

## Eight views of Sculpture

***“The greatest art among the arts based on design is sculpture; it is seven times greater than painting because a statue should have eight views which should all be of equal quality” Cellini***

Taking Cellini's comment with a pinch of salt, he was obviously biased, we will take it as a starting point to consider eight ways in which sculpture may be considered. Although somewhat arbitrary and interchangeable these categories may be helpful in interpreting the works.

### Monumental



***Pharaoh Menkaura and queen Khamerernebty II***; Old Kingdom, Dynasty 4, 2490–2472 BC

The pose is very formal and frontal, allowing for only one viewpoint. It is static, and like a high relief. It is in effect a flat picture, the only suggestion of movement and three dimensions being the forward movement of the leg. The formality of the pose is reduced by the queen's right arm wrapped around her husband. Gigantic effigies like these are found guarding the doors of ancient Egyptian temples.

***Anavysos Kouros***, ca. 530 BC.

This life-size figure is fully in the round. It has escaped from the wall and we can walk around it, yet it still has only one primary viewpoint. The Kouros are free-standing ancient Greek sculptures that first appear in the Archaic period in Greece and represent nude male youths. In Ancient Greek *kouros* means "youth, boy, especially of noble rank".



***Equestrian Kouros*** archaic smile

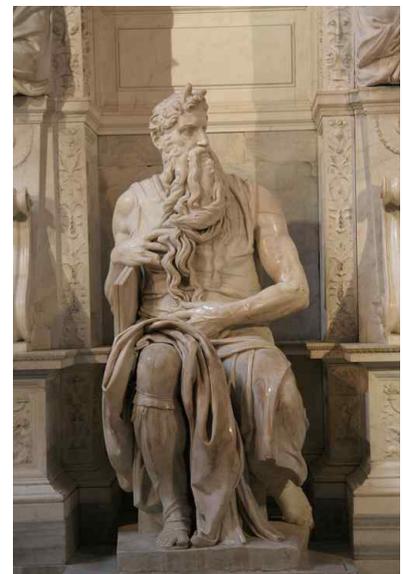
The **archaic smile** was used by sculptors in archaic Greece, especially in the second quarter of the 6th century BCE, possibly to suggest that their subject was alive and infused with a sense of well-being, and maybe blessed by the gods.

### **Michelangelo, *Moses* 1513-15**

Although sculpted fully in the round, by setting the figure in a niche a primarily frontal reading is imposed on the viewer. The turning of the head, the thrusting back of the left leg and the placement of the arms gives the essentially static pose of a seated figure a greater freedom of movement and three dimensionality.

Commissioned in 1505 by Pope Julius II for his tomb, the original project called for a freestanding, three-level structure with some 40 statues. It depicts the biblical figure Moses with horns on his head, based on a description in chapter 34 of Exodus in the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible used at that time.

The 'horns' was Jerome's attempt to faithfully translate the difficult, original Hebrew text, which uses the term *qāran* (based on the root *qeren*, which often means "horn"); the term is now interpreted to mean "shining" or "emitting rays".





**Constantin Brâncuși, *The Kiss*. 1907-08**

This version in plaster of *The Kiss* is an early example of Brâncuși's proto-cubist style of non-literal representation.

Brâncuși created many versions of *The Kiss*, further simplifying geometric forms and sparse objects in each version, tending each time further toward abstraction. His abstract style emphasizes simple geometrical lines that balance forms inherent in his materials with the symbolic allusions of representational art. Here, the shape of the original block of material is maintained, creating a monumental feel. Another version of *The Kiss* serves as an adornment of a tomb in Montparnasse cemetery in Paris.

**Antony Gormley, *Angel of the North***

Completed in 1998, it is a steel sculpture of an angel, 20 meters (66 ft) tall, with wings measuring 54 meters (177 ft) across. The wings are angled 3.5 degrees forward to create, according to Gormley, "a sense of embrace". The angel, like much of Gormley's other work, is based on a cast of his own body.



Notwithstanding that it is set in the open landscape this modern sculpture has one principal frontal viewpoint. Although not built to commemorate an individual, or event, such as a battle, it has become a focus for tourists and a monument to the North.

According to Gormley, the significance of an angel was three-fold: firstly, to signify that beneath the site of its construction, coal miners worked for two centuries; secondly, to grasp the transition from an industrial to an information age; and thirdly, to serve as a focus for our evolving hopes and fears.

**The Pursuit of the Real**

**Bernini, *The Rape of Proserpina***

This is a large Baroque marble sculptural group executed between 1621 and 1622. Bernini was only 23 years old at its completion. It depicts the abduction of Proserpina, who is seized and taken to the underworld by the god Pluto. The word "Rape" is the traditional translation of the Latin *raptus*, "seized" or "carried off", and does not refer specifically to sexual violence.

In this we see a fully, in the round, sculpture. It has no frontal or single viewpoint, but invites the viewer to walk around it and appreciate it from different angles. It fully fulfils Cellini's dictum that a sculpture should have eight views.

The extent to which Bernini attempted to represent reality and bring his figures to life, can be seen in the contrast of smooth flesh and the ropes of hair, the tears running down the cheek of



Proserpina, and the detail of the fingers of Pluto, digging into her soft flesh.





**Rodin, *The Age of Bronze* 1877**

The figure is of a life-size nude male, 72 in. (182.9 cm) high. When first exhibited it was without a visible base, which isolates the figure from the real world. The base was buried in sand, thus giving the impression that the figure was standing in our world.

When the statue was first exhibited at the 1877 Salon in Paris, Rodin was falsely accused of having made the statue by casting a living model, a charge that was vigorously denied. This charge benefited Rodin though, because people were so eager to see this for themselves.

The figure was intended to suggest heroism and suffering, reflective of what many of Rodin's countrymen went through while fighting in the Franco-Prussian War from 1870 to 1871.

Similar to many classical sculptures of young men leaning on a staff, *The Age of Bronze* has a sense of movement which was unprecedented in sculpture of the time. The raised arm to the head gives a sense of heroism to the piece.

By removing the original staff in the right hand of the figure Rodin created a movement which is central to the piece. The bend in the right knee also adds to this feeling and gives the figure an energy which other artist's may not have thought of.

**Degas, *Little Dancer of Fourteen Years*, 1879–80**

The sculpture is one-third life size and was originally sculpted in wax, a somewhat unusual choice of medium for the time. It is dressed in a real bodice, tutu and ballet slippers and has a wig of real hair. All but a hair ribbon and the tutu are covered in wax.

Realistic wax figures with real hair and real clothes had also been popular in religious, Folk, and fine arts for centuries before Degas created his *Little Dancer*.



The arms are taut, and the legs and feet are placed in a ballet position akin to fourth position at rest, and there is tension in the pose, an image of a ballerina being put through her paces, not posing in an angelic way. Her face is – "contorted, people thought it was a deliberate image of ugliness, but you could also say it's the image of a sickly gawky adolescent who is being made to do something she doesn't totally want to do."



**Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917**

*Fountain* is a readymade sculpture consisting of a porcelain urinal signed "R. Mutt". In April 1917, an ordinary piece of plumbing chosen by Duchamp was submitted for an exhibition of the *Society of Independent Artists*, the inaugural exhibition by the Society to be staged at The Grand Central Palace in New York. In Duchamp's presentation, the urinal's orientation was altered from its usual positioning. Duchamp was on the committee but as the work was submitted under the name of Richard Mutt, the rest of the committee were unaware of its originator. As the policy was to accept all submissions the work was not refused but, deemed 'unsuitable', was hidden behind a curtain.

The only surviving record of the original work, now lost, is a photograph taken by Alfred Steiglitz in his studio to where it was removed after the exhibition was closed.

An editorial in the second edition of *The Blind Man* (an art and Dada journal published briefly by the New York Dadaists in 1917.) accompanying the photograph, entitled "The Richard Mutt Case", made a claim that would prove to be important concerning certain works of art that would come after it:

*"Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object."*

In defence of the work being art, the piece continues, "The only works of art America has given are her plumbing and her bridges." Duchamp described his intent with the piece was to shift the focus of art from physical craft to intellectual interpretation.

In a letter dated 23 April 1917, Stieglitz wrote of the photograph he took of *Fountain*: "The "Urinal" photograph is really quite a wonder—Everyone who has seen it thinks it beautiful—And it's true—it is. It has an oriental look about it—a cross between a Buddha and a Veiled Woman."

*The Independent* noted in a February 2008 article that with this single work, Duchamp invented conceptual art and "severed forever the traditional link between the artist's labour and the merit of the work".

As a variant of the *found object* Duchamp coined the term *ready-made* in 1915 to describe a common object that had been selected and not materially altered in any way. They are ordinary manufactured objects that the artist selected and modified, as an antidote to what he called "retinal art". By simply choosing the object (or objects) and repositioning or joining, titling and signing it, the object became art. He assembled *Bicycle Wheel* in 1913 by attaching a common front wheel and fork to the seat of a common stool. Many modern artists are notable for their use of found objects in their art.



**Edward Keinholz, *Back Street Dodge '38* 1964**

This assemblage made from a car sawn in half, including other real objects such as the beer bottles, stems from Duchamp's Readymades, his punning titles and the Dadaist practice of 'reassigning' everyday objects into artworks. Two figures made from shop dummies and chicken wire engage in sexual activity on the rear seat. There is an obvious shocking intention behind the work, which attempts only to 'tell the story' with no aesthetic purpose.

A 1966 show at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) drew considerable controversy over the exhibition of the assemblage. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors called it "revolting, pornographic and blasphemous" and threatened to withhold financing for the museum unless the tableau was removed from view. A compromise was reached under which the sculpture's car door would remain closed and guarded, to be opened only on the request of a museum patron who was over 18, and only if no children were present in the gallery. The uproar led to more than 200 people lining up to see the work the day the show opened. Ever since, *Back Seat Dodge '38* has drawn crowds.

Art critic Brian Sewell called Edward Kienholz "the least known, most neglected and forgotten American artist of Jack Kerouac's Beat Generation of the 1950s, a contemporary of the writers Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs and Norman Mailer, his visual imagery at least as grim, gritty, sordid and depressing as their literary vocabulary".

Kienholz's *The Beanery* (1965) is a life-size, walk-in artwork. It has been referred to as his greatest work, and "one of the most memorable works of late 20th-century art". It represents the interior of a Los Angeles bar, Barney's Beanery. Modelled at two-thirds the size of the original Beanery, it features the smells and sounds of the bar, and models of customers, all of whom have clocks for faces with the time set at 10:10. Only the model of Barney, the owner, has a real face. Kienholz is quoted as saying "The entire work symbolizes the switch from real time (symbolized by a newspaper) to the surrealist time inside the bar, where people waste time, kill time, forget time, and ignore time".



## Movement and action



**Late Archaic warrior from the east pediment of the Temple of Aphaea, c. 500**

This fully in the round sculpture, and finished on the back surfaces which would have been unseen, imparts a sense of movement in the twist of the body as he falls. The pose had a practical purpose in the sculptural scheme as it was made to fit into the awkward shallow triangle at the corner of the pediment. It betrays traces of paint, indicating that it would have been painted to give it more realism.

### **Dying Gaul**

An Ancient Roman marble semi-recumbent statue a copy of a now lost sculpture from the Hellenistic period (323-31 BC) thought to have been made in bronze. The original may have been commissioned at some time between 230 and 220 BC by Attalus of Pergamon to celebrate his victory over the Galatians.

The twist of the body supported by a backward thrusting arm, the relaxed left arm with the hand pressing down on the thigh, the splayed legs and the drooping head all combine to dramatise the action and the circular movement. Further touches of realism are added by the ruffled hair, the raised veins in the right arm, the neck band and the wound in his side dripping blood.



**Henry Moore, *Falling Warrior* 1956-7**

Moore was internationally famous for sculptures of female figures when, in the mid-1950s, he produced a number of sculptures of vulnerable males. For these he looked to classical precedents, photographs and such other sources as the plaster casts of the victims of Pompeii. These suffering male figures spoke, perhaps, to current Cold War anxieties and memories of recent warfare.

This sculpture depicts an almost life-size male figure positioned horizontally over a rectangular base. The figure holds a circular shield in his left hand, which is drawn up towards his head, and appears to be suspended in motion, hovering just above the base. The sculpture is attached to the base at three points: the left heel, the right hand, and the shield.

Although the figure is recognizably a human male, *Falling Warrior* is not represented naturalistically. The arms and legs are particularly thin and the head is disproportionately small when compared to the larger, bulbous belly and buttocks. When seen from the head and the foot of the base, the figure seems to twist at the waist, so that the left shoulder and the right hip are both higher than their counterparts. In addition, the sculpture has not been positioned squarely within the limits of the base; instead the body is curved, with the head and the feet placed towards the rear of the base, and the hips positioned towards the front.

Moore stated:

*In the Falling Warrior sculpture I wanted a figure that was still alive. The pose of the first maquette was that of a completely dead figure and so I altered it to make the action that of a figure in the act of falling, and the shield became a support for the warrior, emphasising the dramatic moment that precedes death.*

The critic David Sylvester proposed that the sculpture is best understood in terms of:  
*the experience within our own body of muscular stresses and strains ... So that, as we stand there and look at it we feel a dislocation in our torsos, we feel our backs hit the ground, our legs thrown helplessly in the air. The empathy we suffer is violent, convulsive, and seems to strain our muscles to the utmost limit.*

### **Rodin, *The Burghers of Calais* 1884-89**

There is a sense of movement weaving in and around the group attained by the way in which they have been assembled.

Rodin's design, which included all six figures rather than just de Saint Pierre as commissioned, was controversial. The public felt that it lacked "overtly heroic antique references" which were considered integral to public sculpture. It was not a pyramidal arrangement and contained no allegorical figures. It was intended to be placed at ground level, rather than on a pedestal. The burghers were not presented in a positive image of glory; instead, they display "pain, anguish and fatalism". To Rodin, this was nevertheless heroic, the heroism of self-sacrifice.



Rodin was a naturalist, less concerned with monumental expression than with character and emotion. Departing with centuries of tradition, he turned away from the idealism of the Greeks, and the decorative beauty of the Baroque and neo-Baroque movements. His sculpture emphasized the individual and the concreteness of flesh, and suggested emotion through detailed, textured surfaces, and the interplay of light and shadow. To a greater degree than his contemporaries, Rodin believed that an individual's character was revealed by his physical features.

Rodin restored an ancient role of sculpture – to capture the physical and intellectual force of the human subject – and he freed sculpture from the repetition of traditional patterns, providing the foundation for greater experimentation in the 20th century.

#### **Rodin's method:**

Instead of copying traditional academic postures, Rodin preferred his models to move naturally around his studio (despite their nakedness). The sculptor often made quick sketches in clay that were later fine-tuned, cast in plaster, and cast in bronze or carved from marble. After he completed his work in clay, he employed highly skilled assistants to re-sculpt his compositions at larger sizes to cast the clay compositions into plaster or bronze, and to carve his marbles. Rodin's major innovation was to capitalize on such multi-staged processes of 19th century sculpture and their reliance on plaster casting.

The figures of the burghers would have been modelled in the nude. The clothes were added by draping material dipped either into thin clay, or into wet plaster at the next stage. Plaster casts would be made from the clay and from those moulds would be made to cast the figures in bronze.



In 1895 the monument was installed in Calais on a large pedestal in front of a public park, contrary to the sculptor's wishes, who wanted contemporary townsfolk to "almost bump into" the figures and feel solidarity with them. Only later was his vision realised, when the sculpture was moved in front of the newly completed town hall of Calais, where it now rests on a much lower base.

#### **Rodin, *The Burghers of Calais***

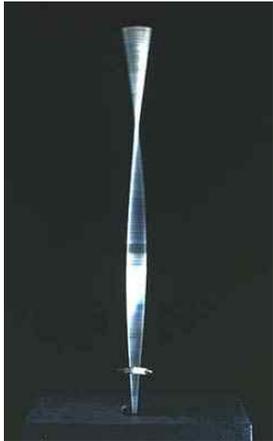
We can walk around and between the individual figures in this arrangement. They are set at ground level and closer to Rodin's intention that we could bump into them.

### Alexander Calder, *Crinkly With Red Disk* 1973

Calder's mobiles were amongst the first sculptures to incorporate actual movement into the artwork.

In 1926, at the suggestion of a Serbian toy merchant in Paris, Calder began to make mechanical toys. At the urging of fellow sculptor Jose de Creeft, he submitted them to the Salon des Humoristes. Calder began to create his *Cirque Calder*, a miniature circus fashioned from wire, cloth, string, rubber, cork, and other found objects.

It was the mixture of his experiments to develop purely abstract sculpture following his visit with Mondrian that led to his first truly kinetic sculptures, actuated by motors and cranks, that would become his signature artworks. Calder's kinetic sculptures are regarded as being amongst the earliest manifestations of an art that consciously departed from the traditional notion of the art work as a static object and integrated the ideas of gesture and immateriality as aesthetic factors.



**Kinetic art** is art from any medium that contains movement perceivable by the viewer or depends on motion for its effect. It most often refers to three-dimensional sculptures and figures such as mobiles that move naturally or are machine operated. The moving parts are generally powered by wind, a motor or the observer. Kinetic art encompasses a wide variety of overlapping techniques and styles.

**Naum Gabo** employed a motor in his *Kinetic Construction* or *Standing Wave* of 1919-20: a single metal rod which produces a perceptible form when vibrating.

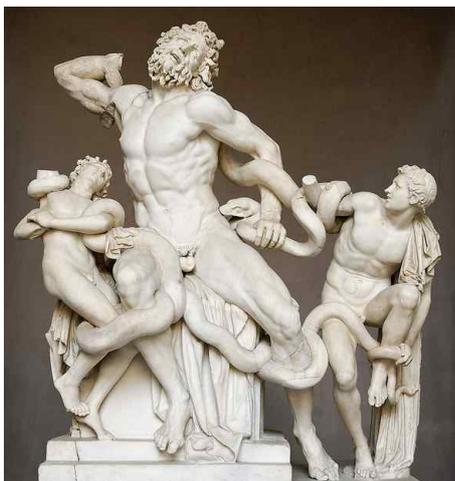
The essence of Gabo's art was the exploration of space, which he believed could be done without having to depict mass

Caroline Collier, an authority on Gabo's work, said, "The real stuff of Gabo's art is not his physical materials, but his perception of space, time and movement. In the calmness at the 'still centre' of even his smallest works, we sense the vastness of space, the enormity of his conception, time as continuous growth." In fact, the element of movement in Gabo's sculpture is connected to a strong rhythm, more implicit and deeper than the chaotic patterns of life itself. The exactness of form leads the viewer to imagine journeying into, through, over and around his sculptures.

### Narrative

#### **Phidias, *Lapith Fighting a Centaur* c. 447–433 BCE**

This High Classical high relief from the Parthenon Frieze on the Parthenon tells the story from Greek mythology of the battle between the Lapiths and Centaurs; an account which would have been immediately understood by a fifth century Greek audience.



#### **Laocoön and His Sons**

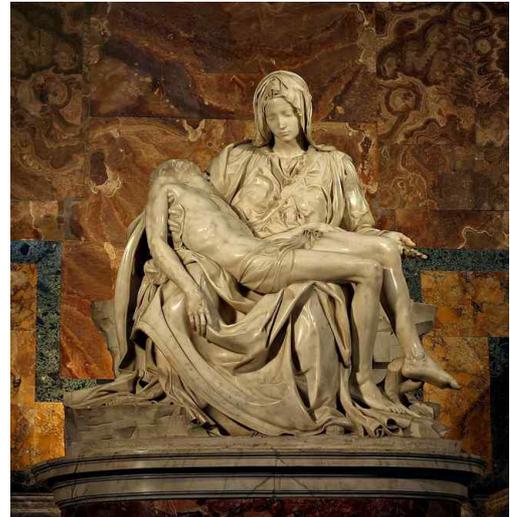
This sculpture, possibly a Roman copy of a Greek Hellenic original, of near life size figures show the Trojan priest Laocoön and his sons being attacked by sea serpents as a punishment. There are various versions of the story, the most famous being Virgil's *Aeneid*.

It has been one of the most famous ancient sculptures ever since it was excavated in Rome in 1506 and placed on public display in the Vatican, where it remains. It influenced many Renaissance and subsequent sculptors.

The group has been called "the prototypical icon of human agony" in Western art, and unlike the agony often depicted in Christian art showing the Passion of Jesus and martyrs, this suffering has no redemptive power or reward. The suffering is shown through the contorted expressions of the faces, which are matched by the struggling bodies, especially that of Laocoön himself, with every part of his body straining. (Charles Darwin pointed out that Laocoön's bulging eyebrows are physiologically impossible).

### Michelangelo, *Pietà*, 1499

The *Pietà* depicts the body of Jesus on the lap of his mother Mary after the Crucifixion. The theme is of Northern origin. Michelangelo's interpretation of the *Pietà* is unprecedented in Italian sculpture. It is an important work as it balances the Renaissance ideals of classical beauty with naturalism. He successfully combines two figures into a coherent and unified whole; making a compact group.



This is one of the earliest sculptures of the young Michelangelo, and the only one he signed. The challenge for Michelangelo was to represent in a convincing and natural style a dead male figure lying across the lap of a young woman. He achieves this with great subtlety by making the figure of Mary larger than would be in real life than that of her son. This disparity in size is disguised by reducing the size of her head to that of Christ, and by the elaboration of the folds in her garment, which partially hide the proportions of the figure beneath. The placing of the sculpture high up on a plinth elevates and detaches the Holy pair from the everyday world of the worshipers. It also has the effect of emphasising the body of Christ and putting his mother into the background.

Also, in contradistinction from the apparent realism is the depiction of Mary as a much younger woman than she would have been at Christ's death. This is appropriate for her veneration as the queen of Heaven.



### Louise Bourgeois, *Maman* (1999)

*Maman* is a bronze, stainless steel, and marble sculpture which depicts a spider. It is among the world's largest sculptures, measuring over 30 ft high and over 33 ft wide (9.27 x 8.91 x 10.24 metres) It includes a sac containing 32 marble eggs and its abdomen and thorax are made of ribbed bronze.

The title is the familiar French word for *Mother* (*Mummy*). The sculpture was created in 1999 by Bourgeois as a part of her



inaugural commission of The Unilever Series (2000), in the Turbine Hall at London's Tate Modern. This original was created in steel, with an edition of six subsequent castings in bronze.

Like all of Bourgeois's sculptures it has a strong personal and narrative context.

The sculpture picks up the theme of the arachnid that Bourgeois had first contemplated in a small ink and charcoal drawing in 1947, continuing with her 1996 sculpture *Spider*. It alludes to the strength of Bourgeois' mother, with metaphors of spinning, weaving, nurture and protection. Her mother, Josephine, was a woman who repaired tapestries in her father's textile restoration workshop in Paris. When Bourgeois was twenty-one, she lost her mother to

an unknown illness. A few days after her mother's passing, in front of her father (who did not seem to take his daughter's despair seriously), Louise threw herself into the Bièvre River; he swam to her rescue.

*The Spider is an ode to my mother. She was my best friend. Like a spider, my mother was a weaver. My family was in the business of tapestry restoration, and my mother was in charge of the workshop. Like spiders, my mother was very clever. Spiders are friendly presences that eat mosquitoes. We know that mosquitoes spread diseases and are therefore unwanted. So, spiders are helpful and protective, just like my mother.*

— Louise Bourgeois



**Rachel Whiteread, *House* 1999**

*House*, perhaps Whiteread's best-known work, was a concrete cast of the inside of an entire Victorian terraced house completed in autumn 1993. It carries the narrative of its form in the high surface relief, which has associations with its purpose, its history and with abstract relief sculptures, such as those of Ben Nicholson.

It was exhibited at the location of the original house – 193 Grove Road – in East London (all the houses in the street had earlier been knocked down by the council). It drew mixed responses, winning her both the Turner Prize for the best young British artist in 1993 and the K Foundation art award for the worst British artist. Tower Hamlets London Borough Council demolished *House* on 11 January 1994, a decision which caused some controversy itself.

Many of Whiteread's works are casts of ordinary domestic objects and, in numerous cases, their so-called negative space. For example, she is known for making solid casts of the open space in and around pieces of furniture such as tables and chairs, architectural details and even entire rooms and buildings. She says the casts carry "the residue of years and years of use." Whiteread mainly focuses on the line and the form for her pieces.

While still at the Slade, Whiteread cast domestic objects and created her first sculpture, *Closet*. She made a plaster cast of the interior of a wooden wardrobe and covered it with black felt. It was based on comforting childhood memories of hiding in a dark closet. *Shallow Breath* (1988), is the cast of the underside of a bed, made not long after her father died.

## Ritual and Religion

### **Bernini, *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*, 1651**

The two central sculptural figures of the swooning nun and the angel with the spear derive from an episode described by Teresa of Avila, a mystical cloistered Discalced Carmelite reformer and nun, in her autobiography, *The Life of Teresa of Jesus* (1515–1582).

The group is illuminated by natural light which filters through a hidden window in the dome of the surrounding shrine, and underscored by gilded stucco rays. Teresa is shown lying on a cloud indicating that this is intended to be a divine apparition we are witnessing. As such the representation of the saint, who is regarded as an intermediary with divine power, is intended as an object of veneration.

Other witnesses appear on the side walls; life-size high-relief portraits of the donor are shown as present at the apparition discussing the event in boxes as if at the theatre. Although the figures are executed in white marble, the aedicule, wall panels and theatre boxes are made from coloured marbles. Above, the vault of the Chapel is frescoed with an illusionistic cherub-filled sky with the descending light of the Holy Ghost allegorized as a dove.



Saint Theresa described her experience of religious ecstasy in her encounter with the angel as follows:

*I saw in his hand a long spear of gold, and at the iron's point there seemed to be a little*

fire. He appeared to me to be thrusting it at times into my heart, and to pierce my very entrails; when he drew it out, he seemed to draw them out also, and to leave me all on fire with a great love of God. The pain was so great, that it made me moan; and yet so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive pain, that I could not wish to be rid of it. The soul is satisfied now with nothing less than God. The pain is not bodily, but spiritual; though the body has its share in it. It is a caressing of love so sweet which now takes place between the soul and God, that I pray God of His goodness to make him experience it who may think that I am lying.



**Nataraja: Shiva as Lord of the Dance** Chola bronze, Tamil Nadu, 10th or 11th century.

In common with the Bernini effigy of Saint Teresa this is an image to venerate and an aid to spiritual devotion. In hinduism images of the gods are decorated with flowers and washed with oils.

**Nataraja** is a depiction of the Hindu god Shiva as the divine dancer. The dynamism of the energetic dance is depicted with the whirling hair which spreads out in thin strands as a fan behind his head. The details in the Nataraja artwork have been variously interpreted by Indian scholars since the 12th century for its symbolic meaning and theological essence.

**Käthe Kollwitz, *The Grieving Parents*, 1932**

In this World War I memorial for her son Peter, the compact images of the parents, withdrawn but dignified, inspire a mood of thoughtful contemplation in the viewer. They may invite prayer for the soul of the deceased son in the compassionate believer who stands before them.



**Mask from Gabon**

This mask would not have been regarded as an art object to be admired for its aesthetic value by the person who made it. It is an object to be worn during a ritual occasion. The bold forms and direct impact on the emotions of such unsophisticated masks and sculptures, produced by pre-civilised communities, have influenced many twentieth century artists through the simplified and powerful geometry of these painted constructions.

**Open Form**

**Canova, *Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss***

We see from this that Henry Moore was not the first sculptor to make 'holes' in his sculptures, and invite the viewer to move inside and through the forms, and imagine what the view might be from the other side.

This representation of the god Cupid in the height of love and tenderness, immediately after awakening the lifeless Psyche with a kiss, is regarded as a masterpiece of Neoclassical sculpture. It shows the mythological lovers at a moment of great emotion, characteristic of the emerging movement of Romanticism.



Rather than presenting the scene to be contemplated from one viewpoint the viewer is forced to walk around and regard it from different angles to achieve a full understanding and aesthetic experience. The eye moves around, through and between the elements, caressing the limbs and the bodies of the pair.

As with many of Canova's sculptures a handle near one of Psyche's feet allows the statue to be revolved on its base. This movement emphasizes the emotion and beauty of the sculpture while piquing interest from all angles. One critic, Carl Ludwig Fernow, complained about the vitality of the embracing figures as there is no singular view from which it should be seen. He stated, "you must run around it, look at it from high and low, up and down, look at it again and keep getting lost."

### Alexander Archipenko, *Untitled* 1912

Archipenko was one of the first sculptors to employ the Cubist style in three dimensions.

Archipenko departed from the neoclassical sculpture of his time, using faceted planes and negative space to create a new way of looking at the human figure, showing a number of views of the subject simultaneously. He is known for introducing sculptural voids, and for his inventive mixing of genres throughout his career: devising 'sculpto-paintings', and later experimenting with materials such as clear acrylic and terra cotta. Inspired by the works of Picasso and Braque, he is also credited for introducing the collage to wider audiences with his *Medrano* series.



**Pevsner, *Projection in Space* 1927**



The Russian born Antoine Pevsner (along with his brother, Naum Gabo) was among the originators of Constructivism and pioneers of Kinetic Art; they discovered a new use for metals and welding and made a new marriage of art and mathematics. Pevsner said: "Art must be inspiration controlled by mathematics. I have a need for peace, symphony, orchestration." He was one of the first to use the blowtorch in sculpture,

welding copper rods onto sculptural forms and along with his brother, Naum, he issued the *Realist Manifesto* in 1920.

Constructivism was an artistic and architectural philosophy that originated in Russia beginning in 1915 with Vladimir Tatlin and Alexander Rodchenko. Abstract and austere, constructivist art aimed to reflect modern industrial society and urban space. The movement rejected decorative stylization in favour of the industrial assemblage of materials.

The *Realist Manifesto* focused largely on divorcing art from such conventions as use of lines, colour, volume, and mass. In the text, Gabo and Pevsner reject the successive stylistic innovations of modern art as mere illusionism (beginning with Impressionism, and including Cubism and Futurism), advocating instead an art grounded in the material reality of space and time: "The realization of our perceptions of the world in the forms of space and time is the only aim of our pictorial and plastic art."

### Barbara Hepworth, *Pierced Form* (1932) pink alabaster

Barbara Hepworth's early work was 'abstracted' but evocative of the natural world; as titles such as *Doves* (1927) and *Seated Figure* (1932-3) suggest. She was highly interested in abstraction and art movements on the continent; and in 1931, was the first to sculpt the pierced figures that are characteristic of both her own work and, later, that of Henry Moore. This (lost) work, which must have seemed pure abstract to viewers at the time, is suggestive of a torso with an arm that sweeps around, defining the space at the centre.

Hepworth also helped raise awareness of continental artists amongst the British public. In 1937, she designed the layout for *Circle: An International Survey of Constructivist Art*, edited by Ben Nicholson, Naum Gabo and the *International Style* architect Leslie Martin, designer of the Festival Hall.





**Moore, *Large Reclining Figure* 1938**

Moore said that 'sculpture should be looked at from the middle outwards'.

*Large Reclining Figure* is some 9 metres (30 ft) long, making it the largest sculpture made by Moore. Although there is a principal frontal view the spaces within the sculpture deny the possibility of viewing it as a compact form. Rather the eye is forced to wander around and through the forms, taking them in a bit at a time

The sculpture is recognisable as a human form. The head has a notch, like a claw; the narrow torso has

two dangling breasts; the left arm rests on the ground, while the right arm and ribbon-like backbone are linked to a pelvis resting on the ground, from which to one long bone-like limb extends to one side.

### **Fragment**

**Unknown artist, *Nike of Samothrace*, c. 220-190 BC**

In the past broken and fragmented sculptures would be regarded as damaged and requiring repair to restore them to their full meaning. Since the nineteenth century, however, it was recognised that sculptural fragments can have a powerful impact. This incomplete, broken image concentrates the eye on the dynamic thrust of the body and the swirl of the drapes as though whipped up by the wind.

The *Winged Victory of Samothrace*, also called the *Nike of Samothrace* is a marble Hellenistic sculpture of Nike (the Greek goddess of victory), that was created in about the 2nd century BC. The sculpture is one of a small number of major Hellenistic statues surviving in the original, rather than Roman copies. Despite its significant damage and incompleteness, the *Victory* is held to be one of the great surviving masterpieces of sculpture from the Hellenistic Period, and from the entire Greco-Roman era. The statue shows a mastery of form and movement which has impressed critics and artists since its discovery.



**Rodin, *Iris, Messenger of the Gods* 1895**

Rodin would often combine fragments of his sculptures together to create new works. He exploited the power of the fragmented human form to evoke emotions and imply a representation of movement in time and space.

The bronze sculpture *Iris, Messenger of the Gods* (*Flying Figure*, or *Eternal Tunnel*) depicts the goddess with her right hand clasping her right foot and her naked body posed provocatively with her legs spread wide, displaying her genitalia.

The sculpture was conceived in 1891 as part of Rodin's second (and ultimately unrealised) proposal for a monument to Victor Hugo. Over time, the project evolved, and the parts of the figures became separate sculptures. The figure that became *Iris* was intended to personify the "Spirit of the Nineteenth Century", or "Glory", hovering above the head of Hugo.

The sculpture was probably from life, with the model lying on a bed or perhaps based on a can-can dancer. Indeed, it may be inspired by Rodin's clipping of the Chahut dancer "Grille d'Égout" from an 1891 issue of the *Gil Blas* magazine.

A small early study of *Iris* retains the head. The sculpture was altered in 1894, when it was enlarged and reoriented vertically, with the left arm and head removed leaving a fragmentary torso similar to that of a damaged statue from Classical antiquity. It was catalogued as *Study of a woman with legs apart* in November 1894,

The critic Arthur Symons wrote that "All the force of the muscle palpitates in this strenuous flesh, the whole splendour of her sex, unveiled, palpitates in the air, the messenger of the gods, bringing some divine message, pauses in flight, an embodied inspiration".

Sculptural fragments to Rodin were autonomous works, and he considered them the essence of his artistic statement. His fragments – perhaps lacking arms, legs, or a head – took sculpture further from its traditional role of portraying likenesses, and into a realm where forms existed for their own sake.

Instead of copying traditional academic postures, Rodin preferred his models to move naturally around his studio (despite their nakedness). The sculptor often made quick sketches in clay that were later fine-tuned, cast in plaster, and cast in bronze or carved from marble. Rodin's focus was on the handling of clay.

Rodin, however, would have multiple plasters made and treat them as the raw material of sculpture, recombining their parts and figures into new compositions, and new names.

### ***Iris* from the West pediment of the Parthenon**

This fragment of a torso of *Iris*, separated from its lost head and limbs, presents a more compact form to the viewer. However, with its outstretched stumps of limbs and the energy of the body revealed by the folds of the dress, fluid like water flowing over pebbles in a stream, it appears to lift from the ground and fly.



**Henry Moore, *Warrior With Shield* 1953-54** Birmingham

In this fragmented figure of a wounded soldier Henry Moore's intention was to invoke both the tragedy of war and the triumph of the human spirit.

One of Moore's philosophies regarding his work in sculpture is that the forms should communicate the character of life and the human experience; the forms should display "the human psychological content" within the sculpture. *Warrior with Shield* is, as Moore said, an image of both defeat and of triumph, of pain and of strength.



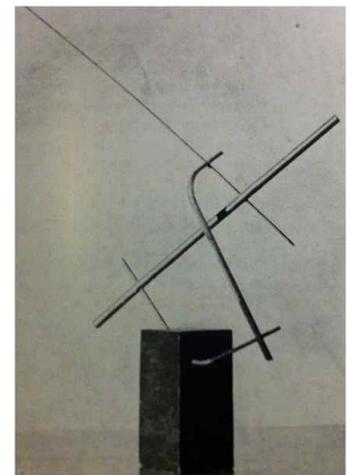
Moore said: "*The idea for The Warrior came to me at the end of 1952 or very early in 1953. It was evolved from a pebble I found on the seashore in the summer of 1952, and which reminded me of the stump of a leg, amputated at the hip. Just as Leonardo says somewhere in his notebooks that a painter can find a battle scene in the lichen marks on a wall, so this gave me the start of 'The Warrior' idea.*" and continued: "*first I added the body, leg and one arm and it became a wounded warrior, but at first the figure was reclining. A day or two later I added a shield and altered its position and arrangement into a seated figure and so it changed from an inactive pose into a figure which, though wounded, is still defiant...*"

### **Pure Form**

#### **Konstantin Medunetsky, *Untitled Construction* (c. 1921)**

Early theorists of Constructivism defined it as the combination of *faktura*: the particular material properties of an object, and *tektonika*, its spatial presence. The emphasis was on the construction (as distinct from traditional techniques of carving and modelling) of works using modern material, such as sheet metal, perspex, metal and perspex rods, wood and cardboard, retaining and exploiting their own particular qualities.

Medunetsky's *Construction* defines the real world with line, direction and space without descriptive references to the natural world, to narrative, or mystical ideas; making the viewer an active viewer of the artwork.



Controversy arose between early practitioners, such as Tatlin and Rodchenko who saw art as having a purely functionalist aesthetic, celebrating technology; and those who, like Pevsner and Gabo, who in their *Realistic Manifesto* asserted a spiritual core to the movement.



### Hepworth, *Sphere With Inner form* 1963

In the twentieth century artists have explored the idea of creating forms which express their own sense of presence and reality, without references to the everyday world. Barbara Hepworth was principle among these and a founder of three dimensional abstract art. Nevertheless, contact with nature was central to her philosophy and her works often intimate natural forces of growth.

The bronze sculpture *Sphere with Inner Form* is sometimes interpreted as a child in a pregnant woman's womb, or as a metaphor for the creation of a sculpture.

Hepworth said in her autobiography "*There is an inside and outside to every form ... a nut in its shell or of a child in the womb*".

### Henry Moore, *Double Oval* 1966

During the 1960s, Moore produced a series of increasingly abstract and monumental sculptures in which he explored a variety of new ideas. Works from this period include multi-part sculptures with forms that repeat or interlock, and so-called 'knife edge' works that incorporate thin, flat forms with sharp edges. In *Double Oval*, Moore combines and develops these interests to create a work of striking originality.



The characteristically understated title belies a work of considerable complexity. The sculpture comprises two arched forms which rise directly from the ground. The solid lower portion of each form acts as a counterbalance to the sweeping arch above, which leans forward and extends sideways, appearing to both cave inwards and expand outwards. This tension is further emphasised by the surface, where dark expanses of subtle texture give way to smooth, angular edges, which appear to strain against an inner force. Although the forms are not identical, they are clearly related, like vertebrae in a spinal column. Their positioning enhances this impression. Set parallel, as if in sequence, they seem poised to interlock. The intimate space that separates the forms, just large enough to walk through, enables the viewer to enter the sculpture and experience for themselves the dynamic synergy between the towering forms.

It is the ovals of negative space at the centre of *Double Oval* that first capture the viewers' attention. As one moves around the sculpture, these giant apertures frame an ever-changing view of the landscape and glimpses of the neighbouring form, providing new and unexpected perspectives of the work and the space it inhabits. Earlier in his career, Moore acknowledged that the holes in his sculpture were made 'for their own sakes' and that sometimes the form was 'only the shell holding the hole.' Subsequently, however, he attempted to make form and space inseparable, so that neither was more important than the other. In *Double Oval*, Moore realised this principle on a monumental scale. The interdependence of form and space is absolute, and the result is a work which brings harmony to the competing qualities of lightness and monumentality.

The inspiration behind *Double Oval* is not documented, but it has been suggested that the idea came from a pair of scissors half submerged in a bowl of plaster. Although this interpretation may seem unusual, Moore did incorporate seemingly mundane everyday objects in other works. His post-war textile designs, for example, feature safety pins, piano keys and clock hands, and his 1955 series of wall reliefs include the impressions of bolts, screws and files. However, it was natural forms that provided the inspiration for most of Moore's late works, and there is a familiar organicism in the two forms of *Double Oval*. The forms have the combination of lightness and strength that Moore admired in bones, which he had studied and collected since his student days. He explained, 'You can feel that a bone has had some sort of use in its life; it has experienced tensions, has supported weights and has actually performed an organic function'.



**David Smith, *CUBI VI* 1963**

David Smith is the foremost American sculptor pioneering abstract forms; best known for creating large steel abstract geometric sculptures.

Traditionally sculpture was either carved, or modelled and cast from moulds; the latter enabling a multitude of copies. The idea of assembling a unique piece from a collection of parts and welding or glueing them together in the manner of a collage comes from the Spanish sculptor Miguel Gonzalez, who influenced Picasso and subsequently other artists, including David Smith.

During World War II, Smith worked as a welder assembling locomotives and M7 tanks. This experience led him to assemble and weld together found pieces of scrap metal into images which sometimes carry references to the human form, or to the human environment, nevertheless their impact lies in the arrangement of

shapes and the way they play off with one-another.

Smith, who often said "I belong with the painters", made his sculptures from scratch, welding together pieces of steel and other metals with his torch, in much the same way that a painter applied paint to a canvas; his sculptures are almost always unique works.

The *Cubi* series is a group of stainless steel sculptures built from cubes, rectangular solids and cylinders with spheroidal or flat endcaps. These pieces are among the last works completed by Smith. They are among his final works in his progression toward a more simplified, abstract form of expression. As an example of Modernism, these are representative of the monumental works in industrial materials that characterized much of the sculpture from this period.

Although the *Cubis* are abstract works composed of geometric shapes, they are ambiguously figural. For example *Cubi VI* appears to be standing on a pair of crossed legs, and gives an impression of walking.

**Joan Miró, *Dona i Ocell (Woman and Bird)* 1982**

Although the title suggests a figurative interpretation the gently fluid abstract shapes, which can be seen as a three dimensional extension of his paintings, with their wandering lines and flattened forms, this piece can be appreciated for its exuberant and animated contours. The colourful tiles enliven the surface and counter the simple formality of the outline.

The work uses some of Miró's recurring themes of women and birds. In Catalan the word for a "bird" (*ocell*) can be used as slang for penis. This might be reflected in the phallic shape of the main form which has a hole through the glans. The sculpture is decorated in primary colours and it has a vulva shaped split down the side of the shaft which is lined with blackish tiles. The idea for the sculpture is not new and examples of placing vulva on a model penis and a hole in the glans have been found on Roman sculpture from the second or third century.



*Dona i Ocell* was part a publicly commissioned trilogy that was intended to welcome visitors to Barcelona as they arrived by the sea, from the air or in this case by land. Car passengers who arrive in Barcelona can see the strong colours of the tiles which are indicative of Miró's style.



**Barnet Newman, *Broken Obelisk*, (1963-67)**

There are four fabrications of *Broken Obelisk*. This one is installed over a pool at the Rothko Chapel as a memorial to Martin Luther King, Jr. It is made of three tons of Cor-Ten steel which is allowed to rust and create a natural patina.

Newman (known chiefly as a painter of large colour-field paintings) here places two pure geometric forms together. The Pyramid and the Obelisk have historical associations.

*Broken Obelisk* posits a dramatic collision of downward and upward forces. The crux of the piece and the source of its paradoxical airiness is the narrow point at which an inverted obelisk balances precariously on the tip of an 2.6 meter high pyramid. The area of contact is only 5.7 centimeters square, a steel rod inside the structure holds the two elements in alignment, making for an overall height of 7.9 meters. The topmost surface, where the shaft of the obelisk has "broken," is jagged and irregular, suggesting infinite height but also providing a literal

break from rigid geometry. The deliberately rough surface of the steel lends a weathered appearance that reinforces the sense of the pyramid and obelisk as ancient forms, despite the utter modernity of the sculpture.

As both form and symbol, the pyramid (a place of ascent of the human spirit) and the obelisk (monument to life and renewal, broken relic of antiquity) fascinated Newman. The eye is pulled toward two areas of drama: the torn boundary at the highest point, and the fragile point where two weighty masses converge and balance, interacting at their points of maximum energy. Its space is Newman's characteristic plunging, upsurging light; its motion is his electric downward zip and a simultaneous sending aloft of the obelisk.

Art critic Robert Hughes, writing on *Broken Obelisk* in 1971, said:

*Newman's pursuit of the sublime lay less in nature than in culture. This enabled him to pick ancient, man-made forms and return them to pristine significance without a trace of piracy. One index of that ability was his sculpture. Broken Obelisk, perhaps the best American sculpture of its time, is Newman's meditation on ancient Egypt: a steel pyramid, from whose apex an inverted obelisk rises like a beam of light. Here, Newman bypassed the Western associations of pyramids and broken columns with death, and produced a life-affirming image of transcendence. That unruffled self-sufficiency, beyond style, gave Newman's work its mysterious didactic value. It is not 'expressive'; the silence at the core bespeaks a man for whom art was a philosophical activity, a way of knowledge.*



**Richard Serra, *Fulcrum 2***

*Fulcrum* is a large sculpture installed in 1987 near the western entrance to Liverpool Street station, as part of the Broadgate development. The sculpture consists of five pieces of Cor-Ten steel, and is approximately 55 feet (17m) tall.

It exhibits no references to or associations with the natural world or the world of everyday experience. It expresses nothing other than itself. As such it relates to the space it occupies – the environment with its changes in light - and to the human body; that is the people moving around it and their sense of scale in relation to it.

**Richard Serra** is an American artist involved in the Process Art Movement.

**Process art** is an artistic movement where the end product of art and craft is not the principal focus; the process of its making is one of the most relevant aspects if not the most important one:

the gathering, sorting, collating, associating, patterning, and moreover the initiation of actions and proceedings. Process artists saw art as pure human expression. Process art defends the idea that the process of creating the work of art can be an art piece itself.