

MEDIA RELEASE

Works of the greatest British artist on display in Serbia from tomorrow

Banca Intesa sponsors Henry Moore exhibition

Belgrade, September 10, 2014 - Representatives of the British Council, the National Museum in Belgrade and Banca Intesa presented at the press conference today the exhibition of graphics and sculptures by the famous English artist Henry Moore titled "Henry Moore – the Graphic Artist" which will be opened on Thursday, September 11.

Participants in the press conference:

- Mr Bojana Borić Brešković, the Director of the National Museum in Belgrade
- Tony O'Brien, Director British Council Western Balkans
- Maja Kolar, Head of the Marketing and Communications Department and Acting Head of the Individuals Segment Management Department of Banca Intesa
- Dragana Kovačić, the custodian of the Collection of drawings and graphics by foreign authors in the National Museum and the professional consultant for the exhibition "Henry Moore – the Graphic Artist" in the National Museum in Belgrade
- David Mitchinson, the former Director of Henry Moore's Foundation and the artist's personal friend
- Lidija Ham Milovanović, moderator

This staging has been devised as a touring exhibition and presents a crosscut of Henry Moore's work in the period from 1934 to 1984. The British Council has been practicing for decades the promotion of British art through touring exhibitions and the works by Henry Moore assume a special place and importance in that. Back in 1943 several works were included in the touring exhibition in Brazil. The British Council precisely is for the most part meritorious because Henry Moore's art has been made popular worldwide.

All works which will be exhibited in the National Museum in Belgrade are kept in the collection of the British Council's Arts Department. On the 50th anniversary since the establishment of the British Council back in 1984, Moore donated over two hundred of his best graphics to the collection of this organization "Museum Without Walls". This gift, which has encompassed the works from nearly all periods of his creation, has been included in the existing collection comprising 124 Moore's graphics. In addition to 82 works on paper, as well as a dozen of photographs which are the pieces of work of the author himself who is known for taking photographs of his work in the spacious ambience, the collection of the British Council includes a significant number of his sculptures too. The exhibition in the National Museum will feature six sculpture models, dating back to the period between 1934 and 1977.

Biography

Henry Moore (Castleford 1899 – Perry Green, 1986) was a sculptor, a drawer and a graphic artist. He has remained remembered as the most prominent British sculptor of the twentieth century. Human figure is the central theme of his entire work. Though during his lifetime he witnessed some revolutionary changes and the introduction of new materials, his expression was based on various cultural and civilization traditions (Inca, Egypt, etc.) which has brought in conformity his work with deep consonance of the arts of old civilizations. His female figures echo with the shapes of mountains, valleys, rocks and caves while at the same time they are extending and enriching the tradition of the scenery characterizing the English visual culture and art.

As a youth, Moore spent his time between education and military service. At the age of 18 he was recruited for the World War I. After the war ended, he was studying for two years at the Art School in Leeds and he continued his education in 1921 at the Royal College in London. Moore was directly included in modernist artistic tendencies, having avoided academic traditionalism. Ever since the start of his career, he was aware of the importance of the direct work with the material and his contact with native sculptures of Oceania, Africa and, before all, of pre-Columbus America he became familiar with in the British Museum confirmed this. His early works, drawings and sculptures, resemble Palaeolithic goddesses of fertility, Cycladic, Egyptian, Sumer sculpture. In 1926 he wrote: “Keep ever prominent the world tradition – the big view of Sculpture.”

During the '30s Moore started a sort of corresponding with other sculptors, Giacometti, J. Arp and especially with Picasso's sculpture “Vicissitude” (1928). He respected surrealists with whom he coincided in the mystery of meanings and ambivalent forms, structures which presuppose the combination of bigger and smaller shapes of suggestive meanings. In 1933 he joined the avant-garde group Unit One. In late '30s he lived in Hampstead, not far from Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Naum Gabo and Piet Mondrian. Though he preserved his independence, the contact with Hepworth and Nicholson was mutually fruitful.

His house was destroyed in the bombing at the beginning of the World War II and so he moved together with his family to Perry Green, fifty kilometres north from London. Being an official war artist, he started his famous series from the shelter, presenting the citizens of London while sleeping or lying on the platforms of subway stations. The view of people sheltering on the platforms of subway stations and tunnels corresponded with the forms and empty spaces in his sculptures. These drawings almost reflect some visionary feeling of collective fear from disastrous dangers which will mark the modern age. On the other hand, the experience of London shelters contributed to more intensified and naturalist approach to human figure.

During the '50s Henry Moore's sculptures became less front-on and the emphasis was fully on three-dimensionality. However, the motifs remained the same – lying figures and a mother with a child were even more abstract now and the symbolism of motifs can be recognized only from their mutual relations.

During the '60s Moore was increasingly more exploring natural materials that he was finding in the environment and so he started introducing bones, shells, pebbles and stones in his works.

Since 1931, Henry Moore was constantly dealing with graphic and drawing (with shorter pauses) in addition to sculpture. He was interested in graphic as a field of research, approach to material and direct contact with it. In those terms, graphic matrix appears as equivalent to sculptures. Most of his pieces were made as copper engravings, in dry needle or aquatint and as lithography as well. During the sixties he was dealing with graphic more and more, the series the subject of which was "Elephant's skull" (1966), Stonehenge (1973) and "Sheep" (1972 and 1974). He produced a total of 719 graphics.