

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY



### Art

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'Large Two Forms', 1966 by Henry Moore (portrait, below) installed outside at Perry Green (top) and, temporarily, indoors at Gagosian (left)

## Moore indoors

Henry Moore's monumental bronzes have been lawfully uprooted and replanted at Gagosian.

**Ossian Ward** relishes this fresh look at his 'Late Large Forms' and a visit to their natural habitat

In late 2010 a wonderful bronze sculpture by Barbara Hepworth was stolen from Dulwich Park, probably to be sold as scrap. This particularly saddened me, as 'Two Forms (Divided Circle)' had been my constant sentinel, watching over walks to school or bike rides in the park. I'd grown up in its shadow and even took a photo of my son peering through its 'eyes' as he engaged with one of his first artworks. I believed it would always be there, but then we're all guilty of taking the permanence of bronze and stone for granted.

Fellow sculptor and Yorkshire native Henry Moore has suffered a similar fate to Hepworth. Not only have metal thieves targeted his outdoor work (a two-tonne piece was stolen in 2005 and melted down), but Moore's art historical

standing has also suffered, largely because his reputation—as one of the biggest, most established and indestructible of British artists—has always been steadfastly solid and secure. His muscular reclining figures are often so perfectly attuned to the contours and textures of their corresponding landscapes as to seem sited since time immemorial—they don't quite disappear in front of our eyes, instead melding with preconceived notions of the countryside. Perhaps more fatally, by the end of his life in 1966, Moore's radical modernism had become mainstream and unfashionable when compared to a new generation of sculptors that included Tony Cragg, Antony Gormley and Anish Kapoor.

So accustomed had I become to Moore's familiar features over the years that I hadn't even bothered to take the short trip north out of London to his studio and house at the Henry Moore Foundation in the village of Perry Green, Hertfordshire. Until a few weeks ago that is, and even then my visit was precipitated by the departure of some of his biggest bronzes, heading in the opposite direction. The Foundation's head of collections and exhibitions, Anita Feldman, was shipping half a dozen giant pieces from its outdoor sculpture park to Gagosian's capacious Britannia Street galleries, for the current, spectacular exhibition, 'Late Large Forms'.

Of course, as Feldman admits, Moore never intended such hulking bronzes to be seen indoors (indeed few spaces were large or amenable enough in his day), but he was intent on exploring the relationship to exterior architecture, given that most of his late-career commissions were for public

plazas, city centres or new-build cultural complexes the world over. Accordingly, brutal breaks and vertical thrusts are more pronounced in Moore's mature work, as though he were competing with the hard edges of skyscrapers and streets, just as his undulating figures once rolled and folded in sympathy with the hills.

When boxed in further, as these 'Late Large Forms' are at Gagosian, they take on a more aggressive, angular character. Despite the gallery's disposal of every possible intervening or encroaching wall, they squat uneasily as if threatening to bust out of their temporary confinement. Yet to see them this way is not claustrophobic for the viewer. Instead, the proximity allows for an unexpected intimacy with the show-stopping 'Large Two Forms' of 1966—its airy walk-through and tactile surfaces belying the six tonnes of heft locked away beneath its metal skin.



**They squat uneasily, threatening to bust out of temporary confinement**

It's not just the white painted backdrop that shows up these roughly hewn, hand-gauged and naturally weathered pieces in a fresh light, but the context and expectations that come with experiencing such monumental Moors in a gallery setting. The surroundings send the sculptures into an entirely different experiential stratosphere of scale, one that's normally reserved for artistic titans such as Richard Serra (to name the only other sculptor to have necessitated a near complete dismantling of this building's structural integrity).

While it's unlikely that the staging of 'Late Large Forms' will irrevocably change Moore's audience and his appreciation, it does at least remind us that he still needs an audience and our appreciation. Despite the show's success (commercial or otherwise, as a couple of the pieces not on loan are for sale), I doubt people will want a massive, megalithic Moore cluttering up their living room any time soon. Instead, these works should, like caged animals, be returned to nature once again and seen in the great outdoors—among the sheep of the neighbouring farm or looming out of a woodland—as they are most of the year round at the Henry Moore Foundation.

Having taken so long to get to Perry Green the first time around, I certainly won't be waiting another lifetime.

**'Henry Moore: Late Large Forms'** is at Gagosian until **Aug 18. The Henry Moore Foundation** at Perry Green is open until **Oct 28** this year, for opening hours visit [www.henry-moore.org](http://www.henry-moore.org) [www.timeout.com/art](http://www.timeout.com/art)