

Henry Moore (1898-1986)

Born in Castleford, Yorkshire, the son of a miner, Henry Moore showed promise at an early age, winning a scholarship to the local grammar school. In 1917 he travelled to London to enlist in the 15th London Regiment (Civil Service Rifles), making his first visit to the British Museum. He was sent to France and was later gassed at the Battle of Cambrai. In 1919 he returned to Yorkshire to attend Leeds College of Art where he was the first student to study sculpture. Two years later Moore won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art. In London he drew extensively from sculpture in the British Museum, including material from the ethnographic collections. His first visit to Paris was in 1923, followed in 1925 with an extensive tour of the major places in central and northern Italy. On his return he resumed teaching at the RCA, and began studying bones at the Natural History Museum and different types of English stone at the Geological Museum; this led to his first transformation drawings of 1926, based on analogies between natural forms and the human figure.

Moore's first one-man show was at the Warren Gallery in London in 1928. In 1929 he married Irina Radetsky, a painting student at the RCA, as well as completing his reclining figure inspired by a reproduction of a carving of the Mexican rain-spirit Chacmool. The thirties saw Moore increasingly associated with avant-garde groups such as the 7 and 5 Society and Unit One, formed by Paul Nash. By the end of the decade modelling and casting had begun to take precedence over direct carving for his sculpture. Drawing continued to play a vital role in his work, becoming of paramount importance during the early years of the Second World War, when he produced some of his most powerful and moving drawings, studies of Londoners sheltering from the Blitz in the Underground. Moore described his feelings on first seeing the figures in the Underground:

I spent the time looking at the rows of people sleeping on the platforms. I had never seen so many reclining figures, and even the train tunnels seemed to be like the holes in my sculpture.



Left: *Crowd Looking at a Tied-Up Object*, 1942. Graphite, coloured chalks and grey wash, 442 x 571 mm 1988-3-5-7. Accepted by H M Government in lieu of tax on the estate of the late Lord Clark of Saltwood and allocated to The British Museum

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He was subsequently appointed as an official war artist by the War Artists' Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Kenneth Clark. Moore returned to sculpture with the *Madonna and Child*, commissioned for St Matthew's Church, Northampton and unveiled in February 1944. After the War he produced various public commissions; one of the most

prestigious was a sculpture for the new UNESCO headquarters in Paris, installed in 1958, for which the British Museum owns preparatory drawings.

Drawings

The British Museum has thirty-five drawings by Henry Moore, the majority of which were presented by the artist himself or by Lord Clark. In addition, Jane, Lady Clark, bequeathed in 1977 the first of the *Shelter Sketchbooks*, dating from the latter end of 1940, while nine of the single-sheet drawings were acquired in 1988 from the estate of Lord Clark after they had been accepted in lieu of tax by the Commissioners of the Inland Revenue. The most famous of these is the compositions *Crowd Looking at a Tied-up Object* of 1942.

The collection in the Department of Prints and Drawings covers most of Moore's career. Several drawings of monumental nudes date from the 1920s. Drawings from the thirties are mostly ideas for metal or stone sculpture. After he had completed the Shelter drawings in 1941, Moore visited the Wheldale Colliery in his hometown of Castleford, where he recorded the miners at work. The British Museum possesses five of sheets from the coalmining sketchbook. A double-page drawing by Moore of helmet heads, executed in 1950, appears in the Visitors' Book for the Institute of Contemporary Arts, which belongs to the Museum.

Prints

Among the material owned by the British Museum is a set of Moore's early collographs plus working proofs; his lithograph for the third series of School Prints, *Sculptural Objects* of 1949, and three of his illustrated portfolios: Goethe's *Prométhée*, translated by André Gide, 1950 (eight lithographs); *Elephant Skull*, 1970 (twenty-five etchings); *Selections from poems by Auden*, 1974 (twenty-one lithographs). The main repositories of his prints belong to Tate in London and to the Henry Moore Foundation at Much Hadham in Herts.

Other Collections

London	Tate Victoria and Albert Museum
UK	The Henry Moore Institute, Leeds The Henry Moore Foundation , Much Hadham, Hertfordshire
Canada	Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
USA	Museum of Modern Art, New York

Further Reading

Auden Poems/Moore Lithographs. British Museum Press, 1974

Berthoud, R. *The Life of Henry Moore*. Faber and Faber, 1987

Carey, F. *Henry Moore: A Shelter Sketchbook*. British Museum Press, 1988

Compton, S. ed. *Henry Moore*. Royal Academy, 1988

Cramer, G. et al. *Henry Moore Catalogue of Graphic Work*. Galerie Gérard Cramer, 1973 and 1976

Finn, D. *Henry Moore at the British Museum*. British Museum Press, 1981

Garrould, A. ed. *Henry Moore: Complete Drawings*. 6 Vols. Lund Humphries, 1994

Kosinski, D. ed. *Henry Moore: Sculpting the 20th Century*. Dallas Museum of Art, 2001

Wilkinson, A. *The Drawings of Henry Moore*. Tate Gallery Publications, 1978