

RELATED DISPLAY

British sculptors' drawings: Moore to Gormley

Until 25 January 2009

Drawings by 20th-century British sculptors including Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Antony Gormley, Marc Quinn and Damien Hirst, all from the Museum's collection.

Admission free, Room 90

EVENTS

Statuephilia Late

Friday 7 November, 18.30–21.00

Statuephilia is open late until 20.30. Celebrate sculpture from ancient to contemporary with related workshops, performances and gallery talks.

Admission free

Documentary screenings: The Sculpture Diaries

Friday 14, 21, 28 November, 18.30, Stevenson Lecture Theatre

Sunday Times art critic Waldemar Januszczak shares his lifetime's passion for the world's sculpture in this landmark three-part series for Channel 4.

One programme per screening. Introduced by Waldemar Januszczak.

UK, 2008, 48 minutes each

£3, concessions £2 for each screening, booking advised

Lunchtime lecture: Body, space and time

Thursday 18 December, 13.15, BP Lecture Theatre

Antony Gormley, artist

Admission free, booking advised

Marc Quinn in conversation with Will Self

Friday 16 January, 18.30, BP Lecture Theatre

Join artist Marc Quinn as he talks to Will Self about this new work *Siren*, the solid gold statue of Kate Moss on display. Quinn talks about the genesis of the piece, and discusses his new publication that details the creation of the work.

£5, concessions £3, booking advised

GALLERY TALKS

British Museum staff discuss sculpture, from ancient to contemporary

Admission free, no pre-booking

Epstein to Moore: from figurative to the abstract

Friday 14 November, 13.15, Room 90

Jennifer Ramkalawon, Curator of Prints and Drawings

The role of sculpture: then and now

Thursday 20 November, 13.15, Room 17

Thorsten Oppen, Curator of Greek and Roman sculpture

Paolozzi to Gormley: from the post-war to the contemporary

Wednesday 26 November, 13.15, Room 90

Jennifer Ramkalawon, Curator of Prints and Drawings

Contemporary sculptors' drawings: Tracey Emin, Damien Hirst and their contemporaries

Wednesday 10 December, 13.15, Room 90

Jennifer Ramkalawon, Curator of Prints and Drawings

Mask: mind, model or mirror

Friday 12 December, 13.15, Room 24

Chris Spring, Curator of Southern Africa

The use and function of sculpture in ancient Egypt

Thursday 8 January, 13.15, Room 4

Marcel Marée, Curator of Ancient Egypt and Sudan

The skull beneath the skin: Damien Hirst's *Cornucopia* at the British Museum

Thursday 15 January, 13.15, Room 1

Frances Carey

Book event tickets through the Box Office on telephone

+44 (0)20 7323 8181. For more information on the exhibition and events, visit www.britishmuseum.org

A large print version of this guide is available from the Information Desk in the Great Court

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THE BRITISH MUSEUM

STATUE PHILIA

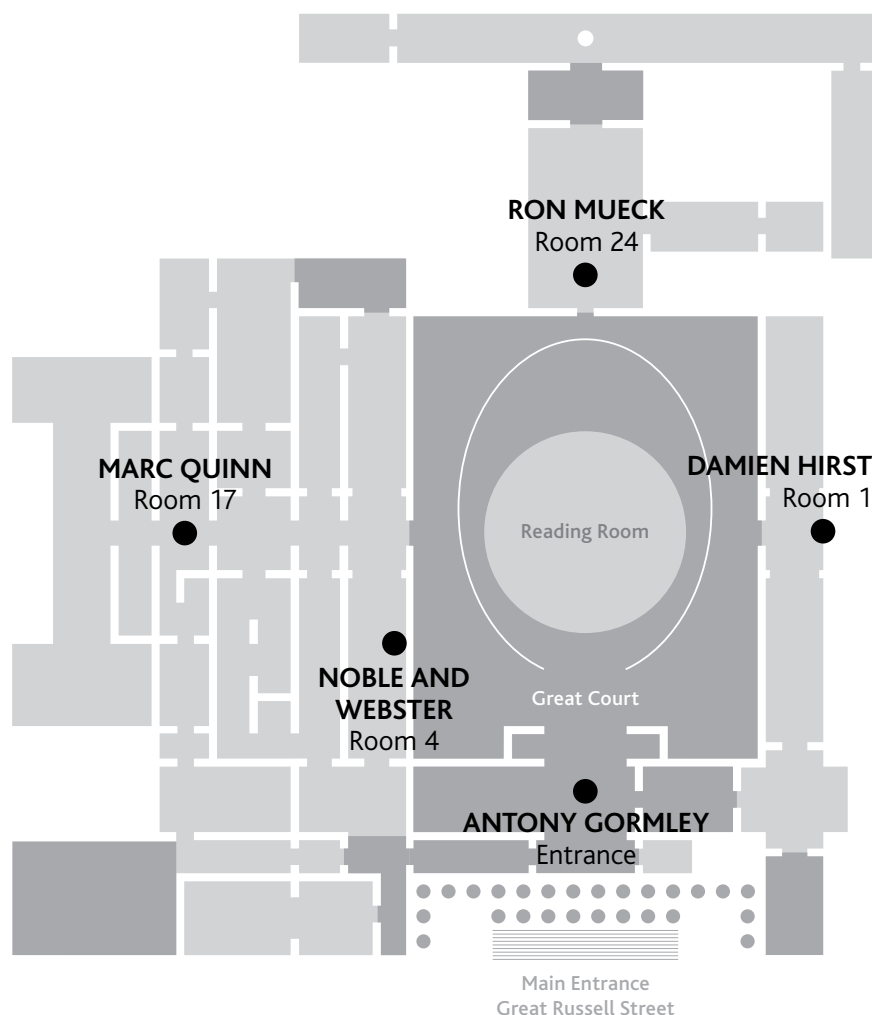
ANTONY GORMLEY
DAMIEN HIRST
RON MUECK
NOBLE AND WEBSTER
MARC QUINN

CONTEMPORARY
SCULPTORS AT THE
BRITISH MUSEUM

Guest curators:
Waldemar Januszczak
and James Fox

4 OCTOBER 2008 –
25 JANUARY 2009
FREE ADMISSION

Five major contemporary works displayed alongside the British Museum's permanent collection



The British Museum has one of the world's most celebrated and diverse collections of sculpture, dating from prehistory to the present day. Since its foundation in 1753, the Museum has consistently engaged with the contemporary world, both in its collecting and its displays.

These two themes are brought together in *Statuephilia*, for which five of Britain's leading artists have contributed a sculpture responding to these world-famous collections. Renowned British sculptor Henry Moore spoke of 'the delight, the excitement, the inspiration' he received from his visits to the British Museum, and this remains true for the sculptors of today.

Antony Gormley and Ron Mueck are represented here by monumental sculptures, Marc Quinn premieres a dazzling gold statue of Kate Moss, while Damien Hirst and Noble and Webster have created provocative new works inspired by the Museum's collections. These five installations show how our understanding of modern art can be deepened by placing it in an historic, global context and reveal just how powerful the art of the past is today.

Statuephilia encourages us to look afresh at both modern and ancient art, to explore the similarities as well as differences between eras and cultures, and to remind ourselves of the perennial power of sculpture.

With thanks to Channel Four Television and ZCZ Films



© Jay Jopling, White Cube London
Photo by Jan Uvelius

ANTONY GORMLEY Case for an Angel I

1989, Plaster, fibreglass, lead, steel, air
Collection of Jay Jopling

Antony Gormley is perhaps best known for his 200-tonne *Angel of the North* (1998), which dominates the landscape near Gateshead in the north-east of England. Gormley created the work shown here, *A Case for an Angel I*, almost a decade earlier.

Both share that familiar, evocative silhouette. At the same time human, superhuman and inhuman, a symbol of triumph and of our own mortality, the form of *Case for an Angel I* echoes many other works in the Museum – Egyptian statues, Assyrian winged bulls, Christian Crucifixions, and of course the Roman caryatid statue on the nearby stairs.

Unlike its monumental offspring, this angel is – despite its 8.5 metre wingspan – defiantly human-sized. It is a metaphor for humanity's capacity to imagine and create. It is therefore particularly appropriate that it stands at the entrance to a museum that celebrates those very endeavours, and whose collections inspired Gormley to become a sculptor in the first place. Since 2007 Antony Gormley has been a trustee of the British Museum.

The British Museum is a laboratory of possibility for any creative mind. It is filled with objects that reach across time and touch us intimately. Seeing as a child the great head of Ramesses and the Assyrian winged bulls at the British Museum was what made me become a sculptor.

Antony Gormley

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© Damien Hirst, Photo by Prudence Cumming

DAMIEN HIRST

Cornucopia

2008, Household gloss paint on plastic skulls
Collection of the artist

Damien Hirst's spot paintings, spin paintings, medicine cabinets, dead sharks in formaldehyde and diamond-encrusted skulls have become familiar around the globe.

Despite this variety of forms, Hirst's work insistently addresses the same concerns: death, the body, the relationship between the sacred and the profane, between reason and superstition. His preoccupations are therefore perfectly suited to the Enlightenment Gallery, where he commandeers eight antique wall cases and fills them with 200 unique spin-painted plastic skulls.

Hirst's fascination with skulls was initially inspired by the Museum's collections, including the famous Crystal Skull. This arrangement, *Cornucopia*, exploits the evocative, ritualistic qualities of such objects, and together they appear like a sinister shrine to a bloodthirsty deity. In the process they offer a dark, superstitious riposte to the Enlightenment concerns – reason, collection and classification – that surround them.

The Enlightenment Gallery is a cornucopia of exciting things from both the natural and man-made world. Whether it is the display of 13th-century English tiles from Maxstoke Priory depicting souls entering Heaven and Hell, or the detailed paper collages of plants by Mary Delany, or the prehistoric stone axes, or the rich maiolica ware with their tin glazes and decorative scenes, all is truly fascinating. The gallery itself inspires me as a space with all those beautiful cabinets and cases complete with artefacts, so I was very glad to be asked to take part in this exhibition, to somehow be part of the Museum's history.
Damien Hirst



© Anthony d'Offay

RON MUECK

Mask II

2001/2002, Mixed media
Collection of Antony d'Offay, London

Ron Mueck's hyperrealist sculptures have inspired wonder for over a decade.

In *Mask II* he has represented the features of his own face with unstinting accuracy but on a superhuman scale. The resulting object – disorientating and moving in equal measure – wavers between realism and abstraction, monumentality and intimacy, and between the states of life and death.

Its neighbour is Hoa Hakananai'a, an enormous stone statue from Rapa Nui (Easter Island) in the South Pacific. These two figures speak to each other across several centuries and 8500 miles in the long history of monumental sculpture. Both reveal the enduring human need to make our own image on a grand scale. *Mask II*'s prostrate orientation also alludes to the many fallen moai (statues of human figures) that remain on Rapa Nui today as reminders of a civilisation that has since been transformed.

Ron Mueck prefers not to talk about his work. But in conversation a few years ago he made it clear to me that scale is one of his chief concerns. Small things made big, or big things made small have a new and potent impact on the viewer. You can see it going on all over the British Museum – basically a museum of sculpture – which is why the meeting of an Easter Island head and Ron Mueck's giant self-portrait is so appropriate.

Waldemar Januszczak

TIM NOBLE AND SUE WEBSTER

Dark Stuff

2008, Various mummified animals, metal stand, light projector
Collection of the artists



For fifteen years Tim Noble and Sue Webster's dark, witty and original works have addressed issues of sexuality, identity, self-representation and taboo.

Inspired by the Museum's Egyptian collections, they have painstakingly produced a unique silhouette work. A simple spotlight transforms an apparently amorphous heap of mummified creatures into two vivid silhouettes of the faces of the artists.

Noble and Webster's use of animals echoes that of their Egyptian predecessors. Ancient Egyptians believed that gods could take the form of animals, and cats, dogs, birds and other creatures were bred in their thousands. These animals were then mummified and sold to pilgrims visiting temples: the mummified creatures were offered to the gods in the hope of material or spiritual reward.

This feral magic lantern show is the second in a trilogy (the first was constructed from stuffed animals; the third will be made out of bones). All examine our attitudes to life and death, beauty and the grotesque. They also invite that perennial question (one so often asked about the ancient Egyptians): 'How did they do it?'

Tim's mum bought some kittens three years ago. The cats started bringing in their prey almost every day. We collected their remains in a box marked with a skull and crossbones, which we called 'Dead Things.' Soon we had a few hundred rotting creatures – mice, rats, voles, even a squirrel and a toad. Walking through the British Museum, we were struck by the Egyptians' use of mummification, their obsession with animals and animal parts, and how good at sculpture they were. And suddenly we knew what to do with our mummified animals!

Sue Webster

MARC QUINN

Siren

2007, Gold
Collection of the artist



Marc Quinn intrigued visitors to London's Trafalgar Square when his monumental statue of Alison Lapper, a pregnant disabled woman, was installed on the square's fourth plinth in 2005.

Quinn's probing fascination with our attitudes towards female beauty has repeatedly led him to ancient Greek art. His new sculpture, *Siren*, is of the model Kate Moss and is made entirely out of gold. Quinn presents Moss as a modern-day Aphrodite – a goddess of our own time. It reminds us of how we have mythologised Moss; how her likeness has become as iconic as the goddesses of the ancient world.

Named after the deadly marine seductresses of Greek mythology, *Siren* transfixes the viewer with her intense gaze. She is positioned next to the Nereid Monument – a temple-like tomb adorned with sea-nymphs. Her contorted body parallels the crouching pose of the nearby statue of Aphrodite, known as 'Lely's Venus', who looks back as though aware of the competition.

The mask of Tutankhamun is one of the first artworks ever I remember seeing – it was in the early 1970s in the British Museum show, and that was one of the inspirations of this work as well. Like that mask, *Siren* is an image that glows and gives out love and light but remains completely implacable and silent. I think of both of them as sculptures of a cultural superego.

Marc Quinn