

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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HENRY MOORE SCULPTURES FROM
THE COLLECTION OF GEORGE AND VIRGINIA ABLAH
ON VIEW AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D.C. December 5, 1985. J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery of Art, today announced the long-term loan of three monumental sculptures by Henry Moore from the George and Virginia Ablah Collection, the largest privately-owned collection of Henry Moore sculpture in the world. The sculptures are currently installed in an open-air sculpture garden created especially for them adjoining the north wall of the East Building of the National Gallery of Art on the Pennsylvania Avenue side. Holly, Japanese maple, dogwood, euonymus and grass have been planted around them.

The loan has been arranged in conjunction with The Treasure Houses of Britain: 500 Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting. Large-scale photographs on the ground floor remind the visitor of the gardens and rural settings of the British country house. One photograph by David Finn taken on the estate of Sir William Keswick points to the continuing tradition of country house collecting in the 20th century. A Moore sculpture, King and Queen, is seen on a hillside, becoming part of the dramatic Scottish landscape.

Henry Moore, born in Yorkshire, England, in 1898 is one of the most influential sculptors of the 20th century. Innovative use of negative space and a combination of classical and primitive influences make the three sculptures included in the Ablah loan characteristic of the work

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of Henry Moore. Monumental in size, the bronzes are an expression of a common theme throughout the artist's oeuvre: the reclining female figure.

An example of Moore's lifelong obsession with the relationship between mother and child, Reclining Connected Forms (1969), is typical of the work of the artist. The heavy curves of this massive bronze evoke in an abstract manner a sense of the protective nature of the mother toward her child.

Reclining Figure: Angles (1979) and Reclining Figure: Hand (1979), like the earlier sculpture, have a horizontal emphasis, connecting the sculptures with the landscape. Moore's fascination with "mother earth" gives the works an organic quality, conceptualizing principles of human existence in the female figure.

George and Virginia Ablah have been collecting art since 1971, most recently 20th century sculpture. In addition to almost 100 Henry Moore sculptures, their collection includes works by Jean Arp, Constantine Brancusi, Alberto Giacometti, Marino Marini and Auguste Rodin.

Mr. and Mrs. Ablah are known for placing their collection where it may be enjoyed by large numbers of viewers. In May of 1984 they loaned 25 monumental works by Henry Moore to all five boroughs of New York City. More recently, the Ablahs have given to the city Two Piece Reclining Figure: Points, one of the group that was on view in New York. It is now installed in Central Park.

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