

Henry Moore Exhibitions - Detailed Report



14 October 2006 - 29 January 2007

Venues

Kunsthal Rotterdam

Exhibition Title

2006-07 Rotterdam, Kunsthal, Henry Moore: Sculptuur en architectuur

More Information

Henry Moore Sculptuur en Architectuur explores the ways in which Moore attempted to reconcile his interest in nature with the knowledge that increasingly his works were finding homes in an urban environment. Throughout his life Moore pronounced that he was not interested in working with architects, as too often public

sculpture was considered only as an afterthought, as mere surface decoration. Yet at the same time, he continued to work with architects throughout his career. This exhibition addresses these conflicts and examines how the artist explored the fundamental relationship between figure and architecture in both his drawings and sculpture. The exhibition encompasses five areas. The first considers Moore's West Wind carving for Charles Holden's London Transport Headquarters in 1928. Moore carved this at the same time as his reliefs for garden benches which have been restored and exhibited here for the first time. Moore's abandoned project for reliefs on Holden's Senate House are also considered; the uncarved blocks of stone cut to Moore's specifications still remain in position at the University of London today. This section further explores Moore's relationship in the 1930s with both the Surrealists and the Constructivists, and with international architects residing in London during the 1930s including Marcel Breuer, Serge Chermayeff, Wells Coates, Walter Gropius and Berthold Lubetkin. The second section examines Moore's collaboration with Michael Rosenauer for the Time/Life Building on Bond Street and studies for Rosenauer's unrealised English Electric Company Headquarters. These were efforts to unify a vision of both architect and artist in a complete concept for the building. These sculptural forms anticipate Moore's Bouwcentrum wall in Rotterdam, the subject of section three, in which the building's brick façade consists of both industrial and organic forms merging into and projecting from the wall. Related bronze wall reliefs and archival material showing the wall under construction are included. Part four concentrates on Moore's attempts to reconcile the human form with architecture with the UNESCO Reclining Figure and related experimental sculptures exploring the positioning of figures with architectural elements such as steps, benches or walls. These had varying degrees of success. With Wall: Background for Sculpture, Moore tried a variety of ideas in front of the walled background only to find that in every case they worked better without the architectural background. This section also includes a number of the artist's photographic collages that have never been exhibited before, revealing how his sculptural experiments with architecture were closely tied into his production of lithographs. Finally, the exhibition will look at Moore's determination to have architects such as IM Pei, with whom he collaborated on four projects, consider possible works for commissions from already existing maquettes. Moore was able to retain creative control without having to take into account the restrictions of a potential environment while developing a sculptural idea. He thus worked in a completely antithetical position to that of many contemporary public sculptors, in that the majority of his work was inherently not site-specific. This enabled Moore's public sculpture to be associated with, yet independent from architecture, and works such as Mirror Knife Edge for the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC or Large Figure in a Shelter can be seen in this context. They are tough bold forms that hold their own, independent of their environment, and often take on architectural qualities in themselves.