

Beyond the Visual

Audio guide

**HENRY MOORE
INSTITUTE**

Stop 15. Track 2.

Lenka Clayton, *Sculpture for the Blind, By the Blind* 2017

Water balloon. Chrysalis. Boulder. Snowball. Brazil nut. Loaf of bread. Flotation device. Hedgehog. Ostrich egg.

On three long black tables, arranged lengthways down the third gallery space, sit nine pale objects, three on each table.

They are all made of the same material: white plaster, coated in wax to give a smooth surface with a slight sheen that catches the light. They are all quite different shapes and sizes, and all show evidence of having been created by different hands. Some have been made as smooth and perfect as possible, while others are rougher and appear to have been deliberately carved or chipped. Some have holes carved or moulded into them while others are solid shapes. Some have distinct puckered fold marks at one end, suggesting that they have been made by pouring plaster into a bag.

What are these sculptures? How were they made? Who made them? And why do they seem to be similar and yet different at the same time?

On the wall to the left of the tables is a photograph and a Braille text. They are both the size and proportion of a small laptop screen. The photograph shows three white marble sculptures in a glass vitrine in a gallery at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The central sculpture in the vitrine is a smooth marble ovoid

called *Sculpture for the Blind*, made by the sculptor Constantin Brâncuși in 1920. The name of the sculpture suggests that it was made to be handled by blind people, but it is now displayed inside a glass case and cannot be accessed by touch.

The Braille text next to the photograph is a description of the Brâncuși sculpture, written by Lenka Clayton.

Unless you can read braille, this description is inaccessible to you, a deliberate decision by the artist. She read this description to a group of blind and partially blind artists, who then made the nine sculptures displayed on the three tables here.

Given that all the participants had the same description, it is surprising how different the results are. They are like rocks from a river: all starting from the same point, all under the same flowing water, but all ending up different.

As you touch the surface of each artwork it feels cool and smooth. Although you can't pick the objects up, you can get a sense of the weight of each one from its surface. You may be drawn to a particular sculpture: you might find the smoother, rounder objects more pleasing to touch or you might be more interested in those that have cavities to explore. You might be drawn to try and pick out resemblances to natural forms or man-made objects. You may find that some of the sculptures are peaceful to touch, perhaps conveying a sense of time and care, while others evoke something more aggressive, as though they've been attacked with an axe. You might try to decipher the arrangement of the sculptures, and whether there are any clues as to why they have been placed in this particular order.

End of Stop 15, Track 2.

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