Sense - Perception (Hertfordshire/Leeds, 12 Oct/29 Nov 19)

Henry Moore Foundation and Henry Moore Institute
Deadline: Jun 7, 2019

Kirstie Gregory

Sense – Perception: Sculpture, Drawing and the Influence of Classicism

This year marks the opening of two major exhibitions by the Henry Moore Foundation: Henry Moore Drawings: The Art of Seeing from April – October at Henry Moore Studios and Gardens, Hertfordshire, and Edward Allington from October – January at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds. While primarily known as sculptors, both Allington (1951-2017) and Moore (1898-1986) were exceptional draughtsman. They used the medium to create imaginary spaces and impossible compositions, testing the limitations of the real world. They can be further connected by their mutual interest in the Classical world, which this two day conference will use as a key research focus.

In 1930, in a bid to break with traditional academic training, Moore wrote of the need for a 'removal of the Greek spectacles from the eyes of the modern sculptor'. He was nonetheless consistently interested in ancient civilizations and even if on early visits to the British Museum he was initially drawn to the 'anti-classical' forms from outside the western canon, he no doubt also absorbed those of ancient Greece and Rome. Only a decade later we see this influence in his seminal shelter drawings. Indeed WWI had prompted a revival of interest in classical art, which was echoed after WWII – a means through which a return to order could be mediated and humanist values extolled. A trip to Greece in 1951 presaged a distinctly classical period in Moore's work.

Allington too visited Greece and had a lifelong interest in Classical Greece and Rome having read Plato at an early age, though he later came to disregard the philosopher's theories of Idealism. His drawings demonstrate both a fascination with, and a revolt against, pure Classical form. He often juxtaposes kitsch with sketches of ancient statues, cornucopiae and architectural fragments and his drawings (and sculptures) regularly feature multiples of what might be considered the singular ideal.

"My strongest objection to Plato is that he was always trying to bury . . . the cult of Dionysus . . . Reading about it or gazing at dislocated fragments in museums, we can catch a glimpse of another way of living which was orgiastic and physical, even almost bestial. What we need now is a new understanding of what was lost then."

What role did drawing have in re-configuring or re-capturing the essence of a world known primarily through sculpture and moreover the fragment? Does the creation of perceived space on paper,

rather than the physical actuality of a three-dimensional object afford these sculptors an opportunity to further new understanding? Can Plato's theories on sense, perception and form help to interpret such work? To what extent does a drawing act like the cave wall, revealing plural representations of essential form? By using the work of Moore and Allington as a starting point, this conference will explore the importance of drawing to sculptural practice.

Suggested topics are (but not limited to):
- Representing lost origin(al)s
- The classical as a lens for the contemporary
- The incomplete drawing/the incomplete sculpture
- Fragmentation, recreation, renewal and restoration
- The (im)possibilities of the page
- Classicism in surrealist drawing practices
- Drawings of chance and contingency
- The space of the drawing and the architecture of the gallery
- Drawing as mediation
- The changes in the sculptors' drawing curriculum
- Sculptor's drawings and the art market
- Sculptural thinking through drawing: negotiating three dimensions in two

Please send 300 word abstracts and a brief biographical note to Kirstie Gregory (kirstie.gregory@henry-moore.org) and Dr Hannah Higham (hannah.higham@henry-moore.org) by 7 June 2019.

The events will take place on:
Saturday 12 October, Henry Moore Studios and Gardens, Hertfordshire
Friday 29 November, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds

Reference:

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