

Beyond the Visual

Audio guide

**HENRY MOORE
INSTITUTE**

Stop 3. Track 1.

Hello, my name is Joseph Rizzo Naudi. I'm a blind writer and I'm going to introduce you to *Mother and Child: Arch*, a sculpture by Henry Moore.

It was made in 1959 and is a bronze cast of a very abstract shape that loosely resembles an arch with a face. The whole sculpture is highly tactile, something that was very important to Moore. In this exhibition, you are invited to touch the sculpture and experience the contrasting surface textures, the temperature of the bronze and the metallic scent that the metal will leave on your fingers.

The lower half of the sculpture is rough, heavily textured with carved marks. The face of the mother rises out of the top of the arch and has very simplified features: two small circles for eyes and a triangle for a nose, cut into the surface of the bronze. There are three smooth, round protrusions swelling out along the mid line of the sculpture. These protrusions make for a noticeable contrast with the rough texture found on the lower part. The uppermost protrusion has a single hole carved into it that could be an eye, but it's hard to tell where the mother ends and the baby begins.

Moore was born in Castleford in 1898 and died in 1986. He was one of the most important British artists of the twentieth century and arguably the most internationally celebrated sculptor of the period, and it's possible to see his semi-abstract monumental

bronzes all over the world. Moore was a champion of the role of touch in appreciating sculpture and his work appeared in several exhibitions for blind and partially blind people during the 1980s and 90s.

In 1968 the photographer John Hedgecoe visited Henry Moore and his wife Irina at their home. They recorded a series of conversations about Moore's life and work. In the extracts that follow, the artist reflects on the theme of the mother and child and the importance of touch in sculpture.

Henry Moore: The Mother and Child is a theme that's been universal from the beginning of time. Some of the very earliest sculptures we have are from Neolithic times, are mothers and children. It's a subject, just like talking about human figure or the female figure. Mother and child theme is just something universal.

One likes people to want to touch. Because touch is a part of your understanding of three-dimensional form. You don't know roughness and smoothness, and you don't know roundness and sharpness and all those. You'd know it much more intensely if you've felt it. If you've been pricked by something, my goodness, you know it much more than if you just look at it. And if a surface is meant to be highly polished and smooth, touching it makes you know, well, it gives you a reality into it. Having these notes 'Do not touch' in the sculpture exhibition... Well, I want the people to touch, because people's fingers are not fous, they're not knives, they're not sharp. Touch is a part of your understanding of form.

[Music]

This is a transcript of an audio guide produced by Henry Moore Institute for the exhibition *Beyond the Visual*, on display from 28 November 2025 to 19 April 2026. For more information visit henry-moore.org/beyond-the-visual