



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

Moore in America: Monumental Sculpture at The New York Botanical Garden

May 24–November 2, 2008

Biography: HENRY MOORE, 1898–1986

Henry Moore, the seventh of eight children of Raymond Spencer Moore and his wife, Mary Baker, was born in the small coalmining town of Castleford, Yorkshire, on July 30, 1898. After elementary school in his hometown, Moore entered Castleford Secondary School via a scholarship when he was 11 years old.

He wanted to take the examinations for a scholarship to the local art college, but his father, ever a practical man, thought that he should follow an elder sister into the teaching profession. After a brief period of training, Moore began teaching fulltime at his old school in Castleford, but didn't take to the profession.

At 18, he enlisted in the 15th Battalion, the London Regiment known as the Civil Service Rifles. Shortly afterward he was sent to France, where he and his regiment took part in the battle of Cambrai. Moore's active participation in the war ceased when he was gassed; he was sent home, spending two months in a hospital in Cardiff. He returned to France for a brief period as an instructor before the armistice. Unsatisfied with teaching, he then applied for and received an ex-serviceman's grant to attend the Leeds School of Art, where he was the sole sculpture student. At the end of his second year he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art in London.

In 1924, Moore was appointed as sculpture instructor at the Royal College. There he met Irina Radetsky, a painting student, whom he married in 1929. The couple lived in Hampstead, where they mingled with many aspiring young artists and writers, including Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Stephen Spender, and Herbert Read. Moore's first commission, received in 1928, was to produce a sculptural relief for Charles Holden's London Transport Headquarters at St James's. His first one-man exhibition, which consisted of 42 sculptures and 51 drawings, opened at the Warren Gallery in the same year. By 1931, Moore had become the first teacher of sculpture at Chelsea School of Art.

In the 1930s came three more one-man shows, all at the Leicester Galleries. Moore also participated in major group exhibitions of the time. In 1931, he exhibited three works in the *Plastik* exhibition in Zurich. In 1936, Moore signed the manifesto urging the end of a policy of non-intervention in Spain. He attempted to go to Republican Spain as part of a delegation of English artists and writers, but their request for permission to travel was rejected by the British Government. In 1940, when the Moores' Hampstead home was damaged during a bombing air-raid, the couple moved to Perry Green, a small hamlet in Hertfordshire, 25 miles north of London. Here the artist would remain for the rest of his life, drawing inspiration from the surrounding landscape and collecting found objects in nature that would provide ideas for his sculptures.

In 1940, he had begun to make sketches of people sheltering from air-raids in the London Underground. These drawings, together with those made subsequently in the coalmines for the War Artists' Advisory Committee, are considered among his greatest achievements.

Moore's only child, a daughter, Mary, was born in 1946, the year of his first foreign retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Demands for exhibitions of his work began to increase, both in number and in scale.

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In 1972, a retrospective of his work was held in Florence, the largest and most impressive exhibition of his career. In 1974, he gifted nearly 200 sculptures and drawings and a complete collection of graphics to the Art Gallery of Ontario. More than 30 major pieces and another collection of graphics went to The Tate Gallery in 1978. Other gifts have included drawings to the British Museum and graphic work to the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Council in London. He was the recipient of a great number of coveted awards, from honorary degrees to the Order of Merit, both in England and abroad. Although the cities of Toronto, Kansas City, and Washington, D.C., have notable collections of Moore's work, surprisingly Moore in America: Monumental Sculpture at The New York Botanical Garden is the first-ever exhibition in North America to concentrate solely on his outdoor sculpture: 20 works, all monumental in scale as well as in concept.

A few years before his death in 1986, Moore donated the entire estate at Perry Green with its studios, houses, cottages and collection of works to the Trustees of the Henry Moore Foundation to administer in perpetuity, charging them with the allocation of grants, bursaries, and scholarships to promote sculpture within the cultural life of the country.

Source: The Henry Moore Foundation

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Moore in America: Monumental Sculpture at The New York Botanical Garden
is presented by MetLife Foundation.

The New York Botanical Garden is an advocate for the plant kingdom. The Garden pursues its mission through its role as a museum of living plant collections arranged in gardens and landscapes across its National Historic Landmark site; through its comprehensive educational programs in horticulture and plant science; and through the wide-ranging research programs of the International Plant Science Center.

At Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road, the Botanical Garden is easy to reach by Metro-North Railroad or subway. The Botanical Garden is open Tuesday through Sunday and Monday federal holidays. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit our Web site at www.nybg.org

The New York Botanical Garden is located on property owned in full by the City of New York, and its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. A portion of the Garden's general operating funds is provided by The New York City Council and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Bronx Borough President and Bronx elected representatives in the City Council and State Legislature provide leadership funding.

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The Henry Moore Foundation maintains the artist's home, studios and grounds at Perry Green in Hertfordshire, England, which is open to visitors from April to October, by appointment. The Foundation also maintains and develops the world's largest collection of Moore's sculpture, drawings, graphics, textiles, and tapestries. The collection is managed from Perry Green by the curatorial staff, who are actively involved in the research, support, and curating of Moore's work worldwide. For more information or to book a visit to Perry Green, visit www.henry-moore-fdn.co.uk or call +44 (0)1279 843333. All press enquiries should go to Sarah Cockburn, Communications Officer, +44 (0)113 2467467 sarah@henry-moore.ac.uk

The Henry Moore Foundation