

Press Release
7 January 2010

Henry Moore

Tate Britain, Linbury Galleries
24 February – 8 August 2010
(Press view: 22 February 2010)

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Henry Moore
Reclining Figure 1939
Detroit Institute of Arts
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The Henry Moore Foundation

Radical, experimental and avant garde, Henry Moore (1898-1986) was one of Britain's greatest artists. This major exhibition will re-assert his position at the forefront of progressive twentieth-century sculpture, bringing together the most comprehensive selection of his works for a generation. *Henry Moore* will present over 150 significant works including stone sculptures, wood carvings, bronzes and drawings.

Henry Moore will reveal the range and quality of Moore's art in new ways – sometimes uncovering a dark and erotically charged dimension that challenges the familiar image of the artist and his work. Henry Moore first emerged as an artist in the wake of the First World War, in which he served on the Western Front. This exhibition will emphasise the impact on Moore's work of its historical and intellectual contexts: the trauma of war, the advent of psychoanalysis and new ideas of sexuality, and the influence of primitive art and surrealism.

The exhibition will explore the defining subjects of Moore's work, including the reclining figure, the iconic mother and child, abstract compositions and seminal drawings of London during the Blitz. The exhibition will assemble a group of Moore's great reclining figures carved in Elm wood, the largest number ever to be brought together. These beautiful, heavily grained works show the development of the reclining figure over the course of Moore's career. The recurring motif of the mother and child will be explored throughout the exhibition. Moore called it his 'fundamental obsession', and presented a complex vision of the maternal relationship, ranging from the nurturing bond of *Mother and Child* 1930-31 (Private Collection), to *Suckling Child* 1930 (Pallant House).

As Official War Artist, Moore made a series of drawings of Londoners sheltering in the London Underground from the Blitz. *Henry Moore* will include a selection of the most important of these, made between the autumn of 1940 and the summer of 1941. The drawings transformed Moore's reputation, not only documenting, but helping to build, the popular perception of the Blitz. His depictions of rows of sleeping figures lying huddled in claustrophobic tunnels captured a sense of profound humanitarian anguish and the fragility of the human body. This continues in his work of the 1950s, reflecting the aftermath of war and the prospect of further conflict.

The exhibition will look at the influence of world cultures in his work, through his primitive masks and works such as *Girl with Clasped Hands* 1930 (The British Council). It will include abstract sculptures of the 1930s such as *Composition* 1931 (The Henry Moore Family Collection),

threatening and sexualised works that suggest the influence of Freud and psychoanalytical theories such as *Reclining Figure* 1931 (Private Collection), and sculptures that capture the political tension and anxiety of the Spanish Civil War and the approach to the Second World War, such as *The Helmet* 1939-40 (The Henry Moore Foundation) and *Three Points* 1939-40 (Tate).

Henry Moore is a collaboration between Tate Britain and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. It is curated by Chris Stephens, Head of Displays at Tate Britain, and Michael Parke-Taylor, Associate Curator of European Art, Art Gallery of Ontario. It will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by Tate Publishing.

Notes to Editors

Henry Moore was born in Castleford, Yorkshire. After serving in the First World War he studied at Leeds School of Art in 1919, and won a scholarship to the Royal College in London in 1921. He lived and worked in London and Kent, teaching at the Royal College and Chelsea School of Art. He won the International Sculpture Award at the 1948 Venice Biennale. From 1940 Moore lived at Perry Green, Much Hadham, in Hertfordshire, now home to the Henry Moore Foundation.

The Henry Moore Foundation is the UK's largest artist foundation, running a visitor programme at the artist's former home in Hertfordshire, an exhibition and research programme at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds, and staging Moore exhibitions all over the world. It awarded over £1.5 million in grants in 2008-9. Visit www.henry-moore.org.

Tate Britain, Linbury Galleries

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For tickets visit www.tate.org.uk/tickets or call 020 7887 8888