



Goslar Warrior

Catalogue Number

LH 641 cast 0

Artwork Type

Sculpture

Date

1973-74

Dimensions

artwork: 300 cm base: 11 × 300 × 122 cm pedestal: 305 × 130 × 50 cm case: 328 × 151 × 163 cm weight cased: 1600 kg

Medium

bronze

Signature

stamped Moore, 0/7

Ownership

The Henry Moore Foundation: gift of the artist 1977

More Information

As a young artist Moore rejected classical Greek sculpture, but following his first visit to Greece in 1951 he acknowledged that the trip had provided some of the most exciting visual experiences of his life.[1] Shortly afterwards, he began his most focused exploration of the male figure in sculpture, a subject he had previously overlooked in favour of the female form. In these works, Moore presents the male figure as a wounded warrior, sometimes with a rounded shield and allusion of a helmet, referencing the sculptural imagery of antiquity.[2] Goslar Warrior is the last of three large-scale warriors that Moore made during his career. Although they were made over a twenty-year period, the works could be read as a narrative sequence. The earliest, Warrior with Shield 1953-54 (LH 360), depicts a wounded soldier, unable to stand but undefeated, his shield raised as if to deflect an impending blow. In the second work, Falling Warrior 1956-57 (LH 405), the subject is defeated and falling, caught in the dramatic moment before his body hits the earth. In Goslar Warrior, the figure is fallen, his enormous shield uselessly out-of-reach at his feet. In a final act of defiance, his head cranes forward, as if straining to see the face of his aggressor. Goslar Warrior is more abstract than Moore's earlier iterations of the theme, but it also includes some figurative and naturalistic features. The figure's body has been reduced to a dense bone-like form, which rises and falls over angular protrusions and twisted hollows. The warrior is limbless apart from one truncated leg, raised in a defensive gesture, which acts as a prop for his shield. In contrast to the serene curves of Moore's female reclining figures, the warrior's contorted form evokes ideas of death and decay while also exuding a pent-up energy. Although the warrior's body is strikingly abstract, the work also includes clear references to the sculpture of Ancient Greece, both in the tragic heroism of the scene and in the warrior's armour. His head – with its hollow eye sockets and elongated nose - recalls the shape of a Corinthian helmet while his shield befits an ancient soldier. Subtle naturalistic features, including ears and a striated ribcage, emphasise his humanity and vulnerability. In 1974, Moore's final warrior was being cast at the Noack foundry in Berlin when he heard that he had won a prestigious art prize awarded by the historic town of Goslar in Lower Saxony. The prize included a commission for a major work to be sited in the town. When Moore visited Goslar to look at possible sites he decided that the new warrior being cast at Noack would be ideal. He sited the sculpture in the Pfalzgarten (Imperial Palace Garden) and titled the work Goslar Warrior as a mark of his gratitude.[3] [1] Interview with Edwin Mullins, Kaleidoscope, BBC 27 June 1978, reprinted in Alan Wilkinson (ed.), Henry Moore: Writings and Conversations, Lund Humphries, Aldershot, 2002, p. 70. [2] Moore's warriors appear to draw on scenes depicted in sculptures from the Parthenon which he saw in the British Museum. The warriors' round shield closely resembles the shield carried by a Lapith in South Metope IV and the pose of the fallen warriors recalls a fallen Lapith beneath a triumphant Centaur in South Metope XXVIII. This observation was made in: Susan Compton, Henry Moore, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1988, p. 239. [3] Julian Andrews in Celebrating Moore, David Mitchinson (ed.), Lund Humphries, London, 1998, p. 306.