

40 YEARS OF BRITISH SCULPTURE



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THE BRITISH COUNCIL

PREFACE

The works in this small exhibition are drawn from the Collection of the British Council. It is not intended to be a full-scale survey of British sculpture since the 1930s; although the Collection contains many more pieces of sculpture and by a much wider range of artists, the majority of these are in use elsewhere, in other exhibitions or on display in Council buildings throughout the world. Many of the larger, more ambitious pieces would in any case be impracticable for a touring exhibition. These works have been chosen from what is available, to show something of the development of sculpture in this country as exemplified by many of its leading artists and including works by internationally acclaimed sculptors.

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Sculpture in Britain over the last half century has seen radical developments from the pure form of international abstraction, through the eclecticism of the Surrealists, to the expressionism of the postwar period. This was followed in its turn by a return to formal abstraction, itself challenged by Conceptual Art where the idea or intention was more important than the object, and then swinging back to figurative, narrative art, leaving at the present time a variety of directions open to the next generations.

Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth both belong to the pioneer period of abstraction in English art. Their circle in the 1920s and 30s represented a courageous band of radicals, linked to like-minded counterparts in Europe, endeavouring to persuade an indifferent or hostile English public to accept new forms of aesthetic experience, based on the ideas of artists such as Brancusi, Giacometti, the Constructivists and Picasso. Their champion in this country was Herbert Read and it was his writing which helped to establish their ideas and those of their artist-contemporaries in an international context. Sculpture was to be seen to exist for its own aesthetic quality rather than as a vehicle for narrative, and works were to stand autonomously as expressive objects, sometimes evocative of organic origins but more frequently as purely geometric forms, conveying rhythms and harmonies akin to those of music. Read was able to demonstrate the archaic or primitive roots of Moore's reclining figures and at the same time to show how these monumental forms had their origin also in landscape and natural phenomena.

Hepworth, next to Moore the most respected sculptor of this older generation, sustained a purer, more ascetic abstraction in contrast to the humanistic basis of Moore's work. As a carver,

her response to materials – wood, bronze, stone – made her alive to the possibilities of texture and colour in her work, but she was concerned primarily with the manipulation of solid and void, the placing of forms in relation to each other and to the surrounding space. As with Moore some of her most successful work is that placed in landscape but in contrast to his organic shapes Hepworth's sharp geometry is set off dramatically by a natural context.

The spiritual climate of the aftermath of World War II gave rise to kinds of art very different from the cool formal abstraction of the inter-war period. The latent Romanticism always undercurrent in British art was fuelled by the strain of war and suffering and a generation of sculptors emerged in the early 50s who were able to convey the anguish and neurosis of the Cold War. Eight of these, including Armitage, Chadwick, Adams, Meadows and Turnbull scored an international success at the 1952 Venice Biennale (where the British entry was organised by the British Council). In his introduction to the catalogue, Herbert Read characterised the sculptors as presenting "images of flight, of ragged claws, "scuttling across the floors of silent seas" of excoriated flesh, frustrated sex, the geometry of fear". Their work is figurative, using angular, distorted human and animal forms to convey the tensions of the age. Most of the sculpture of this period is pictorial, on a non-monumental human scale, and asserting urgent emotional realities rather than an archetypal abstraction. These tensions were strongly evident in the entries for the international Unknown Political Prisoner competition of 1952-53, organised by the ICA and shown at the Tate Gallery. This and other large scale public exhibitions were part of a considerable awakening of interest on the part of institutional patrons in the social use of sculpture and the period saw a large number of commissions for

sculpture on buildings, in New Towns, in parks and other public spaces.

Parallel with this there was a growing interest in primitive and non-traditional sources of sculptural style. Artists like William Turnbull and Hubert Dalwood turned to the totemic and archaic inspiration of Brancusi and Picasso for their starting points, looking to anthropology and archaeology rather than to the European sculptural tradition. Dalwood's drum-like piece is reminiscent of primitive artefacts and Turnbull at this time was making columnar totem forms. Significantly perhaps, after a long subsequent period of rigorous abstract minimalism, he has recently turned back to explore this again.

The late 50s saw also a renewed interest in Constructivism, in which geometric abstraction was refined by sophisticated technical uses of new materials such as brass and plastics. Robert Adam is closest to this element although he worked at this time principally in bronze, producing small-scale, tightly constructed equations of forms, and Denis Mitchell is another artist using abstract shapes to convey ideas of balance and confrontation, stability and tension.

Anthony Caro represents a sharp break in the history of sculpture in Britain from the early 60s. He remains a pivotal figure with a crucial influence on subsequent generations of young sculptors. In contrast to the modelling and carving of earlier artists, Caro's sculpture is constructed, and from ready-made steel components, often industrial off-cuts, welded and bolted into strong and spacious constructions, dispensing with a plinth, and at one period painted in brilliant colours. In these the massive steel structures have an ambiguous weightlessness and gaiety. Caro has made Table-pieces over some decades, often as daring experiments in balance where the piece projects over the edge of the supporting table or base. Latterly his work has become increasingly monumental, using massive sheets of moulded steel, rusted and burnished into a reminiscence of industrial archaeology just as his one-time mentor, Moore's, work harks back to ancient sculpture.

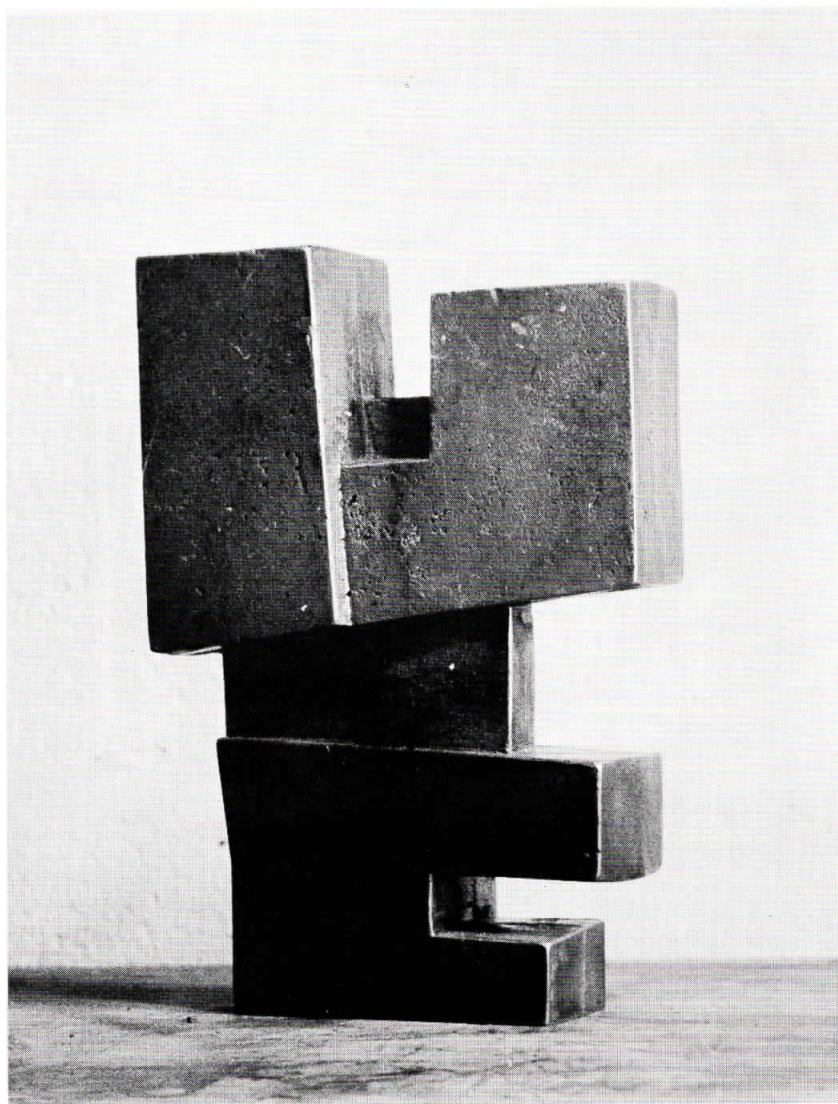
William Turnbull's recent bronze "Axe-head Torso" and the piece by the other Scottish sculptor, the much younger Gavin

Scobie, are very recent acquisitions to the collection and show the continuing use of traditional materials in the present day. In recent years young sculptors have experimented in every conceivable material and form often extending a work into an installation that becomes an environment in its own right. Artists have used their own bodies or the landscape around them as the raw materials for sculpture. It is nonetheless interesting to note how artists are concerned still to explore the possibilities inherent in bronze, and recently also in the carving of stone and wood. Sculpture in Britain over the last 40 years has seen many changes of form and of approach. It has kept pace with and indeed contributed to the international sculpture scene, and continues to do so today sometimes even perhaps setting the pace. We hope through this small exhibition to demonstrate something of this contribution.

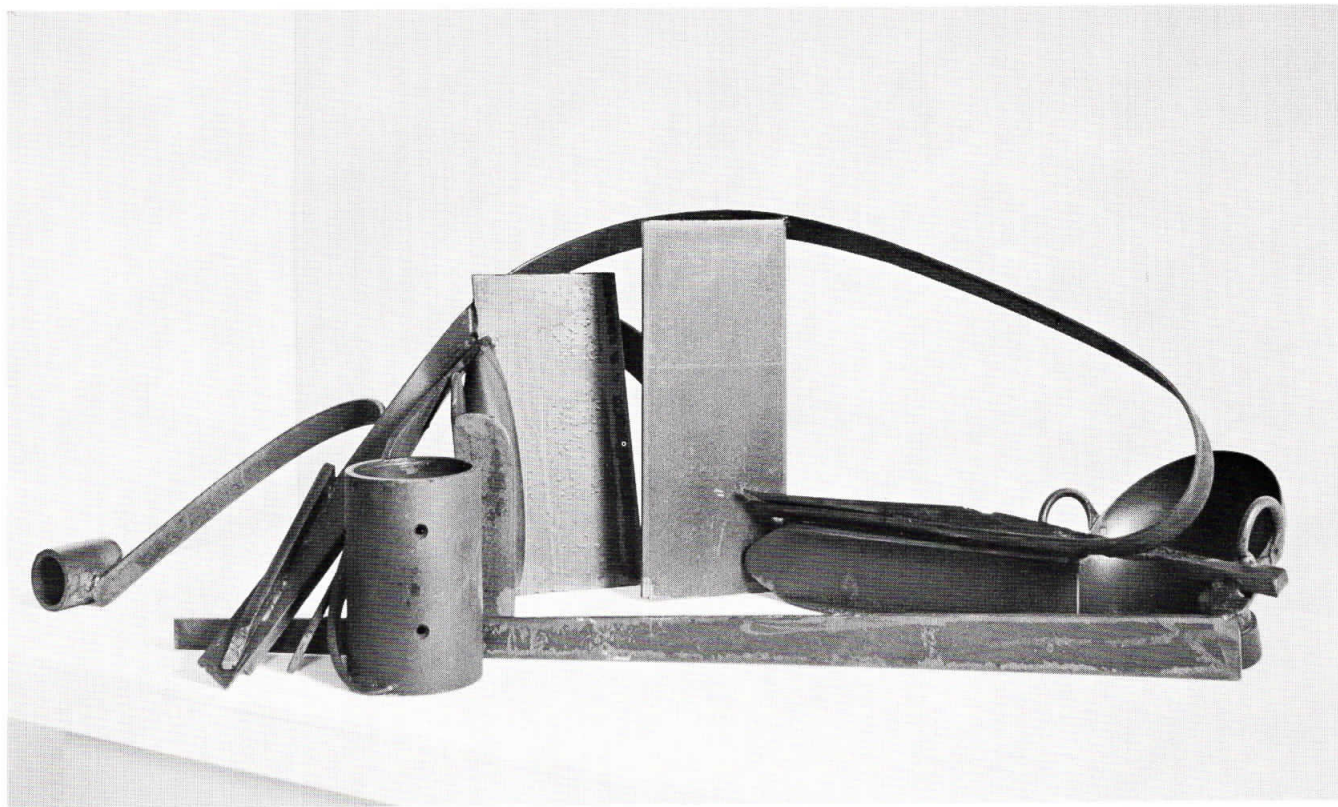
PLATES

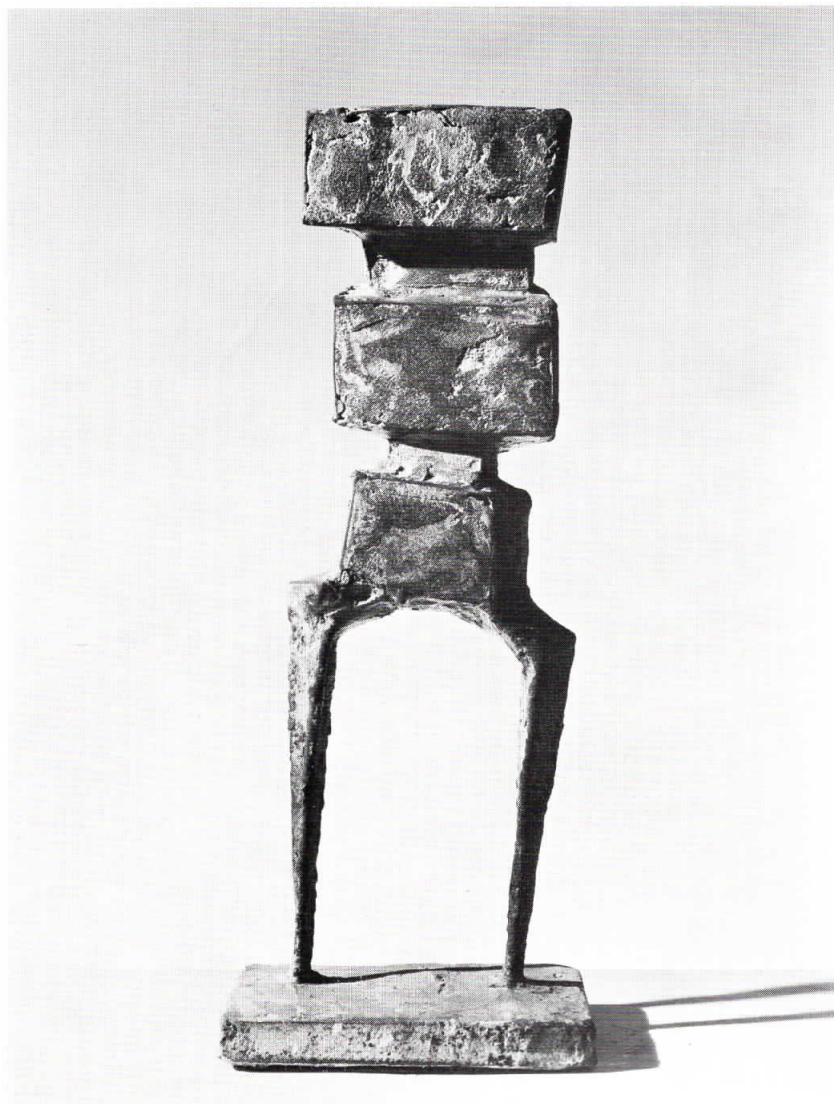
All works in the exhibition are from the British Council Collection.

Dimensions are given in centimetres, height preceding width.

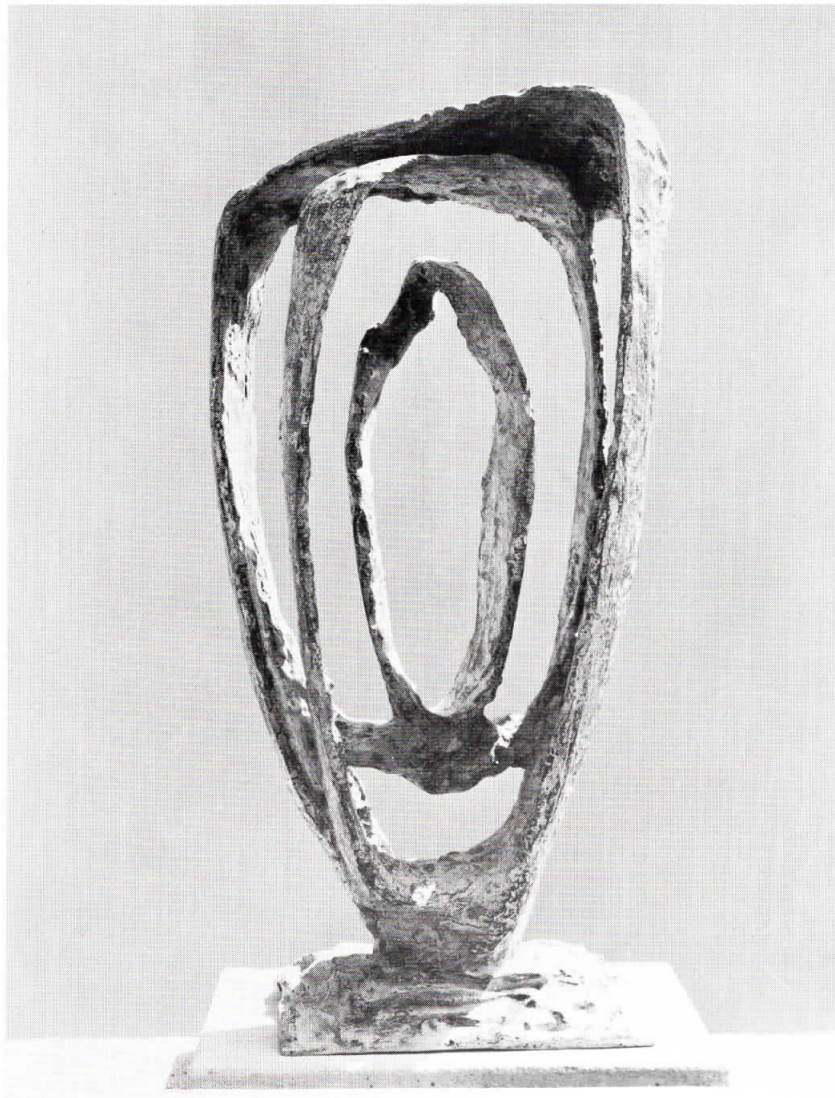








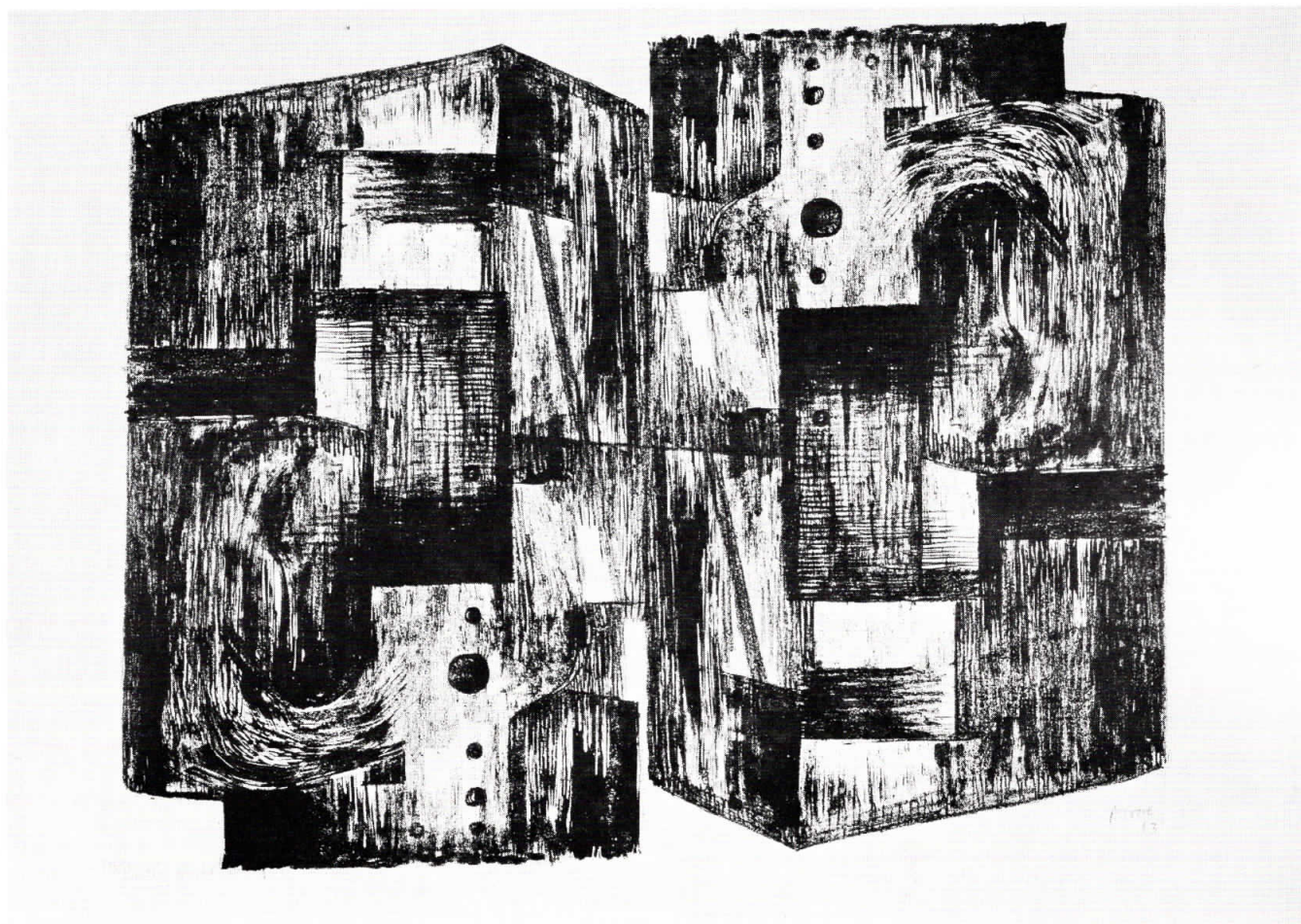


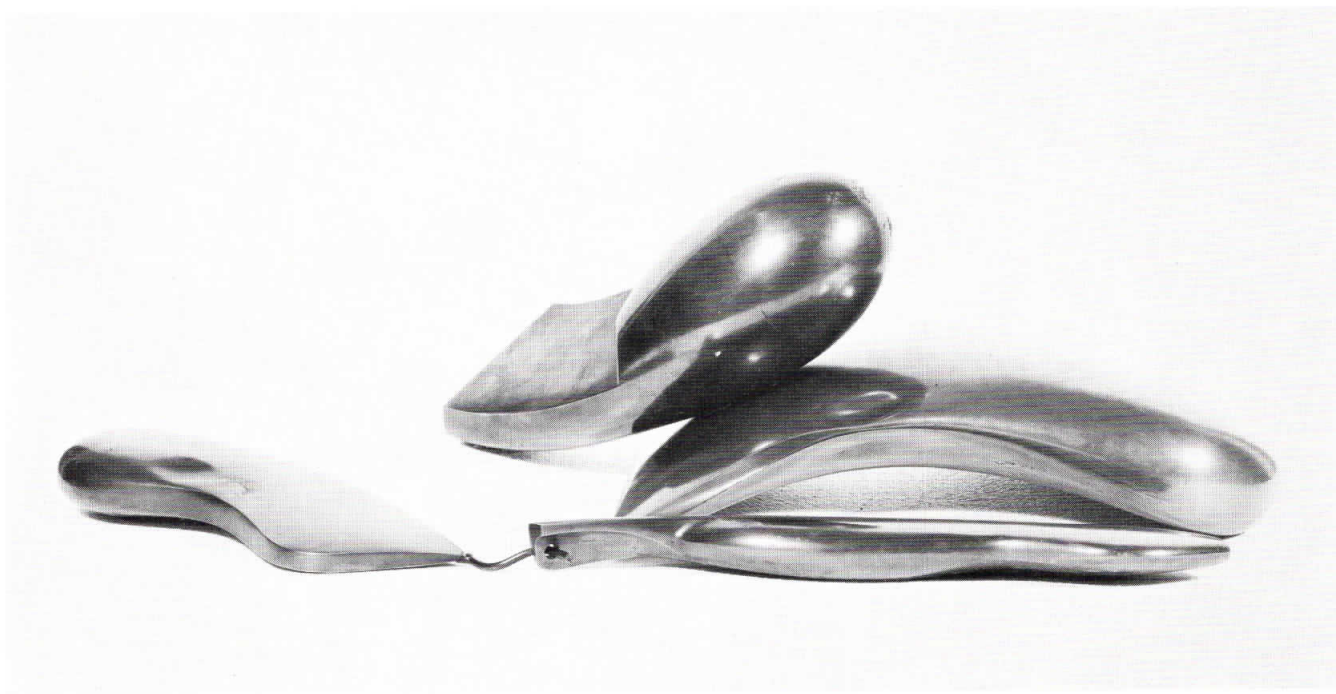












CATALOGUE

All works in the exhibition are from the British Council Collection.

Dimensions are given in centimetres, height preceding width.

ROBERT ADAMS

Born in Northampton in 1917 and studied at Northampton School of Art. Taught at Central School of Art, London 1949-60. Regular one-man shows at Gimpel Fils since 1947, has also participated in major international exhibitions such as Venice Biennale 1952; Middelheim Park, Antwerp 1953, São Paulo Biennale 1957; Documenta III, Kassel, 1964; "British Sculpture of the 60s", Tate Gallery 1964; "British Sculptors 72", Royal Academy, London 1972; "Jubilee Exhibition of Sculpture", Battersea Park, London 1977. Numerous sculptural commissions since 1950 in Britain, Germany and Belgium, represented in public collections in Britain, USA, Yugoslavia, Italy.

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|---|--|------------------------|
| 1 | Orpheus
Monotype | 1949
36 x 29.4 cm |
| 2 | Construction
Monotype | 1949
37.5 x 29.3 cm |
| 3 | Standing Figures
Lithograph | 1949
46.5 x 35 cm |
| 4 | Black Form
Lithograph | 1951
28 x 26 cm |
| 5 | Collage
Paper collage on paper | 1953
54.6 x 30.5 cm |
| 6 | Rectangular Bronze, Form No 8
Bronze | 1955
28 cm high |

KENNETH ARMITAGE

Born in Leeds, 1916, studied first at Leeds College of Art and then in London at the Slade School of Fine Art. From 1946-56 he taught at Bath Academy, Corsham and held the Gregory Fellowship in Sculpture at the University of Leeds 1953-55. Travelled in Venezuela in 1964 and from 1967-69 was resident artist of Berliner Künstlerprogram. Has exhibited widely since 1952, in London and abroad, including 29th Venice Biennale, 1958; 'New Images of Man' at Museum of Modern Art, New York 1959; 7th Tokyo Biennale 1963; 'British Sculpture in the 60s', Tate Gallery 1964; Silver Jubilee Exhibition of Contemporary British Sculpture, Battersea Park, 1977.

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| 7 | Study for Large Seated Group
Bronze | 1957
38 cm long |
| 8 | Standing Figure with Arms Sideways
Bronze | 1956/57
42 cm high |
| 9 | Group
Black chalk & wash | 1955
38 x 56 cm |
| 10 | Studies for Sculpture
Chalk | 1957
76 x 38 cm |
| 11 | Woman Resting
Charcoal & wash | 1959
38 x 56 cm |
| 12 | Three Standing Figures
Chalk & wash | 1960
76 x 56 cm |
| 13 | White Shape
Chalk & wash | 1960
54 x 73.5 cm |

ANTHONY CARO

Born in London in 1924, studied engineering at Cambridge University, studied sculpture 1946 at Regent Street Poly, London, and then at Royal Academy Schools 1947-52. Spent two years as Assistant to Henry Moore, and taught at St Martin's School of Art 1952-55, and 1964-73. Visiting teacher at Bennington College, Vermont 1963-4. Represented Britain in many international events, such as Venice Biennale 1958/66/68/72, Paris Biennale 1959, São Paulo Bienal (prize-winner) 1969. One-man exhibitions from 1963, including Kroller-Muller Museum, Otterlo 1967, Hayward Gallery in 1969, touring retrospective in USA 1975/6 and in Australia 1978. Major touring exhibition of Table Sculptures in Germany 1979. Work in public collections in Britain, including Tate Gallery, Arts Council of Great Britain and others, and abroad, including specially commissioned work.

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| 14 Table Piece CCCX | 1976/77 |
| Steel, rusted and
varnished | 50 x 137 x 98 cm |

LYNN CHADWICK

Born in London in 1914. Studied architecture before World War II but began experimenting with sculpture in 1945. Began exhibiting from 1950, prize-winner in "Unknown Political Prisoner" competition 1953. Showed at Venice Biennale in 1952 and in 1956 when he was awarded the International Prize for Sculpture. Other international exhibitions include São Paulo Biennale 1957 and 1962; '50 Ans de l'Art Moderne' Brussels 1958; Middelheim 1953, 1959 and 1961. First prize at exhibition of small bronzes, Padua 1959. One-man shows in London, New York, Paris, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Italy, Scandinavia and elsewhere. Participated in Silver Jubilee Sculpture Exhibition, Battersea Park 1977. Commissions include Festival of Britain 1951, Milan Triennale 1968 and Manchester University. Widely represented in public collections in Britain and overseas.

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|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 15 Beast XXII | 1959 |
| Bronze | 41.3 cm high |
| 16 Watcher II | 1959 |
| Bronze | 71 cm high |
| 17 Dancing Figures | 1952 |
| Lithograph | 28 x 41 cm |
| 18 Drawing for Sculpture I | 1961 |
| Ink and Wash | 56 x 38.5 cm |
| 19 Drawing for Sculpture II | 1961 |
| Ink and Wash | 58 x 46 cm |
| 20 Drawing for Sculpture IV | 1961 |
| Ink and Wash | 56 x 38 cm |

HUBERT DALWOOD

Born in Bristol 1924. Apprenticed to Bristol Aeroplane Company, began career as engineer in Royal Navy. 1946-49 studied at Bath Academy, travelled in Italy on government scholarship 1957. Taught at Newport School of Art 1951-57. Taught at Leeds, Royal College of Art, London, Hornsey College of Art, Maidstone College of Art 1956-64 and was Head of Sculpture at Hornsey until 1973. Head of Sculpture at Central School of Art, London from 1974 until his death in 1976. Visiting professorships at University of Illinois, Wisconsin and Churchill Fellowship to Japan. Regular one-man shows at Gimpel Fils from 1954; British Council exhibition to Egypt and Lebanon 1974; major memorial retrospective at Hayward Gallery 1979. Included in international events such as 1959 Carnegie International, Pittsburgh; John Moores, Liverpool (1st prize for sculpture); Venice Biennale 1962; 'Painting and Sculpture of a decade, 1954-64', Tate Gallery 1964; 'British Sculptors 72', Royal Academy 1972; 'Silver Jubilee Sculpture Exhibition', Battersea Park 1977. Commissioned work in Britain, Canada, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, represented in public collections in Britain and USA.

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| 21 | Divided Column
Bronze | 1962
53.5 high x 19 cm diam |
| 22 | Screen
Aluminium | 1959
52 x 101.5 cm |

BARBARA HEPWORTH

Born in Wakefield, Yorkshire in 1903. Studied at Leeds, Royal College of Art, London, and in Italy. Lived and worked in London until 1939 then at St Ives, Cornwall until her death in 1975. Between 1934 and 1957 was married to the painter Ben Nicholson. Member of the 7 and 5 Group. Awarded 2nd prize in Sculpture Competition 'The Unknown Political Prisoner' 1953; Grand Prix, Biennale de São Paulo 1959; Dame Commander of the British Empire 1965; Senior Fellow of Royal College of Art 1970; and many other awards. Numerous solo exhibitions throughout the world from 1928, including XXV Venice Biennale 1950; touring retrospective in US and Canada 1955-6. Major international events Documenta II, Kassel 1959; Hirshhorn Collection, Guggenheim Museum, New York 1962; 'Painting and Sculpture of a decade 1954-64', Tate Gallery 1964; Guggenheim International Exhibition 1968; British Painting and Sculpture 1960-70, National Gallery of Art, Washington 1970. Participated in open-air sculpture exhibitions throughout her career. Represented in public collections in Britain, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Israel, Norway, France, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Venezuela, Chile, Brazil and commissioned work installed throughout the world.

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| 23 | Variations on a Theme
Bronze | 1946
43.2 cm high |
| 24 | Aegean
Bronze | 1956
27.9 high |
| 25 | Curved forms with red and yellow
Oil and pencil on board | 1946
26.7 x 37.5 cm |
| 26 | Turning forms and standing figures
Pencil and oil on board | 1947
28.6 x 46.7 cm |
| 27 | Prevision
Pencil and oil on cardboard | 1948
45.7 x 35.9 |

BERNARD MEADOWS

Born 1915 in Norwich, studied in Norwich and in London at Chelsea School of Art and Royal College of Art. Professor of Sculpture at Royal College from 1960-1980. Exhibitions since 1952 include Venice Biennale 1952 and 1964; São Paulo Biennale 1957; Documenta II, Kassel 1959; Carnegie International, Pittsburgh 1959, 62 and 64; "Painting and Sculpture of a Decade 1954-64" Tate Gallery 1964; Musée Rodin, Paris 1966; British Sculptors, Royal Academy 1972. One-man shows since 1957 in Britain, Germany, Holland and Japan. Public commissions in Norwich and elsewhere, many works in public collections in Britain and abroad.

30 **Cock** 1955
Lithograph 38.5 x 29 cm

31 **Large Flat Bird** 1957
Bronze 112 cm high

32 **Three drawings for sculpture** 1965
Pencil and watercolour

(a) Watching figure 16 x 16 cm

(b) Head 13 x 11.5 cm

(c) Two friends 16 x 16 cm

BARBARA HEPWORTH

28 **Coronation Dance—
red and yellow** 1953
Oil and pencil on board 43.2 x 14.3 cm

29 **Winged figure—
(for brass)** 1953
Ink 25.5 x 36 cm

DENIS MITCHELL

Born 1912 in Wealdstone, Middlesex, but grew up in Swansea, South Wales, where he knew the poet Dylan Thomas, and attended Swansea College of Art. Has lived in Cornwall since 1939, in St Ives and Newlyn. Worked as assistant to Barbara Hepworth 1949-59, first worked in bronze in 1959. Active in Art Societies and Schools of Art in West Country since 1949. Exhibited in London and elsewhere since 1957, including one-man exhibition toured by British Council to mediterranean countries and the Far East. 1973-78 work in many public collections in Britain, in Australia and New Zealand. Commissioned 1968 by Foreign Office for sculpture presentation to University of the Andes, Bogota, Colombia.

33 **Kerrow** 1971
Bronze 99 cm high

HENRY MOORE

Born 1898 in Castleford, Yorkshire. Studied first at Leeds College of Art and then at the Royal College of Art, London. Taught at the Royal College 1922-32, established sculpture department at Chelsea School of Art 1932. Official war artist 1940-45, Trustee of the Tate Gallery 1941-54, of the National Gallery 1955-74. Has received honorary doctorates from Universities in many countries and was awarded Order of Merit 1963. Prize-winner at Venice Biennale 1948, at São Paulo Biennale 1953, at Carnegie International, Pittsburgh 1958 and many other awards. Other international exhibitions include 'Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism' Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1936; Documenta I, Kassel 1955; Documenta II 1959; and many more. Innumerable one-man exhibitions from 1928, including retrospectives at Museum of Modern Art, New York 1946; the Tate Gallery 1951 and 1968; Florence 1972; Paris 1977 and Madrid 1981. Public commissions include Festival of Britain 1951; Boucentrum, Rotterdam 1954; UNESCO 1956; Chicago (Fermi Monument) 1966. Gift to the Art Gallery of Ontario for opening of Henry Moore Sculpture Centre, 1974. Henry Moore Foundation established 1977.

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| 34 | Reclining figure
Bronze | 1939
14.7 x 29.8 cm |
| 35 | Reclining figure
Bronze | 1939
22.9 cm long |
| 36 | Family group
Bronze | 1946
17.8 cm high |
| 37 | Square forms
Lithograph | 1963
45.7 x 59 cm |
| 38 | Six reclining figures
black
Lithograph | 1963
41 x 51.8 cm |
| 39 | Study for sculpture, 2-
and 3-piece reclining
figures
Etching and drypoint | 30.5 x 23.2 cm |

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|----|---|---------------------------|
| 40 | Fantasy
Etching | 1967
20 x 25.4 cm |
| 41 | Ideas for sculpture
Etching | 1969
30.8 x 23.8 cm |
| 42 | Reclining figures
Etching | 1969
29.8 x 23.8 cm |
| 43 | Three reclining figures
Lithograph | 1971
29.5 x 23.8 cm |
| 44 | Four mothers
Etching | 1971-72
30.5 x 24.1 cm |
| 45 | Woman seated on a
fireside stool
Lithograph | 1973
65 x 50 cm |
| 46 | Four silhouette figures
Lithograph | 1973
35.5 x 14 cm |

GAVIN SCOBIE

Born in Edinburgh 1940, studied 1956-62 at Edinburgh College of Art, taught there from 1963 for 10 years then went to live permanently at Aarvie, Ross-shire. Began exhibiting in 1972, principally in Scottish Arts Council exhibitions. Winner of Invergordon Sculpture Competition 1972, of Century Aluminium Award 1973, of Eden Court Sculpture Commission 1976 and SAC Major Bursary, 1978. Represented in public collections in Scotland.

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|----|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 47 | Gorky's Pillow | 1979 |
| | Bronze | 90 x 60 x 28 cm |

WILLIAM TURNBULL

Born 1922 in Scotland, studied in London at the Slade School 1945-48 and spent the next two years in Paris where he was associated with Eduardo Paolozzi. Taught at Central School of Art, London, 1952-61 and 1964-71. Exhibiting since 1950, as a painter and sculptor. Solo exhibitions at Hanover, Molton and Waddington Galleries in London, major retrospective at the Tate Gallery in 1973. Exhibitions abroad include Venice Biennale of 1952; São Paulo Bienal 1957 and 1967; Guggenheim International 1964 and 1967; Documenta 4, Kassel 1968; International Sculpture Exhibition, Hakone, Japan 1969. Represented in public collections world-wide, including Tate Gallery, Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Sydney Opera House, Australia, Hirschhorn Collection, Washington and others.

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|----|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 48 | Head I | 1956 |
| | Lithograph | 73.5 x 54.5 cm |
| 49 | Head II | 1956 |
| | Lithograph | 68.5 x 57 cm |
| 50 | Axe-head Torso | 1979 |
| | Bronze | 34 x 30.5 x 5.5 cm |



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