

MOORE / BRANDT





MOORE BRANDT

11th - 20th May 2022

UPSTONE

In association with Grob Gallery, Geneva

Preface

We are delighted to stage what is the first commercial exhibition that pairs these two masters together, who speak so meaningfully to each other.

It follows the museum show that was held at The Hepworth Wakefield, The Yale Center for British Art and The Sainsbury Centre in 2020-1.

Moore and Brandt show a set of intersecting interests in their subject matter and the way that it is presented, whether it is the reclining nude figure, families sheltering from the Blitz or miners in the pits.

Moore was fascinated by photography and started photographing his own work from the early 1930s onwards. He also used photographs of rocks, branches and other objects to serve as visual stimulation for his sculpture, strengthening the link between one medium and another.

The exhibition is a collaboration with the Grob Gallery in Geneva to whom we give our warmest thanks.

Robert Upstone

INTRODUCTION

Henry Moore and Bill Brandt led parallel and intersecting careers - one as the greatest sculptor of the twentieth century and the other as the greatest photographer in Britain.

Brandt and Moore met in 1942 when Brandt was commissioned to take a portrait photograph of Moore in his studio for a ten-page spread on the artist for the December edition of Lilliput magazine. The feature juxtaposed the two artists' images of sleeping people sheltering from the Blitz in the London Underground. Both men had started depicting the shelters in September 1940 when the Blitz began. Moore first made shelter drawings after by chance encountering people in Belsize Park tube. Brandt was recruited to the Ministry of Information to record the effects of the bombing, and the human price. Kenneth Clark recruited Moore after seeing his first shelter drawings.



These images of exhausted figures are both similar and very different. Brandt's seem intensely intimate - we see people in disarray, exhausted, vulnerable, their bodies intertwined, personal space and distance abandoned. Moore's shelter drawings abstract the figures somewhat, making them more anonymous and so at the same time more monumental and hieratic.

Moore's interest in photography began early in his career. In 1932 he bought a top of the range Leica to start photographing his own sculptures. Throughout his career Moore carefully composed and lit each shot, always using natural light rather than artificial which he believed flattened the sculpture surface. From 1934 Moore started making careful notes of the exposure and lighting of each photograph. Shots were never taken from above but instead either from eye level or below for an increased sense of monumentality. Rather than the artificial environment of a photographic studio, Moore preferred either his own working spaces or else outdoors to photograph his work, therefore increasing the immediacy and individual spirit of each of his sculptures. These concerns all demonstrate that Moore was not simply documenting his sculptures. Instead the photographs were a way of expressing the artistic intention behind the work and using the photographic image as a means for navigating how the viewer experienced it. By the medium of such carefully staged images he was able to emphasise the fleeting effects that came from changed viewpoints and lighting, demonstrating and controlling the ideal conditions by which to experience each piece.

Photography also became a stimulus to his creative process and the origination of design. Whereas before the war his sculpture was invariably based on sketchbook studies, after it he worked directly with small maquettes for the origination of larger pieces. Photography came to be a useful method by which he could work through these creative processes by examining his sculpture from multiple viewpoints.

In the 1930s Bill Brandt's photography focussed on miners and parlour maids, the industry of the North, and the ancient landscape and architecture of Britain. But immediately after the war he began an extraordinary series of photographs of female nudes. In 1945 he famously acquired a second hand Police camera with a wide angle lens that had been used to photograph crime scenes. He used this to portray female nudes in London interiors that constrain the figure and gives them a sense of relentless intensity and presence.



Brandt took models to the beach at Eastbourne and later France and, using the same wide angle lens, photographed them close up in order to create highly inventive cropped and distorted images of the figure. The specificity of anatomy dissolves, and instead becomes an abstract arrangement of forms. Brandt plays with scale and form, and exaggerates the polarities of tone to greater increase this sense of abstraction.

In these works Brandt appears to run parallel to Henry Moore. Moore's principal repeated subject was the reclining female figure, and Brandt's inventive and original photographs seem informed in some way by Moore's sculptural investigation of the figure and also the focus on the tension between abstraction and figuration.

Brandt's use of the camera, and his design of his shots, are the antithesis of reportage. They are acts of pure artistic creation and invention, as one would expect from a former assistant to Man Ray. Brandt took a similarly highly creative approach to the printing of his photographs. He would work over and adapt both the negative and the print to create the effects he was seeking, even using somewhat unorthodox materials such as beer. Each was a singular, distinct object, and prints vary one from another, and depending on when they were made.

The visual and subjective connections between Moore and Brandt are immediately visible in the works included in this exhibition. The correspondence between their concerns in depicting the figure are evident. Perhaps one can draw further broader parallels between the overlapping sensibilities of photography and sculpture - the way in which casting and patination echo the processes and spectrum of creating photographs. In any event the photographs shown here document the highly distinctive and creative approach to subject and medium of two of the most original artists of the twentieth century.

Robert Upstone



I.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Nude (Eastbourne Beach) 1957

Vintage silver gelatin print, printed late 1960s

22.8 x 19.7 cm

Signed in ink on recto



2.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Nude (Hands Around) 1957

Vintage silver gelatin print, printed 1960s

22.8 x 19.7 cm

Initialed, photographer's credit stamp with '58 Hillfield Court'
address, annotations in ink and pencil verso



3.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Nude and Stones (East Sussex) 1978

Vintage silver gelatin print

23 x 19.7 cm

Two credit stamps and dated 'June 1978' in an unidentified hand
in ink on the verso



4.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Hiding Nude (East Sussex Coast) May 1957

Vintage silver gelatin print, printed c.1960

34.3 x 30 cm

Signed on the card



5.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Nude, London 1954

Silver gelatin print, printed c.1970

33.5 x 28 cm

Signed on verso



6.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Nude 1953

Vintage silver gelatin print

23 x 19.7 cm

Stamped and inscribed on verso



7.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Eygalières, France 1953

Silver gelatin print

22.9 × 19.7 cm

Stamped on the verso



1-10-11

8.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Nude on a parquet Floor 1945

Silver gelatin print

33.7 x 29,2 cm

Signed in ink on the mount



9.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Nude, Belgravia 1951

Silver gelatin print

33.7 x 29.2 cm

Signed in ink on the mount



10.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Nude 1953

Silver gelatin print, printed late 1960s

34.3 x 29.2 cm

Signed in ink on verso



II.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Nude, Hampstead 1952

Silver gelatin print, printed 1970s

34.3 x 28,3 cm

Signed in felt tip pen on recto



12.

Bill Brandt 1904-1983

Nude with Pigeon on Shelf 1958

Silver gelatin print

34.1 x 29 cm

Signed on the mount



13.

Henry Moore 1898-1986

Two Piece Reclining Figure No. 2 1960

Silver gelatin print

20.4 x 25.7 cm

Artist's stamp on verso



14.

Henry Moore 1898-1986

Two Pieces Reclining Figure No. 1 I 1960

Silver gelatin print

19 x 24 cm cm

Artist's blindstamp on verso



15.

Henry Moore 1898-1986

Reclining Figure

Silver gelatin print

19.4 x 24 cm

Artist's blindstamp verso



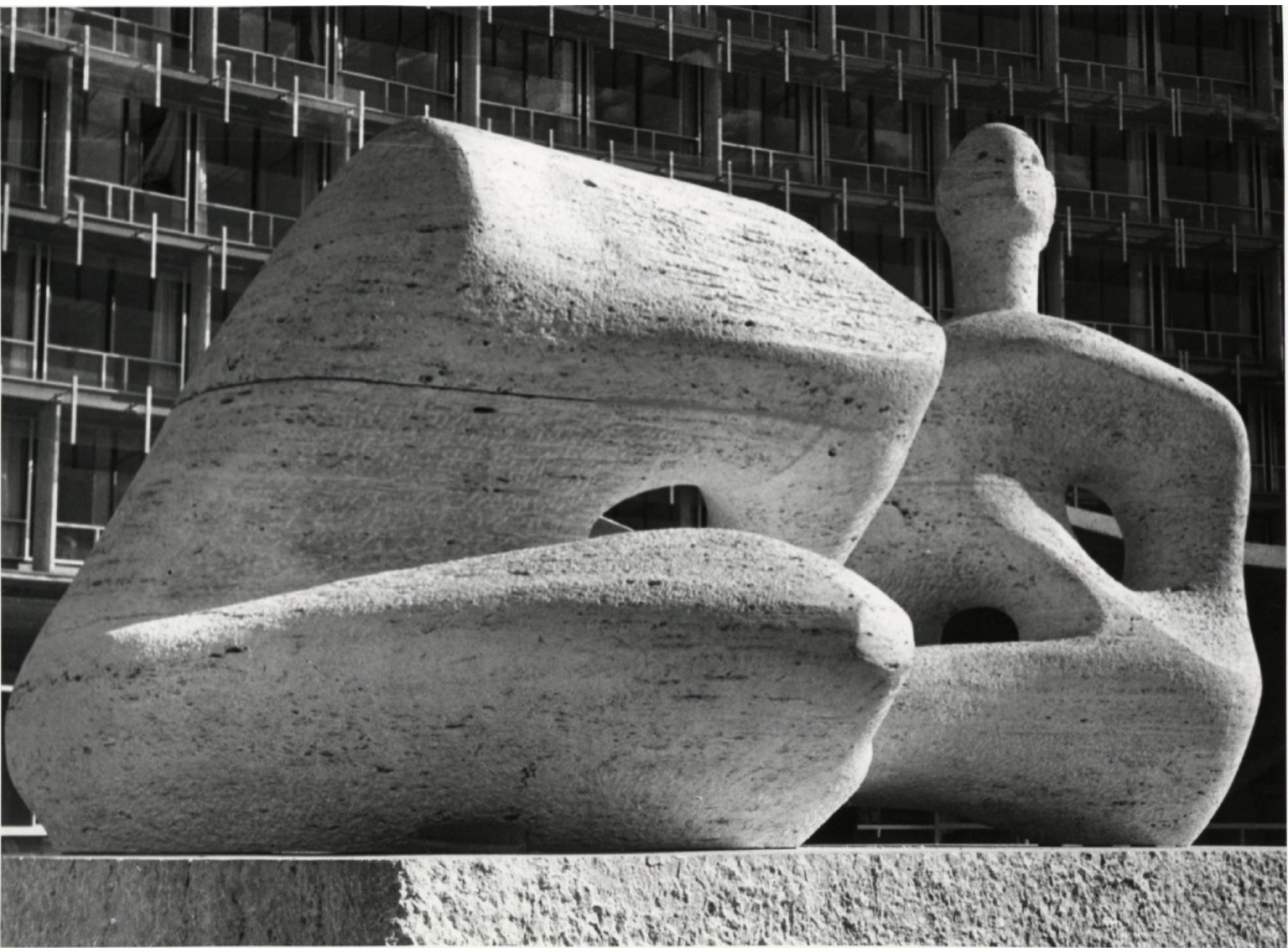
16.

Henry Moore 1898-1986

Draped reclining Woman 1957/8

Silver gelatin print

Artist's blindstamp verso



17.

Henry Moore 1898-1986

UNESCO Reclining Figure 1957/8

Silver gelatin print

18 x 24 cm

Artist's blindstamp verso



18.

Henry Moore 1898-1986

Hepworth Sculpture

Silver gelatin print

16.7 × 23.7 cm

Artist's blindstamp verso



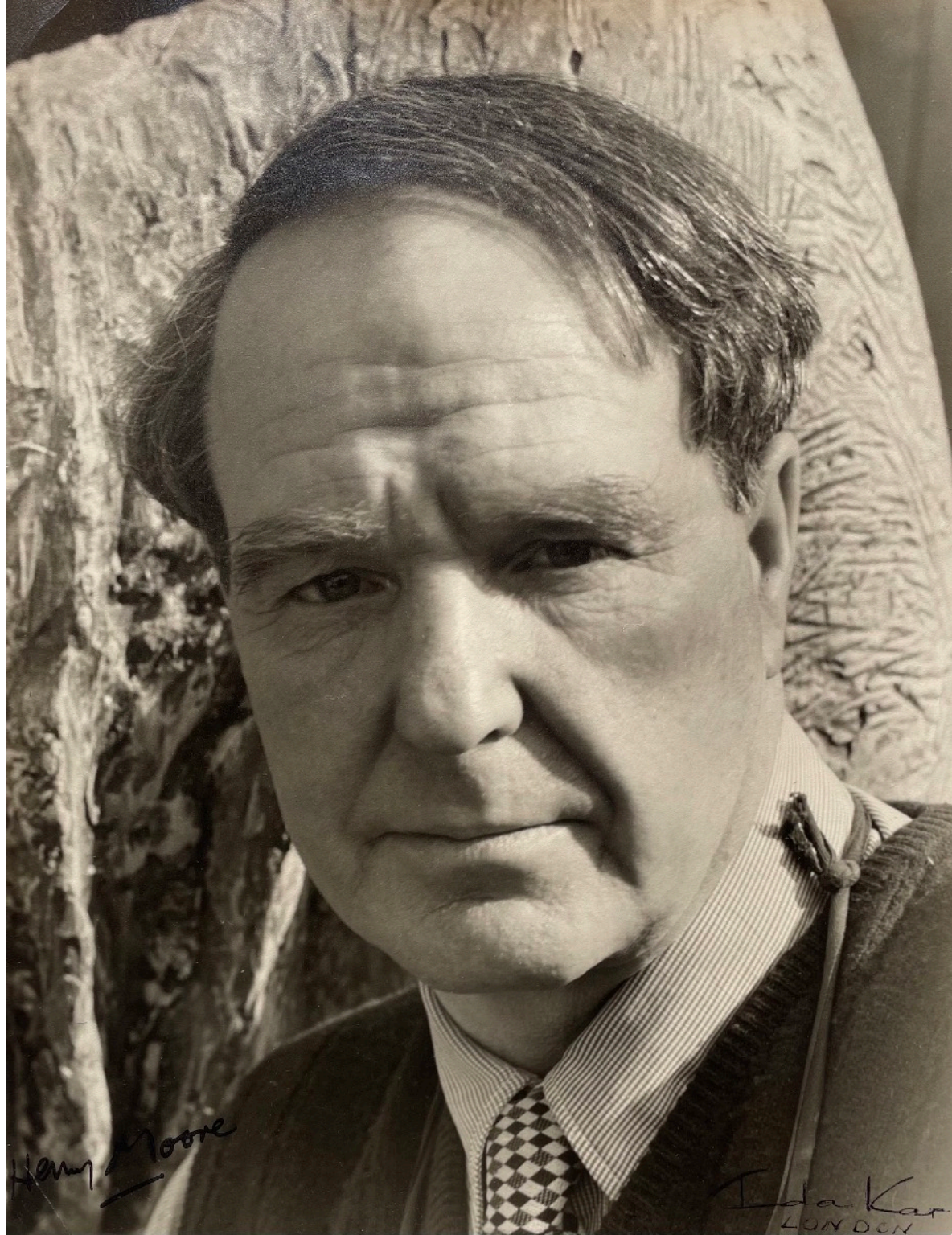
19.

Henry Moore 1898-1986

Reclining Figure

16.3 x 23.7 cm

Silver gelatin print



Henry Moore

Ida Kar
LONDON

20.

Ida Kar 1908-1974

Henry Moore 1954

Vintage bromide print

37.5 x 29 cm

Signed by Henry Moore and Ida Kar on recto,
artist's blind stamp on verso



21.

Henry Moore 1898-1986

Reclining Figure (Elm Wood) 1945-6

Silver print

20,6 × 28,9 cm

Moore's signature, title and date in ink on the verso.



22.

Henry Moore 1898-1986

Reclining Figure 1945-6

Four vintage silver prints

8.5 x 21.1 cm

Moore's signature, title and date in ink on the verso



23.

Henry Moore 1898-1986

Girl Seated against square Wall 1957-8

Vintage silver gelatin print

24.9 x 19 cm



24.

Henry Moore 1898-1986

Reclining Figure c.1958

Vintage silver gelatin print

17.9 x 24.6 cm image, 19.4 x 25.3 paper

Artist's stamp on the verso





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