

The Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

Artist: Henry Moore
Title: *Superior Eye - Helmet Head Series* (1975)
Medium: lithograph
Dimensions: 32cm x 38cm

b. 1898, Yorkshire, England d.1986, Herts

Henry Moore has said, "To be an artist is to believe in life." Certainly it was this great belief in and love of life that propelled him towards his chosen career. At the tender age of eleven, he made the conscious decision to become a sculptor after being exposed to the work of Michelangelo. However, the path to greatness did not run smoothly; after a brief period as a student teacher, he enlisted in the Civil Service Rifles, Fifteenth London Regiment at the age of eighteen. During service he was involved in the Battle of Cambrai and spent two months in hospital after a gas attack.

After becoming an Army Physical Training Instructor, he enrolled as the first student of sculpture at the Leeds School of Art. This was a period of great artistic growth and development. He was influenced by the work of modern artists, Cezanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin, and by "primitive" non-Western sculpture, among other things. However, he also studied classical art, being awarded a travel scholarship from the Royal College of Art (where he studied from 1921-4) in order to learn from masters such as Giotto, Donatello, and of course, his original inspiration, Michelangelo. This process of study allowed him to reject traditional models; he did not idealise the human form and stayed true to the materials he used. Critics, seeing it as brutalist, did not look on his early work favourably. However, all that soon changed and he was accepted into the modern canon of art. In 1934 the Museum of Modern Art, New York, borrowed two of his sculptures for their groundbreaking *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition. Interestingly, a few years later, the Director of the National Gallery, Sir Kenneth Clarke, appointed him as Official War Artist for World War II. His work grew enormously in popularity, and now he is regarded as one of the most important British sculptors of the twentieth century.

His name is generally associated with monumental sculpture, favouring bold figural forms in interesting mediums. However, he had a deep love of draughtsmanship, having stated that: 'I find drawing a useful outlet for ideas for which there is not time enough to realize as sculpture... And I sometimes draw just for its own enjoyment.'

Further works in Dublin by Henry Moore are: *Standing Figure Knife Edge* in St Stephen's Green and *Reclining Figure No. 2* in Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane.

The information in this article was taken from http://www.henry-moore-fdn.co.uk/matrix_engine/content.php?page_id=3802

This information has been compiled by Art Collections assistants, interns, and volunteers
For further information please consult www.tcd.ie/artcollections