

Henry Moore Land and Sea
Lewes Town Hall
3 July-31 August 2004

The exhibition opens towards the end of the summer term and continues until the end of August. Some schools are planning to begin work based on Henry Moore's sculptures, prints, and drawings in the early part of the summer term, bringing their pupils to see the exhibition once they have become familiar with some of the ideas and concepts connected with his work.

Ideas for Teachers

These notes are intended as a guide for teachers who may wish to use some of the ideas as starting points for work in the classroom. The project suggestions made here are guidelines only and may be adapted for students of any age.

Materials and Processes

From early in his career Henry Moore made collections of **found objects**. These were often pebbles, bones, flints and pieces of wood.

Moore made sketches of ideas for sculpture.

Direct carving in wood and stone was Moore's chosen way of working in his early career. He believed in "**truth to materials**" - respecting the materials and allowing them to mould his response to a particular piece of stone, or wood. The original shape and size of the stone or piece of wood is very important to the carver. The **block** offers restrictions and inspiration.

Wood has grain patterns and the trunk-like shapes suggest upright forms. Wood is usually softer than stone, and allowed Moore to explore its particular structure and find his own shapes within.

Stone also has faults and deposits that makes each piece unique.

Stone or wood carving demands a very direct interaction with the material, as it is not possible to put back any part removed accidentally.

Moore also made sculptures in **plaster and clay** and then had them cast in **bronze** or other materials.

Relief Carving allowed the artist to map out a composition, which often lent itself to a more pictorial style.

Maquettes are small-scale sketch-models.

"I have wanted my sculpture to be interesting from all viewpoints, and so I work . . . from small maquettes which can be held in one hand and looked at and worked on from all angles." Henry Moore

Working Model is the intermediary stage between a maquette and the full-sized or monumental sculpture. In the working model, Moore re-examined themes and ideas explored in the small sculptures.

Moore's Themes

The Human Figure

Henry Moore continued to draw the human figure throughout his life. He thought that form was something one could put one's arms round, and these drawings and the resulting sculptures, were sensual and intimate. The figures often looked rooted or grounded by heavy legs and hips, and through time the relative size of the upper torso and head diminished. Facial details, which occur in his early work, disappeared as the work was simplified and changed from blank all seeing stare, to a vestigial head without any definable features.

Projects

- Draw a seated/reclining figure from observation paying particular attention to the ways in which the body connects to the surface it is on.
- Observe a figure as a contour map. Indicate volume by the direction of line. Avoid any outline. Use white wax crayons to draw with initially and then work into the shape with felt-tip pens and biros. Make a wash, using only water, over the drawing, which will make the pen run. The background can be made darker using watercolour or inks.
- Pose a figure leaning on a support. Alter the height of the support and document how the figure reacts to the change.
- Use these studies as starting points for maquettes in plasticine or clay.

Organic Form

In the 1930s, Moore made observational drawings of natural objects and transformed them through abstraction and simplification into other things. Drawings were repeated and changed in a series of quick 'doodles'. This allowed him to

document the way in which his unconscious mind was making connections.

Projects

- Collect organic objects especially wood, bones, fossils and shells. Make lists of words that describe these shapes. Do they remind you of anything?
- Make a series of observational drawings from different angles.
- Lay two or three stones/ bones out in an arrangement.
- Draw / photograph. Change the positioning and document.
- Decide which shapes please you the most and make sculptures based on the shapes in clay.

Gravity

The ways in which the forces of gravity pull on the body, provided Henry Moore with a continuing source of interest throughout his life. His sculptures express concepts of 'mass' and 'weight'.

Students could begin by looking at ways in which gravity can be seen to work.

Projects

- Collect pieces of wood, slate or other materials and construct three-dimensional arrangements by supporting one piece against another. Make quick sketches or photographs.
- Fill a plastic bag with water and fasten the top. Draw or photograph the resulting 'slumped' shape. This could also be done with a mixture of plaster so that the shape becomes solid. Lay the bag over different surface shapes and see how gravity affects it.
- Ask two students to hold hands and lean back, supporting each others weight. Get them to do this in different ways and to note the way that each figure reacts to the weight and pull of the other.

Use any of these ideas as starting points for three-dimensional work.

Relief Carving

Projects

- Look at examples of Central American stone carving and the way that it often fits into a soft edged shape.
- Using large open cardboard boxes, pose a figure fitting into a space. Draw with a black felt tip pen.
- Cast plaster in a box lined with polythene and carve a figure based on the drawings.

Mother and Child

This was a recurring theme throughout Henry Moore's working life. It is a primal subject and has been dealt with in all cultures and ages. The theme challenges the sculptor to express the relationship of a large form to a small one.

Projects

- Look for ways in which different artists have represented the subject, and make a collection of images. Look at examples of primitive art, especially Mexican stone carving, and at the early work of Picasso.
- One of Henry Moore's early sculptures based on this theme was thought to have been inspired by drawings he made of an Aztec stone carving in the British Museum.
- Draw a figure holding a small doll or stuffed toy. Experiment with the placing of the object and the way the figure relates to it. Try placing it on the figure's shoulders. Make small maquettes based on these observations in clay or plasticine and experiment with the idea of combining large and small shapes.

Inside/Outside

From the early 1930s, Henry Moore developed ideas in his sketchbooks of figures within figures. In most of these the main shape provides a skin of protection for the smaller figure. However, in some pieces dynamic, vital forms that give the impression of a power within the interior space. The drawings led on to a series of sculptures dealing with the layering of space and meaning.

"The interior of the helmet is really a figure and the outside casing of it is like the armour by which it might be protected in battle. I suppose in my mind was also the Mother and Child idea and of birth and the child in embryo.

All these things are connected in this interior and exterior idea." Henry Moore 'The Helmet' 1939-40

Projects

- Make a still life arrangement of objects, which have had some of their surface cut away and other objects placed inside. Experiment with these relationships and their possible meanings. Draw or photograph the results.
- Make a list of words and thoughts connected to the ideas of inside/outside.
- Make a hollow shape by covering a model head with papier-maché or clay. When dry remove and make a smaller shape to fit inside it. Think about what this smaller shape might represent. it could be a part of yourself you want to keep hidden or something vital and strong which represents talent or strength.

Landscape

Henry Moore was interested in the parallels to be found between the planes and hollows of the human body and landscape. His work suggests a similarity in the way that soil and vegetation clothe rocks, and muscle and skin cover bones.

He also liked the finished work to be sited so that it interacted with Nature

"I like my sculptures, especially the big ones, to have a relationship with the outdoor world, with sunlight, clouds and sky, with trees and water, rather than being placed with architecture or confined in a museum." Henry Moore

Projects

- Make drawings and photographs of landscapes paying particular attention to the horizon lines and undulating shapes of the land.
- If possible make drawings of cliffs, beaches and the sea.
- Make detailed sketches of rock pools, seaweed and flotsam.
- Develop these drawings in a sketchbook as starting points for sculptures.
- See if you can find any shapes or forms which remind you of a human figure

The Reclining Figure

This was a recurring theme and links his interest in Toltec-Mayan stone carving, with ideas of undulating country and the interplay of materials and their associations. Negative space between a bent arm or leg and the rest of the body became an important part of the composition and eventually evolved into the placing of a hole - sometimes in the main part of the figure

"The first hole made through a piece of stone is a revelation. The hole connects one side to the other, making it immediately more three-dimensional. A hole can itself have as much shape-meaning as a solid mass." Henry Moore

"The mystery of the hole - the mysterious fascination of caves in hillsides and cliffs." Henry Moore

Projects

- Look at ways that the subject of a reclining figure has been dealt with by other artists and cultures.
- Pose a figure lying on a surface and experiment with the ways legs and arms can be arranged to support it. Draw.
- Simplify the drawings. Pay particular attention to the outline and any areas of negative space.
- Consider different ways that this might be represented in three dimensions and log these ideas in a sketchbook.
- Make maquettes in a variety of materials and decide which you prefer.

Two-Piece Figures

Moore made his first two-piece figure in 1959. This was a reclining figure cut into two and arranged to make a feature of the empty space between the shapes. He said, "The two-piece sculptures pose a problem of relationship: the kind of relationship between two people. It's very different once you divide a thing into three."

Projects

- Make a reclining figure based on observational drawings of flints and bones. Cut the shape in two and experiment with the placing of the parts.

Mystery

Henry Moore said, "Sculpture should always at first sight have obscurities and further meanings. People should want to go on looking and thinking; it should never tell all about itself immediately."

Moore's work links to the unconscious through his choice of shapes, which have strange echoes and connections - bones, which may look like animals, simple abstract forms which may be grouped as if in conversation or relationship, or the placing of incongruous objects next to one another. Scale is altered and what may have originally been small becomes monumental.

Projects

- From observational drawings of organic form make a series of quick doodles transforming them into animals or figures.
- Cut up a page of these and collage them together making random associations of scale and meaning.
- Use these as starting points for three-dimensional work.

Upright Motives

These totem pole-like structures are made up of different forms balanced on top of one another. They look rather like structures made by North American indigenous people.

Projects

- Draw a selection of organic forms in a sketchbook.
- Photocopy the drawings and cut out the shapes.
- Arrange them in different ways as a vertical and stick down.
- Use this as a starting point for a carving or modelled sculpture.

These are some ways that students and teachers might begin work based on Henry Moore's sculptures, maquettes, and drawings. The exhibition will be a vital resource, and can be used as an opportunity to draw works from observation.

School groups are welcome to visit the exhibition by arrangement.

Christine Hall, the Education Co-ordinator will be giving drawing workshops and guided tours in the exhibition 5 July - 14 July.

These can be booked by contacting Lewes Town Hall: Tel 01273 471469 or Christine Hall: Tel 01273 70376
e-mail christinehall@solutionsinc.co.uk
A number of INSET sessions in schools are being planned please telephone or e-mail Christine Hall for details.