



Plate XI, from the series "Elephant Skull"

Date

1969 (published 1970)

Primary Maker

Henry Moore

Medium

Etching

Description

In 1919, having completed his military service in World War I at the age of thirty-one, Henry Moore entered the Leeds School of Art, where he studied for two years before transferring to the Royal College of Art in London. He made sculptures that were influenced by what was then called "primitive" art from various world cultures (see cat. no. 85). In a series of thirty-two prints produced in 1969, Moore explored the contours and volumes of a three-foot-tall elephant skull that the biologist Julian Huxley and his wife, Juliette, had given to him the previous year. The skull had resided in the couple's garden, but the London climate was causing it to deteriorate. Bones and skeletal structures intrigued Moore on account of their paradoxical lightness and strength, which he felt could inform his sculpture. "By bringing the skull very close to me and drawing various details," Moore wrote, "I found so

many contrasts in form and shape that I began to see in it great deserts and rocky landscapes, big caves in the sides of hills, great pieces of architecture, columns and dungeons." To make the etchings, Moore composed and drew directly in the resist on his copper plates rather than copying drawings he had created beforehand. In the early prints in the series, he depicted the entire skull, as here, while in later ones, he concentrated on specific details. The series was published by G rard Cramer, who worked with such prominent artists as Joan Mir , Georges Braque, and Max Ernst. He also owned a gallery in Geneva that specialized in exhibiting prints and small sculptures. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

Dimensions

Plate: 9 7/8 x 7 11/16 in. (25.1 x 19.5 cm) Sheet: 19 7/16 x 14 15/16 in. (49.4 x 37.9 cm)