

FORMED FROM NATURE
BARBARA HEPWORTH

'I WAS STRIVING TO MAKE A THING WHICH I COULD LIVE WITH AND HOLD AND TOUCH AND WHICH WOULD HAVE SOME SENSE OF ETERNITY IN IT'

Barbara Hepworth, Interview, 1967



Barbara Hepworth in her garden, St Ives, Cornwall, 15 May 1970

INTRODUCTION

Barbara Hepworth was one of the most important sculptors of the twentieth century. Her influence on British art in particular has been profound. Together with Ben Nicholson, she played an instrumental role in bringing continental modernism to London in the 1930s. After relocating to Cornwall at the beginning of the Second World War, she helped transform St Ives into the unlikely centre of modern art that in many respects it remains today. Over six decades of relentless creativity Hepworth re-imagined both the form and function of sculpture. As her instantly recognisable artworks appeared in parks, streets, squares, housing estates, universities, churches, and even outside the United Nations headquarters, she cultivated a public appetite for abstract art that has arguably never faded. When she died in 1975 she was a household name in Britain, and admired all over the globe. Her exceptional career is all the more remarkable because she worked in a stubbornly masculine world.

Like many of the finest sculptors, Hepworth's work was inextricably bound to its site. Hepworth thought carefully about her sculptures' relationship to nature, and to the varied environments they inhabited. These ideas are best expressed in her unforgettable sculpture garden at Trewyn Studio in St Ives. To mark the 25th anniversary of Dickinson Gallery, which coincides with the Tate St Ives' own 25th anniversary celebration, Dickinson presents *Formed from Nature: Barbara Hepworth*, a recreation in spirit of the artist's garden at Trewyn, centred on a magnificent cast of *River Form*, one of the outstanding monumental bronzes that can be seen in her garden today.

Dr James Fox, Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge



EARLY YEARS

Hepworth's career began with a scholarship to the Leeds School of Art, where Henry Moore was a fellow pupil, earned in 1919 when she was just 16. A year later, she won a second scholarship to the Royal College of Art in London, where for the first time she tried her hand at stone carving. Her attraction to the medium was strengthened by a period in Florence, where she learned to carve in marble and married her first husband, fellow sculptor John Skeaping. The first major leap in Hepworth's artistic evolution took place in 1931, the year she met Ben Nicholson on holiday in Norfolk (fig. 1); Hepworth's marriage to Skeaping had already fallen apart, and after Nicholson subsequently left his wife the two were married. Artistically speaking, they had a more active exchange of ideas than had Hepworth and Skeaping. 1932 marked Hepworth's first exploration into pierced forms, a technique that was to become a trademark of her style, together with an increasing movement - more rapid after 1933 - away from the traditional closed volume of form. Her first pierced sculpture, called simply Abstraction, was exhibited at Tooth's Gallery in 1932 and subsequently in a group show at Leicester Galleries. Hepworth recalled: 'I had felt the most intense pleasure in piercing the stone in order to make an abstract form and space; quite a different sensation from that of doing it for the purpose of realism.' Having lived in Hampstead since 1932, where they associated with a community of like-minded artists and architects, Hepworth and Nicholson left for Cornwall in 1939 at the outbreak of War (fig. 2). This move marked a turning point in Hepworth's life and career.

Fig. 1: L-R Ivon Hitchens, Irina Moore, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson and Mary Jenkins; Norfolk, 1931 (Photograph by Douglas Jenkins)

Fig 2: St Ives, Cornwall, 1940s



Fig. 1



-ig. 2

6. DICKINSON

HEPWORTH IN ST. IVES

Hepworth, Nicholson and their children arrived in St Ives on 25 August 1939, staying at first at the home of the artist and critic Adrian Stokes, and moving four months later into their own small house. Kept busy by the demands of motherhood and housekeeping, Hepworth at first focused increasingly on her drawings, which addressed motifs similar to those she had explored in sculpture (fig. 3). Inspired by the seaside at St Ives, Hepworth went on to sculpt oval and spherical forms, curved and interrupted by hollows or piercings, and she introduced colour and wire cords in a three-dimensional translation of her drawings (fig. 4). Her interest in colour was partially inspired by Stokes's 1937 text *Colour and Form*, but it was also prompted by associations with the seaside. Hepworth explained: 'The colour in the concavities plunges me into the depth of water, caves, of shadows deeper than the carved concavities themselves.'

Fig. 3: B. Hepworth, *Drawing* for 'Sculpture with Colour' (Forms with Colour), signed and dated lower right *Barbara* Hepworth 1941, gouache, oil and pencil on paper, 21.7 x 39.2 cm., Tate, London

Fig. 4: B. Hepworth, *Pelagos* (BH133), 1946, elm and strings on oak base, 43 x 46 x 38.5 cm., Tate, London

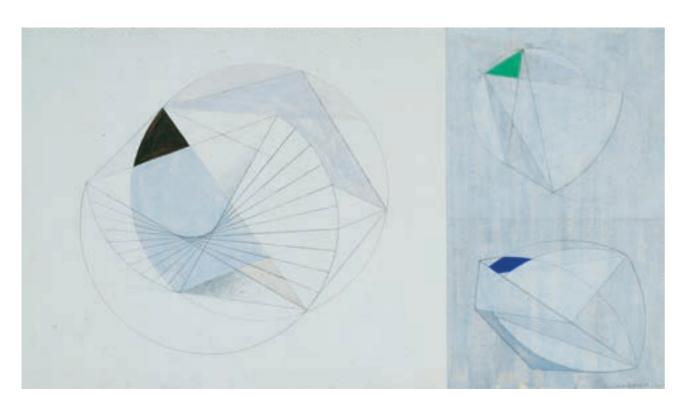


Fig. 3

'I HAVE GAINED VERY GREAT INSPIRATION FROM THE CORNISH LAND AND SEA-SCAPE. THE HORIZONTAL LINE OF THE SEA AND THE QUALITY OF LIGHT AND COLOUR REMINDS ME OF THE MEDITERRANEAN LIGHT AND COLOUR WHICH SO EXCITES ONE'S SENSE OF FORM'

Barbara Hepworth, 1946



Fig. 4

FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON

'FINDING TREWYN STUDIO WAS A SORT OF MAGIC...HERE WAS A STUDIO, A YARD AND GARDEN WHERE I COULD WORK IN OPEN AIR AND SPACE.'



Fig 5





Fig. 6

Fig. 5: The greenhouse, Trewyn Studio, St Ives, Cornwall

Fig. 6: Trewyn Studio, St Ives, Cornwall

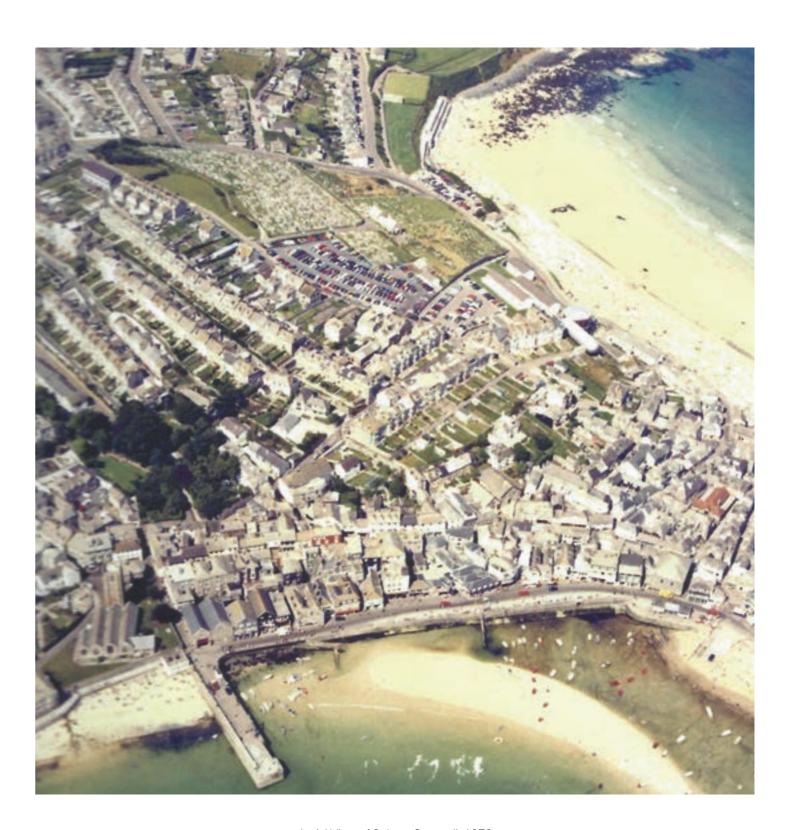
Fig. 7: Interior, Trewyn Studio, St Ives, Cornwall In September 1949, ten years after her arrival in Cornwall,
Hepworth acquired the Trewyn Studio in the centre of St Ives –
now The Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden at
Tate St Ives – where she would live and work until her untimely
death in 1975 (fig. 5). Having previously been attempting to work
at home in Chy-an-Kerris, where she jostled for studio space with
Nicholson, Hepworth was overjoyed to find the studio, which was
built of local stone and came with a garden and a greenhouse (fig.
6). She wrote to Philip James, Director of Art at the Arts Council:
'It is completely perfect for me. It will be a joy to carve in such a
perfect place, both serene & secluded – the courtyard & garden
protected by tall trees & roof tops so that I can work out of doors
most of the year.' Nicholson said, more succinctly, 'It's a corker',
adding that the studio 'meant life itself to her.'

After nearly two decades together, Hepworth and Nicholson separated in December of 1950, though they remained close. Their divorce favourably affected Hepworth's artistic practice, as she replaced family life with a growing devotion to her sculpture. Trewyn became Hepworth's haven, and it served as both catalyst and gallery for some of her greatest masterpieces. Before long she reconfigured and added to the space so that she could live as well as work there, writing to Herbert Read in 1953: 'I have arranged in my studio, opposite my bed, a mirror which reflects the rising morning sun – for half an hour with incredible splendour this moving & focused source of light travels slowly over the nine sculptures in its path - hollows and piercings, forms within forms, strings & features, volume & space are animated to a new vibration of life & every form & contour, known so intimately by my hands, reveals its proper significance' (18 Jan. 1953; fig. 7). In 1961, Hepworth had the opportunity to buy the Palais de Danse, formerly a cinema and dance hall, in St Ives; this allowed her the additional space she needed to work on her monumental sculptures.

FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON



Barbara Hepwith with *Cantate Domino* (BH 244), Sept. 1958, Trewyn Studio, St Ives, Cornwall



Aerial View of St Ives, Cornwall, 1973





Fig. 8

'WITH SPACE The Trewyn st surrounded it more so. Hep-

ABOVE,

SCULPTURE

CAN EXPAND

AND BREATHE'

Barbara Hepworth, 1961

HEPWORTH AND LANDSCAPE

The Trewyn studio was only part of the story: the garden that surrounded it was equally important to Hepworth, perhaps even more so. Hepworth's affection for the English countryside was long-standing and deeply felt. Her father, Herbert, was the county surveyor of the West Riding, Yorkshire. On long drives through the countryside he encouraged her love of the outdoors, as well as her ambitions, thanks to his belief in the equality of the sexes. 'Moving through and over the West Riding landscape with my father in his car, the hills were sculptures; the roads defined the form. Above all, there was the sensation of moving physically over the contours of fullness and concavities, through hollows and over peaks – feeling, touching, through mind and hand and eye.'

Hepworth's garden at Trewyn was deliberately adapted with plants chosen to complement the sculptures (fig. 8). She collaborated with a friend, the South African composer Ivy Priaulx Rainier, who dedicated one of her most significant compositions to Hepworth, the orchestral suite Aequora Lunae. Together, Hepworth and Rainier planned and planted in harmony with Hepworth's sculptures, creating an immersive and three-dimensional setting that encouraged visitors to experience the pieces from multiple angles. Hepworth was interested in the relationship between the viewer and the sculpture, as well as in the relationship between individual pieces in a grouping. She encouraged visitors to touch the sculptures in order to experience more fully the tactile as well as visual qualities of her work. As much as Hepworth loved her garden, the sculptures were paramount: she even sacrificed a favourite bed of roses to clear the ideal spot for Four-Square (Walk Through). As Hepworth explained, 'I always envisage "perfect settings" for sculpture and they are, of course, mostly envisaged outside and related to the landscape' (1962). Over time, Hepworth acquired more acreage and added extensions to the existing buildings in order to provide adequate space for her work. She added a summer house at the bottom of the garden and often took her afternoon rest there.

Fig. 8: The Barbara Hepworth

Museum and Sculpture Garden
at Tate St Ives, Cornwall

FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON

One of the first sculptures Hepworth produced in the garden at Trewyn was *Bicentric Form*, which became the first of her sculptures to enter the Tate collection when it was acquired in 1950 (fig. 9). *River Form* also emerged from this environment, its smooth surface and simplified contours hearkening back to her Pre-War style, and moving away from the heavily-textured surfaces of the previous decade's sculptures.

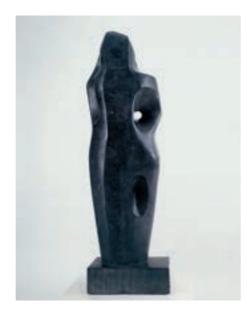


Fig. 9



Fig. 9: B. Hepworth, *Bicentric* Form (BH 160), 1949, limestone, 159 x 52.2 x 33 cm., Tate, London

Fig. 10: B. Hepworth, *River*Form (BH 401), 1965,
American walnut, Hepworth
Estate, on loan to the
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Fig. 11: B. Hepworth, *River*Form (BH 568), 1965 (cast
1973), bronze artist's proof, 79
x 193 x 85 cm, Tate
St Ives, Cornwall, on display
at The Barbara Hepworth
Museum and Sculpture Garden

Fig. 10

RIVER FORM

'IT'S LOVELY TO LIVE
WITH A SCULPTURE,
BECAUSE IT
CHANGES IN EVERY
POSSIBLE LIGHT;
ALL THROUGH THE
DAY, MOONLIGHT,
ARTIFICIAL LIGHT
– ANY LIGHT
– IT'S ALWAYS
CHANGING.'

Conceived originally in American walnut in 1965, *River Form* was produced in a small edition of three bronze casts plus one artist's proof in 1973. The bronze casting was proposed to preserve the sculpture as the walnut version (BH 401; fig. 10), currently on extended loan from the artist's estate to the Ashmolean Museum, had begun to split.

The elegant composition of *River Form* is pierced by three spiral hollows, reminiscent of the holes hewn out of rocks by eddies of water. *River Form* creates a powerful interaction between viewer and artwork, echoing the artist's deep engagement with the Cornish coastline. The scale of the work, its simplified form and the sea-green-coloured oval hollow are all intended to evoke in a material way the experience of walking along the dramatic Atlantic coastline between St Ives and Land's End, with its jutting rocks, calm hollows, languid pools, windswept beaches and the infinite sea. The artist's proof of *River Form* belongs to the Hepworth Sculpture Garden, Tate St Ives, where it is displayed alongside other monumental sculptures in the original garden setting (fig. 11).



Fig. 1

18. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH



HEPWORTH AND BRONZE

Hepworth only began working in bronze in 1956, preferring stone carving up to this point, and the move was largely shaped by her growing international reputation. As early as 1950 she had represented Britain at the Venice Biennale. Hepworth received her first public commissions for the Festival of Britain in 1951 and, at the end of the decade, she won first prize at the São Paulo Bienal in 1959. The intensely time-consuming nature of Hepworth's stone-carving process was limiting, and by working in bronze, Hepworth was better able to fulfil her large scale public commissions.

In the upper workshop at Trewyn, Hepworth laid down wet plaster onto wire armatures for her plaster prototypes, treating the material in much the same way she handled blocks of stone (fig. 12): 'I found the most intense pleasure in this new adventure in material. I had always hated clay and never previously liked any bronze casts of forms modelled in clay. But now I felt free to enjoy the making of the armature. I could blend it with my carving technique – by building up the plaster of Paris and then cutting it down as though carving. Finally...by treating the plaster as if it was oil paint with large flat spatula, I built surfaces which I could then cut down when hard. This method gave me the same feeling of personal surfaces as when I prepare the boards on which I draw and paint.' Hepworth continued to produce work in stone and wood at the same time as she experimented with bronze, fuelling the ongoing dialogue between her materials (fig. 13).

Hepworth was very closely involved in the patination of her sculptures, differentiating and experimenting between casts in an effort to individualise each of the editioned works. For instance the transition between the rich and varied dark exterior and sea-green interior of this cast of *River Form* is very crisp, while it is softer in the other casts from the series. These distinctions were Hepworth's own choices, and the patinations her own recipes; sometimes she applied three or four distinct patinas to a single work in order to achieve a specific effect. The excellent state of preservation of *River Form* allows us to appreciate Hepworth's original intentions.

Fig. 12: Hepworth at work in the Palais de Danse, St Ives, Cornwall, 1964

Fig. 13: Hepworth at work in her studio, St Ives, Cornwall, 1958 (Photograph by John Picton) 'IWAS A
COMPARATIVE
NEWCOMER
TO BRONZE,
SO I USED IT
EXTRAVAGANTLY
TO SEE HOW FAR
I COULD GO. IT
HAS A PRESENCE
BUT IT DOESN'T
LOOK AT YOU THE
WAY A CARVING



Fig. 12



DOES.THERE IS A
STRONGER SENSE
OF PARTICIPATING
IN THE FORM –
YOU WANT TO
GO IN AND OUT
AS YOU LOOK AT
A SCULPTURE!

Barbara Hepworth, 1971

Fig. 13

22. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON 23.

DISPLAY AND PLINTHS

By the time Hepworth's 1968 Tate retrospective was in its planning stages, the traditional concept of the white plinth as a vehicle for displaying sculpture was becoming outdated. In 1962, at her Whitechapel show, Hepworth had experimented with the plinths – testing out different shapes and hues - but she was not satisfied with the results. The following year, Anthony Caro pioneered the concept of displaying large-scale sculpture on the gallery floor, dispensing with the plinth entirely. This raised important curatorial questions about the 'assumed neutrality' of the white plinth, questions Hepworth continued to mull over during the approach to her show. She was also aware of





Fig. 15

Fig. 14: Barbara Hepworth retrospective exhibition, Rietveld Pavilion, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, Netherlands, 1965

Fig. 15: Barbara Hepworth exhibition, Tate Gallery, London, 3 April - 19 May 1968; installation photographs

Fig. 16: Exhibition on the Occasion of the Conferment of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St Ives on Bernard Leach and Barbara Hepworth, St Ives Guildhall, 1968, installation photograph, St Ives Archive, Cyril Gilbert Collection







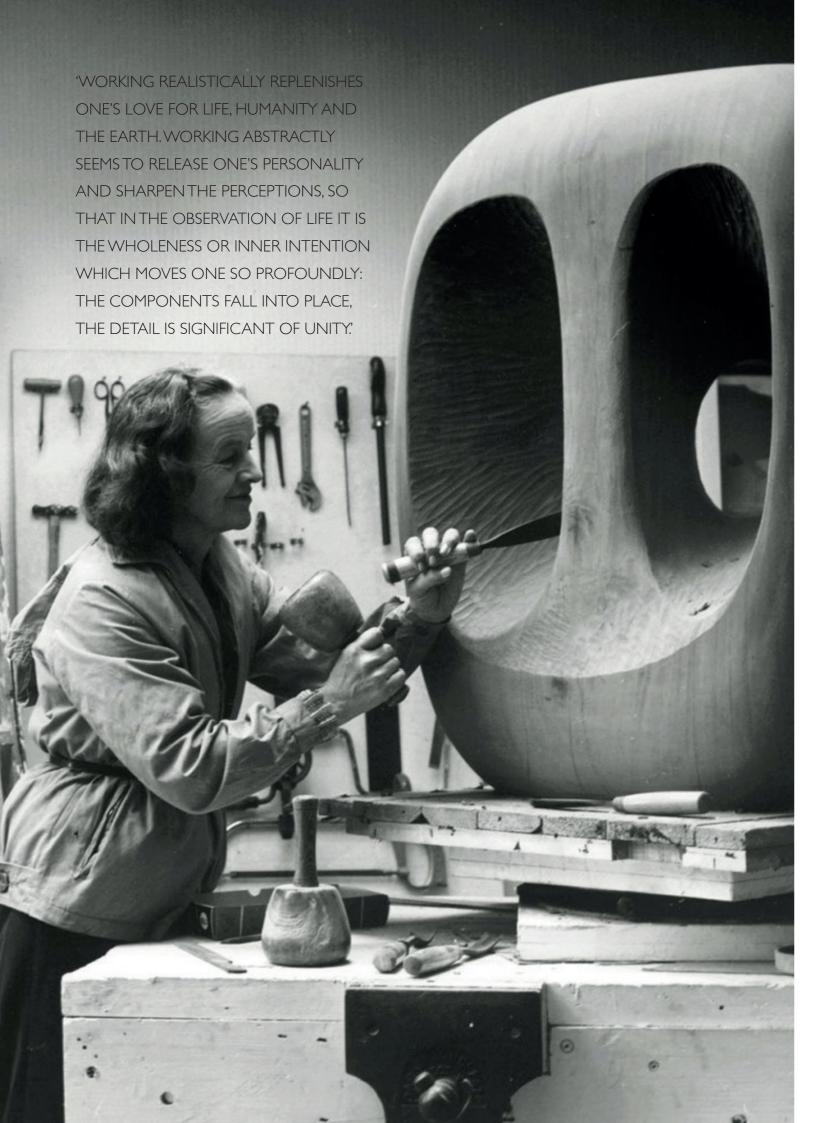
'I AM DESPERATELY IN NEED OF THE BRICKS...ALL WF NEED ARE THE BRICKS, PLEASE'

Barbara Hepworth, 1968

River Form (BH 568), details of the foundry mark, signature and numbering the exhibition designer Michael Brawne's 1965 text The New Museum, in which he considered how elements of architecture, flooring, lighting and display designs affect viewers' perceptions of the art itself.

In May of 1965, the year River Form was conceived, Hepworth was honoured with a retrospective of her sculpture held at the Kröller-Müller Museum in the Netherlands (fig. 14). At the museum, Hepworth's sculptures were displayed in a recreation of a Pavilion originally designed by the De Stijl architect Gerrit Rietveld, which featured rhythmic walls made of stacked bricks in a garden setting. In the course of planning the 1968 Tate retrospective with Brawne, Hepworth recalled the visual effects of the Rietveld Pavilion, and envisioned plinths made of stacked concrete bricks in the Duveen Galleries at the Tate. Hepworth worked closely alongside Brawne, writing to him repeatedly about the plinths, and even offering to pay for the bricks herself if the Arts Council would not fund them. The plinths thus became part of the display and the artwork. So, too, did the plants used in the exhibition to bring the garden indoors: in his commentary on the initial design plan, Brawne noted that 'we must leave some money aside for blockwork and shrubbery'. In the end, the plants were 'most generously' funded by the Friends of the Tate at a cost of £70, allowing Hepworth to realise her vision of situating her sculptures in the 'perfect setting' (figs. 15-16).





LEGACY

In 1959, Hepworth became the first British artist to win the Grand Prix at the São Paulo Bienal. The Kröller-Müller and Tate exhibitions, among others, raised her international profile, and she enjoyed commercial as well as critical success: in 1965 Hepworth had increased the size of the Trewyn garden by half, giving her more space in which to display her monumental sculptures. Also in 1965 she was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire, and she became the first female trustee of the Tate Gallery the same year. In 1968, Hepworth was granted Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St Ives.

Throughout her life, Hepworth remained resigned to reporters who patronised her and referred to her as a 'woman artist', as though to suggest that her achievements were impressive only in light of her gender. Hepworth explained: 'There is a deep prejudice against women in art. Many people – most people still, I imagine – think that women should not involve themselves in the act of creation except on its more trivial fringes. They still think of sculpture as a male occupation: because, I suppose, they have a misconception of what sculpture involves. There is this cliché, you see, a sculptor is a muscular brute bashing at an inert lump of stone...Stone never surrenders to force.' She concluded: 'Art is anonymous. It is not competition with men. It's a complementary contribution.'

Hepworth's old schoolmate in Leeds, Henry Moore, might have disagreed: despite their early training together, Moore was disparaging of Hepworth's talent and contributions to the field. In 1945 when the Tate first considered acquiring one of Hepworth's wood sculptures, Moore, then a trustee, declared: 'If sculpture [was] nothing more than that, it would be a poor affair.' The Hepworth was rejected but the museum acquired seven other sculptures that year – all by Moore. Thanks to Moore's jealousy it took another five years for the Tate to add a Hepworth to its

Barbara Hepworth carving
Hollow Form with White Interior
(BH 328), Palais de Danse,
St Ives, Cornwall, 1963
(Photograph by Val Wilmer)

DICKINSON 27.

collection. Today, as her reputation spreads, Hepworth's sculptures remain somewhat undervalued in comparison to those of her contemporaries.

Hepworth died on 20 May 1975, aged 72, in a tragic fire at Trewyn Studio. After her death the studio and grounds were opened as a museum in April 1976, according to Hepworth's express wishes, and The Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden has been under the care of the Tate since 1980. Hepworth's studio and garden remain as the artist left them; there is even a group of uncut marble blocks, which Hepworth likened to 'a flock of sheep', awaiting her attention. Since 2011, the Wakefield Art Gallery in Hepworth's hometown of Wakefield, Yorkshire, has been known as the Hepworth Wakefield; this collection houses Hepworth's work bench and tools as well as examples of her work and pieces by contemporaries (fig. 17). In the same year the museum received a substantial gift of Hepworth's original plasters and drawings from Hepworth's daughters Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness (whose husband, Alan Bowness, was Director of the Tate in the 1980s). Hepworth's role in the history of British sculpture cannot be underestimated, and works such as River Form capture the skilful combination of physical power and intricate beauty that characterises her monumental sculptures. As one of the first great female sculptors, Hepworth led the way for her successors by quite literally carving her own niche in a traditionally male domain.

opposite page:
Barbara Hepworth with the
plaster of *Curved Form (Bryher II* (BH 305), Palais de Danse, St

Ives, Cornwall, 1961

Barbara Hepworth with

Figure (Archaean) (BH263),

Trewyn Studio garden, St Ives,

Cornwall, 1963

Fig. 17: The Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire



'THE VISIT WAS PAID ABOUT
ELEVEN O'CLOCK AT NIGHT,
AND THE MOONLIGHT
SHONE OF A HUGE
TARPAULIN-COVERED
SCULPTURE LOOMING UP IN
THE GARDEN. INSIDE AND
UPSTAIRS ON THE BARE
BOARDS STOOD A NUMBER
OF CARVINGS IN WOOD
AND STONE, REPOSEFUL,
REMOTE, YET SEEMING TO
SPRING TO LIFE FROM THE
ROOTS IN THE FLOOR.'

Misomé Peile, a painter friend of Hepworth's, *The St Ives Times*, 17 Feb. 1950





28. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON



Barbara Hepworth, Denis Mitchell and John Wells at work on *Contrapuntal Forms* (BH 165), Trewyn Studio, St Ives, Cornwall, 1950

The Barbara Hepworth

Museum and Sculpture Garden
at Tate St Ives, Cornwall

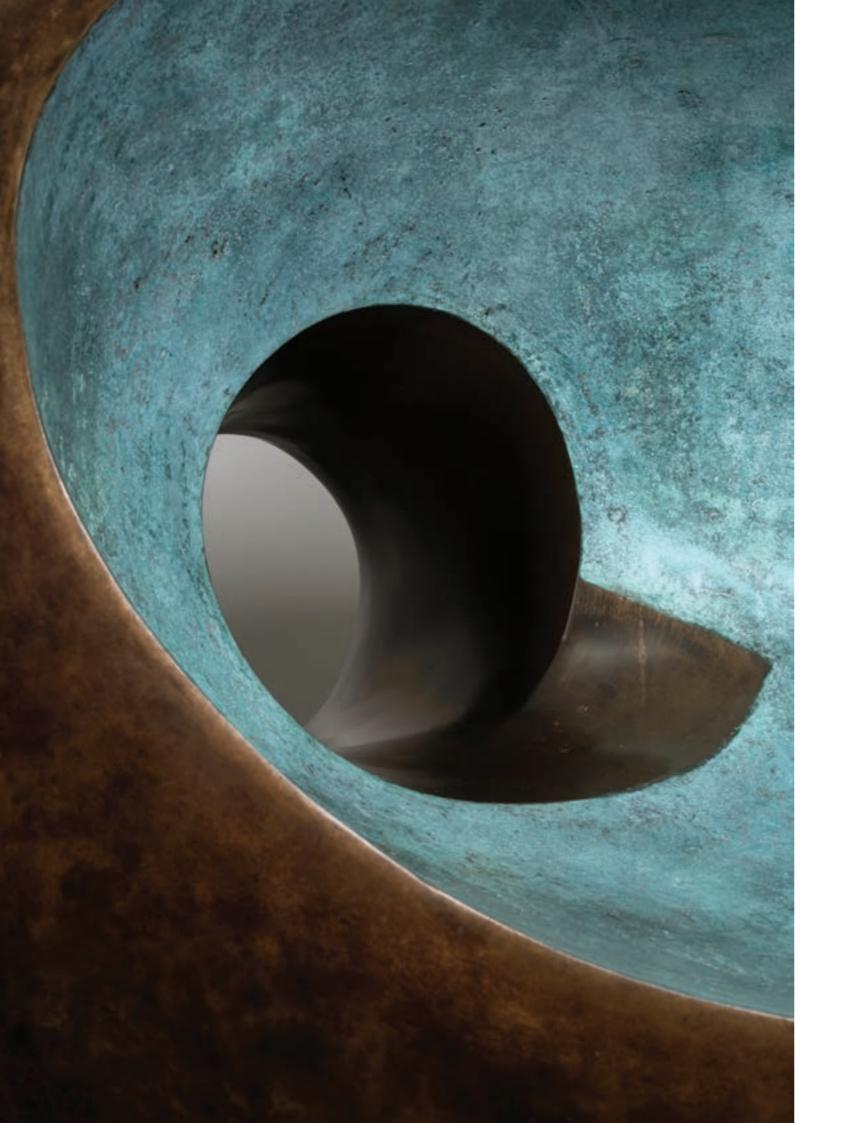
opposite page:
Barbara Hepworth, *Poised*Form (BH 172), 1951-52
(reworked 1957) and Coré (BH 208), 1955-56, cast 1960,
Trewyn Studio Garden, St Ives,
Cornwall, May 1969





30

FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH



EXHIBITED WORKS

MOTHER AND CHILD (BH 60), 1934

ironstone on a stone base

width including base: 13 cm. (5 ¼ in.)

Provenance:

Sir Herbert and Margaret 'Ludo' Read, 1934. Benedict Read, by descent from the above. His Estate sale; Bonham's, London, 22 Nov. 2017, lot 36. Private Collection, UK, acquired at the above sale.

Literature:

'A Quarterly Review of Contemporary "Abstract" Painting & Sculpture', *Axis*, no. 1, Jan. 1935, p. 18 (illus. and titled 'Carving')

W. Gibson, *Barbara Hepworth: Sculptress*, London, 1949, p. 19 (illus.)

H. Read, *Barbara Hepworth, Carvings and Drawings*, London, 1952, no. 31 (illus.)

J.P. Hodin, *Barbara Hepworth*, Lausanne, 1961, p. 163, no. 60.

Exhibited:

London, Marlborough Gallery, *Art in Britain 1930 – 1940*, March 1965, no. 38.

London, Tate Gallery, *Barbara Hepworth*, 3 April – 1 May 1968, no. 23.

London, Morley College, The Morley Gallery, *Works from the Personal Collection of Herbert Read*, 21 April – 23 May 1970, no. 11.

Cambridge, Kettle's Yard, *Carving Mountains*, 7 March – 26 April 1998; this exhibition later travelled to Beybill on Sea. De la Warr Pavilion, 2 May – 28 June

exhibition later travelled to Bexhill-on-Sea, De la Warr Pavilion, 2 May – 28 June (n.n.)

Norwich, Castle Museum, *Moore, Hepworth, Nicholson: A Gentle Nest of Artists in the 1930s*, 31 Jan. –19 April 2009, no. 39; this exhibition later travelled to Sheffield, Graves Gallery, 20 May – 29 Aug.

Norwich, Sainsbury Centre, *Masterpieces: Art and East Anglia*, 14 Sept. 2013 – 24 Feb. 2014.

London, Tate Britain, *Barbara Hepworth*, 24 June – 25 Oct. 2015, no. 55; this exhibition later travelled to Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, 28 Nov. 2015 – 17 April 2016; and Rolandseck, Arp Museum, 22 May – 28 Aug. 2016.

Perry Green, Henry Moore Foundation, *Becoming Henry Moore*, 14 April – 22 Oct. 2017 (n.n.)



34. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON 35.

In 1931, seeking fresh inspiration for her work, Barbara Hepworth and her husband the sculptor John Skeaping embarked on a holiday to Norfolk with fellow artists Henry and Irina Moore, Ivon Hitchens and Ben Nicholson (fig. 1). It proved a fruitful trip in unexpected ways when the unhappily married Hepworth and the recently divorced Nicholson fell in love, but it also saw Hepworth and Moore discover the ironstone pebbles that littered the coastline. So called for its colour rather than its hardness, iron stone was 'ideal for carving and polished up like bronze, as Skeaping later noted. After Nicholson left Norfolk, Hepworth wrote to inform him that she and Moore had packed up four large crates of the stones to be shipped back to London. Their flattish, disc-like shape lent itself to shallow carving, and the group shared ideas to such an extent that the Tate later acquired an ironstone fish by Skeaping as a Hepworth.

In addition to their material qualities and shape, some of the stones 'had holes going right through them', as Moore observed. Hepworth must have been similarly struck by these forms. Already familiar with the organic sculptures of her Continental contemporaries Brancusi and Arp, Hepworth produced a pink alabaster entitled *Pierced Form* in 1932, the year after the Norfolk trip (fig. 2; destroyed during the War). It is the first instance of a pierced form in Hepworth's *oeuvre*.

In 1934, the year *Mother and Child* was created, Hepworth was pregnant with triplets by Nicholson, whom she later married in 1938 after his divorce was finalised. She returned repeatedly to the subject of maternity in her work. Many examples are sculptures in two pieces, with a smaller 'child' designed to sit on or nestle into its 'mother'. 'So poignant are these shapes of stone,' commented the critic Adrian Stokes in *The Spectator*, 'it is not a matter of a mother and child group represented in stone...Miss Hepworth's stone is a mother, her huge pebble its child' (quoted in *Barbara Hepworth*, *A Pictorial Autobiography*, London, 2012, p. 29). *Mother and Child*, however, presents the viewer with a single, unified form, whose gentle curves reference perhaps not only the Norfolk pebbles but also the Provençal countryside where Hepworth and Nicholson had recently travelled. She described travelling by train to Avignon through the Rhone valley: 'I began to imagine the earth rising and becoming human' (S. Festing, *Barbara Hepworth*, *A Life of Forms*, New York, 1995, p. 98).

Mother and Child first belonged to Sir Herbert and Margaret 'Ludo' Read, who took up residence in 3
The Mall Studio following their elopement from Edinburgh. Hepworth and Nicholson lived at no.
7 a few doors down, while other artists including Paul Nash also lived nearby. It is not known whether Mother and Child was originally a gift from Hepworth to Ludo or a purchase, but the two women maintained a close friendship.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2: B. Hepworth, *Pierced Form* (BH 35), 1932, pink alabaster, destroyed during WWII



Fig. 2

36. DICKINSON 37.

SCULPTURE WITH COLOUR AND STRING (BH 113 B)

conceived in 1939 and cast in bronze with string in 1961 in an edition of 9 + Artist's proof (this cast 3/9)
16.5 x 20.2 x 20.2 cm. (6 ½ x 8 x 8 in.)

Provenance:

Anon. sale; Sotheby's, London, 17 July 1968, lot 205. Private Collection, Europe, acquired at the above sale.

Literature:

H. Read, *Barbara Hepworth Carvings and Drawings*, London, 1952, no. 60a (plaster version illus.)

A. Bowness and J.P. Hodin, *Barbara Hepworth*, Neuchâtel, 1961, p. 165, no. 113 (plaster version).

Art in Britain 1930-40, exh. cat., Marlborough Fine Art, London, 1965, p. 13, no. 46 (illus.)

A.M. Hammacher, *Modern English Sculpture*, London, 1967, p. 81 (another cast illus.)

A.M. Hammacher, *The Sculpture of Barbara Hepworth*, New York, 1968, p. 78, no. 55 (another cast illus.)

Exhibited:

London, Marlborough Fine Art, *Art in Britain 1930-40*, March – April 1965, no. 46.





38. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON

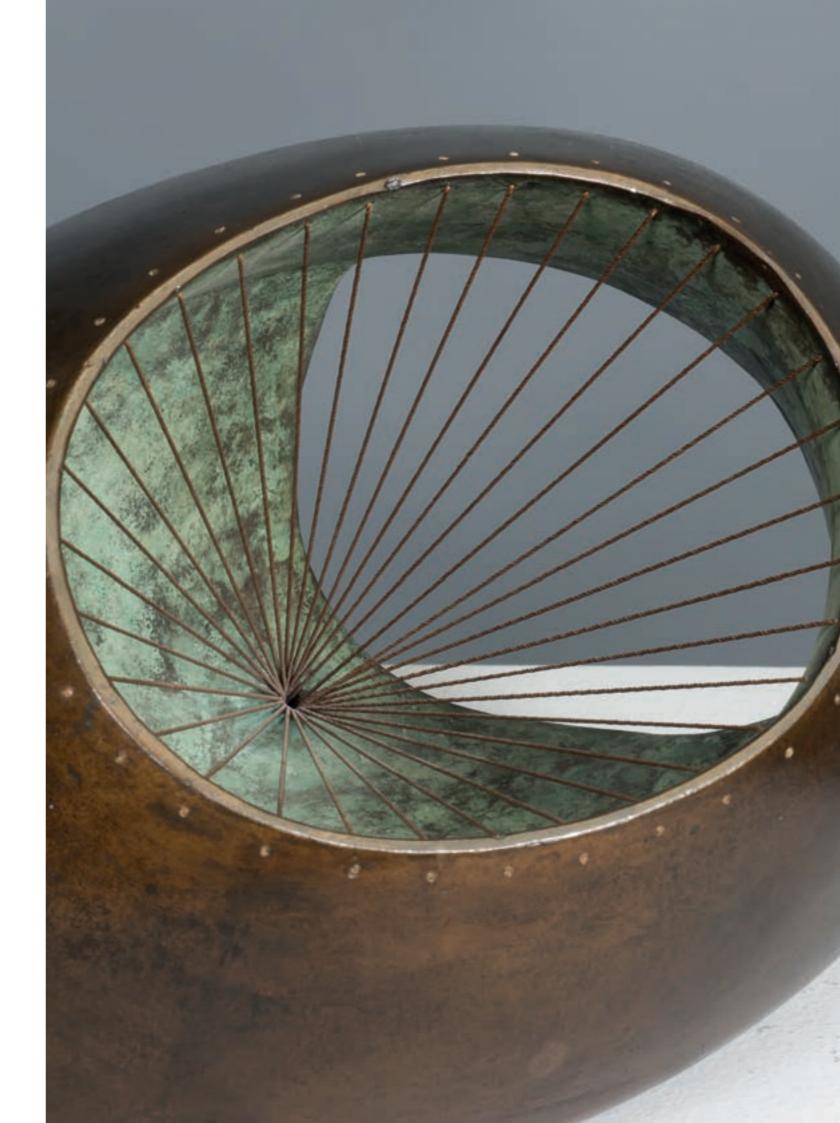
Sculpture with Colour and String was conceived in 1939 shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, around the time of Barbara Hepworth's move to St Ives on 25 August with her second husband Ben Nicholson. With a scarcity of materials to hand as a result of the conflict, Hepworth focused on drawing and carving on a small scale, incorporating string into her sculpture. Her work in this period was largely inspired by the avant-garde milieu of exiled artists she encountered in St Ives. As she wrote: 'In St Ives I was fortunate enough to have constant contact with artists and writers and craftsmen who lived there, Ben Nicholson my husband, Naum Gabo, Bernard Leach, Adrian Stokes, and there was a steady stream of visitors from London who came for a few days' rest, and who contributed in a great measure to the important exchange of ideas and stimulus to creative activity ... It was during this time that I gradually discovered the remarkable pagan landscape which lies between St Ives, Penzance and Land's End; a landscape which still has a very deep effect on me, developing all my ideas about the relationship of the human figure in landscape – sculpture in landscape and the essential quality of light in relation to sculpture which induced a new way of piercing the forms to contain colour' (letter to Margot Eates, Nov. 1945).

Sculpture with Colour and String was cast in 1961 from a coloured plaster maquette entitled Sculpture with Colour, White, Blue with Red Strings (BH 113A). The maquette was the only sculpture the artist took with her to St Ives and it was subsequently broken up and lost following the casting. In the bronze version Hepworth combines the Constructivist aesthetic of her earlier work, largely inspired by the

linear compositions of Naum Gabo (fig. 1), with the rich chromatic expressiveness of her bronze work commenced in the late 1950s. As she wrote: 'The sea, a flat diminishing plane, held within itself the capacity to radiate an infinitude of blues, greys, greens and even pinks of strange hues; the lighthouse and its strange rocky island was an eye; the Island of St Ives an arm, a hand, a face ... The colour in the concavities plunged me into the depth of water, caves, or shadows deeper than the carved concavities themselves. The strings were the tension I felt between myself and the sea, the wind or the hill.' (letter to Margot Eates, Nov. 1945).



Fig.1: N. Gabo, *Linear*Construction in Space No. 1, c.
1945-46, Perspex with nylon monofilament, 44.8 x 45.7
x 9.8 cm., The Solomon R.
Guggenheim Museum, New York



THREE FORMS (BH 521), 1971

signed, numbered and inscribed with foundry mark on the back of the base *Barbara Hepworth 9/9 Morris/Singer/FOUNDERS/LONDON*

conceived in alabaster in 1935 and cast in 1971 in an edition of 9 + Artist's proof (this cast 9/9) bronze with a light brown patina width: 47 cm. (18 ½ in.)

Provenance:

John Williams, UK, as a gift from the artist. His sale; Christie's, London, 21 June 2016, lot 161. Private Collection, UK, acquired at the above sale.



Three Forms was originally carved in grey alabaster in 1935 and is in the collection of the Tate's Barbara Hepworth Museum and Garden, St Ives (BH 66; fig. 1). As Herbert Read comments: 'Although Hepworth had been arranging organic elements on bases during 1933-34, the geometric forms seem to date from 1935. She would later associate the move to abstraction with the birth of her triplets on 3 October 1934. "When I started carving again in November 1934", she wrote, "my work seemed to have changed direction although the only fresh influence had been the arrival of the children. The work was more formal and all traces of naturalism had disappeared, and for some years I was absorbed in the relationships in space, in size and texture and weight, as well as in the tensions between the forms". (H. Read, Barbara Hepworth: Carvings and Drawings, London, 1952, section 3).

Three Forms was gifted to the guitarist John Williams when he performed at Hepworth's 70th birthday. As he later recalled: 'The party was organised by Gilbert Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art, and was held at a large hotel just outside St Ives. Barbara loved Greek music. At that time I was playing and recording with the great Greek singer Maria Farantouri and so we were both invited. A traditional Bouzouki group played well into the night after Maria and I performed songs by Theodorakis. Barbara was happy but tired towards the end and so missed the traditional Greek plate smashing; however, when I told her about it the next day she said "how wonderful!" The whole occasion was such an honour and pleasure and the gift of this sculpture was an extraordinary surprise; it has been by my music stand ever since'.

Fig. 1: B. Hepworth, Three Forms (BH 66), 1935, alabaster on marble base, 26.5 x 47.3 x 21.7 cm., Tate St Ives, Cornwall, on display at The Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden



42. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON 43.

STUDY FOR 'LISA (HANDS TO FACE)' (BH D 214), 1949

signed and dated upper right *Barbara Hepworth / 1949* pencil and oil on board 45.7 x 25.4 cm. (18 x 10 in.)

Provenance:

Mr and Mrs F.E. Halliday.

Private Collection, U.K.

Offer Waterman & Co, London.

Jerwood Collection, acquired from the above in April 2015.

Exhibited:

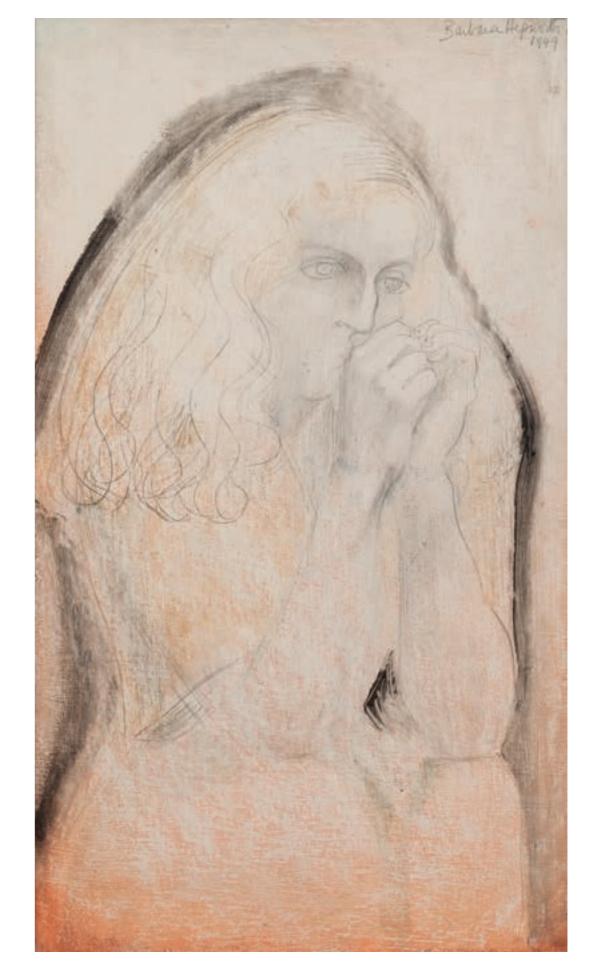
London, Lefevre Gallery, *New Sculpture and Drawings by Barbara Hepworth*, Feb. 1950, no. 41.

Venice, British Pavilion, British Council, XXV Biennale, *An Exhibition of Works by John Constable, Matthew Smith and Barbara Hepworth*, Summer 1950, no. 119. Wakefield, City Art Gallery, *Barbara Hepworth: Sculpture and Drawings, Festival of Britain*, May – July 1951, no. 90; this exhibition later travelled to York, City Art Gallery, July – Aug. 1951; and Manchester, City Art Gallery, Sept. – Oct. 1951. London, Whitechapel Art Gallery, *Barbara Hepworth, Retrospective Exhibition* 1927 – 1954, April – June 1954, no. 129.

St Ives, Parish Church, *Exhibition on the Occasion of the Conferment of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St Ives on Bernard Leach and Barbara Hepworth*, Sept. – Oct. 1968.

Plymouth, City Art Gallery, *Barbara Hepworth*, June – Aug. 1970, no. 69. Hastings, Jerwood Gallery, *Horizons: Kettle's Yard at Jerwood Gallery*, Sept. 2015 – Jan. 2016.

London, Business Design Centre, *London Art Fair, Coast*, Jan. 2016. Hastings, Jerwood Gallery, *Coast*, April – July 2016. Bristol, Royal West of England Academy, *In Relation: Nine Couples who Transformed Modern British Art*, Jun. 2018 – Sept. 2018.



44. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH 45.

Study for 'Lisa (Hands to Face)' was executed in 1949, the year that Hepworth bought Trewyn Studios (now The Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden) in St Ives, where she lived permanently from December 1950 until her death in 1975. Around this time she met and befriended a local girl called Lisa who would go on to sit for several other important drawings: Lisa Holding a Teacup (coin) (Private Collection), Two Girls with Teacups (Arts Council Collection) and Portrait of Lisa in Blue and Red (Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate), all dated 1949.

In the early 1940s Hepworth's drawings were 'precise, cool and totally abstract, exploring crystalline structures and curving forms which related directly to her sculptures (A. Bowness, Barbara Hepworth: Drawings from a Sculptor's Landscape, London, 1966, p. 17). In 1947 Hepworth was invited to watch an operation taking place in the Princess Elizabeth Orthopaedic Hospital in Exeter. She was only allowed to take in with her a pen and sterilised notepad, and she used her sketches to execute a series of fully-realised drawings. This new experience had a profound effect on Hepworth and prompted a renewed interest in drawing directly from life, which lasted for around two years. As she explained: 'With the model before one, every known factor has to be understood, filtered and selected; and then, from these elements in the living object, one chooses those which seem to be structurally essential to the abstract equivalent, relevant to the composition and material

in which one wishes to convey the idea' (*op. cit.*, p. 20).

Hepworth's drawing boards were prepared with layers of scumbled oil paint in muted colours, which were scraped or rubbed off in places as the drawings developed. Hepworth developed her use of pencil line over a painted ground while making her hospital drawings. It is an unconventional technique also employed by her second husband Ben Nicholson, which allowed both artists to achieve a greater spatial depth while retaining the precise line of a conventional drawing. Hepworth's economic line is in turn strong and delicate, while soft shading draws the viewer's focus towards the delicately modelled face and hands. She does not aim for a three-dimensional realisation of the figure, but rather she is concerned with capturing a sense of rhythm, so important to her sculpture.

All of Hepworth's drawings of Lisa pay close attention to the sitter's wavy hair, which Hepworth seems to have relished drawing. Colour is employed descriptively and to enhance the sitter's features; yellow oil paint is used generously, creating a halo around the sitter's head. As Hepworth wrote: 'One needs to record, endlessly, one's observations of the human form, and of nature. It is from these sources that my forms derive. I often involve myself in periods of drawing from life, especially when I find a model that excites me. The impulses of human life and nature absorb me' (quoted in A. Wilkinson, *The Drawings of Barbara Hepworth*, London, 2015, p. 90)

SKIAGRAM (BH D 210), 1949

oil and pencil on paper 54.6 x 36.8 cm. (21 ½ x 14 ½ in.)

Provenance:

Private Collection, UK.

Literature:

Barbara Hepworth. Retrospective Exhibition 1927 – 1954, exh. cat., Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, p. 25, no. 125.

N. Hepburn, *Barbara Hepworth: The Hospital Drawings*, exh. cat., The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield, 2012, p. 125 (illus. p. 111).

Exhibited:

New York, Durlacher Brothers, Barbara Hepworth (Drawings), Oct. 1949.

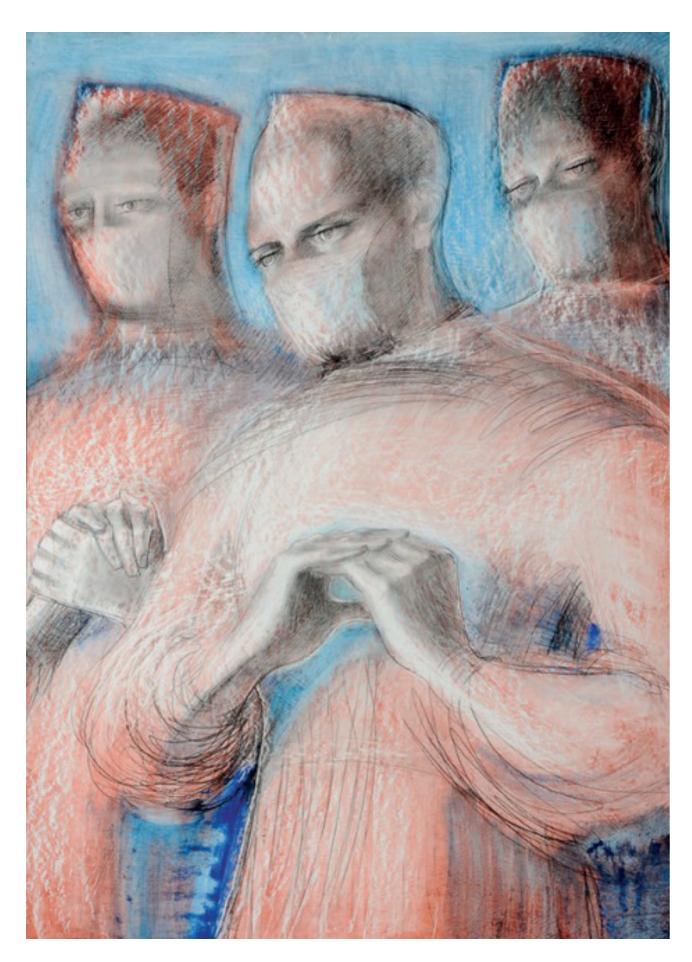
London, Lefevre Gallery, New Sculpture and Drawings by Barbara Hepworth, Feb. 1950.

Wakefield, City Art Gallery, *Barbara Hepworth*, *Sculpture and Drawings*, *Festival of Britain*, 19 May – 7 July 1951; this exhibition later travelled to York, City Art Gallery, 14 July – 12 Aug. 1951; and Manchester, City Art Gallery, *Barbara Hepworth: Sculpture and Drawings*, 24 Sept. – 21 Oct. 1951.

London, Whitechapel Art Gallery, *Barbara Hepworth: Retrospective Exhibition 1927 – 1954*, 8 April – 6 June 1954, no. 125. Wakefield, The Hepworth Wakefield, *Barbara Hepworth: The*

Hospital Drawings, 27 Oct. 2012 – 3 Feb 2013 (n.n.); this exhibition later travelled to Chichester, Pallant House Gallery, 16 Feb. – 2 June 2013; and Kent, Mascalls Gallery, 14 June – 24 Aug. 2013.

46. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON 47.



Skiagram is one of a series of compositions executed by Hepworth in the late 1940s that have come to be known collectively as the 'Hospital Drawings'. In 1943 Hepworth's daughter Sarah underwent surgery and her orthopaedic surgeon Norman Capener, an amateur sculptor, subsequently invited Hepworth to observe an operation. In 1947, Hepworth witnessed her first surgery, a hip replacement, and for three years after this outing she was permitted to work in operating theatres in London and in the West Country, sketching in a small notepad and later transferring her observations into larger scale drawings.

Observing these operations had a profound effect on Hepworth. She compared the movement and harmony of surgeons to that of an orchestra, ballet dancers and Olympians. She explained: 'I expected I should dislike it; but from the moment when I entered the operating theatre I became completely absorbed by two things: first, the extraordinary beauty of purpose and co-ordination between human beings all dedicated to the saving of life, and the way that unity of idea and purpose dictated a perfection of concentration, movement and gesture; and secondly by the way this special grace (grace of mind and body) induced a spontaneous space composition, an articulated and animated kind of abstract sculpture very close to what I had been seeking in my own work' (quoted in H. Read, Barbara Hepworth: Carvings and Drawings, London, 1952, opp. pl. 92).

In *Skiagram* this perception of beauty and purpose is clearly portrayed. As Hepworth said of the work in a lecture she gave to surgeons in Exeter in 1953: 'This was an exciting glimpse of three surgeons

studying the X-rays – their faces illuminated and their united attention giving them a similarity of appearance' (quoted in N. Hepburn, *op. cit.*, p. 111). The equipoise of Hepworth's three figures, depicted in their orange coats, creates a harmonious and compelling visual rhythm. At the centre of the composition the surgeon's clasped hands form a perfect circle, through which the bright blue of the background can be glimpsed, reminding the viewer of Hepworth's sculptural forms.

Indeed, for Hepworth there was a close relationship between the surgeon and the sculptor, whose mind is also focused on a single form: 'It ratified, moreover, my previous ideas as a sculptor, of the basic principles of abstract composition, rhythm, poise, and equilibrium which is inherent in human activity when the mind wholly governs the body for the fulfilment of an unselfish end' (quoted in N. Hepburn, op. cit., p. 81). As J.P. Hodin observed: 'It is of interest to note the tension between these representational drawings and the abstract sculptures produced at the same time. We feel that here is the key to the understanding of her working method, which is that of a constant interchange of outward observation and inner reflection' (J.P. Hodin, Barbara Hepworth, Neuchâtel, 1961, p. 21).

48. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON 49.



Fig. 1: Barbara Hepworth at work on an operating theatre drawing, *Quartet I Arthroplasty*, Chy an Kerris, Carbis Bay, Jan. 1948

RECLINING FIGURE (TRENONA) (BH 238), 1958

conceived in 1958 and cast the same year in an edition of 9 by the Art Bronze Foundry (this cast 5/9)

bronze

length: 30.6 cm. (12 in.)

Provenance:

Galerie Chalette, New York.

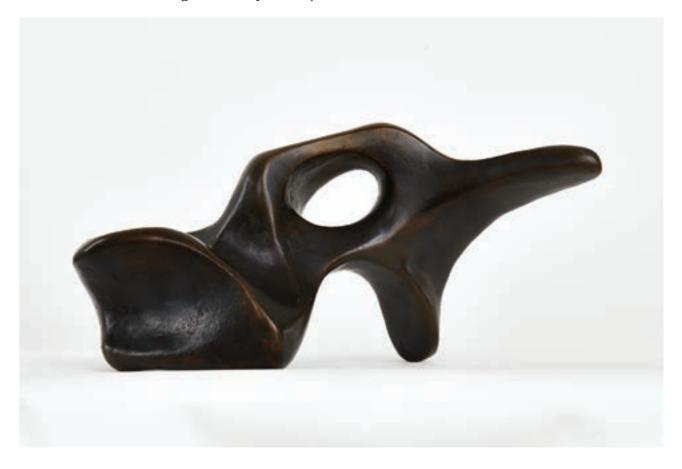
Private Collection, Buffalo, NY, acquired from the above in August 1959. Private Collection, New Orleans, LA, by descent from the above.

Literature:

J.P. Hodin, *Barbara Hepworth*, Neuchâtel, 1961, p. 170, no. 238 (another cast illus.) *Barbara Hepworth: An exhibition of sculpture from 1952 – 1962*, exh. cat., Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1962, no. 32 (another cast illus.) A.M. Hammacher, *Barbara Hepworth*, London, 1998, p. 135 (another cast illus.)

Exhibited:

New York, Galerie Chalette, *Hepworth*, Oct. – Nov. 1959, no. 22. Buffalo, NY, Upton Hall Gallery, State University College, *Outstanding Art Collections in the Greater Buffalo Area*, April – May 1964, n.n.



50. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON 51.

Reclining Figure (Trenona) was cast in 1958, just two years after Barbara Hepworth first began working in bronze, and the year before she won first prize at the prestigious São Paulo Bienal. 1958 was also the year that Hepworth was made C.B.E. in the New Year's honours list, an indication of her rising international fame.

Hepworth addressed the theme of the reclining figure – also a favourite motif of her contemporary Henry Moore – in paint and in wood and stone carving as well as in bronze. Reclining figures began appearing in her work in the late 1920s, with the drawing *Recumbent Nude* (1929; Private Collection) and alabaster *Reclining Figure* (1933; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.) among the earliest examples.

The subtitle of this sculpture refers a site near Truro in Cornwall. Hepworth often titled or subtitled her works with the names of places they recalled for her. She was initially inspired to consider the relationship between the figure and the landscape during a trip to Dieppe, Paris, Avignon and Saint-Rémy with her future second husband the artist Ben Nicholson in the spring of 1933. She later recalled her experiences in the South of France: 'after a bus ride we walked up the hill and encountered at the top a sea of olive trees receding behind the ancient arch on the plateau, and human figures sitting, reclining, walking, and embracing at the foot of the arch, grouped in rhythmic relation to the far distant undulating hills and mountain rocks' (quoted in Barbara Hepworth: Carvings and Drawings, London, 1952, n.p.) During their time in Paris, Hepworth and Nicholson visited the studio of the sculptor Jean Arp, and Hepworth was struck by his abstractions which combine elements of the human form with the landscape. In works like Reclining Figure (Trenona), Hepworth seemingly recalls these dual and complementary influences.

RECLINING FORM (MYKONOS) (BH D 433), 1960

signed and dated lower right Barbara Hepworth 1960; signed, titled and inscribed verso Barbara Hepworth / "Reclining Form (Mykonos)" / oil + pencil 1960/for Charles + Pelly October 3 1960 with love + affection / Barbara oil and pencil on board $38.2 \times 74.3 \text{ cm.} (15 \% \times 29 \% \text{ in.})$

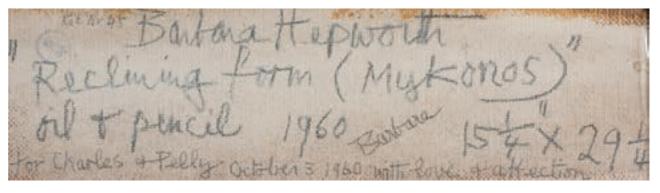
Provenance:

Charles and Pelly Lienhard, Zurich, a gift from the artist; Their sale; Sotheby's, London, 10 June 1976, lot 129. Private collection, UK, acquired at the above sale.

Exhibited:

Zurich, Charles Lienhard Gallery, Barbara Hepworth, Oct. 1960.





52. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON 53.

Hepworth first employed Greek titles in the 1940s, to honour her love of Greek mythology, art and culture, before she had ever been to the country. It was only in 1953, following the death of her eldest son, Paul Skeaping, in a flying accident, that Hepworth's friend Margaret Gardiner suggested a trip to Greece. Hepworth visited several sites on the mainland including Athens and Delphi, and a number of the Aegean islands, including Crete, Patmos, Santorini and Mykonos (fig. 1). This experience made a profound impact on her work. Hepworth later recalled: 'In Greece the inspiration was fantastic. I ran up the hills like a hare, with my notebook, to get there first and have the total impact of solitude. I made many drawings for new sculptures called 'Delphi', 'Delos', 'Mycenae', 'Epidauros' and 'Santorin'. These forms were my experience there...I had waited thirty years to get to Greece' (quoted in Barbara Hepworth: A Pictorial Autobiography, London, 1985, p. 71).

The Greek influence manifests itself in Hepworth's sculpture as a return to the simpler, more solid forms of her earlier years, with relatively larger masses and slightly smaller piercings (fig. 2). Reclining Form (Mykonos) can be directly linked to Curved Reclining Form (Rosewall) of 1960-62, which is named for a hill in St Ives but which also takes inspiration from Hepworth's visit to Greece.

The horizontal stretch of the form, with a narrower middle and relatively smaller piercings, is characteristic of her work from this period, and the shape is echoed in *Reclining Form (Mykonos)*. Both painting and sculpture evoke the swirling waves as well as the rounded shores of the island, eroded over time and polished by the sea.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Fig. 1: Mykonos, Greece

Fig. 2: B. Hepworth, *Corinthos* (BH 198), 1954-55, Guarea wood and paint on wooden base, 104.1 x 106.7 x 101.6 cm., Tate, London

Fig. 3: Hepworth with *Curved Reclining Form (Rosewall)* (BH
29), 1960-62, Nebrasina
stone, 90 x 230 x 60 cm., now
Chesterfield Museum and Art
Gallery, Derbyshire



Fig. 3

54. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON 55.

HAND SCULPTURE (BH 338), 1963

cherrywood; unique height: 59 cm. (23 ¼ in.)

Provenance:

Marlborough Fine Art, London, by 1967. Mary Louise Greiner, Madison, IN, (probably) acquired from the above.

Hanover College, Hanover, IN, a gift from the above by Nov. 1968.

Literature:

A. Bowness, *The complete sculpture of Barbara Hepworth 1960-69*, London, 1971, p. 36, no. 338 (illus. p. 37).

Exhibited:

Zurich, Gimpel-Hanover Galerie, *Barbara Hepworth*, 16 Nov. 1963 – 11 Jan. 1964, no. 23.

London, Gimpel Fils, *Barbara Hepworth*, 2 – 27 June 1964, no. 23.

Otterlo, The Netherlands, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller (Rietveld Pavilion), *Beeldhouwwerken en tekeningen van Barbara Hepworth*, 8 May – 18 July 1965, no. 37; this exhibition then travelled to Basel, Kunsthalle, 14 Sept. – 10 Oct. 1965, no. 28; Turin, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna,28 Oct. – Nov. 1965, no. 36; Karlsruhe, Badischer Kunstverein, 6 Feb. – 27 March 1966; and Essen, Museum Folkwang, 30 April – 26 June 1966.

London, Marlborough Fine Art, *Recent Acquisitions*, July – Aug. 1967, no. 7.

London, Tate Gallery, *Retrospective 1927 – 1967*, 3 April – 19 May 1968, no. 134.

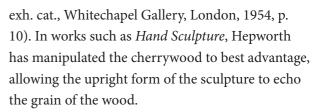
London, Marlborough Fine Art, *Recent Acquisitions*, July 1968, no. 15.



opposite:

Fig. 1: B. Hepworth, *The Artist's Hand* (BH 434), 1943-44, cast 1967, bronze, 5.8 x 18.6 x 9.2 cm., Tate, London

Hand Sculpture, one of Barbara Hepworth's mature carvings in wood, brings together several of her primary artistic concerns including material, oval forms, and piercing. Hepworth began using pierced forms in her sculpture as early as 1932. Her introduction of negative space enriched the possibilities of abstract sculpture by abolishing the presumption of a closed form. As she explained: 'I have always been interested in oval or ovoid shapes...the weight, poise, and curvature of the ovoid as a basic form. The carving and piercing of such a form seems to open up an infinite variety of continuous curves in the third dimension...' (quoted in 'Approach to Sculpture', The Studio, vol. 132, no. 643, Oct. 1946). This interest in the dialogue between the internal and external form was coupled with a fascination with her raw materials. She stressed the importance of listening to the materials of her art, noting: 'In sculpture there must be a complete realisation of the structure and quality of the stone or wood which is being carved. But I do not think that this alone supplies the life and vitality of the sculpture. I believe that the understanding of the material and the meaning of the form being carved must be in perfect equilibrium' (quoted in Barbara Hepworth Retrospective Exhibition 1927 - 1954,



Added to her inherent sensitivity to materials was an ongoing interest in certain motifs. Hepworth saw the hand as a symbol of the artist's creativity, observing: 'My left hand is my thinking hand. The right is only a motor hand. This holds the hammer. The left hand, the thinking hand, must be relaxed, sensitive. The rhythms of thought pass through the fingers and grip of this hand into the stone. It is also a listening hand. It listens for basic weaknesses of flaws in the stone; for the possibility or imminence of fractures' (quoted in Barbara Hepworth: A Pictorial Autobiography, London, 1985, p. 79). This relationship between the hand and the artwork was transmitted to the observer as well, through Hepworth's insistence that viewers touch as well as look at her work. Her sculptures were meant to appeal to both the visual and tactile senses: 'Our sense of touch is a fundamental sensibility...the ability to feel weight and form and assess its significance' (quoted in op. cit. p. 53).



Hands appear in both figurative and abstract form in Hepworth's work. Her bronze sculpture *The Artist's Hand*, conceived in 1943-44, follows the realist precedent set by Auguste Rodin (fig. 1). Around the same time, Hepworth created the first of the abstract *Hand Sculptures* (BH 123) in 1944. And there is an emphasis on the hands of the surgeons in Hepworth's *Hospital Drawings* of 1947-79. This unique example from 1963 is an elegant and sensitive interpretation of one of Hepworth's most personal and enduring motifs.

56. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON 57.

TWO FORMS (JANUARY 1967) (BH 436)

signed, dated and numbered on the base *Barbara Hepworth/1967 3/9* polished bronze, cast in an edition of 9 height (including base): 23 cm. (9 in.)

Provenance:

Waddington Galleries, London. Emile Golding Gallery, Los Angeles. Anon. sale; Bonham's, London, 16 Nov. 2011, lot 27. Private Collection, UK, acquired at the above sale.

Literature:

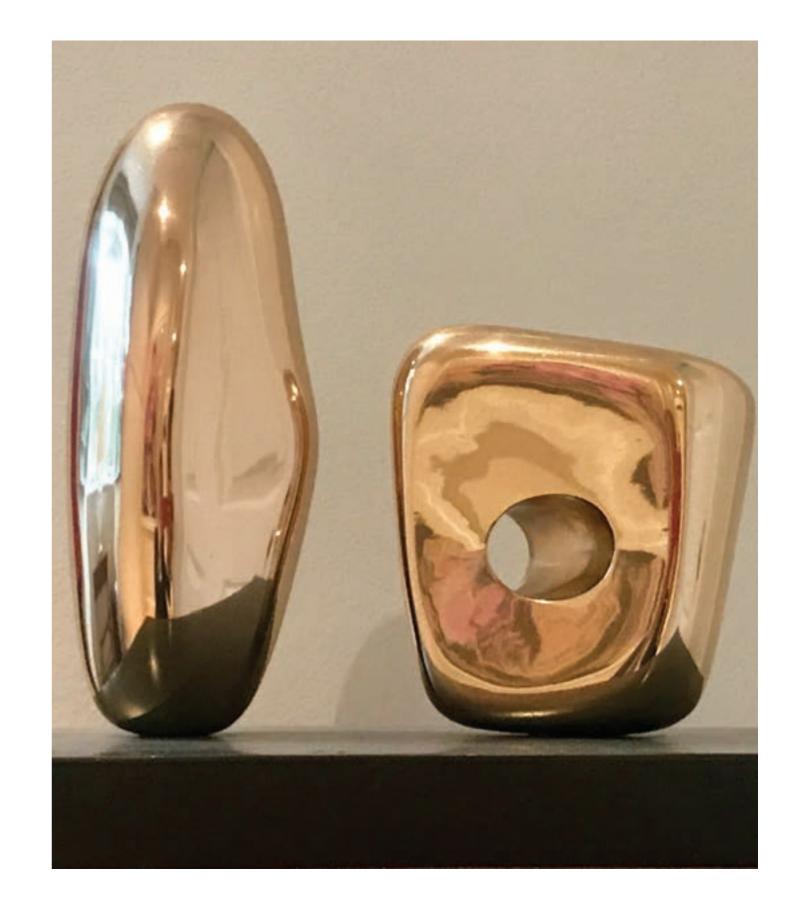
A. Bowness, *The complete sculpture of Barbara Hepworth 1960-69*, London, 1971, p. 45, no. 436 (another cast illus. p. 45).

Executed in the later years of Hepworth's life, *Two Forms (January 1967)* is based on a slate carving of the same title and year (BH 435) and explores many of the major themes she considered throughout her life. As Sophie Bowness has written, Hepworth's small polished bronzes are 'characterised by a sensuous, golden finish. They illustrate a new richness in her later work.' Their reflective surfaces, 'akin to the high finish achieved on some of her contemporary marble and slate carvings...have a light of their own as well as being highly reflective' (S. Bowness, *Barbara Hepworth, Polished Bronzes*, exh. cat., New Art Centre, Salisbury, 2001, n.p.)

The interaction of upright forms was one that was particularly relevant in Hepworth's late sculptures, largely influenced by the prehistoric rock formations she encountered in the Cornish landscape. As Hepworth wrote: 'I gradually discovered the remarkable pagan landscape which lies between St. Ives, Penzance and Land's End: a landscape which still has a very deep effect on me, developing all my ideas about the relationship of the human figure...

There is no landscape without the human figure: it is impossible for me to contemplate pre-history in the abstract' (quoted in B. Read, *Barbara Hepworth: Carvings and Drawings*, London, 1952, n.p.)

The piercing of the right form represents an important element in Hepworth's sculptural language, first explored in Pierced Form, 1932 (BH 35, destroyed during WWII). Whilst a number of European sculptors had introduced piercing into their work much earlier, notably Archipenko and Lipchitz, this had tended to be organic and related to the stylisation of their subject. Hepworth's introduction of this element enriched the possibilities of abstract sculpture by abolishing the concept of a closed, and thus entire form, and brought the individual sculpture firmly into the environment in which it was placed. In Two Forms (January 1967) the piercing also serves to create contrast between the solidity of the rounded forms and to add a delicacy and openness, as well as bringing shadow and contrast to the centre of the mass.



58. FORMED FROM NATURE: BARBARA HEPWORTH DICKINSON 59.



RIVER FORM (BH 568)

conceived in 1965 and cast in 1973 in an edition of 3 + Artist's proof (this cast 3/3) signed and numbered on the base *Barbara Hepworth 3/3*; and inscribed with foundry mark *Morris Singer Founder*, *London*

bronze

89 x 187 x 77 cm. (35 x 73 \(^3\)5 x 30 \(^1\)3 in.)

Provenance:

The Artist's Estate.

Private Collection, Switzerland, acquired from the above in 1987;

Thence by descent to the present owner, 2011.

Literature:

Barbara Hepworth: 'Conversations', exh. cat., Marlborough Gallery, New York, 1974, p. 20, no. 4 (illus.).

Monumenta: A Biennial Exhibition of Outdoor Sculpture, exh. cat., Monumenta Newport Inc., Rhode Island, 1974 (another cast illus. p. 72).

Barbara Hepworth 1903 – 1975, exh. cat., Marlborough Gallery, Zurich, 1975, p. 45, no. 21 (illus.)

Barbara Hepworth: Late Works, exh. cat., Edinburgh Festival Society, Royal Botanical Gardens, Edinburgh, 1976 (another cast illus. p. 28).

Barbara Hepworth: Carvings and Bronzes, exh. cat., Marlborough Gallery, New York, 1979, p. 47, no. 57 (illus.)

Anon., *Barbara Hepworth*, exh. cat., Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Bretton Hall, 1980, p. 29 (another cast illus.)

Masters of the 19th and 20th Centuries, exh. cat., Marlborough Gallery, New York, 1983, no. 19 (illus.)

D. Brown, *St Ives 1939-64: Twenty Five Years of Painting, Sculpture and Pottery*, exh. cat., Tate Gallery, London, 1985, p. 193 (walnut version illus. p. 71)

Barbara Hepworth – Sculpture from the Estate, exh. cat., Wildenstein, New York, 1996 (walnut version illus.)

M. Gale & C. Stephens, *Barbara Hepworth – Works in the Tate Gallery Collection and the Barbara Hepworth Museum St Ives*, London, 1998, pp. 234-35 (another cast illus.)

Exhibited:

Marlborough Gallery, New York, *Barbara Hepworth: 'Conversations'*, March – April 1974, no. 4.

Zurich, Marlborough Gallery, *Barbara Hepworth 1903 – 1975*, Aug. – Oct. 1975, no. 21. New York, Marlborough Gallery, *Barbara Hepworth: Carving and Bronzes*, 5 May – 29 June 1979, no. 57.

Wakefield, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, on loan 1980-82.

New York, Marlborough Gallery, *Masters of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 7 May – 11 June 1983, no. 19.

Originally conceived in American walnut in 1965 (fig. 1), *River Form* was produced in a small edition of three bronze casts plus one artist's proof in 1973. With the walnut version splitting shortly after completion the small bronze edition was proposed to preserve the sculpture. For Hepworth, bronze allowed her the lightness, flexibility and freedom to create forms evocative of the ebb and flow of the waves, the movement of the wind and the roughness of the rocky Cornish coastline. The sculpture's elegant form is pierced by three spiral hollows, reminiscent of the holes hewn out of rocks by water, while the enclosed interior features rich aquamarine hues.

Comparing bronze, which she discovered only in the late 1950s, to carving, Hepworth described how 'it has a presence but it doesn't look at you the way a carving does. There is a stronger sense of participating in the form – you want to go in and out as you look at a sculpture' (quoted in S. Bowness, ed., *Barbara Hepworth: Writings and Conversations*, London, 2015, p. 175). *River Form* creates a powerful interaction between viewer and artwork, echoing the artist's deep engagement with the Cornish coastline. As Hepworth declared: 'You can't make a sculpture, in my opinion, without involving your body'.

The other bronze examples are located in the Barbara Hepworth Sculpture Garden, Tate St Ives; the New Orleans Museum of Art (Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden); and the collection of Kensington Town Hall, London. With only one former owner since it was cast, this example of *River Form* represents an exciting opportunity to acquire one of Hepworth's most significant large-scale sculptures from the 1970s.



62. DICKINSON 63.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 1: *River Form* (BH 401), 1965, American Walnut, 74 x 188 cm., Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (on loan from the Hepworth Estate)

Fig. 2: River Form, The Artist's Proof, 0/3, bronze, Tate St Ives, Cornwall, on display at The Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden

Fig. 3: *River Form*, 1973, bronze, The Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden, New Orleans Museum of Art

Fig. 4: The Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden at Tate St Ives, Cornwall, with River Form in foreground



Fig. 4

64. DICKINSON

THREE FORMS ON AN ISLAND (BH 390), 1965

slate in three parts on a wooden base; unique including base: $24.1 \times 30.5 \times 25.4$ cm. (9 ½ x 12×10 in.)

Provenance:

Warren Forma, USA, a gift from the artist. Private Collection, USA, by descent from the above.

Literature:

A. Bowness, *The complete sculpture of Barbara Hepworth 1960-69*, London, 1971, p. 40, no. 390 (illus. pl. 122).

Exhibited:

London, Gimpel Fils, *Barbara Hepworth*, 25 May – 20 July 1966, no. 23.

1965, the year that she carved *Three Forms on an Island*, was a significant milestone for Barbara Hepworth. In recognition of her substantial contributions to British modernism, Hepworth was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire. She was also appointed a Trustee of the Tate Gallery (a position she held until 1972). Hepworth's international reputation was further cemented with the opening of a retrospective exhibition staged in the Rietveld Pavilion at the Kröller-Müller museum in Otterlo, Netherlands.

Hepworth began producing sculptural groupings like *Three Forms on an Island* in the 1930s. A work also called *Three Forms* was one of the first sculptures she created after the birth of her triplets with Ben Nicholson in 1934 (fig. 1). Her concern with harmonious arrangement led her to reduce her forms to the most simple shapes, and she later recalled that she was 'absorbed in the relationships in space, in size and texture and weight, as well as [in] the tensions between forms'. Such works can also be seen to draw on the influence of her contemporaries Constantin Brâncuşi and Jean Arp.

Three Forms on an Island is carved from slate, most likely Cornish slate. The material clearly resonated with her as she returned to it again and again over the course of her career. The verticality of the forms also pays homage to the ancient stones standing in the landscape around St Ives.



Fig. 1: B. Hepworth, *Three Forms* (BH 72), 1934, marble, Tate, London



66. DICKINSON 67.

TWO TURNING FORMS (IN 2 PARTS) (BH 548), 1972

white marble, in two parts on a wooden base, unique including base: 45.7 cm. x 76.2 cm. (18 x 30 in.)

Provenance:

Marlborough Gallery, New York.

Anon. sale; Sotheby's, New York, 9 Nov. 1994, lot 276. Anon. sale; Sotheby's, New York, 9 May 2002, lot 270a. Private Collection, UK, acquired at the above sale.

Literature:

Barbara Hepworth 'Conversations', exh. cat., Marlborough Gallery, New York, 1974, pp. 10 & 31, no. 9 (illus.)

Barbara Hepworth: Late Works, exh. cat., Edinburgh Festival Society, Edinburgh, 1976, pp. 14 & 37, no. 23 (illus.)

Barbara Hepworth: carvings, exh. cat. Marlborough Fine Art, London, 1982, pp. 8 & 31, no. 23 (illus.)

Exhibited:

New York, Marlborough Gallery, *Barbara Hepworth* 'Conversations', March – April 1974, no. 9. Edinburgh, Royal Botanic Garden, International Festival, *Barbara Hepworth: Late Works*, Aug. – Sept. 1976, no. 23.

London, Marlborough Fine Art, *Barbara Hepworth: Carvings*, July – Aug. 1982, no. 23.



The unique marble *Two Turning Forms*, conceived in 1972, is one of the finest examples of Barbara Hepworth's later work. During this epoch Hepworth returned to motifs from the 1930s, taking the strongest elements of her previous *oeuvre* and building on them to create a new dialogue of form. Some of the most successful of these recommencements were the group compositions. Hepworth embraced this subject with renewed energy, conceiving a series of multi-configurative works in the 1970s, the highlight of which was *Two Turning Forms* created three years before her death.

Hepworth took great pleasure in the physicality of carving, which allowed her direct contact with the material. In 1932 she stated: 'I have always preferred carving to modelling because I like the hard material and feel happier working that way. Carving is more adapted to the expression of the accumulative idea of experience and clay to the visual attitude' (quoted in *Barbara Hepworth*, exh. cat., Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Valencia, 2004, p. 19). In *Two Turning Forms* Hepworth manipulates the reflection of light, juxtaposing flat and curved planes so that it seems to radiate from the cold white marble. The forms can be moved into different positions, so as to change the composition of the piece. Hepworth enjoyed the

active nature of these works, relishing the potential involvement of the spectator. Indeed, Hepworth sought to recreate her experience of the landscape of Cornwall, her home from 1949 until her death in 1975. As the artist stated: 'I have gained very great inspiration from Cornish land- and sea-scape, the horizontal line of the sea and the quality of light and colour which reminds me of the Mediterranean light and colour which so excites one's sense of form' (quoted in 'Approach to Sculpture', *The Studio*, London, vol. 132, no. 643, Oct. 1946).

Although ostensibly abstract, *Two Turning Forms* hints at a maternal theme running through this series, as Penelope Curtis has identified: 'These works certainly complicate the rather tiresome notion of the stone engendering the form for the direct carver; here there is a tiering of this notion of genesis, which allows both literal and allegorical readings of giving birth' (P. Curtis, *Barbara Hepworth: St Ives Artists*, London, 1998, p. 33). As Adrian Stokes, Hepworth's first host in St Ives, wrote: 'It is not a matter of a mother and child group represented in stone. Miss Hepworth's stone is a mother, her huge pebble is a child' (quoted in A.M. Hammacher, *Barbara Hepworth*, London, 1987, p. 67).

DICKINSON 69.





SIMON C. DICKINSON LTD.

LONDON

58 Jermyn Street London SW1Y 6LX Tel (44) 207 493 0340 Fax (44) 207 493 0796

NEW YORK

19 East 66th Street New York NY 10065 Tel (1) 212 772 8083 Fax (1) 212 772 8186

www.simondickinson.com

COPYRIGHT

© Bowness

© Simon C. Dickinson Ltd., 2018

© Tate, London 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dickinson would like to express our gratitude to all the lenders of works of art, most of whom have chosen to remain anonymous. Besides those who wish to remain anonymous we would also like to thank Dr. Sophie Bowness, Dr. James Fox, Lara Wardle and Clair Montier of the Jerwood Collection, the Trustees of Hanover College, Indiana, Federica Bonacasa, Josephine Breese, David Wade, Andrew Kalman, Lyndsey Bracken, Tessa Jackson and Rebecca Gwyn. Without their trust and co-operation this project would never have been realised.



Regent's Park, London 5–7 October 2018 Preview 3–4 October frieze.com

Text: Molly Dorkin
Research: John Swarbrooke
© Simon C. Dickinson Ltd.

All Rights Reserved Simon C. Dickinson Ltd 2018