Sculpture of Jacob Epstein with a Complete Catalogue*, Oxford 1986, p.54)
- *Jacob and the Angel* was completed in 1940, and can be seen as one of a group of large carvings dealing with religious themes. These included: *Behold the Man*, 1934-5 (Coventry Cathedral); *Consummation Est*, 1936 (Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art) and *Adam*, 1938-9. These works showed Epstein's interest in so-called primitive sculpture. John Rothenstein later wrote how, in *Jacob and the Angel*, Epstein '**seems to have tapped the mysterious source of energy that so often animates primitive sculpture, without imitating any actual features**'. (Epstein, exhibition catalogue, Tate Gallery 1961, [p.4]). The use of this primitivist style when dealing with **religious subject** matter was **found shocking** by many of Epstein's contemporaries.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/epstein-jacob-and-the-angel-t07139/text-summary>



ERIC GILL (1882-1940)

- **Eric Gill** (1882-1940) was born in **Brighton**, one of 12 children and in 1897 the family moved to **Chichester**. He studied at Chichester Art School and in 1900 moved to London to study as an **architect**. In 1903 he gave up his architectural training to become a calligrapher, letter-cutter, and monumental mason. He was associated with the Arts & Crafts movement and was **controversial**, particularly his **erotic art**. In 1904 he **married** Ethel Moore and had three daughters and an adopted son.
- His 1989 biography by Fiona MacCarthy was based on his detailed diaries and revealed his sexual activity for the first time including extramarital affairs, incest with his two eldest teenage daughters, incestuous relationships with his sisters, and sexual acts on his dog. His daughter Petra, who was alive at the time of the biography, described her father as having 'endless curiosity about sex' and that 'we just took it for granted'. The biography resulted in publicity and reassessment which resulted in a strengthened artistic reputation and a reputation as one of the twentieth century's strangest artists.



Eric Gill, *Mother and Child*, 1910, 62cm tall, National Museum Wales, Cardiff

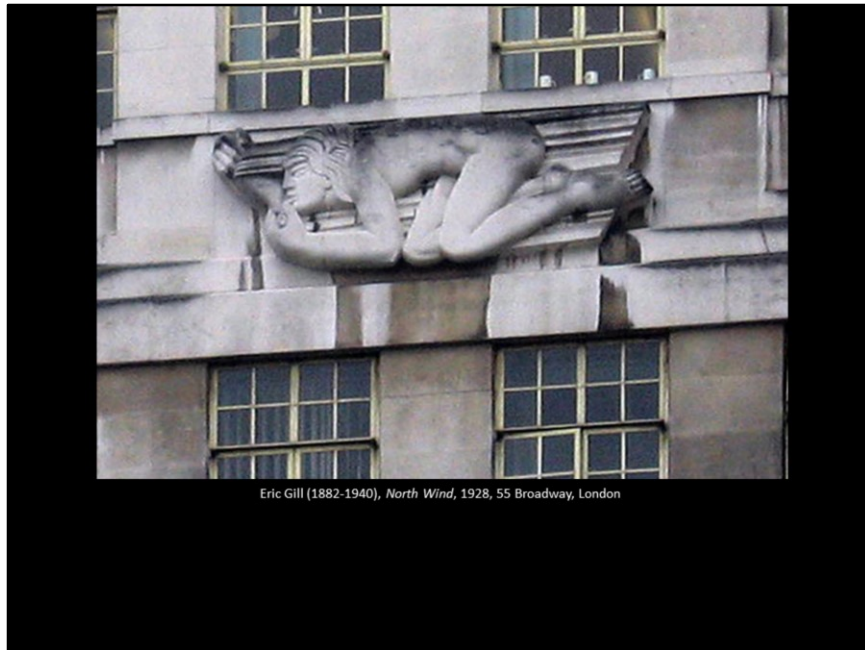
- In 1907 he moved to **Ditchling** in Sussex where he took up direct stone carving, such as this *Mother and Child* (1910).
- National Museum Wales, "The style of this carving reveals Gill's study of Romanesque art. Its subject may have been suggested by the birth of his **daughter Joanna** in February 1910. Included in the artist's first exhibition in 1911, Roger Fry wrote of it: 'has anyone ever looked more directly at the real thing and seen its **pathetic animalism** as Gill has? Merely to have seen what the gesture of pressing the breast with the left hand means, as he has, seems to be a piece of deep imagination'."



Eric Gill (1882-1940), *Ecstasy*, 1910-11, Hoptonwood stone, 137.2 x 45.7 x 22.8 cm, Tate
Purchased 1982

- In 1911 he produced *Ecstasy* (1911) and *Mother and Child* (1912), his first public success. Gill became fascinated with Indian temple sculpture and with his friend Epstein they planned to construct a colossal Indian-style monument in Sussex.
- He became a Roman Catholic in 1913 and later opposed fascism and became a pacifist. He produced sculptures for Westminster Cathedral and several war memorials after the war.
- In 1924 he moved to Wales and started a new workshop but it was too far from London so in 1928 he moved near High Wycombe and set up a printing press and took on many apprentices.
- Postcardwall, 'When Gill's contemporaries first saw his sculpture *Ecstasy* they recoiled at such a vivid depiction of a couple 'fornicating'; when exhibited with *Wild Thing* at the Royal Academy, the piece is referred to in terms of its notorious subject of a couple in the ultimate embrace. Though *Ecstasy* is clearly provocative in both subject and title, it could hardly be called grotesque. It is a piece beautifully

calm, encouraged by the simplicity of white stone and smooth limbs, uncomplicated by a background that does little more than provide a quiet frame. Mounting his piece on a block, or rather allowing it to emerge from it, increases the subtlety of the sculpture; the protagonists are hidden from one side and seem at one with their material. Gill's characteristic style of figure also encourages this simplicity. They are naked not only literally but also in their stripped back form — made up of simple strong limbs, Egyptian-like hands and feet, and faces that betray little individuality. However, this is not to say that they are without expression, as these characters are full of emotion; passion as the woman clings, pulling her partner towards her, yet tenderness as his head is lost in her shoulder, too close to kiss. Ecstasy is clearly an emotion, the experience of the sublime, yet here it is not with hot-headed obsession that it is found but with a deep and exalted calm, shown in the intense serenity of her face, eyes finally closed.'



Eric Gill (1882-1940), *North Wind*, 1928, 55 Broadway, London

Eric Gill (1882-1940), *North Wind*, 1928, 55 Broadway, London

- In 1928–9, Gill carved three of eight relief sculptures on the theme of winds for the London Electric Railway company (now Transport for London) at 55 Broadway, St James's.
- This is *North Wind* in Portland stone.
- Jacob Epstein's *Day and Night* drew most of the criticism from the London public.



Eric Gill (1882-1940), *Ariel Between Wisdom and Gaiety*, 1932, Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London

Eric Gill (1882-1940), *Prospero and Ariel*, 1932, Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London

The building showcases works of art, most prominently the statues of *Prospero and Ariel* (from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*) by Eric Gill. Their choice was fitting since Prospero was a magician and scholar, and Ariel a spirit of the air, in which radio waves travel. There was, reportedly, controversy over some features of the statues when built and they were said to have been modified. They were reported to have been sculpted by Gill as God and Man, rather than Prospero and Ariel, and that there is a small carved picture of a beautiful girl on the back of Prospero. Additional carvings of Ariel are on the exterior in many bas-reliefs, some by Gill, others by Gilbert Bayes. The reception area contains a statue of *The Sower* by Gill.

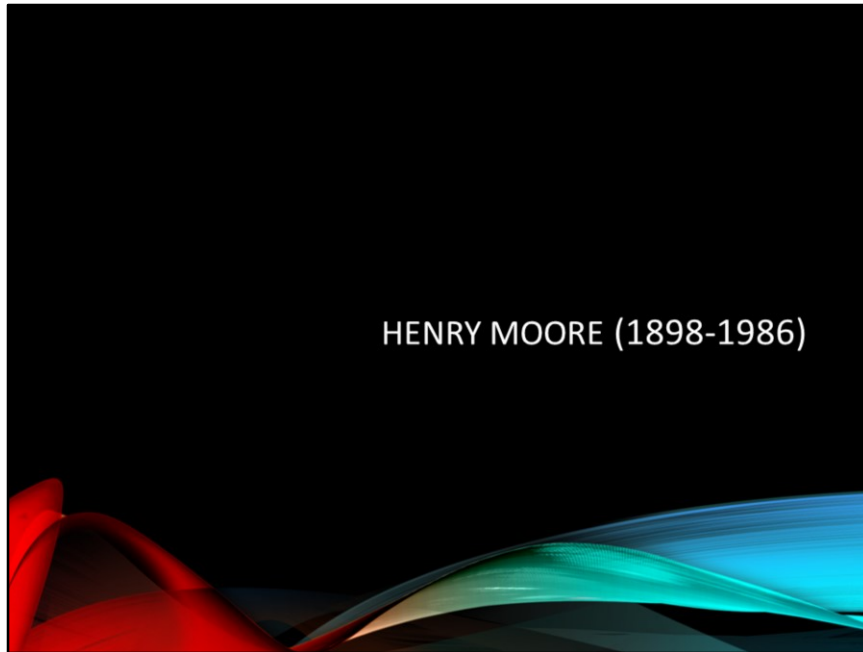
- In 1932, Gill produced a group of sculptures, *Prospero and Ariel*, and others for the BBC's Broadcasting House in London.
- In 1934 he visited Jerusalem where he carved a number of stone bas reliefs.
- He also produced works for Queen Mary University (1936), designed the first

George VI stamp (1937), Palace of Nations, Geneva (1938), a Roman Catholic church and the Art Deco Midland Hotel.

- He designed **many typefaces** including Perpetua, Joanna and **Gill Sans** which was used by Penguin Books, British Railways and the BBC.
- He published many essays on the relationship between art and religion and produced many erotic engravings.
- He died of lung cancer in 1940.

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<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/jul/22/art.art>



- Henry Moore (1898-1986) was an **Anglo-Irish sculptor** and artist the son of a **Yorkshire coalminer**. He was best known for his semi-abstract monumental bronze sculptures which are located around the world as public works of art.
- His forms are usually **abstractions of the human figure**, typically depicting **mother-and-child** or **reclining figures**. Moore's works are usually suggestive of the **female body**, apart from a phase in the 1950s when he sculpted **family groups**. His forms are **generally pierced** or contain hollow spaces. Many interpreters liken the undulating form of his reclining figures to the landscape and hills of his birthplace, Yorkshire.
- His work can be seen around London and at **Henry Moore Studios & Gardens**, Dane Tree House, Perry Green, Hertfordshire SG10 6EE (near Stanstead airport). The **Yorkshire Sculpture Park** contains one of the largest displays of open-air bronzes by Henry Moore in Europe. Created between 1955 and 1985, the bronzes represent the peak of the artist's career when he worked on a monumental scale and particularly for the open air.

Various Forms and Features of Moore's Work

- African and Mayan influence, 1925
- The Year of the Hole, 1932

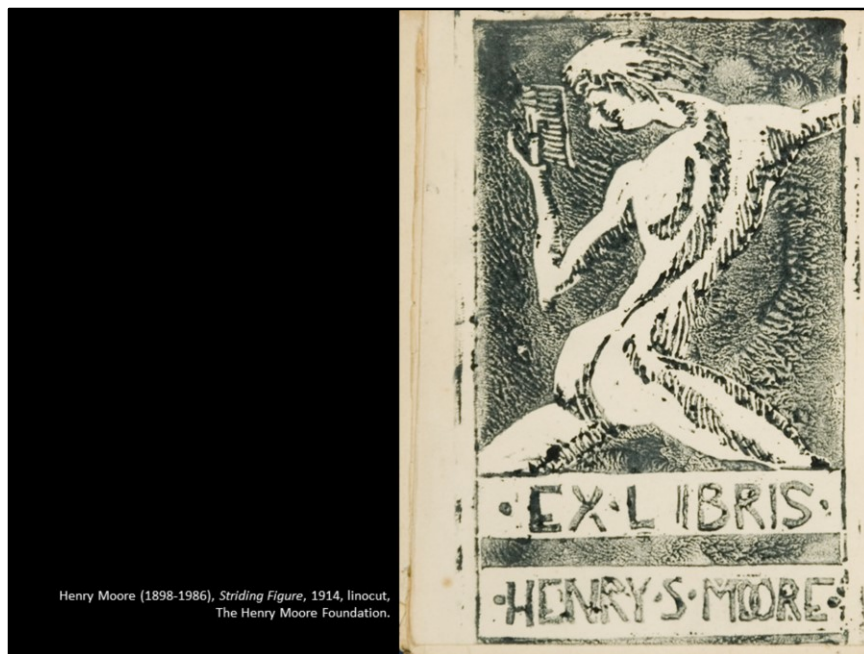
- Stringed figures, late 1930s
- Pointed figures, idea 1938, sculptures late 1960s
- Helmets, first drawings from 1948, first helmet heads from 1950
- Greek drapery from his visit in 1951

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Henry Moore (1898-1986), *Striding Figure*, 1914, linocut, The Henry Moore Foundation.

- Henry Moore was born in July 1898 in **Castleford, Yorkshire**, the seventh of eight children. When he was 11 he won a scholarship to Castleford Secondary School where his artistic abilities were encouraged. **Moore's first-known print** is a book plate mounted onto the half-title page of a **biography about Albrecht Dürer**.
- In 1915, aged 17, he completed his student teacher training at his old school in Castleford but he felt too young to control his students.

Notes

- Moore decided to become a sculptor aged 11, when hearing of Michelangelo's exploits at Sunday School. A managed to enter Castleford Grammar School but his parents were against desire to become a sculptor.
- The bookplate is a small label at the front of a book indicating the owner. 'Ex libris' means 'from the books of ...'.
- Castleford Secondary School opened in 1906. It cost £6 a year plus 10s for textbooks and a shilling a term for the Sports Club. Fees were abolished by the Education Act of 1944. The school gradually became known as Castleford

Grammar School over the next 50 years. In 1970, it became a comprehensive school and more recently an Academy.



Henry Moore (top row, fourth from left) with his fellow Rifles, 1916.

Henry Moore, *Self-portrait in Army Uniform*, 1917, pen and ink, private collection

- **Moore enlisted** in the Winchester Civil Service Rifles in 1916 at the age of 18. He also received his first commission and “first serious wood carving” to commemorate boys from his old school leaving for war.
- Moore went on to serve in World War I and was **injured in a gas attack** at the Battle of **Cambrai** in Northern France in 1917. His unit **went out 400 strong and only 52 came back** including Moore. He spent the rest of the war as a physical training instructor.
- He sent this *Self-Portrait in Army Uniform* in a letter to his school art teacher, **Miss Gostick**.

Notes

- This was the year when Epstein was dismantling his *The Rock Drill*.



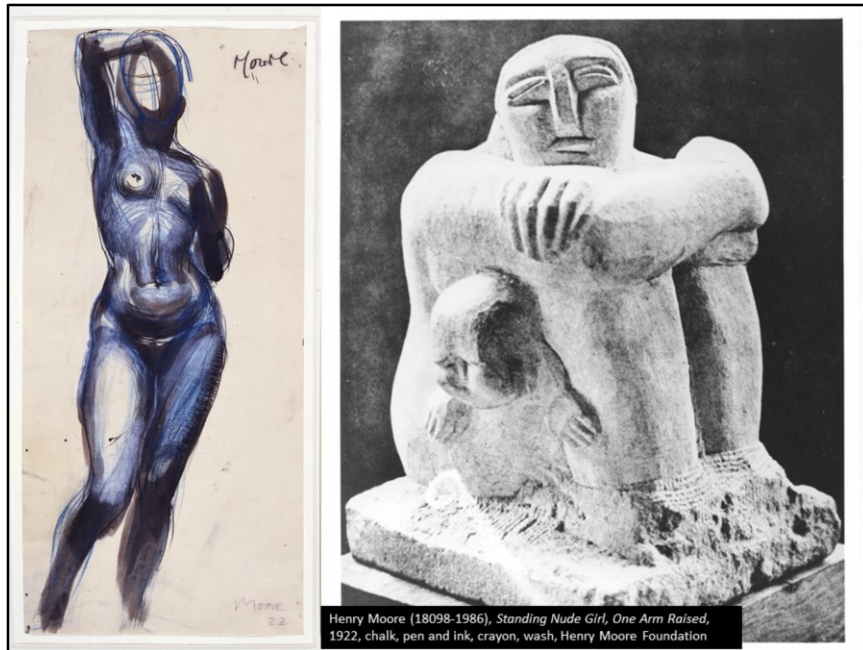
Henry Moore, *Head*, 1918, sycamore wood, private collection

- In 1918, after the war, he returned to teach at Castleford. The following year he secured a place at **Leeds School of Art** with an ex-servicemen's grant and the school set up a sculpture studio **specially for him**. He completed the two-year drawing course in one year. He was **the only full-time sculpture student** so he had the tutor to himself although he later complained that his tutor spent the time looking over his shoulder. At Leeds he **met Barbara Hepworth** who there from 1920 to 1921 and she was to become a lifelong friendly rival.
- In 1921 he received a scholarship to study sculpture at the **Royal College of Art** with Hepworth who was there from 1921 to 1924.
- He studied '**primitive**' art at the **Victoria & Albert Museum and the British Museum**. Both Moore and Hepworth at this stage followed the Victorian style of natural forms, landscapes and animal studies. He became dissatisfied with what he had been taught which was based on moulding in clay then cast in plaster and then the use of a largely mechanical and 'pointing' machine to reproduce it in stone or wood. His knowledge of primitive art and the influence of sculptors such as **Constantin Brâncuși, Jacob Epstein**, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Frank Dobson led him to the method of direct carving. Modelling is a building up process and carving

is a cutting down to find the form within the solid block.

Notes

- 1918 was the year women won the right to vote.

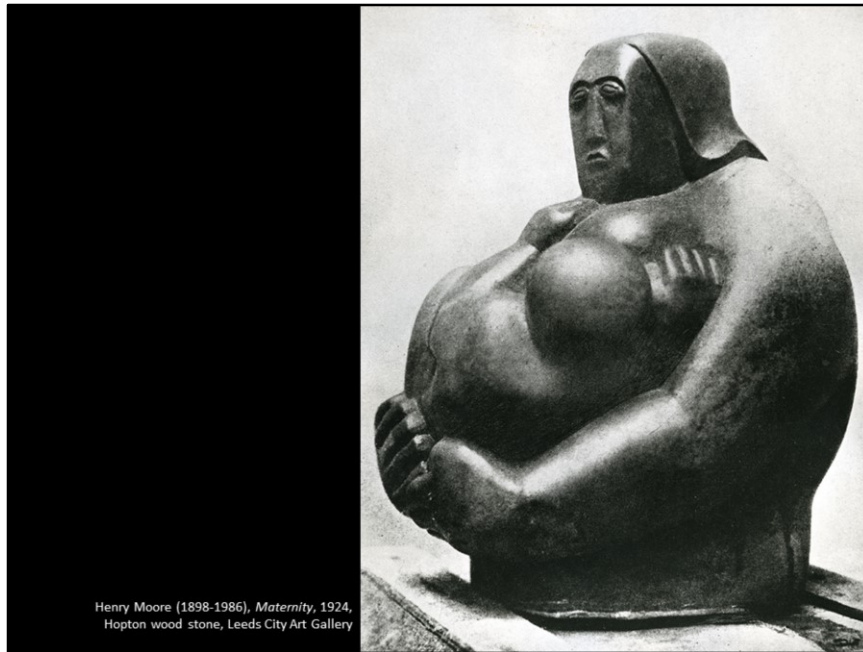


Henry Moore (1898-1986), *Mother and Child*, 1922, portland stone, current whereabouts unknown

Henry Moore (1898-1986), *Standing Nude Girl, One Arm Raised*, 1922, chalk, pen and ink, crayon, wash, Henry Moore Foundation

- Moore's **first mother and child**, a theme that will preoccupy him throughout his career.
- *Standing Nude Girl, One Arm Raised*, the Henry Moore Foundation (gift of the artist 1977). At this time, Moore begins to use **experimental techniques whilst drawing** from life; this is one of the earliest instances of his combination of pen, ink, chalk and wash.
- Moore said in an interview by Bernard Levin in 1983 that he **considered drawing fundamental to both painting and sculpture** as it was essential to be **trained to see** and to be able to **represent what one saw**. He thought no good artist could possibly disagree, '**it is common sense**'. When he came to London he immersed himself in the galleries, particularly the National Gallery and the British Museum. He was aware of Cubism and modern art but had to struggle against the strong reaction against modern art, particularly at the Royal Academy.
- The following year, 1923, Charles Rutherston (brother of the principal of the Royal

College of Art) bought two of Moore's carvings and became his **first patron**. He invited Moore to see his extensive collection in Bradford.



Henry Moore (1898-1986), *Maternity*, 1924, Hopton wood stone, Leeds City Art Gallery (presented by the Contemporary Arts Society in 1946)

- Demonstrating Moore's interests in direct carving and his more confident handling of the material.
- Moore won a **scholarship** after graduating from Leeds to **travel to Italy** to see the Old Masters. His trip was delayed until 1925 as he continued as sculpture tutor until a replacement could be found. He then worked as a part-time sculpture tutor at the Royal College of Art until 1931.
- In 1926 he started to create sculptures in concrete, a material that had been confined to architecture up till then.

Notes

- Hopton Wood stone (sometimes Hopton-Wood stone or Hoptonwood stone) is a type of limestone quarried west of Middleton-by-Wirksworth, Derbyshire, England. Described as "**very fine, almost like marble**" and as "England's premier decorative stone", it is particularly suited to carving, making it popular for tombstones (including many thousands for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission), sculpture and building. Buildings and structures made using Hopton Wood stone

include the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, the Albert Memorial, Lichfield Cathedral, Calke Abbey, Chatsworth House and Oscar Wilde's tomb.



Henry Moore (1898-1986) *Reclining Figure*, 1929, Hornton stone, Leeds Museums & Galleries

Maya chacmool from Chichen Itza, National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico

- In **1925**, he travelled Europe on a **scholarship** and saw Italy and Paris. In the Musée du **Trocadéro** in Paris he saw a plaster cast of the **Mayan chacmool** from Chichen Itza which had a profound effect on his later work. On returning to London he spent seven years **teaching** at the **Royal College of Art**.
- Moore emerged in the 1920s as a radical, experimental and avant-garde figure and was rapidly established as the leading British sculptor of his generation. His principal and enduring subject was the human body, through which he believed 'one can express more completely one's feelings about the world than in any other way'.
- Moore also rejected the established academic practices and insisted on direct carvings and truth to materials, influenced by sculptors like Brancusi and Epstein. He abandoned modelling in clay and casting in favour of direct carving of stone and wood. He said it was important that the sculptor "gets the solid shape, as it were, inside his head... he identifies himself with its centre of gravity." He maintained

that each material had a life of its own and it was the sculptors job to respect it and reveal it.

- His early sculpture was **not always understood** or appreciated, and revolutionary as it was, it was **largely condemned** by reviewers. Often his works were expressed in Epsteinian terms of primitivism and barbarism, in the *Daily Mirror* (14 April 1931) the Leeds *Reclining Figure* is described: '**A monstrosity at an exhibition of sculpture by Mr. Henry Moore which surpassed in repulsiveness even that of Epstein**'.
- Moore returned again and again to the reclining figure as a theme. He was also a fine draughtsman and his drawing of figures sheltering in the underground during World War II air raids remain some of his best received works.
- His interest in landscape and nature was combined with his deep humanism placing him firmly in the tradition of British art. Moore was inspired by the natural world and often had ideas based on the form of shells, pebbles and bones he found. His work encourages us to look at the natural world as one vast sculpture carved by natural forces.

Notes

- 1929 was the year of the Wall Street Crash and the start of the Great Depression.
- Hornton stone is a blue/grey Jurassic limestone that oxidises to a brown/orange colour. It was used to build many of the Oxford colleges.

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<http://www.henry-moore.org/works-in-public/world/uk/leeds/leeds-art-gallery/reclining-figure-1929-lh-59>



An early photograph of Moore working in his studio at 3 Grove Studios, Hammersmith

Henry Moore (1898-1986), *Head and Shoulders*, 1927, Verde di Prato, current whereabouts unknown

- Described as **Moore's first masterpiece** by the dealer Dr Heinz Roland. At this time he started to be influenced by Mexican and African art.
- In 1928, he held his **first solo exhibition** at Warren Gallery, London where his work was bought by Jacob Epstein and Augustus John.
- Moore **exhibited *Head and Shoulders* at the Venice Biennale in 1930** alongside Jacob Epstein and the painters Augustus John, Wilson Steer and Walter Sickert.

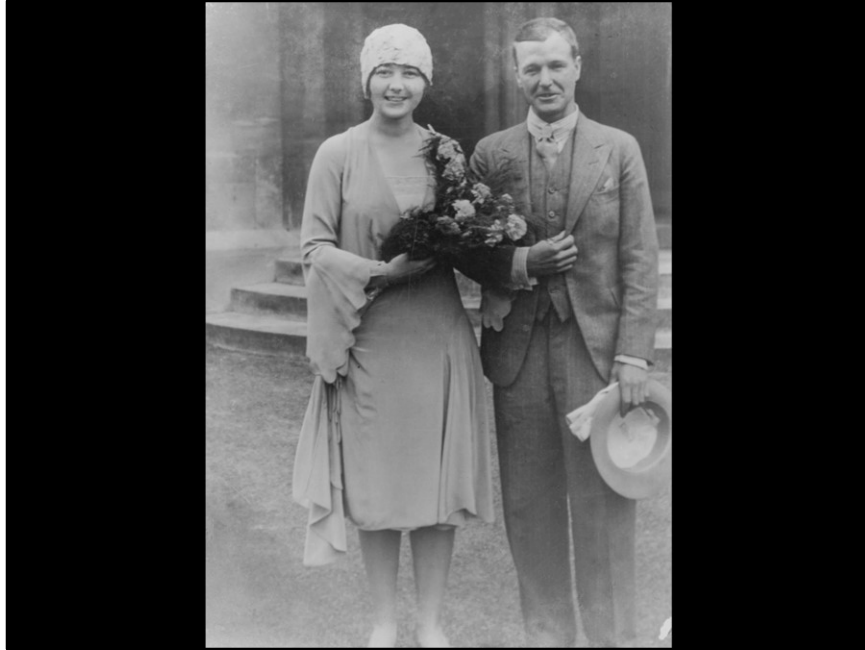


Henry Moore (1898-1986), *West Wind*, 1928–29, 55 Broadway

- His **first public commission**, *West Wind* (1928–29), was one of the eight reliefs of the 'four winds' high on the walls of London Underground's headquarters at 55 Broadway. The other 'winds' were carved by contemporary sculptors including Eric Gill with the ground-level pieces provided by Epstein.
- Moore carved the statue from Portland stone and it shows the **influence of Michelangelo's figures** for the Medici Chapel and the **Mayan Chacmool** figure.
- The relief is placed high on the walls of 55 Broadway, London Underground Limited's headquarters above St. James's Park tube station. The seven 'winds' on the other walls were carved by Eric Gill, A.H Gerrard and Samuel Rabinovich.
- The architect Charles Holden commissioned several contemporary sculptures to decorate his art deco building. Most controversially, the pair of sculptures *Day* and *Night* by Jacob Epstein which sit above the two main entrances. When the building was completed in 1929 it was the **graphic nakedness of Epstein's sculptures** that triggered a newspaper campaign to have the sculptures removed.
- **1928 was a turning point for Moore. After this he received exhibited and received commissions on a regular basis.**

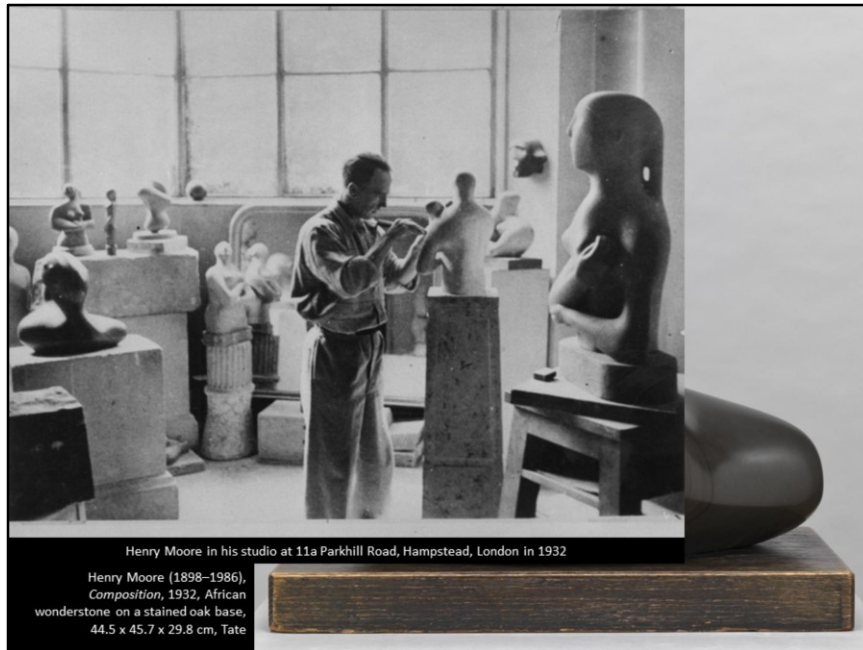
Notes

- Portland stone is a limestone from the Jurassic period quarried on the Isle of Portland, Dorset. The quarries consist of beds of white-grey limestone. It has been used extensively as a building stone throughout the British Isles, notably in major public buildings in London such as St Paul's Cathedral and Buckingham Palace.



In 1929 he married Irina Radetzky, a painting student at the Royal College of Art, and they moved to Hampstead, a hub of the arts.

- **In 1929**, he was appointed as sculpture instructor at the **Royal College of Art** which only involved teaching two days a week. **In July** Moore **married Irina** Radetsky, a painting student at the Royal College, and they moved to Hampstead **near Hepworth and her second husband Ben Nicholson**, Naum Gabo, Roland Penrose, Cecil Stephenson and the art critic Herbert Read (“a nest of gentle artists”). When courting his future wife Irina, Moore took her on an early date to watch him carving.



Henry Moore (1898–1986), *Composition*, 1932, African wonderstone on a stained oak base, 44.5 x 45.7 x 29.8 cm, Tate

- In 1931 Moore held his **second solo exhibition** at the Leicester Galleries, London and he left London for a larger studio in Jasmine Cottage, Kent. he produced his first abstract piece and he pushed the human body into near abstraction. He resigned from his teaching post at the Royal College of Art following a vicious press campaign against him backed by colleagues. 1931 was also the year that Barbara Hepworth's *Pierced Form* inspired his use of the abstract hole as a formal device between the solid and void.
- In 1932, he became **Head of Department at Chelsea School of Art** which he held until WWII. Moore and Hepworth were members of the **Seven and Five Society** consisting of seven painters and five sculptors. By 1934 the society's general meeting was attended by **Moore, Hepworth, Nicholson and Piper** amongst others. Their work became steadily more abstract. During his frequent visits to Paris he met Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Jean Arp and Alberto **Giacometti**.
- In 1933 **Paul Nash founded Unit One, a modern art movement**. In 1934, Moore exhibited and published a book with Unit One, co-founded with Paul Nash, Ben

Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth in 1933 to promote modern art, architecture and design. Moore flirted with Surrealism.

- In 1934 he and Irina made their only **visit to Spain**, visiting Altamira, Madrid, Toledo and Barcelona. He visited the cave of Altamira (which he described as the "Royal Academy of Cave Painting"), Madrid, Toledo and Pamplona. He was much affected by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. Throughout Moore's life, and in spite of his considerable wealth in later years, he remained faithful to his father's 'old Labour' left-wing politics, hence his sympathies were on the Republican side.
- By 1934 Moore was becoming an **established name** and the first monograph on Moore's work by Herbert Read was published.
- This sculpture, *Composition*, is loosely reminiscent of a portrait bust – a head and neck rising from shoulders – although these human characteristics are not represented with any anatomical accuracy. Instead the sculpture is made up of rounded globular forms that seem to melt into each other, an effect achieved by the highly-polished finish. This in turn makes the sculpture appear as though it might be soft to touch.
- It is likely that it was created at Moore's studio at 11a Parkhill Road, London. A photograph of Moore working in his Parkhill Road studio taken in 1932 (pop-up) clearly shows the completed *Composition* resting on a large cuboid plinth in the left of the image.
- Moore and his wife Irina had moved to their studio-cum-apartment in the summer of 1929. Their neighbours in Hampstead included the sculptors Barbara Hepworth and John Skeaping, the art critic Herbert Read, curator and collector H.S. Ede, the architect Wells Coates, and the painter and collector Roland Penrose. Although Read was to describe Hampstead's artistic community as 'a nest of gentle artists', it was in fact a competitive environment in which artists shared and challenged each others' ideas.
- African wonderstone is a fine-grained sedimentary rock, which, as *Composition* demonstrates, can be smoothed and polished to a high finish. Its hardness lies between marble and alabaster. Sculpture had conventionally been done using marble or cast from bronze. Moore broke with convention early on by favouring English stones. The use of African wonderstone is unusual but once again was a break with convention.
- During the 1930s he was influenced by the way in which Constructivism exposed the abstract forms of a piece and by Surrealism as it added a deep psychological insight to forms. The two strands of thought encouraged him to fragment the human form into its elements and reduce it to its essentials while still retaining its psychological insight.
- His early interest in non-Western art gave his work a frontality. Later, he explored all three dimensions and this led to holes in the pieces that provided both a route

through and a central point from which the figure could grow.

Constructivism

- Constructivism was an artistic and architectural philosophy that originated in Russia beginning in 1913 by Vladimir Tatlin. This was a rejection of the idea of autonomous art. He wanted 'to construct' art. The movement was in favour of art as a practice for social purposes. Constructivism had a great effect on modern art movements of the 20th century, influencing major trends such as the Bauhaus and De Stijl movements. Its influence was pervasive, with major effects upon architecture, graphic design, industrial design, theatre, film, dance, fashion and to some extent music.

References

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1936, *International Surrealist Exhibition*, New Burlington Galleries, London
 Henry Moore (1898-1986), *Reclining Figure*, 1936, Elmwood, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo

- Moore and Nash were on the organising committee of the ***International Surrealist Exhibition***, which took place at the New Burlington Galleries, London in **1936**. Moore exhibited three drawings and four sculptures
- **Also in 1936, The Leicester Galleries**, London held a solo exhibition of Moore's work.
- **In 1937**, Roland Penrose purchased an abstract 'Mother and Child' in stone from Moore that he displayed in the front garden of his house in Hampstead. The work proved controversial with other residents and the local press ran a campaign against the piece over the next two years.
- Moore's *Reclining Figure* was the first of six major reclining figures in Elmwood.
- **In 1937 he visited Picasso's studio** with André Breton, Paul Eluard, Max Ernst and Alberto Giacometti seeing *Guernica* in progress. Also in 1937 he produced *Stringed Relief* the first of a series of stringed sculptures inspired by mathematical models.

Notes

- 1937 was the year the Nazi Party held the Degenerate Art exhibition in Munich.



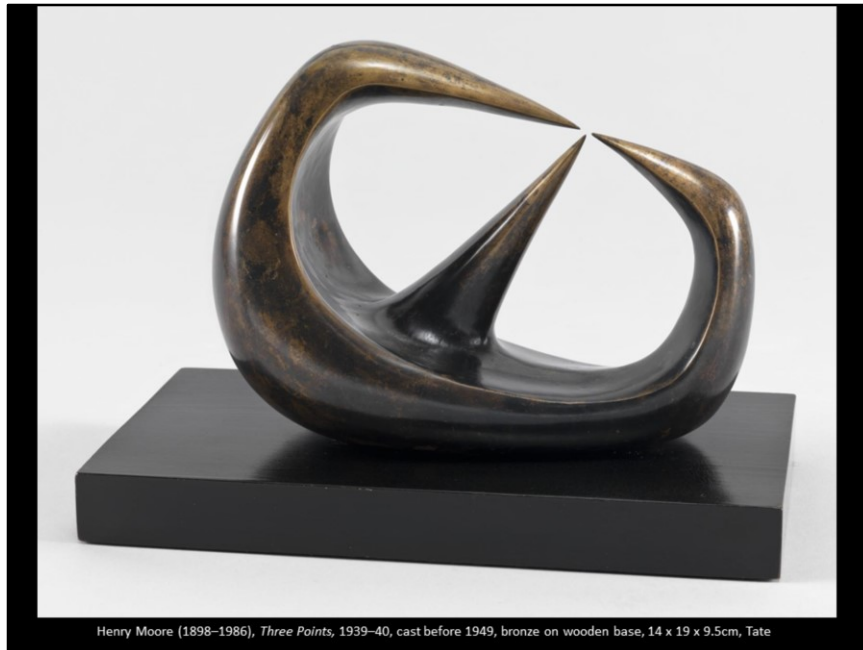
Henry Moore (1898-1986), *Stringed Figure*, 1938, cast 1960, bronze and elastic string, 27.3 x 34.3 x 19.7cm, Tate

- One of Moore's first stringed sculptures produced in the late 1930s.
- The original idea of this sculpture was made in wood. It was lost in Poland in the early part of the war, and has never been traced.
- In 1968 Moore accounted for his interest in strings:
 - 'Undoubtedly the source of my stringed figures was the Science Museum ... I was fascinated by the mathematical models I saw there, which had been made to illustrate the difference of the form that is half-way between a square and a circle. One model had a square stone end with twenty holes along each side making eighty holes in all. Through these holes strings were threaded and led to a circle with the same number of holes at the other end. A plane interposed through the middle shows the form that is halfway between a square and a circle. One end could also be twisted to produce forms that would be terribly difficult to draw on a flat surface. It wasn't the scientific study of these models but the ability to look through the strings as with a bird cage and to see one form within another which excited me.'
- From a Tate catalogue in 1951:

- ‘The function of the string or wire is three-fold. It contrasts, in its tautness, with the curvilinear contours of the mass. It establishes a barrier between the space enclosed by the sculpture’s mass and the space which surrounds the sculpture – only, a barrier which, being a cage and not a wall, can contain the space on its open side while allowing it to remain visible. Above all, the string provokes movement of the spectators eye along its length and thereby increases his awareness of the space within the sculpture – especially when ... one set of strings can be seen through another, so creating a counterpoint of movement which brings to life the space around and within which the strings operate.’

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/henry-moore/henry-moore-om-ch-stringed-figure-r1146217>



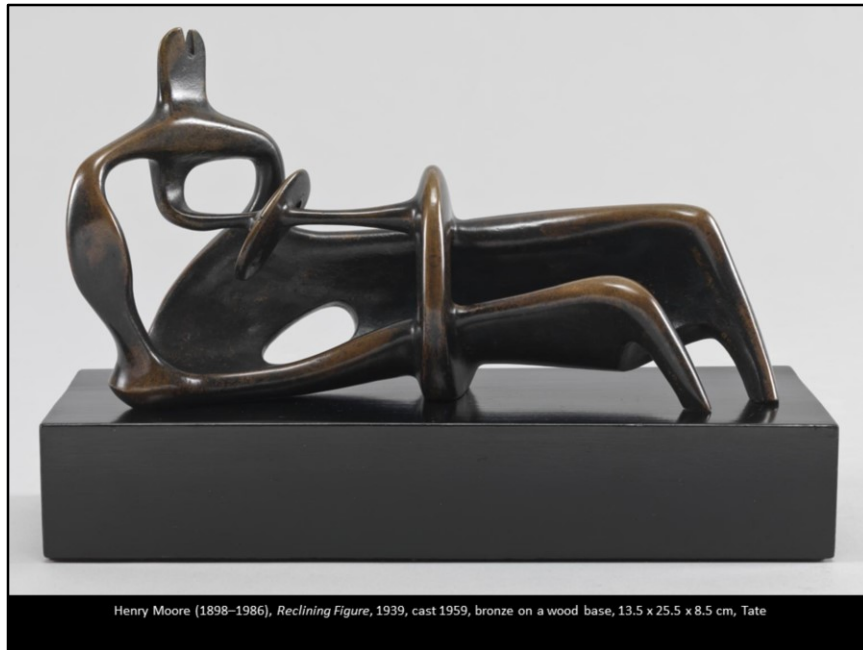
Henry Moore (1898–1986), *Three Points*, 1939–40, cast before 1949, bronze on wooden base, 14 x 19 x 9.5cm, Tate

- Moore had the idea for pointed forms in 1938 although he did not use the idea extensively until the late 1960s. The points should almost but not quite touch to create a feeling of anticipation.
- In 1978 Moore explained the ideas behind the composition of *Three Points*:
 - 'In 1940 I made a sculpture with three points [the lead version of *Three Points*], because this pointing has an emotional or physical action in it where things are just about to touch but don't. There is some anticipation of this action. Michelangelo used the same theme in his fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, of God creating Adam, in which the forefinger of God's hand is just about to touch and give life to Adam. It's also like the points in the sparking plug of a car, where the spark has to jump across the gap between the points. There is a very beautiful early French painting (Gabrielle d'Estrées with her sister in the bath), where one sister is just about to touch the nipple of the other. I used this sense of anticipation first in the *Three Points* of 1940, but there are other, later works where one form is nearly making contact with the other. It is very important that the

points do not actually touch. There has to be a gap.'

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/henry-moore/henry-moore-om-ch-three-points-r1151463>



Henry Moore (1898–1986), *Reclining Figure*, 1939, cast 1959, bronze on a wood base, 13.5 x 25.5 x 8.5 cm, Tate

- In the 1930s Moore **cast the lead figures at home using a lost wax process**. He would carve the figure in **beeswax** that he bought from Boots in the High Street. This would be **covered in plaster** mixed with ground pottery and then **heated** in a kiln and the **wax poured out**. He then **heated lead** in an old saucepan over a primus stove in the studio and **pour it** into the mould. The danger was the lead would be too heavy for the saucepan handle. A disadvantage of this process was that **only one copy** could be made.
- In the **1950s** he made the decision to **cast many** of his **lead figures in bronze**. The decision was the result of many of his lead figures needing to be **repaired**. In the 1930s Moore was **unaware** of the fact that a **little antimony** mixed with the lead would make it **hard**, so his work was often damaged by touch. Also, if a lead figure was dropped it collapsed whereas a bronze figure is almost indestructible. The decision to recast his lead figures in bronze may also have been **financial** as by the 1950s his **work was in great demand** and a limited edition of small bronze figures would sell at a high price.
- In 1959 Henry Moore cast this sculpture of a female reclining figure in bronze. The

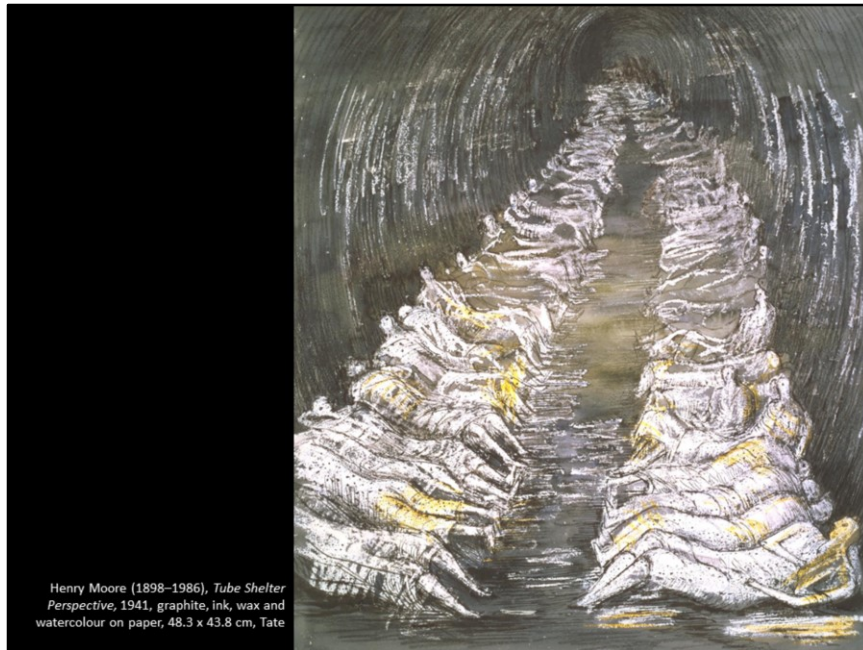
original version was made in lead in 1939 and, in that it represents the human body as a skeletal form, reveals the influence of Pablo Picasso and Alberto Giacometti on Moore's sculptures of the late 1930s.

- Figures such as *Reclining Figure* were associated with the **dream world of Surrealism** but the owner of the original lead version, the painter Gordon Onslow Ford, said, "**I do not believe that Surrealism was ever central to Moore** although he sometimes showed with the Surrealists. He did not share [André] Breton's feeling that there was no other alternative in art at the time and Surrealism was *the* great hope. In comparison to the Surrealists – who were often amateurs trying something that couldn't have been done before, Moore came from a **traditional art background** and had a **thorough professional training**. Even at his most experimental Moore – unlike the Surrealists – has always been involved in continuing the tradition of European man, and his changes have been humanistic changes." Ford referred to the sculpture as 'the fire engine', possibly because its arrangement of tubes and armatures reminded him of water hoses.
- Moore often chose reclining figures as he considered them more stable and permanent than standing or sitting figures. He also believed that as the reclining figure was easily recognised and a common subject for a sculptor he was free to experiment with the position of the body and limbs and the way they projected into space and interacted with each other. It is clear that **he did not intend his sculptures to have any specific meaning**. He said,
 - "I want to be **quite free of having to find a 'reason'** for doing the Reclining Figures, and freer still of having to find a 'meaning' for them. The **vital thing** for an artist is to have a subject that allows [him] to **try out all kinds of formal ideas** – things that he doesn't yet know about for certain but **wants to experiment with**, as Cézanne did in this 'Bathers' series. In my case the reclining figure provides chances of that sort. The subject-matter is *given*. It's settled for you, and you know it and like it, so that within it, within the subject that you've done a dozen times before, you are free to invent a completely new form-idea."
- The open and linear forms of *Reclining Figure* may have been influenced by Pablo Picasso's fragmentation of the body in his paintings, drawings and sculptures. Moore had been **aware of Picasso's work** since his student days at Leeds School of Art, and in 1973 reflected that 'really all my practicing life was as a student, and as a sculptor I have been **very conscious of Picasso because he dominated sculpture and painting** – even sculpture as well as painting – since Cubism'.
- Another source for Moore's opened bodies may have been the **work of Alberto Giacometti**. Moore exhibited alongside Giacometti at the *International Surrealism Exhibition* held at the New Burlington Galleries, London, in 1936, and had met the artist at Picasso's studio in 1937, if not before.
- In his 1959 book on Moore German psychologist Eric Neumann discussed *Reclining*

Figure as a **symbol of death**: 'everything fruitlike has been melted away from the woman's body, and its deathly machine-like character is very much to the fore.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/henry-moore/henry-moore-om-ch-reclining-figure-r1147452>



Henry Moore (1898–1986), *Tube Shelter Perspective*, 1941, graphite, ink, wax and watercolour on paper, 48.3 x 43.8 cm, Tate

- Moore produced powerful drawings of **Londoners sleeping in the London Underground** while sheltering from **the Blitz**. These are now regarded as some of the **finest works** resulting from the War Artists' Advisory Committee (WAAC) run by **Kenneth Clark**. He also drew miners working underground in Yorkshire. These drawings helped **boost Moore's reputation internationally**, particularly in America.
- In 1940 Henry and Irena's home was bombed in London and they **moved out to Hertfordshire**. They moved to Perry Green near Much Hadham and at first rented half of a house called 'Hoglands' before buying the whole house. This was to become Moore's home and workshop for the **rest of his life** despite acquiring significant wealth later in life.
- Becomes an **Official War Artist** after showing his shelter drawings to his friend and chairman of the War Artists' Advisory Committee, **Kenneth Clark**. Out of sympathy for the shelterers, Moore does not make any direct sketches underground, instead taking descriptive notes on the back of an envelope before returning to his studio

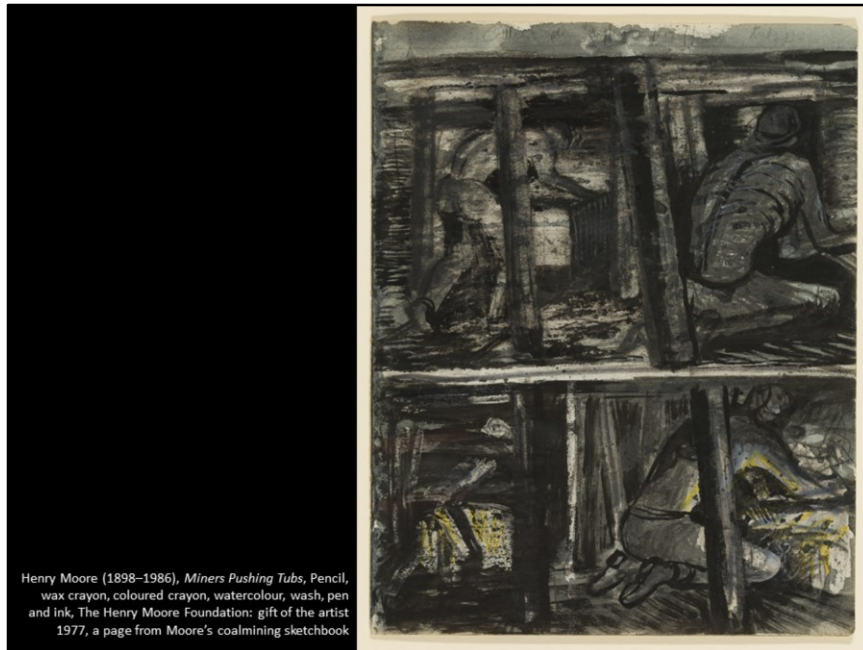
to draw from memory.

- This picture was exhibited at the National Gallery in 1941. It was described in the catalogue as '**a terrifying vista of recumbent shapes, pale as all underground life tends to be pale; regimented, as only fear can regiment; helpless yet tense, safe yet listening, uncouth, uprooted, waiting in the tunnel for the dawn to release them. This is not the descriptive journalism of art. It is imaginative poetry of a high order.**'



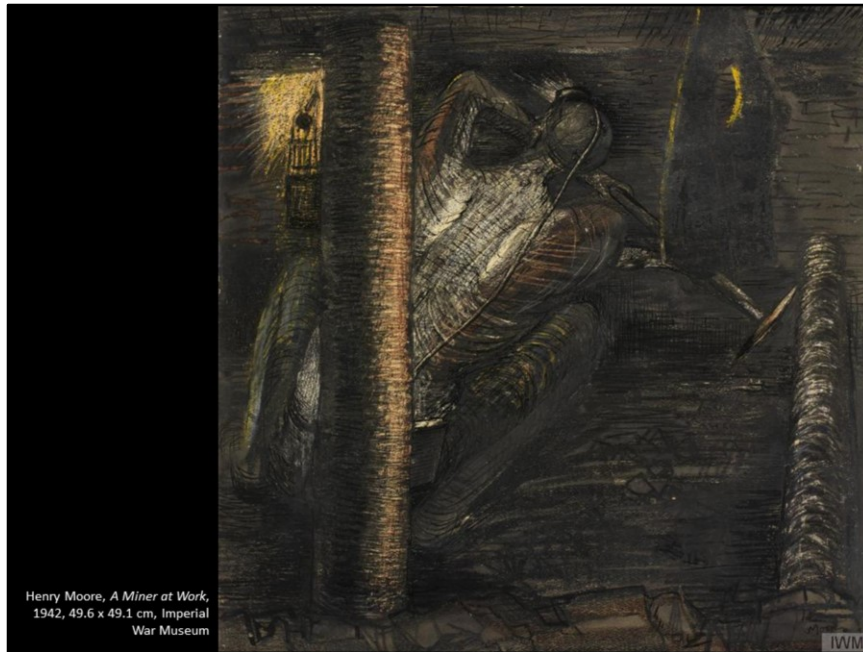
Henry Moore (1898–1986), *Pink and Green Sleepers*, 1941, pencil, wax crayon, coloured crayon, chalk, watercolour wash, pen and ink on paper, 38.1 x 55.9 cm, Tate: presented by the War Artists' Advisory Committee 1946

- One critic, writing in 1943, described the Shelter Drawings in terms of **natural phenomena**. He compared the strange colours, scratchy lines and pitted surfaces to 'lichen of grey rock, the coloured texture of weather-worn stone, the fiery black and red of igneous formations of burning coal'. Such associations between Moore's shelterers and nature supported a general propaganda message that within the **British people lived an indomitable, almost elemental force which would prevail whatever the threat**.
- The greens and blues of the figures and the close composition evocatively portray the dank, crowded conditions of the underground.



Henry Moore (1898–1986), *Miners Pushing Tubs*, Pencil, wax crayon, coloured crayon, watercolour, wash, pen and ink, The Henry Moore Foundation: gift of the artist 1977.

- In 1942 Moore was commissioned by the War Artists' Advisory Committee to draw the coalminers near Castleford, where draw in situ down the mines. This is a page from his coalmining sketchbook.



Henry Moore, *A Miner at Work*, 1942, 49.6 x 49.1 cm, Imperial War Museum

- Google Cultural Institute, 'At his own suggestion, Moore was commissioned in August 1941 by the War Artists Advisory Committee to make drawings of Coal Mining at Wheldale Colliery, Yorkshire, where his father had worked at the beginning of the century. Moore made a number of visits during that winter and submitted drawings in May 1942. The original commission was for 25 guineas but eight drawings were purchased for 80 guineas and a further three seem to have been added later. Drawing the male figure was a departure for Moore and lead to the inclusion of male forms in his sculpture. Although coal mining had been in decline since 1913, at the start of the Second World War it was still a large industry, accounting for 10% of all exports. The miner seems impossibly constrained at the coal face, almost inseparable from his surroundings. The subject matter is a continuation of Moore's war time subterranean interests.'

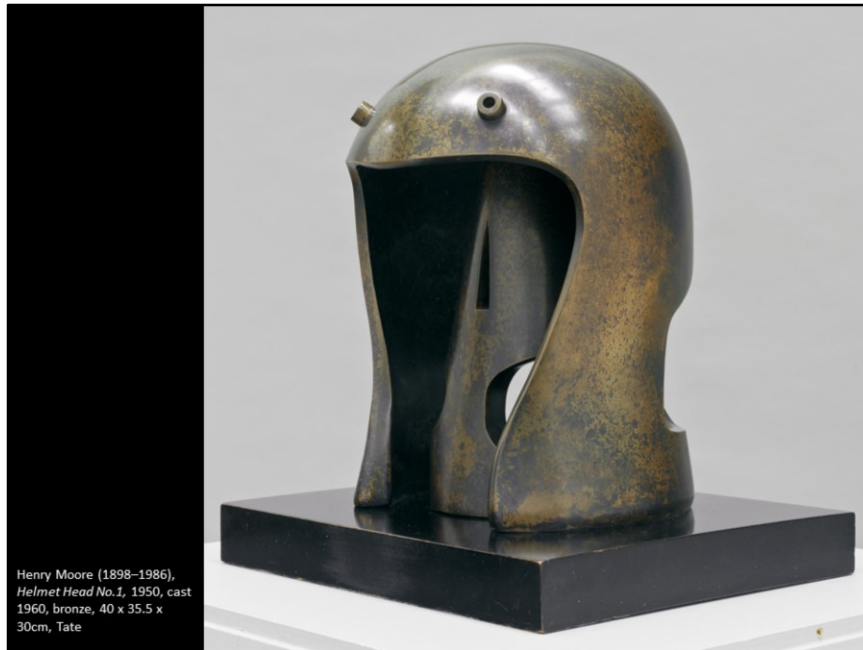


Henry Moore (1898–1986), *Family Group*, 1950, bronze, sited at the entrance to Barclay School, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, England

- In 1943 Moore was commissioned to produce a Madonna and Child for St. Matthew's Church in Northampton. This was the first piece that translated his mother and child theme into a religious subject.
- Moore's **mother died** in 1944 and his **first daughter was born in 1946**. This led to a number of '**mother and child**' compositions. His *Family Group* (1950) in Stevenage became his first large-scale public bronze.
- In 1944 he started a family group for Harlow New town.
- In 1945 he received an honorary degree from Leeds University, the first of over 20 he was to receive from all over the world.
- In 1946 Henry and Irena's only child, Mary, was born.
- This *Family Group* was Moore's first large scale commission for a bronze and his first commission following the Second World war. It was originally intended for Impington Village College in Cambridge and the Family Group subject fits in with the village college philosophy of life-long education. However, after Moore had

designed the maquette, Impington cancel the sculpture due to lack of funds.

- The project was revived a few years later when the new town of Stevenage was being designed. The Chief Education Officer, John Newsom, persuaded the council to allocate funds for public art works at each of the new schools being built, allowing Moore to complete Family Group for the Barclay School in 1950.
- Moore's signature form is a reclining figure. Moore's exploration of this form, under the influence of the Toltec-Mayan figure he had seen at the Louvre, was to lead him to increasing abstraction as he turned his thoughts towards experimentation with the elements of design. Moore's earlier reclining figures deal principally with mass, while his later ones contrast the solid elements of the sculpture with the space, not only round them but generally through them as he pierced the forms with openings.



Henry Moore (1898–1986), *Helmet Head No. 1*, 1950, cast 1960, bronze, 40 x 35.5 x 30cm, Tate

- This bronze sculpture was cast in 1960 from a lead version originally made in 1950. It was the first in a series of works that addressed the theme of protection through the form of a militaristic helmet. Most critics have interpreted *Helmet Head No. 1* with reference to the Second World War, but it may also have been informed by Moore's experiences of fighting in the trenches during the First World War.
- *Helmet Head No. 1* developed from Moore's pre-Second World War explorations of the relationship between interior and exterior forms and the notion of the body as a protective shell.
- In 1950 he turned down a knighthood as 'it would change my conception of myself, and with it the conception of my work.'
- In 1950 he produced this *Helmet Head, No. 1*, an exploration of an internal form enclosed by an external form.
- In 1951 Moore is the subject of a BBC documentary titled *Henry Moore*, the first ever film on a living artist, to coincide with his commission for the Festival of Britain. The Tate held their first retrospective of his work.

- In 1954 he was elected a trustee of the National Gallery and held the post until 1974.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/henry-moore/henry-moore-om-ch-helmet-head-no1-r1149255>



Henry Moore (1898–1986), *Reclining Figure*, 1951, painted plaster. As of 2004 sited outside the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. On loan from the Henry Moore Foundation.

- After WW II the Holocaust and the atomic bomb instilled in sculptor a sense that it should return to its pre-cultural roots.
- Earlier figures are pierced in a conventional manner, in which bent limbs separate from and rejoin the body. The later, more abstract figures are often penetrated by spaces directly through the body, by which means Moore explores and alternates concave and convex shapes. These more extreme piercings developed in parallel with Barbara Hepworth's sculptures. Hepworth first pierced a torso after misreading a review of one of Henry Moore's early shows. The plaster *Reclining Figure: Festival* (1951) in the Tate, is characteristic of Moore's later sculptures: an abstract female figure intercut with voids. As with much of the post-War work, there are several bronze casts of this sculpture. When Moore's niece asked why his sculptures had such simple titles, he replied,

"All art should have a certain mystery and should make demands on the spectator. Giving a sculpture or a drawing too explicit a title takes away part of that mystery so that the spectator moves on to the next object, making no

effort to ponder the meaning of what he has just seen. Everyone thinks that he or she looks but they don't really, you know."



Henry Moore, *Draped Reclining Woman 1957–58 (Grosse Liegende)*, in the Skulpturenpark Pinakotheken in Munich

- Following a trip to Greece in 1951 Moore was inspired by ancient Greece sculpture to adopt the use of drapery to emphasize the form of his figures.
- In the 1950s he started to receive **more and more important commissions** including UNESCO (1958), University of Chicago (*Nuclear Energy*, 1967), Chicago *Man Enters the Cosmos* (1980). In 1962, he completed *Knife Edge Two Piece* for College Green near the Houses of Parliament in London and in 1979 he became known in Germany with *Large Two Forms* outside the Chancellery in Bonn..

References

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draped_Reclining_Woman_1957%E2%80%9358

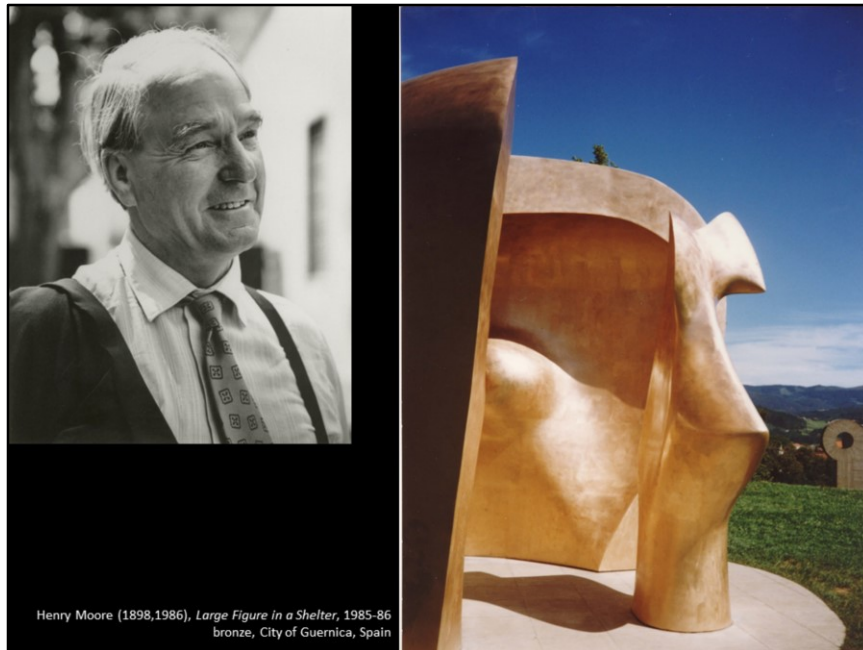


Henry Moore (1898–1986), *Large Upright Internal/External Form*, 1954



Henry Moore (1898,1986), *Reclining Figure*, 1963-65, bronze, outside the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts, New York

- In 1961 Alistair Gordon writes for the *Connoisseur* magazine *"it is difficult for us in Britain to understand ... just how much Moore is revered abroad: he is considered quite simply as the greatest living sculptor."*
- By the end of the 1970s there were some 40 exhibitions a year featuring his work. By 1977 he was paying over **a million pounds a year in income tax** and he **established** the **Henry Moore Foundation** to help the arts.
- The last 30 years of his life (1956 to 1986) saw him become the **most famous and highest earning artist in the country**. He earned his money from a continuous stream of large, prestigious sculptures around the world.
- In 1975 his lifelong friend Barbara Hepworth died.



Henry Moore (1898-1986), *Large Figure in a Shelter*, 1985-86 bronze, City of Guernica, Spain

- Moore's last sculptural work is presented to Guernica, Spain as a tribute to those who died in the Spanish Civil War.
- Moore died at his home in Perry Green on 31st August 1986 survived by his wife, Irina, daughter Mary and his grandchildren.



- Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) is an English artist and sculptor and one of the few internationally significant women artists in the early and mid-twentieth century. She was born in Yorkshire to a middle-class family and won a scholarship to study at Leeds School of Art (1920-21) where she met fellow student Henry Moore (1898-1986). There was a friendly rivalry and Hepworth was the first to sculpt the pierced figures that became the hallmark of both of their works. She won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art (1921-24). She travelled to Italy on another scholarship and married John Skeaping in Florence. They had a son, Paul, in 1929. She became associated with the 'new movement', direct carving, abstraction and precise forms and she joined the London Group and the 7 & 5 Society. She divorced Skeaping and had triplets with Ben Nicholson in 1934 and they married in 1938. They visited the Parisian studios of Jean Arp, Constantin Brâncuși, Piet Mondrian, Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso and joined Abstraction-Création, and were major figures in Paul Nash's Unit One group.

References

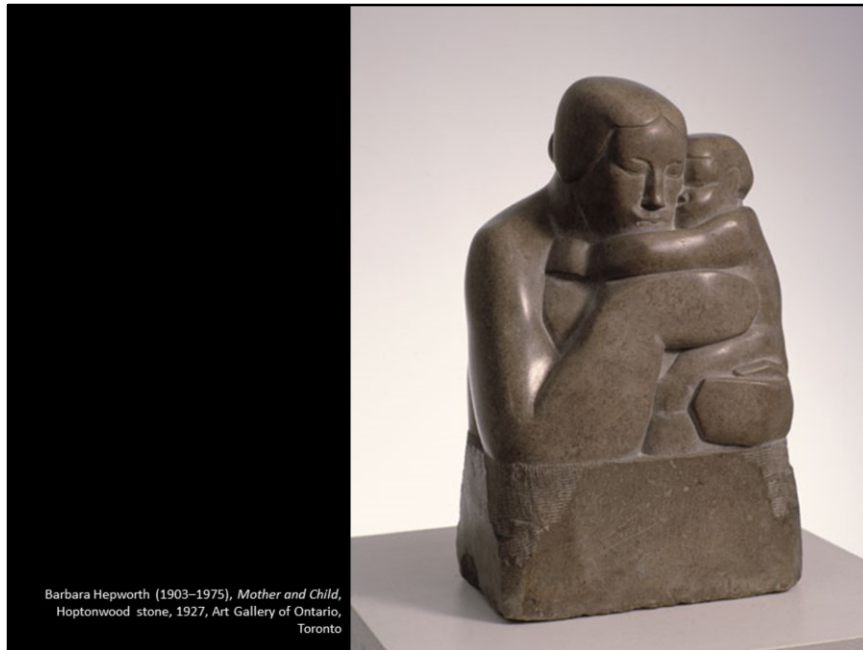
<http://barbarahepworth.org.uk/>

<http://www.hepworthwakefield.org/>



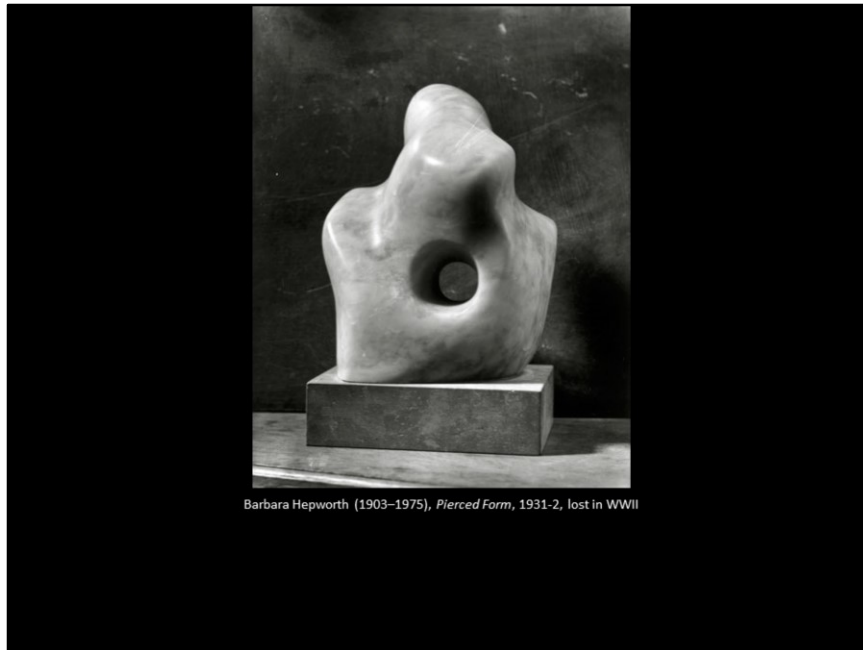
Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975), portrait, 1913, aged 10 at school
 1920, in Paris with Henry Moore (centre) and Edna Ginesi (left)
 1921, at the Royal College of Art
 1925, with John Skeaping at the British School in Rome

- She was born in Yorkshire to a middle-class family (her father was a civil engineer) and she won a **scholarship** to study at **Leeds School of Art** (1920-21) where she **met fellow student Henry Moore** (1898-1986). There was a **friendly rivalry** and Hepworth was the first to sculpt the pierced figures that became the hallmark of both of their works.
- She won a **scholarship** to the **Royal College of Art** (1921-24) which Moore also attended. She and Moore and other students went on trips to Paris to study art.
- She won a West Riding **Scholarship** to **Florence** in 1924. In 1925 she travelled to Siena with **John Skeaping**, the Royal Academy Prix de Rome winner and they married in Florence. They moved to Rome where Skeaping was a scholar and began to carve in stone before returning to London in 1926.



Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975), *Mother and Child*, Hoptonwood stone, 1927, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

- In 1927, Hepworth and Skeating held a studio exhibition and Hepworth sold two works. They moved to Hampstead (1928 to 1939) and had a son, Paul, in 1929 but the marriage was already deteriorating. She became associated with the 'new movement', direct carving, abstraction and precise forms and she joined the **London Group** and the **7 & 5 Society** in 1930-31. Hepworth and Moore became the leading sculptors in the 'new movement'.



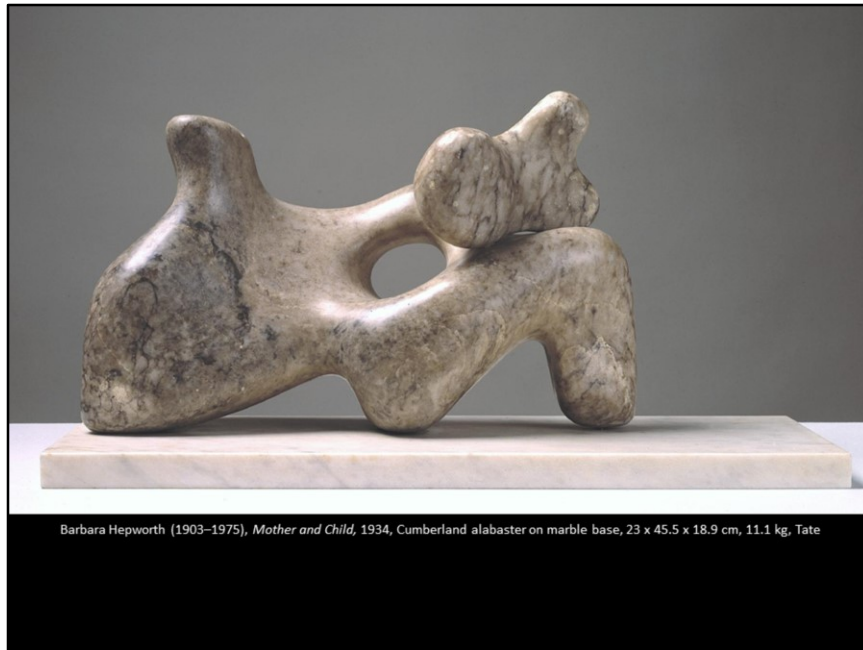
Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975), *Pierced Form*, 1931-2, lost in WWII

- Henry Moore called 1932 'The Year of the Hole'. The previous year his friend and rival, Barbara Hepworth, made her first pierced form, the year she gave birth to her first child. The hole she carved became the most important formal features of much of her and Moore's later work.
- Hepworth, 'I felt the most intense pleasure in piercing the stone in order to make an abstract form and space; quite a different sensation from that doing it for the purpose of realism'.
- Hepworth has been criticized for lacking Moore's 'tumult' (see Adrian Stokes) but he goes on to admire her serenity and the way her works 'evade disputations of power or of antagonism'. Her forms appear slow, smooth and subtle. Jeanette Winterson (Tate) describes the hole as a form of focused energy, a still point in a turning world (a reference to T. S. Eliot's poem 'Burnt Norton' on of the *The Four Quartets*). The centuries assumption has been that objects are positive, underpin the world and are associated with energy and masculinity but space, the 'hole', is negative and associated with femininity was exploded by quantum mechanics. Quantum theory teaches us that what appear to be hard, physical objects are forms of energy whose location is subject to uncertainty.

- In 1931, Hepworth met Ben Nicholson who was then married. He joined her on a holiday to Happisburgh, Norfolk.
- She divorced Skeaping in March 1933, gave birth to triplets with Nicholson in 1934 and married him in 1938.
- Hepworth's first 'holed' sculpture, *Pierced Form*, was carved in 1932 and exhibited in 1934. They she revealed her move to abstraction in 1932 and 1934 epitomised by the pioneering piercing of the block and experiments in collage, photograms and prints. the couple visited the Parisian studios of Arp, Brancusi, Mondrian, Braque and Picasso. They joined Abstraction-Création, and were major figures in **Paul Nash's Unit One** grouping and the associated publication edited by Herbert Read (1934).
- Hepworth and Nicholson visited the Parisian studios of Jean Arp, Constantin Brâncuși, Piet Mondrian, Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso and joined Abstraction-Création, and were major figures in Paul Nash's Unit One group.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/hole-of-life>



Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975), *Mother and Child*, 1934, Cumberland alabaster on marble base, 23 x 45.5 x 18.9 cm, 11.1 kg, Tate

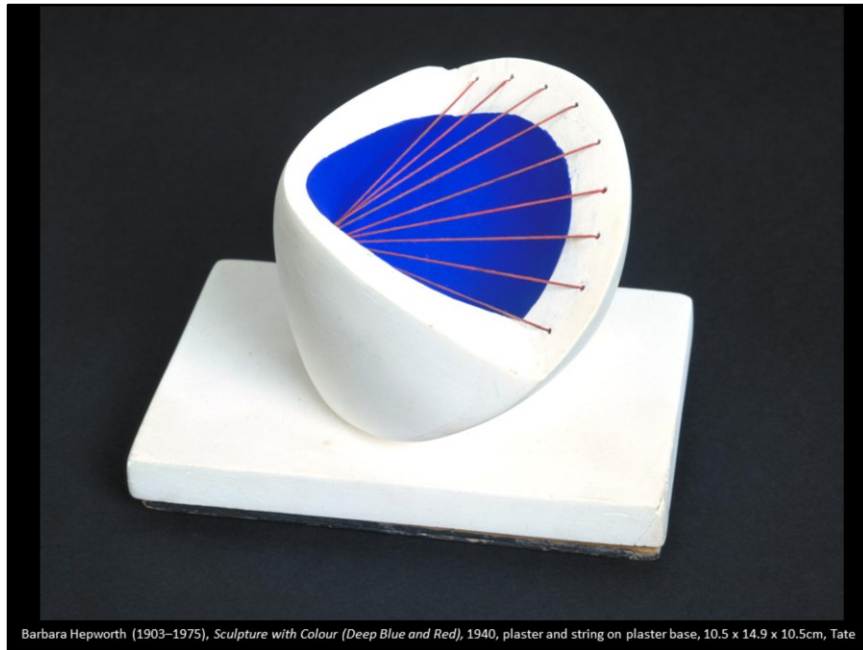
- The motif of mother and child occurs frequently in her work at this time. In 1929 she gave birth to her own son Paul Skeaping and in 1934 when she carved this work she gave birth to triplets.
- She acknowledged she was becoming more abstract in 1931 although this sculpture is clearly a mother and child. It employs two innovations. It is a multi-part sculpture rather than a single integrated sculptural mass and it has a large hole in the centre. She first used a large hole in *Pierced Form* in 1931. It was more than a formal device as it had conceptual value, signifying the vacant space in the mother's body where the child had come from. The psychoanalytic implications and the relationship of the work to her anxieties, such as that of separation, have been discussed by art historians.
- "*Mother and Child* was produced using a sculptural practice known as direct carving. First introduced by the French artist Constantin Brancusi in 1906, the technique was further developed by Hepworth, Moore, Skeaping and the British painter and sculptor Ben Nicholson in the 1920s and 1930s. Direct carving is a

process in which no models or sculptural maquettes are used to plan the work, but rather the final form of the sculpture emerges through the act of carving the material (see the discussion of Hepworth's approach to direct carving in Curtis 1994, p.15). Through this technique, these artists emphasised the inherent properties of the materials, and the marble, stone and wood that they used was rubbed and polished in order to enhance its natural texture, colours and markings. They believed that direct carving, as well as the use of simple forms and organic compositions, brought them closer to a 'primitive' or non-Western approach to making art and encouraged a sensitive and instinctive relationship to the landscape. Hepworth and Moore were inspired by objects that they studied in the collections of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Hepworth owned some ancient artefacts, including those from the Neolithic and Cycladic eras." (Tate)

- In 1935 they were instrumental in restricting the **7&5 to abstract work**, thus paving the way for a fertile period of constructivism enhanced by artist refugees from totalitarian Europe (Gropius, Moholy-Nagy, Breuer, Gabo).

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hepworth-mother-and-child-t06676/text-summary>



Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975), *Sculpture with Colour (Deep Blue and Red)*, 1940, plaster and string on plaster base, 10.5 x 14.9 x 10.5cm, Tate

- *Sculpture with Colour (Deep Blue and Red)* was made at Dunluce, the house in Carbis Bay, near St Ives, to which Hepworth and Nicholson had moved on 27 December 1939. Prior to that, since their evacuation from London in late August 1939, they had been staying nearby with Adrian Stokes and Margaret Mellis. The relative scarcity and small scale of Hepworth's work between 1939 and 1943 has been seen as the result of the restrictions placed upon her by domestic responsibilities, the lack of a proper studio and a shortage of materials.
- Her husband Nicholson reverted to landscape motifs during the war as an attempt to produce more saleable work at a time when the art market had all but collapsed and the family's financial situation was especially precarious. Hepworth made paintings during the war that also sold relatively easily and it may be that her production of multiple small sculptures like this one was similarly aimed at ensuring sales.
- The sculptures with colour embody two significant departures in Hepworth's work: her use of colour and the inclusion of strings. The latter must be compared to Henry Moore's strung works - in particular his *Stringed Relief*, 1937.

- Hepworth's use of strings to her interest in mathematical models and stated, presumably drawing upon the artist's own testimony, that she had studied them 'in Paris and London in her youth but let the idea lie dormant until she could use it emotionally, not mathematically'. Their use of them for artistic purposes reflected a desire for a modernist synthesis of science and art.
- Her use of bright colours is unusual and may reveal a debt to Mondrian, whom she had met in the early 1930s and who was a close neighbour in Hampstead between September 1938 and their departure the following August. She also wrote, 'The colour in the concavities plunged me into the depth of water, caves, of shadows deeper than the carved concavities themselves. The strings were the tension I felt between myself and the sea, the wind or the hills.'

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hepworth-sculpture-with-colour-deep-blue-and-red-t03133/text-catalogue-entry>



Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975), *Oval Sculpture (No. 2)*, 1943, cast 1958, plaster on a veneered wooden base, Tate

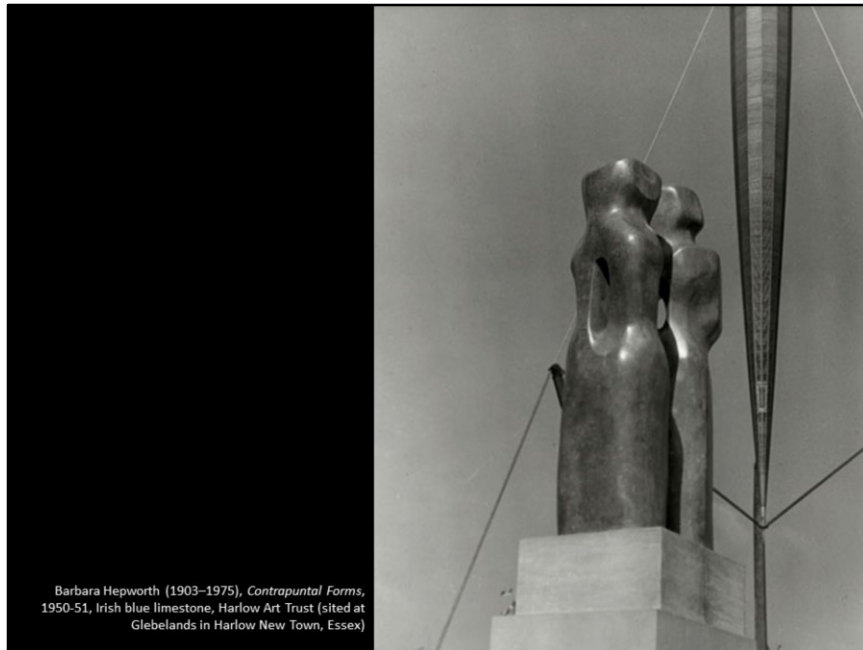
- Tate website
 - In the 1930s Barbara Hepworth and her husband Ben Nicholson were members of the London-based avant-garde. Shortly before the outbreak of war they moved to Cornwall with their children. Hepworth's abstract forms, which seem akin to caves and shells, were affected by the Cornish landscape. Her response to nature was not romantic or mystical but more firmly based on actual observation. Circles and spheres had dominated her work. These were replaced by ovals which gave her sculptures two centres rather than one, complicating their interior form.
 - This work was originally in wood but when it began to split Hepworth called in a well-known plaster caster 'Macx' Macini. At first he thought it too difficult but agreed to produce a 40-piece mould from which two casts were made, one now in the Tate and the other in the Barbara Hepworth Museum, St. Ives. Four polished bronzes were cast the following year.
 - The work evolved from abstract drawings Hepworth did in 1942 and this work is based on one of the first work she carved after moving to Carbis Bay. However,

during the war seasoned wood was unobtainable and she was concerned the wood she used would split, which it subsequently did.

- It is an ovoid open in four places to give views of the interior. Other artists such as Naum Gabo had also used similar forms and there was some concern about mutual influence which culminated in a split between Hepworth and Gabo after he accused her of stealing the oval. Hepworth said, 'The carving and piercing of such a form seems to open up an infinite variety of continuous curves in the third dimension, changing in accordance with the contours of the original ovoid and with the degree of penetration of the material'
- The ovoid form could also derive from Brancusi's use of an archetypal form derived, in part, from the human head. She saw his work in his Paris studio in 1933. Herbert Read cited the egg as an exemplar of the organic form. He contrasted the organic approach and constructivism as two opposing forms of sculpture. Quoting D'Arcy Thompson's theory of the determination of form by natural processes, Read wrote: 'The egg is not an arbitrary shape; it is determined, as we say, by physical laws'.
- The ovoid could also derive from a scheme of symbols described by Hepworth which included 'curves, spirals ovoids - foetus erotic [sic], prenatal dream, childhood - primitive etc?' The ovoid or egg-shaped form could therefore be associated with foetus and childbirth.
- In its use of an archetypal organic form to express a natural, passive process of growth, *Oval Sculpture* may be seen to establish the tenor of Hepworth's work for the subsequent few years.
- Their utopian ideas were curtailed by the war and they moved to St Ives. In 1949 Hepworth established the Penwith Society of Artists with Nicholson, Peter Lanyon and others. Her contribution to the 1950 Venice Biennale was dogged by comparisons with Moore but other exhibitions helped establish her reputation.

References

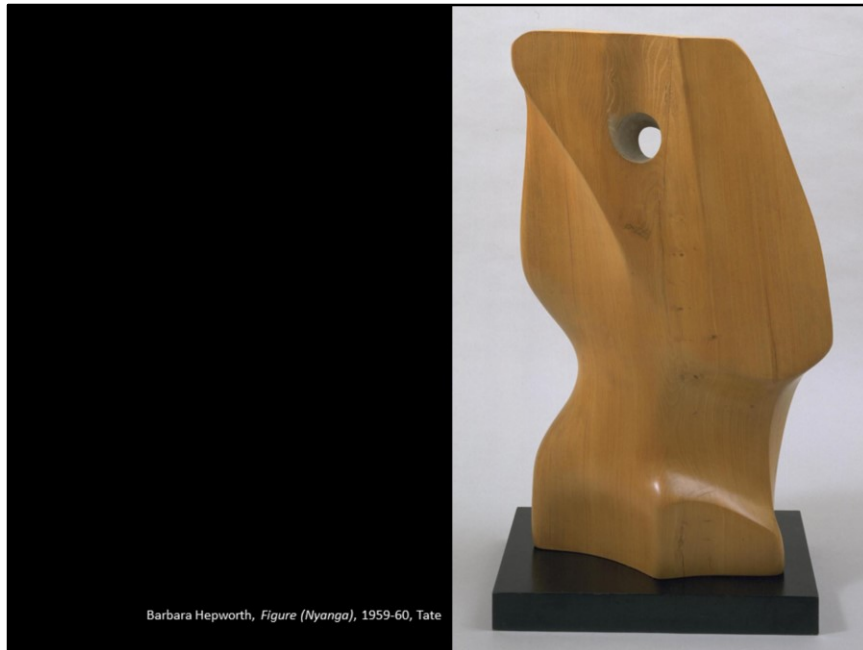
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hepworth-oval-sculpture-no-2-t00953/text-catalogue-entry>



Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975), *Contrapuntal Forms*, 1950-51, Irish blue limestone, Harlow Art Trust (sited at Glebelands in Harlow New Town, Essex)

- After the war **she was in great demand** and employed assistants. Hepworth's **first public commissions** were for the **Festival of Britain**. *Contrapuntal Forms* was commissioned by the Arts Council to stand on the South Bank during the Festival. Hepworth carved the two monumental figures in **Irish blue limestone** with the help of assistants she took on for the first time, Denis Mitchell, John Wells and Terry Frost. In 1953 the Arts Council **presented** *Contrapuntal Forms* to the new town of **Harlow** in Essex. It is sited at Glebelands in Harlow.
- She **divorced Nicholson in 1951** and **visited Greece** in 1954 to try to recover from the **sudden death of her son in 1953**.
- Hepworth was a skilled draughtsman and her work includes 80 **drawings of surgical procedures** and operating rooms after she struck up a friendship with the surgeon Norman Capener in 1944. During World War II she was a leading figure in the St Ives School with Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo and she divorced Nicholson in 1951.
- Her international standing was confirmed by the Grand Prix of the 1959 São Paulo

Bienal, a Whitechapel exhibition and a European tour.



Barbara Hepworth, *Figure (Nyanga)*, 1959-60, Tate

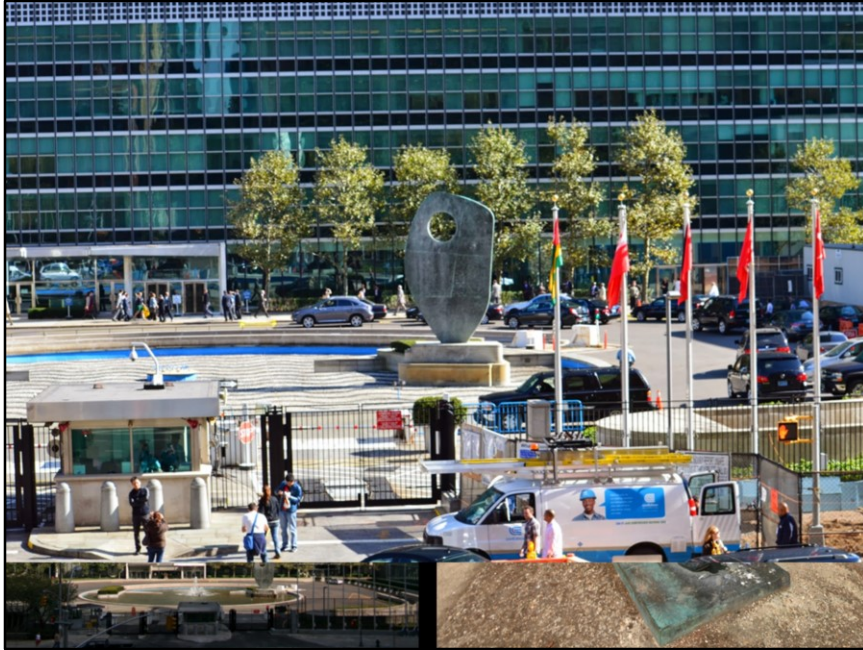
- This is *Figure (Nyanga)* by Barbara Hepworth. It is elm on a plywood base and is a warm honey colour and a broad grain that she uses to enhance the modelling. The sculpture is called *Figure* which encourages us to read the form as a head, particularly if consider what could be a shoulder, a jaw line, an eye and a profile. The eye is accentuated by a spiral form and the interior of the hole is slightly whitened with paint to form a contrast with the main waxed surface. If the front edge is a profile, then the face is turned upwards in a pose that reminds us of religious saints looking up to heaven. I do not mean it represents a saint but that it invokes spiritual feelings.
- Hepworth believed that art could play a powerful role in community activity, and ardently supported the United Nations as it attempted to maintain peace during the international tension of the 1950s. She saw this abstract sculpture as a response to the racial violence taking place in Africa. Hepworth said that when she was carving this sculpture she was preoccupied with **'thoughts about Africa and the United Nations'**, explaining that her concern for human suffering and dignity had on occasion lent a certain poignancy to her works. Hepworth associated the sculpture retrospectively with the efforts of Dag Hammarskjöld, the Secretary

General of the United Nations, to establish peace in Central Africa. Hammarskjöld was a close friend of Hepworth and he was killed in a plane crash [in 1961] on his way to negotiate with a rebel leader.

- This work was linked more specifically to her sense of sorrow after the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, when South African police opened fire on demonstrators, killing 69 people. The demonstrators were objecting to 'Pass Laws' that restricted their freedom of movement. The Sharpeville massacre focused international attention on the apartheid system of racial segregation in South Africa and it initiated three decades of protest.
- A few weeks later, and a thousand miles from Sharpeville, five people were killed in Nyanga [near Cape Town]. One of those killed was a young child shot in her mother's arms. Ingrid Jonker wrote a poem in Afrikaans called '***The Child who Was Shot Dead by Soldiers at Nyanga***' which starts with a line from the Bible, '**The child is not dead**', and includes the line '**The child who just wanted to play in the sun at Nyanga is everywhere**'. The late Nelson Mandela read her poem at the opening of the first democratic Parliament in South Africa [on 24 May 1994]. The statue could therefore be about a single child's death but represent the universality of suffering.

Notes

- Ingrid Jonker (1933-1965) wrote '**The child is not dead**' following a visit to the Philippi police station to see the body of a child who had been shot dead in his mother's arms by the police in the township of Nyanga in Cape Town. It happened in the aftermath of the massacre of 69 people in Sharpeville, south of Johannesburg, on 21 March 1960. The poem starts with a line from the Bible, 'The child is not dead' (Mark 5:39, Christ says, 'The child is not dead but sleeping'). Note, The Tate website says 71 were killed at Sharpeville and other sources, including the BBC, say 69.
- Apartheid is an Afrikaans word meaning 'separateness', or 'the state of being apart' and it was a system of racial segregation in South Africa enforced through legislation by the National Party, the governing party from 1948 to 1994.
- Nyanga is elm on a plywood base, 90.8 x 57.1 cm, and was presented by the artist to the Tate in 1969. Such large blocks are prone to splitting and a substantial crack on the rear face has been carefully filled with matching wood.



Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975), *Single Form* (Memorial), 1964, Battersea Park

- In 1964, she **attended the unveiling** of *Single Form* at the United Nations in New York, which was commissioned in memory of her friend **Dag Hammarskjöld** (pronounced 'Hammer-shold'), Secretary General of the United Nations, who was killed in 1961.
- *Single Form* is a **monumental bronze sculpture** and is her largest work, and one of her most prominent public commissions, displayed since 1964 in a circular water feature that forms a traffic island at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York. A second cast was made in 1963, bought by London County Council for **6,000 guineas** and installed at **Battersea Park in 1964**, where it remains on the south shore of the lake. It measures 3.12 by 2 by 0.25 metres.
- In 1970, the art critic Edwin Mullins suggested: "**it is a torso, it is a profile with an eye, it is an expanse of space in which the sun rises, it is a blade, it is a human hand ... raised flat in a sign of authority, or of salute, or as a gesture of allegiance**". In 1974 the art critic Dore Ashton suggested it is a "**vision of the cosmos**".
- Hepworth served as a Tate trustee (1965-72), donating six works in 1964 and a

further nine in 1967. After a long battle with cancer she died at home in 1975, aged 72, in a horrific fire.

References

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_Hepworth

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_Form



NEXT WEEK:
WORLD WAR II ART

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