

MIT List Center

Henry Moore_Reclining Figure

The reclining figure was a frequent motif for artist Henry Moore, the more significant British sculptor of the 20th century. But this cast bronze work, "Reclining Figure, Working Model for Lincoln Center," sculpture from 1963 conjures more monumental natural forms. Anita Feldman, Head of Collections and Exhibitions at the Henry Moore Foundation.

From the end of the 1950s, he started fragmenting the human form in order to make each of its parts resemble topographical elements from nature. So the torso starts to look like a cliff face, and various parts of the body resemble rock formations.

Moore did more than make his sculptures look like nature. He literally incorporated elements of nature into his work.

For this sculpture in particular, he's using parts of animal bones and parts of flintstones, and casting their impressions in plaster. And he ends up with a plaster sculpture small enough to hold in his hand.

From there, he developed this much larger working model, which helped him envision the final version to be displayed in a reflecting pool at Lincoln Center in New York City.

Today there are many sculptors who say their works are site-specific. If you move the sculpture, then you're, in effect, destroying it. But Moore was not like that.

I think he welcomed that, because sculpture itself is an ever-changing journey. And so by changing the setting, you're just inviting new interpretations and a new context. And it's all part of that experience.

You can find commentary on Moore's other work at MIT on the List website.