



Sculptural Object in Landscape

Henry Moore

Not on display

Title/Description: Sculptural Object in Landscape

Artist/Maker: Henry Moore

Born: 1939

Object Type: Drawing

Materials: Crayon, Ink, Paper, Pencil, Watercolour, Wax crayon

Measurements: Unframed: (h. 380 x w. 553 x d. 1 mm) Framed: (h. 586 x w. 756 x d. 37 mm)

Inscription: signature

Accession Number: 89

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe

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Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

Moore used paper to conceptualise sculptural compositions and presented many sculptural ideas in imagined landscapes. Of these, Alan Wilkinson writes that *Sculptural Object in a Landscape* is 'one of Moore's finest'. [1] Although the scene may seem generalised, it represents the valley and hills behind Henry and Irina Moore's cottage of Burcroft, in Kingston, where they had a home from 1935 to 1940. Moore explained that in this setting 'for the first time I worked with a three or four mile view of the countryside to which I could relate my sculptures. The space, the distance and the landscape became very important to me as a background and as an environment for my sculpture.' [2] Long shadows suggest early morning or dusk.

Sculptural Object in a Landscape demonstrates how Moore is imagining immense scale on a small, two-dimensional plane. The imagined object looms in a sparse landscape with a distant horizon. The image does not resemble any actual sculpture - former or future. It suggests his open reclining figures in bronze of the period, but the 'sculptural object' more closely resembles a bone, which was a frequently cited source material for Moore. The slender form conveys the simultaneous inherent strength and delicacy of bone. The materiality of bone in this drawing is suggested by the white and yellow wax crayon, which rejects the blue tones of the watercolour wash. The sculptural image therefore seems to stand out against the ground.

A bone would suggest a smaller size, but a sense of the object's towering scale is indicated by three discrete grazing animals behind. In 1939 Moore had the ambition to work on the scale suggested by the present drawing, but he did not yet have the resources to execute sculpture at this size. [3] It was not until the 1960s that his work truly grew to a massive scale. Therefore, as this drawing indicates, he could only imagine his monumental works within the confines of the page.

Sculptural Object in a Landscape had its germination the previous year in a sheet of sketches of sculptures in natural settings. On the top left is the sculptural composition that has become the focus of the later drawing. The sculpture is seemingly the same, but in the earlier sketch the lower horizon intersects the sculpture. In the later drawing the high horizon line adds to the sense of the sculpture's monumentality. On the same sheet as the initial sketch are two sketches of landscapes with no sculptures but herds of animals grazing. One of them is inscribed with the line 'field as background perhaps for sculpture'. It is a sparser version of this scene, on which Moore ultimately places the hypothetical sculpture.

Tania Moore, September 2020

[1] Alan Wilkinson, *The Drawings of Henry Moore* (London and Ontario: Tate and the Art Gallery of Ontario, 1977), p.98

[2] John Hedgecoe and Henry Moore, *Henry Spencer Moore* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1968), p.93.

[3] Interview between Henry Moore and Robert Sainsbury, 18 January 1983, Sainsbury Research Unit Archives, p.15.

Exhibitions

'Henry Moore at Dulwich Picture Gallery', Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, 12/5/2004 - 12/9/2004

'Henry Moore', CaixaForum, Madrid, 18/7/2006 - 15/10/2006

'Henry Moore' Tate, London, 24/2/2010 - 8/8/2010

'Bill Brandt | Henry Moore', Sainsbury Centre, UK, 3/12/2020 - 11/4/2021

Further Reading

Steven Hooper (ed.), Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, volume 1 (Norwich: University of East Anglia, 1997)

Ann Garrould, Anita Feldman Bennett and Ian Dejardin, Henry Moore at Dulwich Picture Gallery (London: Scala Publishers, 2004)

Chris Stephens (ed.), Henry Moore (London: Tate, 2010)

Martina Droth and Paul Messier, Bill Brandt | Henry Moore (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020)

Tania Moore, Henry Moore: Friendships and Legacies (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre, 2020)

Provenance

Purchased by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from the Leicester Galleries in 1940.

Donated to the University of East Anglia in 1973 (Sainsbury Centre).
