



Hill Arches

Catalogue Number

LH 636 cast 0

Artwork Type

Sculpture

Date

1973

Dimensions

artwork: 300 × 550 × 320 cm weight uncased: 5400 kg

Medium

bronze

Signature

stamped Moore, 0/3

Ownership

The Henry Moore Foundation: gift of the artist 1977

More Information

Hill Arches is one of Moore's most striking and ambitious sculptures. Conceived in 1973, the work belongs to a group of late monumental bronzes including Locking Piece and The Arch, but despite its title, the abstract forms are less overtly organic than their more evolutionary counterparts. The interplay between the four components of the work, designed to contain and articulate space, is also more complex. The ribbon-like bands of bronze create a dynamic and open composition. They are interlocked, but not stuck, creating instead a sense of rhythmic movement or inner energy. This effect is augmented when the viewer moves around the work – something which Moore encouraged. He liked the mystery that a work like this could evoke, and how when one circled it, one form got in the way of another, creating new and surprising views. The roots of this sculpture can be found in Moore's explorations of the 1930s and in particular a wood carving of 1934, Two Forms (LH 153). This work has been described as an abstracted mother and child, the larger form leaning protectively over the smaller. In Hill Arches, the 'mother' form has been enlarged and exploded, the increased abstraction making the allusion to the theme less evident. Joined by a second, larger arch form, which stretches toward the 'mother' and round 'child' element, the work may be more akin to a family group. As Moore had a tendency to 'humanise everything',^[1] it is tempting to see these interwoven abstracted forms as male and female, and the interplay of solid and void, internal and external, shelter and protection, as inventive reinterpretations of familial themes that Moore treated earlier in his career. Moore's title for the work suggests the forms be read as natural and, with its four pieces precisely set out in space, the work has been described as a 'landscape in itself'.^[2] Certainly the inner-dynamism of this work is circumscribed by the elegant pair of arched forms evoking the shape of a hillside. The stimulus for such forms has often been cited as the Yorkshire landscape of Moore's youth, but they may also have been inspired by some fields adjacent to his studio which he had recently purchased. One field contained an artificial mound, formed by the ballast thrown up from a gravel excavation, which occupied a prominent position on the horizon. Moore was anxious to explore ideas for a suitable sculpture for this mound, and it was at this time he made the maquette for Hill Arches. Hill Arches found its most prominent siting opposite the Karlskirche in Vienna, where it can still be seen today. In 1971 Moore decided to gift the city a sculpture and began investigating a suitable site. Danish architect Sven-Ingvar Andersson was re-designing the square in front of the church, and together he and Moore planned to locate the work off-centre in an elliptical pool. Here, the curving forms of the bronze are reflected in the water and echo those of the ornate church and its domes behind. 'A Baroque sculpture for a Baroque church' was Moore's comment when the work was finally installed. Other casts can be found in The National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, and in Illinois, USA. ^[1] In Alan Wilkinson, Writings and Conversations, p.114} - Unpublished notes c.1941, HMF archive ^[2] David Cohen in Celebrating Moore ed. David Mitchinson, p. 305