

The Art and Life of Henry Moore

Audio guide

HENRY MOORE
STUDIOS & GARDENS

Introduction

Hello and welcome to the Sheep Field Barn Gallery at Henry Moore Studios & Gardens.

Situated in the grounds of Perry Green is a large barn with vertical wooden cladding and an asymmetrical pitched roof.

As you enter through the sliding door, a large, double-height airy white space opens up. In this atrium on your left are enlarged black and white photographs of Henry Moore in action in his studio with mallets, chisels and large works-in-progress.

As you go through the corridor space ahead, there are Henry Moore posters in an alcove on the left, an accessible lift, a staircase leading to the upstairs gallery and, on the right, a low wooden bench. There is also a small room to your right, in which a number of BBC documentaries of Moore at work are playing on a loop. In this space there are benches where you can sit and watch or listen to the films.

From here, a bright open-plan gallery draws you in.

The space opens up like a vast aircraft hangar. It's flooded with natural light shining in through eight skylights from the pitched roof above.

The space is painted soft white and pale grey with grey flooring throughout, clean lines and is spare with a modernist feel. There are no partitions, so there is an uninterrupted view, punctuated by clusters of works on plinths and in display cases around the room.

In the space there are around eighty sculptures. Some are presented in groups in display cases, some with acrylic covers and some without, while some larger works stand alone. There are also four large display cabinets: one on each wall. Here, smaller sculptures and maquettes (small models for larger works) are displayed in rows on shelves.

Many of the exhibits can be encountered from all sides or we can get very close, but we are not able to touch any of the works.

The exhibition takes us chronologically through four chapters of Henry Moore's long and active life:

1. Exploring ideas and materials (1922 to 1939)
2. His work as a civic artist (1940 to 1959)
3. Monumental presence (1960 to 1976)
4. Enduring forms (1977 to 1986)

Our tour will highlight eight sculptures in the exhibition which cover the wide range of Moore's development and working practices. Each track lasts between three and five minutes.

As you enter the gallery, you will find the first chapter on the left and if you follow the display clockwise around the room, you will get to the chapters two and three at the back of the gallery, finishing at chapter four on the right, back near the entrance. This audio description follows chronologically. However please feel free to meander around the space, encountering the works in any order you choose.

Each chapter comprises an introduction, a selection of sculptures on plinths, a wall display case with smaller sculptures and maquettes, plus reproductions of archive material including photographs, press cuttings and exhibition catalogues, displayed on the wall.

There is also a small video screen mounted on one wall, showing silent film footage of life and work at Perry Green

made by Frank Farnham, Moore's foreman, and his son John, one of Moore's assistants. Filmed in the mid-1960s, the recordings on display show activity in and around the Plastic Studio, where Moore and his assistants worked on his monumental sculptures.

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