

Panel 1 Biography

Henry Moore is one of the world's most famous modern sculptors. Born on July 30, 1898 in Castleford, England, Moore showed talent as an artist early in childhood. Teachers noticed his abilities and gave him opportunities, such as carving commemorative signs, to develop his skills. He volunteered at the age of 18 and fought in World War I as a member of the Civil Rifle Service. Once his service was completed, Moore attended Leeds School of Art where his professional career as an artist began. At Leeds he was exposed to different modernist tendencies in the work of Cezanne and Gauguin. Moore became aware of sculpture from Africa, Oceania, and Mesoamerica in the private collections of his professors. The massive forms of these objects and their wide range of sculptural vocabulary and the use of direct carving, instead of the academic pointing machine or modeling of a malleable material were particularly interesting to Moore. In 1921 Moore won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art in London. While in London he made weekly visits to the British Museum and spent some time in Paris absorbing the flood of new European artistic styles. In 1924 he became an instructor of sculpture at the RCA. Two years later he won a traveling scholarship that allowed him to spend six months in Italy. While there, Moore saw the works of Giotto, Masaccio, and Michelangelo. Moore was taken by the monumentality of Renaissance forms and returned to London looking for a new visual vocabulary to use in his carvings. Moore's first one man show was in London in 1928 but it wasn't until after the showing of his *Shelter Drawings* in 1941 that he began to draw attention from around the world. In the last half of his career, he completed commissions for large, public spaces.

Images: Michelangelo's *Dawn or Night*, Cezanne's *Large Bathers*, Gauguin's *Day of the god*.

Panel 2 Explanation of Moore's career and style

During his formative years in 1920s London, Moore carved sculptures from wood or stone inspired by Pre-Columbian stone carvings. In the following decade Moore's work became increasingly abstract but always retained a humanistic character. Many of Moore's works are concerned with human relationships. This general theme manifested

itself in many ways. On the most abstract level, Moore would create forms within forms that would express ideas of shelter and protection.

The German Blitzkrieg ravaged London during WW II. The War Artists Advisory Committee commissioned Moore to document the thousands of people who were taking shelter in the London Underground during the bombing of September 1940 to May 1941. These sometimes eerie drawings of human figures in enclosed spaces were haunting expressions of a Londoner's experience during WWII.

Although winning much acclaim from these drawings, in the 1950s he returned to sculpting and carving works that increasingly three-dimensional and less frontal, necessitating a viewing space that allowed the viewer to move around the pieces. He included holes in the carvings, allowing the works to interact with and activate the spaces they occupied. In this decade he also turned to natural objects such as bones, shells, pebbles, and flint stone as inspiration for his designs. Moore sculpted man and woman figures to express these ideas but the Mother and Child image was a constant throughout his career. Mother and Child sculptures ranged in size and abstraction, sometimes taking on religious significance, depending on the commission. The reclining figure, especially of the female body, was also constant (consistent) theme in Moore's work. Moore liked to explore the different positions in which the body could rest and how that position could interact with the space around it. The reclining female form could also be equated to the rolling, English landscape of Moore's childhood. The female figures of Moore's sculpture were usually solid, mature and rarely young and frail.

During the 1960s and 1970s Moore's reputation as a phenomenal sculptor and carver spread throughout the world. Financial success allowed Moore to work with a wider variety of materials, such as marble and bronze. Moore received commissions that led to large-scale works for public spaces.

Images: Chacmool comparison, *Mother and Child* 1930s, 1950s, *Reclining Figure Hand*.

Panel 3 Large Spindle Piece

Large Spindle Piece is part of Moore's "Spindle series," which he made for a 1968 outdoor exhibit in London. He worked on *Large Spindle Piece* from 1968 to 1974, first exploring the idea in a maquette, a small version of the finished form in an easily workable material, such as plaster. Moore also made a working model in bronze and a

carved version in travertine marble. Six bronze casts of *Large Spindle Piece* exist throughout the world. In addition to Kenyon's piece, two of the casts are in Japanese collections, one in Tranquility Park in downtown Houston, Texas, and on the grounds of the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, North Carolina, and the final one is in a private collection.

Large Spindle Piece is a culmination of several major themes with which Moore worked throughout his career. Moore was strongly influenced by Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel. In *Large Spindle Piece*, one can see an inverted interpretation of the hand of G-d about to touch the hand of Adam as depicted in the *Creation of Adam*. In Michelangelo's fresco, the divine energy is between two specific points, G-d's powerful, outstretched arm and Adam's limp, receptive arm. However, in Moore's bronze, the energy is generated within the spindle at the center of the sculpture and directed outward at the opposite points. Moore's inspirations in the late 1960s and early 1970s came from natural artifacts, such as chunks of flint or animal skulls. The upper portion of the sculpture looks like the rounded area of a cranium; the empty space, like an eye socket. The sharp edges in the lower portion of the sculpture resemble the fracture lines of flint. There are many interpretations of the forms within *Large Spindle Piece*, but like many of Moore's other works there is no single source or explanation for the sculpture.

Images: *Creation of Adam*.