



Upright Motive No.5

Catalogue Number

LH 383 cast g

Artwork Type

Sculpture

Date

1955-56

Dimensions

artwork with base (h x l x d): 213.5 x 47 x 60 cm pedestal: 55 x 65 x 25 cm case (l x d x h): 256 x 70 x 92 cm weight cased: 399 kg weight uncased: 210 kg

Medium

bronze

Signature

Moore (stamped)

Ownership

The Henry Moore Foundation: gift of the artist 1977

More Information

In 1954 Moore worked with architect Michael Rosenauer on a design for the English Electric Company Headquarters in London. He produced eight upright motive maquettes, which he conceived as integral parts of the building. The project was never realised but the maquettes became the impetus for Moore's later series of

large upright motives, numbered one to nine, cast between 1955 and 1979. The idea for the upright motives resurfaced in 1955, when Moore was asked to make a sculpture for the courtyard of the Olivetti building in Milan, Italy. He later recalled: I visited the site and a lone lombardy poplar growing behind the building convinced me that a vertical work would act as the correct counterfoil to the horizontal rhythm of the building. This idea grew ultimately into the 'Upright Motives'. Back home in England I began the series of maquettes. I started by balancing different forms one above the other, with results rather like the North-West American totem poles, but as I continued the attempt gained more unity, also perhaps became more organic...[1] Moore worked with architects throughout his career: Rosenauer, Charles Holden, Gordon Bunshaft and I.M. Pei among others. While he often considered landscape the optimum setting for his work, he nonetheless enjoyed the challenge of conceiving work for architectural settings. The upright motives combine these interests, recalling architectural columns and the organic growth of trees and stalagmites. The motives can also appear ambiguously figurative. Alongside the influence of North American totem poles in conceiving the upright motives, Moore also acknowledged a debt to an Arawak wood carving from Jamaica depicting a bird man, which he had seen in the British Museum. Prehistoric dolmens such as Stonehenge, much admired by Moore, and Celtic crucifix forms can also be linked to these monolithic works. He may also have thought on contemporary Crucifixion paintings by acquaintances such as Francis Bacon and Graham Sutherland – a connection most evident when the motives are grouped. Moore also includes mechanical forms in the motives, some parts appearing like military shell casings. The combination of nature, man and machine is potent and these sentry-like works are sometimes met with unease. Individual works vary considerably but in each, truncated forms, nooks, crannies, deep grooves and intriguing orifices encourage closer inspection and evoke multiple associations. There are no specific preparatory drawings for the upright motives. They instead illustrate the profound changes in Moore's working methods at this time. Instead of using drawing as a means of generating ideas for sculpture, he began to work directly in three dimensions. The plaster maquettes for the upright motives were made from clay moulds into which Moore pressed a line of found objects. [1] Henry Moore: Drie Staande Motieven, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo 1965 (n.p.)