## ADVENTURES IN 3 DIMENSIONS: 20TH CENTURY SCULPTURE IN BRITAIN

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*I became a sculptor to make things real.* (Henry Moore)

Modern sculpture is mysterious to many people. Frequently abstract or distorted in form, and complicated rather than illuminated by critical jargon, it seems difficult and inaccessible. Yet everywhere we go, sculpture is: invading our space, demanding to have attention paid. That is what makes it so challenging, and potentially so rewarding.

The story of sculpture through the 20th century reveals a growing understanding of how form can be manipulated to explore emotion as well as appearance, how materials can dictate meaning as well as shape, and how technical skill and concentrated imagination can use a three-dimensional language as expressively as any painter, poet or novelist to give us insights into the rhythms and meanings of life itself.

Initially controversial, the names of the sculptors involved have tended to become more accessible than what they made. Jacob Epstein and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska; Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore; Michael Ayrton, Anthony Gormley, Elisabeth Frink and Eduardo Paolozzi – their work stands at the heart of our time, and yet still, too often, people looking at individual pieces are intimidated where they should be enthralled. The viewing of sculpture is an exploration, an adventure, something to be enjoyed. This lecture sets out to prove that we can all be explorers.

 

**Illustrations**:

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska **Sleeping Fawn** 1913

Jacob Epstein **Rock Drill Torso** 1913-16

Barbara Hepworth **Mother and Child** 1934

George Frederic Watts: **Physical Energy** 1902

Henry Moore **Hill Arches** 1972

## ARTISTS

Alfred Gilbert 1854-1934

Frederic Leighton 1830-96

Hamo Thorneycroft 1850-1925

George Frederic Watts 1817-1904

Jacob Epstein 1880-1959

Frank Dobson 1888-1963

Alan Durst 1883-1970

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska 1891-1915

Eric Gill 1882-1986

Michael Ayrton 1921-75

Anthony Caro 1924-2013

Elisabeth Frink 1930-93

Barbara Hepworth 1903-75

Henry Moore 1898-1986

Eduardo Paolozzi 1924-2005

Tony Cragg b.1949

Antony Gormley b.1950

Anish Kapoor b.1954

David Nash b.1945

## FURTHER READING

Susan Beattie **The New Sculpture** 1983 Yale University Press

Penelope Curtis **Sculpture 1900-1945** (Oxford History of Art) 1999

Oxford University Press

Penelope Curtis & Keith Wilson **Modern British Sculpture** 2011 Royal Academy

Herbert George **The Elements of Sculpture** 2014 Phaidon

D.J. Getsey **Sculpture and the Pursuit of a Modern Ideal in Britain**

Ashgate Publishing 2004

William Tucker **The Language of Sculpture** (new ed.) Thames & Hudson 1992

There is also an excellent series published by Lund Humphries in association with the Henry Moore Foundation: **British Sculptors and Sculpture**, which includes monographs of many less familiar artists.

## FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

There is an increasing number of Sculpture Parks in this country which provide opportunities to see sculpture in what many of the makers regarded as its natural habitat – the landscape. Among the best are:

* The Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden, St Ives, Cornwall
* The Cass Sculpture Foundation, Goodwood.
* The Henry Moore Foundation, Perry Green, Hertfordshire
* The Ironbridge Open Air Museum of Steel Sculpture, Telford, Shropshire
* The New Art Centre Sculpture Park and Gallery, Roche Court, Wiltshire
* Sausmarez Manor Art Park, Guernsey
* The Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield

And in addition – keep your eyes open wherever you go. City, town and country – there’s more sculpture out there than you might think!

**SLIDE LIST**

**Slide 1:** (from left)

Eric Gill **Ecstasy** 1911 (Portland stone) [Tate Gallery]

Michael Ayrton **Scavenger II** 1968 (bronze) [Private Collection (pc)]

Henry Moore **Hill Arches** 1972-3 (bronze) [Moore Foundation]

**Slide 2:**

Elisabeth Frink **Walking Madonna** 1981 (bronze) [Salisbury Cathedral]

Hamo Thorneycroft **Oliver Cromwell** 1895-99 (bronze) [Houses of Parliament]

**Slide 3:**

Frederic Leighton **Athlete Wrestling with a Python** 1877 (bronze)

[Tate Gallery (TG)]

George Frederic Watts **Physical Energy** 1902 (bronze) [Kensington Gardens]

**Slide 4:**

Alfred Gilbert **Perseus Arming** 1882 (bronze) [Minneapolis]

George Frampton **Peter Pan** 1912 (bronze) [Kensington Gardens]

**Slide 5:**

Alfred Gilbert **Shaftsbury Memorial (Eros)** 1886-93 (bronze & aluminium)

Thomas Brock **A Moment of Peril** 1881 (bronze) [Leighton House garden]

**Slide 6:**

Hamo Thorneycroft **Joy of Life** 1895 (bronze) [pc]

Eric Gill **A Roland for an Oliver** 1910 (Hoptonwood stone) [University of Hull]

**Slide 7:** (from left)

Jacob Epstein **Infancy** 1908 (plaster model for stone)

[Original carvings on Zimbabwe House, The Strand]

**Portrait of Einstein** 1933 (bronze) [V&A]

**Consummatum Est** 1936-7 (alabaster)

[National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh]

**Slide 8:** (from left)

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska **Hieratic Head of Ezra Pound** 1914 (marble)

[National Gallery of Art, Washington DC]

**Sleeping Fawn** 1913 (painted plaster from original marble) [TG]

**Bird Swallowing Fish** 1914 (painted plaster) [Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge]

**Slide 9:**

Alan Durst **The Acrobats** 1937 (wood) [TG]

Frank Dobson **Manchild** 1921 (marble) [TG]

**Slide 10:**

Jacob Epstein **Rock Drill (Torso)** 1913-16 (bronze) [TG]

Henry Moore **Large Upright Internal/External Form** 1981-2 (bronze) [Kew]

**Slide 11:** (from left)

Henry Moore **King and Queen** 1952-3 (bronze) [Glenkiln Estate, Dumfries]

**A Suckling Child** 1930 (alabaster) [Pallant House, Chichester] **Stringed Figure** 1958-60 (bronze & strings) [TG]

**Slide 12:**

Henry Moore **Reclining Figure** 1936 (elm) [Wakefield Art Gallery]

Barbara Hepworth **Mother and child** 1934 (Cumberland alabaster) [TG]

**Slide 13:** (from top left)

Barbara Hepworth **Conoid, Sphere and Hollow III** 1937 (marble)

[Government collection (HM Treasury)]

**Single Form (September)** 1961 (walnut) [TG]

**Stringed Figure (Curlew II)** 1956 (bronze & strings) [TG]

**Slide 14:**

Anthony Caro **Early One Morning** 1962 (painted steel & aluminium) [TG]

**Slide 15:** (from top left)

Elisabeth Frink **Bird** 1952 (bronze) [TG]

**Riace Figures** 1986-9 (bronze) [Yorkshire Sculpture Park]

**Prisoner** 1988 (bronze) [Bristol City Museum]

**Slide 16:**

Eduardo Paolozzi **Cyclops** 1957 (bronze) [TG]

Michael Ayrton **Arkville Minotaur** 1968-9 (bronze) [London Wall, Barbican]

**Slide 17:**

Antony Gormley **Quantum Cloud** 2000 (steel) [River Thames, Greenwich]

Anish Kapoor & Cecil Balmond **Orbit** 2012 [Olympic Park, Stratford]

**Slide 18:** (from left)

Tony Cragg **Here Today, Gone Tomorrow** 2002 (stone)

[Cass Sculpture Foundation, Goodwood]

David Nash **Black Dome** 1986 (charred oak) [Forest of Dean, Glos.]

**Wooden Boulder** 1978-2003-2009-? (oak)

[River Dwyryd and estuary, N. Wales]

**Slide 19:**

Jacob Epstein **Jacob and the Angel** 1940-41 (alabaster) [TG]

Antony Gormley **Angel of the North** 1995-8 (steel & concrete) [Gateshead]

**Slide 20:**

Barbara Hepworth **Conversation with Magic Stones** 1973 (bronze) [TG]

*My sculpture is sufficient explanation in itself.* (Jacob Epstein)

*A sculpture might, and sculptures do, reside in emptiness, but nothing happens*

*until the living human encounters the image.* (Barbara Hepworth)

*Art is an instrument for thinking.* (Antony Gormley)