

The Art and Life of Henry Moore

Audio guide

HENRY MOORE
STUDIOS & GARDENS

Time/Life Screen: Working Model 1952

This piece is one of Moore's designs for a sculpture made in 1952. Titled *Time/Life Screen: Working Model*, it is situated on the back wall of the gallery, to the right of the large display case. It's positioned above waist height on a large grey shelf. It can only be viewed from the front but is not behind an acrylic cover, so we can get quite close.

It's a long rectangular piece, cast in bronze. It's over a metre long, and just under half a metre high. The depth is only twenty centimetres wide, and so the work has a flattened appearance. It sits solidly in a horizontal orientation on a long, rectangular wooden base on the shelf.

Although in bronze, the colour is unusual. It's dark and muddy green like verdigris or algae. In places it's mottled. The surface of the bronze seems to have oxidised to its green colour as a result of its environment and Moore's intentions.

The piece is like a picture frame, with four rectangular window spaces inside, with rounded edges. Each one of these contains an individual bronze sculpture. Together they form a kind of screen.

The four sculptures within are abstract and all different. It's not clear what they represent. Could they be faces, gargoyles, or machinery with moving parts?

From left to right, the first sculpture is chunky and squashed into its opening.

It could be a head and shoulders in profile, with a rounded helmet. It also suggests tools and machinery, perhaps a ratchet or a spanner.

The next frame is a vertical and horizontal structure with holes. It suggests metal moving parts, such as a piston.

The third window is reminiscent of a carved totem figure with a large flat head, facing us. Its geometrical sections are again reminiscent of mechanical parts.

The final piece on the right, seems constricted within its frame. Again in profile it echoes the first sculpture. In this way, the two sculptures which bookend the screen could be faces looking inwards.

The sculptures within the screen appear like silhouettes, revealing negative spaces of the white wall behind. This is a playful element: a sense of a puzzle or moving parts.

Indeed, when Moore made these pieces, they were originally designed to pivot within the frame. The work was probably made on this scale so that he could experiment with how this would work practically. In the current position we cannot touch or rotate the pieces, but we are aware of each being an individual sculpture within the larger body of the screen.

In this period, Moore gained greater recognition, being awarded private and public commissions. He worked closely with architects of that time, such as Michael Rosenauer, wanting to make his work integral to the building design, rather than an add-on.

Listen as Moore describes his original, ambitious plan for the *Time/Life Screen*.

Henry Moore: Here's the *Time/Life Screen*. [...] They were intended to be put on turnable bases so that one could have

turned them individually into different positions, say at the first of every month. But this was found impractical because the, each of these blocks weighs four or five tons, and it was thought to be a danger to the public [...] though I think it's still a good idea and should be [...] to get that advantage of not always seeing the same view of a piece of sculpture.

– The final work in Portland stone can still be seen from New Bond Street, on the third-floor façade of Time & Life Building in London.

[Music]