

The Museum of Modern Art

1 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

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Three large sculptures recently purchased by The Museum of Modern Art through the Fund provided by Mrs. Simon Guggenheim and restricted to major acquisitions will be on view beginning August 29 in the Museum Sculpture Garden and Main Hall. The works, all produced in the 1960s, are by Seymour Lipton, Henry Moore and George Rickey.

In 1938 Mrs. Simon Guggenheim gave money for the purchase of a single important painting. Since then, year after year, she has most generously provided the Museum's largest purchase fund, with the simple -- and wise -- condition that it be spent only upon works of exceptional importance. A total of sixty-four have been purchased to date with the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund; twenty-three of these are sculptures, the three just acquired bringing the number to twenty-six. (List of these sculptures page 4)

Henry Moore's LARGE TORSO (ARCH), one of the British sculptor's most original recent bronzes, was done in 1962-63, and is 6 1/2 feet high by nearly 5 feet wide. It has been installed on the south terrace of the Museum's Sculpture Garden just outside the doors from the Main Hall.

Moore has written eloquently about this sculpture in a recent letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of Museum Collections, in response to a question as to whether the ARCH was inspired in part by the structural beauty of bones: "I began finding the shapes of bones fascinating in my student days... and I made innumerable visits (to the Natural History Museum) examining and drawing the enormous variety of specimens there..." The sculptor continues, "You say the ARCH seems to you quite different from most other work I have done -- perhaps this is because almost all my sculpture is based on female form, but the ARCH is very much derived from male form..." (Complete quotation, page 5).

LARGE TORSO (ARCH) is the tenth sculpture by Moore to enter the Museum Collection. The first was TWO FORMS, a work of 1934 in wood. (Note and list of the Museum's sculptures by Moore and their present placing, page 6) (more)

MANUSCRIPT by the American Seymour Lipton is on view in the Main Hall of the Museum. Completed in 1961, it is a direct construction in welded metal, in this case bronze on monel metal, nearly 7 feet long and over 5 feet high. Lipton is already represented in the Museum Collection by SANCTUARY, a work of 1953, at present on view in the Museum's 3rd floor sculpture gallery.

MANUSCRIPT is one of a remarkable series of large-scale works that Lipton has produced in the late 1950s and 1960s. It is, however, unique in this series, departing as it does from the primarily vertical forms of the other pieces with their complex diagonal and spiral thrusts. Broad simple planes constitute the "pages" of the MANUSCRIPT, interrupted only by what Lipton describes as "a chaotic form like a bolt of lightning, suggesting meaninglessness," on one side, and on the other side by "a counter element of evolving law and order... planal tensions and the counterplay of isolated forms against sweeping, curving, flat voids were even more primal than the symbolisms later accredited to the forms." (Lipton's further remarks about this sculpture, page 7)

George Rickey's TWO LINES-TEMPORAL I is the first of his kinetic sculptures to enter the Museum Collection. It was shown last summer in the great international exhibition, DOCUMENTA III, at Kassel, Germany, where it was given a position of conspicuous honor. It is now installed on the upper or east terrace of the Museum's Sculpture Garden.

TWO LINES is the culmination and simplification of a series of kinetic sculptures in "lines" which Rickey began in 1961. "Line" is the name given by the sculptor to "a hollow spar of thin sheet metal folded into a triangular section and tapering to a point at the top." The spar is counterweighted in the large end with lead and balanced on a post or fulcrum with a knife-edge bearing to permit maximum movement.

"Lines," Rickey writes, offer "a great variety of possibilities -- straight lines, curved lines, vertical lines, horizontals and diagonals and combinations... and any scale from 6 inches to the 35 feet limit I have reached thus far.

(more)

"The geometry of the lines was never fixed, though limits were. Since the lines moved, there was no 'correct' position. The motive power was always the wind... movement was thus a vital contribution of nature to the design."

(Rickey's further remarks about this sculpture, pages 8 & 9)

Alfred H. Barr, Jr. comments on the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund: "Almost three decades have passed since Mrs. Guggenheim first suggested that she buy and present to the Museum a work of art of high quality and major importance. The Museum proposed Picasso's GIRL BEFORE A MIRROR. Mrs. Guggenheim concurred even though she modestly admitted at the time that she neither understood the painting nor particularly liked it. Later, after frequent visits to the Museum, she came to admire it. Among the many works subsequently bought with her fund there must have been others which she did not feel warmly toward, but she graciously agreed to their purchase.

"The faith Mrs. Guggenheim has shown in the Museum's judgment has been matched not only by her generosity. Welcome, too, has been her stipulation that the acquisitions bought with her fund should be of such excellence that the Museum was convinced they would endure.

"Mrs. Guggenheim's stipulation is salutary but formidable. The GIRL BEFORE A MIRROR and the second purchase, Rousseau's SLEEPING GYPSY, and Léger's THREE WOMEN, the WATER LILIES triptych of Monet, Picasso's THREE MUSICIANS, Lachaise's STANDING WOMAN and the four great bronze reliefs of Matisse -- it is hard to believe that they will fade as time passes. Already they have stood the test of thirty to seventy years. But we cannot be sure; nor can we be certain of the viable excellence of the sculptures by Lipton, Moore and Rickey just acquired with Mrs. Guggenheim's Fund, recent works, one of them completed only last year. The risks exist but they are inherent in the Museum's program and they are risks taken by the Trustees and staff with the steadfast encouragement of Mrs. Guggenheim herself."

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019. Circle 5-8900.

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SCULPTURE ACQUIRED THROUGH THE MRS. SIMON GUGGENHEIM FUND

- ARP, Jean - Floral Nude. (1957).
- BRANCUSI, Constantin - Socrates. (1923).
- CALDER, Alexander - Black Widow. 1959.
- DESPIAU, Charles - Assia. (1938).
- EPSTEIN, Jacob - The Rock Drill. (1912-13).
- GONZALEZ, Julio - Woman Combing Her Hair. (1936).
- LACHAISE, Gaston - Standing Woman. 1932.
- LIPCHITZ, Jacques - Man with a Guitar. 1915.
- LIPCHITZ, Jacques - Mother and Child, II. (1941-45).
- LIPPOLD, Richard - Variation Number 7: Full Moon. (1949-50).
- MAILLOL, Aristide - The River. (c.1939-43).
- MARINI, Marino - Miracle. (1953-54).
- MATISSE, Henri - The Back, I, 1909, II (c.1914?), III (c.1914?), IV (1929?).
Bronze reliefs.
- MODIGLIANI, Amedeo - Carvatiid. (c.1914).
- PICASSO, Pablo - Baboon and Young. (1951).
- PICASSO, Pablo - Goat Skull and Bottle. (1951-52).
- PICASSO, Pablo - She-Goat. (1950).
- POMODORO, Arnaldo - Sphere Number 1. 1963.
- RODIN, Auguste - St. John the Baptist Preaching. (1878).
- SMITH, David - History of LeRoy Borton. 1956.

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- LIPTON, Seymour - Manuscript. 1961.
- MOORE, Henry - Large Torso (Arch). 1962-63.
- RICKEY, George - Two Lines - Temporal I. 1964.

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EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER FROM HENRY MOORE, AUGUST 9, 1965, TO ALFRED H. BARR, JR.

"I began finding the shapes of bones fascinating in my student days at the Royal College of Art, - for next door to the R.C.A. in South Kensington, is the Natural History Museum, and I made innumerable visits there, - perhaps two or three times every month over several years in the late 1920's and early 1930's, examining and drawing the enormous variety of specimens there, - among the ancient fossil bones, and the bones of more modern times.

"One common form-principle in all bones is, of course, structural strength, - since their purpose is interior support.... In prehistoric times this strength was achieved by solidity and bulk, - later through evolution, bones got lighter but yet had to retain their strength, - and in some bones one can find the modern engineering principle of steel-girder construction."

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"You say the Arch seems to you quite different from most other work I have done, - perhaps this is because almost all my sculpture is based on female form, - but the Arch is very much derived from male form.

"In 1950 I illustrated, (by eight lithographs) Andre Gide's translation of Goethe's 'Prométhée', - making these illustrations occupied several weeks, during which time I thought very much about the Prometheus myth.

"While doing the Arch sculpture, thoughts about Prométhée frequently recurred, - the defiant 'braced' strength, the taut arching of the shoulders, etc., (I nearly called this sculpture Prométhée, except that I don't really like literary references in titles).

(Signed)
Henry Moore

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SCULPTURE BY HENRY MOORE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Two Forms. 1934. Pynkado wood, 11 x 17 3/4". Sir Michael Sadler Fund, 1937. On view, third floor, gallery 15.

Reclining Figure. 1938. Cast lead, 5 3/4 x 13". Purchase, 1939. On view, third floor, gallery 14.

Mother and Child. 1938. Elmwood, 30 3/8" high. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest, 1953. On view, third floor, gallery 15.

The Bride. 1940. Cast lead and copper wire, 9 3/8" high. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest, 1947. On view, third floor, gallery 14.

Family Group. 1945. Bronze, 9 3/8 x 8 1/2 x 5 1/8". Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest, 1947. (Not on view).

Family Group. 1945-49. Bronze (cast 1950), 59 1/4 x 45 x 29 7/8". A. Conger Goodyear Fund, 1951. On view in Sculpture Garden.

Queen. 1952. Terra cotta, 40 3/4 x 19". Gift of G. David Thompson, 1963. On view, third floor, gallery 15.

Study for Sculpture on Time-Life Building, London. 1952-53. Bronze, 15 x 38 7/8". Gift of Time Inc., 1954. (Not on view).

Reclining Figure, II (Two Parts). 1960. Bronze, 50 x 99 1/8", base, 114 x 54". Given in memory of G. David Thompson, Jr. by his father, 1961. On view in Sculpture Garden.

Large Torso (Arch). 1962-63. Bronze, 78 1/8 x 59 1/8 x 51 1/4". Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, 1965. On view in Sculpture Garden.

NOTE

In 1936, at a time when Moore's name was scarcely known in the United States, TWO FORMS was shown in two of the Museum's exhibitions, CUBISM AND ABSTRACT ART and FANTASTIC ART, DADA, SURREALISM. The Museum had practically no purchase funds in that Depression period, and in 1937 asked the sculptor if he could name someone who might provide funds for the purchase of TWO FORMS. Moore suggested Sir Michael Sadler, who most generously responded with a check with which the Museum bought the first Moore sculpture acquired by an American museum.

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STATEMENT BY SEYMOUR LIPTON ABOUT "MANUSCRIPT"

The mood of "Manuscript" is that of the pages of man's history and his relation to the cosmos. It is a visual unfurling of the world on which is seen the interplay of chance and law, of ugliness and beauty -- all occur in this world we live in.

The front element of the sculpture, a chaotic form like a bolt of lightning, suggests meaninglessness. In the back is a counter element of evolving law and order. Both forms are set against broad unfolding sheets of metal. These are suggested experiences that emerged for me in the course of making the original sketches. Other congruent meanings are readable in the forms -- such as an unfurling flag or a page from a medieval illuminated manuscript.

Planal tensions and the counterplay of isolated forms against sweeping, curving, flat voids were even more primal than the symbolisms later accredited to the forms. I have always been interested in developing images that are peculiarly sculptural (that is, multi-dimensional) as differentiated from pictorial, graphic or frontal visual experiences. I believe that much sculpture of an abstract character has been too single-viewed in conception.

In the "Manuscript" I tried to make a sculpture that was a relief or wall, yet paradoxically, anti-relief or anti-wall. The final piece developed as front and back conceptions bridged by appropriate forms organic to the entire work. Planal tensions occurred with a fourth interior dimension dynamically related to these planes. At least, this is what I hope has happened in the full formal experience.

Beyond all this it is vital for me that the formal invention be appropriate and natural to suggested meanings. Also, my material and technique become part of the larger unity. For example, in this work, the patina suggesting very old gold adds to the central mood of a medieval text.

(signed)
Seymour Lipton
6/21/65

8/29/65

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EXCERPTS FROM A STATEMENT BY GEORGE RICKEY ABOUT "TWO LINES - TEMPORAL I"

I have been working with the movement of lines since 1961. At that time I made several sculptures in which I combined a vertical motif of oscillating intersecting lines with a group of masses and concentrated planar elements. The counterweights necessary to maintain the lines erect were in the planar components. These designs culminated in a nine-foot high sculpture, "Sedge," of six lines, now in the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College, and one eighteen feet high, now in the Nelson Rockefeller collection.

In the course of making small variations on the "Sedge" theme I occasionally omitted the planes and placed the counterweight inside the line itself. The "line" in all these sculptures consisted of a hollow spar of thin sheet metal folded into a triangular section and tapering to a point at the top. The counterweight was usually lead cast directly in the spar below the bearing. The bearing was an arm of steel projecting at right angles to the spar at the point of balance. It was sharpened to a knife-edge to reduce friction. The motion was through an arc in the vertical plane, or, if the bearing was mounted on gimbals (universal joint), the motion was random through a wide cone of space whose apex was at the bearing.

These rigid lines, sometimes curved, more often straight, tapered to give some of the change of density of a pen-stroke, offered a great variety of possibilities -- straight lines, curved lines, vertical lines, horizontals and diagonals and combinations, few lines, many lines, parallel lines, radiating or converging lines, distribution on diverse grids, equal or disparate length, and any scale from six inches high to the thirty-five foot limit I have reached thus far.

The geometry of the lines was never fixed, though limits were. Since the lines moved, there was no "correct" position. The motive power was the wind... a vital contribution from nature to the design...

(more)

In 1963 I was invited by Arnold Bode to prepare three large sculptures for Documenta III in Kassel the following year. I already had my large "Sedge," was preparing a twenty-foot-wide relief sculpture of two groups of three opposing horizontal intermeshing blades, and decided to make a thirty-five foot high stand of two blades in stainless steel as simple and austere as I could, letting all play or lyricism come from the wind rather than from me. This was made in the late winter and spring of 1964 and was shipped to Germany in May.

Because of the difficulty of a narrow crate over thirty feet long, I made the blades so that they could be separated in the middle, then bolted together and still maintain their rigidity. Lead weights were precisely cast in diminishing sizes to make the counterweights as compact and efficient as possible. "Keepers" prevented the bearings from climbing out of their seats in strong winds...

This is the sculpture The Museum of Modern Art decided to buy in June of this year... a simple braking system was added, which leaves the movement completely unhampered in the middle but begins a braking action at about forty-five degrees. The weight of the blade itself supplies the braking force.

(signed)
George Rickey

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