BECOMING HENRY MOORE SYMPOSIUM
PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS

FRIDAY 16 JUNE - Reception & keynote address by Tony Cragg
Venue: Paul Mellon Centre, 16 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JA
6pm (doors open 5.45)

Henry Moore: His influence in the 20th century and beyond
Tony Cragg talks about Henry Moore in the context of his environment in time and the meaning and influence of his work for sculpture.

Tony Cragg has been working and exhibiting since 1969. He studied at the Royal College of Art in London and has lived in Wuppertal since 1977. He has participated in documenta 7 and 8 and represented Britain at the Biennale in Venice in 1988. He is recipient of the Turner Prize at the Tate Gallery, London in 1988, the prestigious Praemium Imperiale Award, Tokyo in 2007 and the Lifetime Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award in 2017.


SATURDAY 17 JUNE - Symposium papers and discussion
Venue: Henry Moore Studios & Gardens, Perry Green, Hertfordshire, SG10 6EE

10.00 Registration and coffee
10.30 Sebastiano Barassi: Introduction to Becoming Henry Moore
Chair - Sarah Turner
11.00 Robert Sutton: Educating Henry: Context, Circumstance, Educational Opportunity
11.30 Rachel Smith: ‘I looked over and over again’: Connecting Barbara Hepworth’s early life and work
12.00 Panel discussion and questions
12.15 Opportunity to visit exhibition with Sebastiano Barassi
Lunch (provided)
2.00 Alexander Massouras: The old old and the new old: challenges to the antique room 1914-1930
2.30 Inga Fraser: Stilled Rhythms or Vitalised Matter: Frank Dobson and Henry Moore in London 1919-1930
3.00 Cathy Corbett: Henry Moore, Edward Wadsworth and Ossip Zadkine’s Figures in the Garden.
3.30 Panel discussion and questions
3.45 End
Grounds and exhibition open until 5pm


The Russian sculptor Ossip Zadkine was ten years older than Henry Moore and, although settled in Paris by 1910, he had studied in London art schools from 1906 and had positive experiences of exhibiting his avant-garde sculpture in London before Moore arrived in the capital. This paper will focus on a period in the late 1920s when both men regularly spent time in the Sussex countryside as guests of their mutual friend Edward Wadsworth. Zadkine carved two large figurative wooden works for Wadsworth’s garden during this time and the paper will consider what impact, if any, these works might have had on Moore.

Cathy Corbett is a PhD candidate at the Courtauld Institute of Art where she is supervised by Professor Christopher Green. The title of her thesis is: “A Russian sculptor abroad: Ossip Zadkine and his works in wood, 1908 – 1940.”

Inga Fraser: Stilled Rhythms or Vitalised Matter: Frank Dobson and Henry Moore in London 1919-1930

This paper draws a comparison between two sculptors’ experiences of the city in the twenties: Henry Moore and his predecessor Frank Dobson. Both artists received their formative training outside London and both became resident there after the First World War. At the beginning of the decade, Dobson was the foremost advocate and practitioner of avant-garde sculpture in Britain and Moore was a student at the Royal College of Art. Their respective experiences of the city’s cultural life and the new photographic or cinematic technologies of vision that formed urban experience in the years after the War sharpened their individual concerns as artists. By the end of the decade, Moore and Dobson had themselves added to the modern cityscape, contributing relief works in the public realm (Moore’s West Wind, 1928 and Dobson’s Faience Panels, 1930). Ultimately, neither sculptor found the medium satisfying, and their comments on the experience tell us something of the nature of their divergent sensibilities amid the technological modernity of the city: Dobson’s materialism versus Moore’s vitalism.

Inga Fraser is a researcher, writer and curator based in London. Currently she is an AHRC-funded collaborative doctoral student with Tate and the Royal College of Art, looking at artists’ engagement with cinema in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century. Inga was previously Assistant Curator of Modern British Art at Tate, where she curated the display Paule Vézelay (2017) and co-curated the exhibitions Paul Nash (2016) and Barbara Hepworth: Sculpture for a Modern World (2015). Inga was a recipient of the Mobius Fellowship at the Ateneum, Helsinki in 2015 and of the Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Grant in New York in 2013. Her recent publications include ‘From a Sheet of Paper to the Sky: pattern in the work of Paul Nash’ in Paul Nash (ed. Emma Chambers, Tate, 2016); ‘Media and Movement: Barbara Hepworth beyond the lens’ in Barbara Hepworth: The Penrose Years (ed. Andrew Wilkie, Paul Close, Tate, 2015).

Alexander Massouras: The old old and the new old: challenges to the antique room 1914–1930

This paper examines the shifting attitudes to classical sculpture which Moore and his peers witnessed and contributed to. An emergent appetite for alternative pasts—for the Sumerian and Pre-Columbian sculpture which so captivated Moore, for example—was but one element of an increasing doubt about the relevance of Greek and Roman art to the art of the day. Drawing from plaster copies of classical sculpture in the antique room had been a central part of art education for hundreds of years. This paper uses the new problems encountered by that practice to illuminate aspects of this debate, and to give a context for Moore’s work.

Alexander Massouras is an artist and cultural historian based at the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford, where he is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow.

Rachel Smith: ‘I looked over and over again’: Connecting Barbara Hepworth’s early life and work

This paper will consider the critical history of Hepworth’s early life and work, and focus on methodological approaches which can help to strengthen understanding of the relevance of Hepworth’s formative years of inspiration and education, and of the connections and differences between a number of artists under discussion. Starting with the later reflections by Hepworth and those around her on the years before 1930, it will explore where else the reflections and existing knowledge on this period characterised by opportunity to travel and time for self-discovery might lead.

Rachel Rose Smith is a curator, researcher and lecturer from mid-Cornwall, based in London. Her MA thesis on Hepworth and phenomenology (Tate Papers, no.20) led to an AHRC-funded collaborative doctoral project ‘Modern Art Movements and St Ives 1939-49’ (University of York and Tate, 2015). She was co-curator of ‘International Exchanges: Modern Art and St Ives 1915-65’ (Tate St Ives, 1914), then Bye-Fellow and Curator of the Heong Gallery at Downing College, Cambridge (2015-16), where she remains an Affiliate Lecturer. She is currently Assistant Curator of Modern British Art at Tate Britain.

Robert Sutton: Educating Henry: Context, Circumstance, Educational Opportunity

Long before Herbert Read revised the fables of Moore’s early years to account for an “innate plastic sensibility which education might foster but could not create”, the context and circumstance of Moore’s early years directed and shaped the nature of his education. By tracing the social and circumstantial factors that facilitated Moore’s educational development, this paper argues for the fundamental significance of these experiences in the formation of his artistic outlook, placing Moore’s development in the context of educational and legislative reform at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Robert James Sutton is an early career researcher interested in the democratic accountability of the public art produced in post-war Britain. Since the completion of his doctorate in 2015 he has
taught at a number of institutions including CAPA, NYU London and the Universities of Coventry and Nottingham.

Sebastiano Barassi is Head of Henry Moore Collections and Exhibitions at the Henry Moore Foundation and curator of the Becoming Henry Moore exhibition.


Jon Wood is Research Curator at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds and a contributor to the Becoming Henry Moore exhibition catalogue. He was on the editorial board of Tate’s Research Publication Henry Moore: Sculptural Process and Public Identity and contributed essays to Henry Moore (Tate, 2010) and Henry Moore: Critical Essays (Ashgate, 2003).