

The Art and Life of Henry Moore

Audio guide

HENRY MOORE
STUDIOS & GARDENS

Working Model for Upright Internal/External Form 1951

Just a little back from the display case, this sculpture sits on a low plinth. It's encased in acrylic, so it can be viewed from all sides. It's just over half a metre tall and reaches from waist height to head height.

Its title is *Working Model for Upright Internal/External Form* made in 1951.

The sculpture stands on a squarish brown wooden base. It's tall, thin and vertical, like an elongated lozenge shape. It seems to have an outer casing with organic forms inside. On our first encounter, it could be stone but is in fact made from plaster. The colour, a creamy grey white makes it appear like bone or ivory. The surface has been polished to a soft sheen with greyish scratch marks drawn in, both inside and out.

There is a suggestion that the outer shell is protection or armour for something inside.

The front is open, with a strip across near the top, like a sandal strap. It creates the impression of two cavities within. As we approach it's not apparent what this represents. Is it a seed pod or a cocoon? Is it plant form or human form? It could be a foetus inside a womb, a mussel inside a shell, or a baby swaddled in cloth.

Inside the top of the structure is a rounded form, which has been hollowed out, perhaps suggesting a head or some other natural form. It has a small protuberance at the top with a hole through it.

Extending down from the head is an extruded form, like a long stalk or sausage shape. At the bottom it becomes bulbous with a long slit through it, like an eye of a large needle.

Inside the cavity there is a slightly pinky, fleshy tone.

If we go round to the back of the sculpture, the surface is much flatter and smoother. Overall, it has a long rounded oblong shape, suggesting a mummy or a sarcophagus.

Moore purposely made his sculptures open to interpretation. They are both abstract and reference natural forms.

This sculpture is one of many where he experimented with combining the internal and the external.

Moore made a number of smaller works so he could still handle them, pick them up and view them from all sides. This one made in plaster would have been a lighter material than stone, wood or bronze.

This is one of Moore's mid-size working models which he eventually made on a much larger scale.

One of his monumental bronze works, based on this series, can be seen in the grounds outside the gallery.

Listen as Moore describes how this form explores the idea of protection.

Henry Moore: This is the Large Upright Interior/Exterior sculpture, which I did other sculptures based on this form idea of one form being protected by another one. Some of the Helmets from 1939, in which the interior of the helmet is really a figure, and the outside of it is like the armour that one might be protected in battle. But also, in my mind was this, the Mother and Child idea too, and of the birth in an embryo. So that all these things are connected in this Interior/Exterior idea.

[Music]