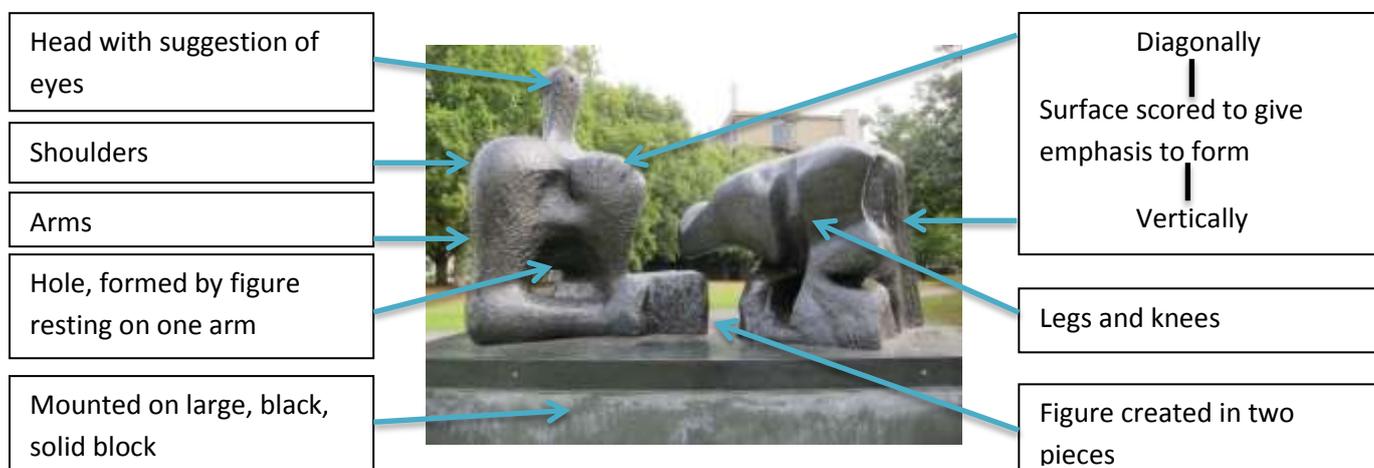


Two Piece Reclining Figure No. 3 – Henry Moore



Bronze, 1961, length 239cm, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts (on loan from the Tate)

- Not an instantly recognisable form
- Curves suggest movement
- Two pieces suggest landscape – hills?
- Looks very different when viewed from different angles

Description

This is a very long (239cm) bronze sculpture. It is in two separate, distinct pieces. As you look at the sculpture aspects of a reclining figure begin to appear. The most obvious is the head and shoulders. The head has eye sockets but no other discernible facial features. The part of the figure containing a head also resembles a person reclining with one arm on the ground. On the second part of the sculpture there are suggestions of feet, knees and legs.

The sculpture was set in open land with buildings of the University of East Anglia around it (it is a temporary installation, being on loan from the Tate). There are trees and grassland surrounding the sculpture and the taller buildings are at sufficient distance not to dwarf the piece.

The bronze of the figure has been scored to give an irregular texture to the surface.

The sculpture had a great mass, a presence to it.

Interpretation

It is interesting to see a sculpture in two separate parts. All sculptures are three dimensional and you will get a different view of the work depending on the angle you are viewing it from (e.g. from in front and from behind).

This sculpture gives a completely different look depending on the viewing angle as the following two photographs show.



From in front or behind the reclining figure is recognisable but composed of two distinct pieces.

But when viewed from the end, the gap disappears and it almost resembles a single piece sculpture. The reclining figure can be better seen in this view with the body resting on a right arm and with legs and feet in front.

Evaluation

Henry Moore had a very large output of work. This is one of his later pieces where, according to Chilvers (2012 p420) “Bronze took over from stone as his preferred medium and he often worked on a very large scale. There was a tendency also for his works to be composed of several elements grouped together rather than made up of a single object”.

The Henry Moore website quotes the sculptor talking about this piece “I realised what an advantage a separated two-piece composition could have in relating figures to landscape. Knees and breasts are mountains. Once those two parts become separated you don’t expect it to be a naturalistic figure, therefore you can justifiably make it like a landscape or a rock”.

This explanation helped me to see the sculpture in a different light. Not just looking for a reclining figure, but also for elements of landscape. This also helped the sculpture to blend with its surroundings in a very naturalistic way.

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References

Chilvers, I. (2009) Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press

Web References

<http://www.henry-moore.org/works-in-public/world/uk/norwich/sainsbury-centre-for-visual-arts/two-piece-reclining-figure-no3-1961-lh-478>