

Henry Moore Exhibitions - Detailed Report



03 April 2007 - 28 February 2008

Venues

Henry Moore Foundation, Musée Bourdelle

Exhibition Title

2007 Perry Green HMF, Paris Musée Bourdelle, Moore and Mythology

More Information

The world of classical mythology has proved a rich vein of creativity for countless artists, but for many years it was a subject which Moore deliberately avoided, preferring to find inspiration from non-western art and found objects. Two literary collaborations in the post-war years changed all this. Moore's

illustrations for adaptations of *The Odyssey* and *Prometheus Bound* not only form a fascinating study in themselves but their influence can be traced throughout the artist's subsequent work. *Moore and Mythology*, co-curated by David Mitchinson and Anita Feldman Bennet, reveals this captivating but little-known area of Moore's work. *The Rescue*, based on Homer's *Odyssey*, was a melodrama for radio conceived by Edward Sackville-West with an orchestral score by Benjamin Britten. In 1945, after the BBC had broadcast it, the play was published by Secker and Warburg, accompanied by Moore's illustrations. This exhibition brings together for the first time a large proportion of the sketchbook Moore used when working on *The Rescue* as well as the final published illustrations. These compelling drawings show Moore's close attention to Sackville-West's text, often taking their colour and form directly from his words, while their composition recall Moore's famous shelter drawings of the same era, emphasising the common humanity of these classic stories. In 1949 Moore received another literary commission to illustrate *Prométhée*, André Gide's translation of Goethe's *Prometheus*, a dramatic fragment taken from Eschylus' *Prometheus Bound*. *Moore and Mythology* also brings together an impressive collection of sketches surrounding this project and the resulting lithographs. In these drawings Moore shapes a new vision of Prometheus as a noble human figure rather than the tormented victim often portrayed. In his collaboration with Gide, Moore worked in the French tradition of the *livre d'artiste*, going so far as to design illuminated lettering for the title page and elsewhere, a practice seen nowhere else in Moore's oeuvre. This exhibition not only displayed *The Rescue Sketchbook* and *The Prométhée Sketchbook* together for the first time, it also explored the lasting effects these projects had on Moore's work. Characters from these drawings reappear, notably the face of the goddess Athene from *The Rescue* is immortalised in the original BAFTA statuette which Moore designed, an example of which was shown in the exhibition. Before these illustrations, the male figure was rarely seen in Moore's work but necessarily feature prominently in both sketchbooks. Simultaneously men began to be incorporated into Moore's depictions of the family group and his series of warrior sculptures that immediately post-date *The Rescue*. Thus *Moore and Mythology* not only reveals an unknown treasure trove of Moore's work on paper it also investigates the lasting effect this brush with mythology had on his later sculpture, sketches and lithographs. *Moore and Mythology* toured to Musée Bourdelle, Paris from 17 October 2007 - 28 February 2008.