

# ***Beyond the Visual***

## **Audio guide**

**HENRY MOORE  
INSTITUTE**

### **Stop 8.**

This artwork is *Pass Away* by Serafina Min, made in 2025. The objects that the artist has made are placed inside an opaque box and are hidden from gallery visitors. The only way to experience the artwork is through the following audio description, recorded by the artist to explain the reasons why. It'll take about 12 minutes to listen to.

Hello, I hope you're having a good day. My name is Serafina Min. It's very good to meet you. I am an artist and educator, an art teacher at a school in London for blind and visually impaired students.

Today, I am going to show you three deaths made with wax. I will guide you through how wax remembers to die. This was inspired by one of my former students. Not so long ago in South Korea, a student who was born blind came to the classroom one day and asked, "Teacher, what is death?" I had thought that I was prepared for the day, but not for this question. You see, the student had recently lost a family member. He told me, I asked other adults and they said, "Death is when you can't see or feel someone anymore. But I'm blind. I can't see anyone. And I can only feel someone when they come close."

Every child deserves honesty. Not harsh, but truthful. So I began to explain. "When you die, your heart stops. Your blood stops circulating. Your brain stops receiving oxygen." But I saw

the question still on his face. So instead, I started to explain. "You know how in Korean, we say, 돌아가셨다, which means someone has gone back or returned. Well, in English, people say someone has passed away. In other languages, they say someone went up or down or began smelling flowers from underneath."

And as I went on, the student became quiet, head up, thinking. And I thought of a line from *The Little Prince* published in 1943, which goes, "What is essential is invisible to the eye".

Inside this vitrine before you, 26cm high, 44 wide, 36 deep, there are three depths.

The first is to pass away.  
The second is to fall away.  
The third is to return.

Each is made of wax, a material that is both temporal and eternal. It's a material that remembers. It melts. Softens. Loses its shape with heat. And when it cools, it finds its form again. These three depths are made from wax that has lived other lives. Melted, reformed. Reborn from the remains of my earlier works. Three small reincarnations.

The first death is to pass away. It's an expression found in languages including English and Portuguese. Imagine a small rectangle of black wax. 14 by 18 cm, like a night sky that fits into your hands. Its surface is restless. It bears the traces of touch and time. Small holes. Uneven marks. These marks are not carved, but happened. Made by raindrops falling on still warm wax by moments that touched and passed.

Then across the black surface, a long, deliberate dent runs diagonally upward. Like the echo of a path once taken. A place

where something once moved and now is gone. The edge of a memory. Slight as the breath of a bird.

In the lower left corner of the night sky stands a figure. Two curved blue shells stacked one above the other. Held upright by a dark column. The shells are smooth and cold to touch. Their surface is milky translucent like breath on glass. Inside the upper shell, small beads rest, some white, some blue, and a few particles so bright they seem to hold light not as a flash but as a pulse, like warmth moving across the fingertips, or the quiet shimmer of air felt layered where light becomes touch. If you could touch it, you might roll one of these tiny beads along the dent, let it move, roll, drag, then stop.

That small gesture, that quiet pause, is what it means to pass away, a small re-enactment of passing away. In that motion, loss becomes gesture, and gesture becomes a way of remembering that even what disappears leaves a mark. Something leaves, something lingers.

The second death is to fall away, an expression found in Nordic languages including Danish and Icelandic. It began as a solid block, heavy, certain, complete. Over time it softened. The surface trembled, peeled, fell away from itself. Was it collapsing inward, or reaching out toward the world beyond its own edges?

The air below thickened, damp and heavy with change. Each layer seemed to hesitate, not breaking, but loosening, as if remembering what it means to yield. Now at its centre sits a dark green sphere, smooth, but punctured by small openings. Around it, layers of rough wax fold outward, curling like skin loosening, after a long bath.

Some parts have wrinkled, edges expanding. Soft ridges where they once were. From the spherical body, colder, pale green extend. Twist. Reach. Seems to hover between falling and becoming. Caught in that fragile moment just before descent. If you were to hold it, you might feel the edges flake slightly under your fingers.

The sphere remembers its shell. The shell remembers what it held. Each fracture, each gap, is the record of release. Their dark outlines drifting in the slow, sleepy rhythm. Towards the very bottom, you'd be surrounded by fallen shapes simply allowed to be. This is how you shape a creature made of wetness and memory. Not immense, but enough to hold the archaeology. And if you listen closely, this death, despite everything falling and collapsing does not sound like destruction, but like one long, quiet exhale.

The third death is to return. As they say in South Korea and Kazakhstan. This death rests in a gentle curve. An amber arc of a colour close to my skin. About the size of my hand cupped. It bends almost into a circle, but not quite. There's a breadth of space left open. From one end rises a branching of blue wax. Thin, delicate, trembling, as if caught mid-breath. If touched, it rocks back and forth. Back and forth. Back and forth. Then settles.

Motion between falling and stillness. Between departure and return. A small, quiet negotiation with gravity. In this small landscape, gravity is memory. Once it might have been whole, stable and unmoving. But over time, it became a being that understood motion. It learned how to leave. And it learned how to come back. It did not resist motion. Nor did it chase it. It simply learned to move without leaving to rest without ending.

Trace the curve with your finger. It slopes downwards. Then rises again. Then splits into smaller, blue lines. At the ends of the lines. Tiny wax fears wait. Each one a quiet stop. A quiet drop. A pause in motion. There is a saying in Afrikaans for death. One stopped quietly. Sometimes, the being would lean as far as it could, until the edge of its world met the table, and then, with a faint sigh, it would come back. Always, it came back. Not because it feared falling, but because it understood that returning was a way of continuing.

To return is not to repeat, but to come back changed. Each sculpture you have heard, to pass away, to fall away, to return, holds death, not as an absence, but as a gesture.

[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](https://henry-moore.org/beyond-the-visual)