



Large Figure in a Shelter

Catalogue Number

LH 652c cast 0

Artwork Type

Sculpture

Date

1985-86

Dimensions

artwork: 762 cm

Medium

bronze

Signature

stamped Moore, 0/1

Ownership

The Henry Moore Foundation: acquired 1987

More Information

In the 1920s and 1930s Moore avidly visited the armouries of the Wallace Collection and subsequently produced a series of works related to helmets. For Moore, armour was a powerful and exciting sculptural form, inextricably linked to human history and the human body, which aligned with his exploration of the dynamic between internal and external space and volume. In 1937, while these investigations were underway, Moore visited Pablo Picasso in his studio in Paris. Picasso was in the process of painting his now iconic response to the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica in northern Spain. [1] Greatly moved, Moore produced his own work in support of Spanish Republican prisoners of war, which reflects his fascination with helmets and their association with both protection and entrapment (HMF 1464, CGM 3). Over the course of his career Moore made a series of sculptures titled 'Helmet Head'. Large Figure in a Shelter – Moore's last monumental sculpture - was developed directly from Helmet Head No. 6 (LH 651), created in 1975, the year the Spanish dictator Franco died. It is pertinent that one of the two casts of Large Figure in a Shelter resides in Guernica, in the Parque de los Pueblos de Europa. Helmet Head No. 6 has a more organic, shelter-like form than earlier works in the series, which are more readily identifiable as helmets. The enclosing casing has grown thicker in cross-section and the entire front or 'face' opened up to reveal interior walls that bulge inward as if both shaping and being shaped by the interior figure. The figure itself is a nascent bird-like creature emerging from within. Although the military overtones of previous Helmet Heads are replaced by something more optimistic, the figure remains firmly inside its shelter, enclosed and protected. In 1983, Moore first enlarged the sculpture to just under 2 m in height and titled it Figure in a Shelter (LH 652a). At this scale the work began to open up; the internal figure was brought further out from its enclosure and the external shell was sliced in two. The final enlargement, Large Figure in a Shelter, was completed in 1986. At over 7 m in height, the work becomes an architectural space large enough to walk through and around, allowing the viewer to inhabit the same sheltered space as the sculptural figure. [1] Picasso's painting Guernica, 1937, is now held in the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid.