

Barbara Hepworth Two Forms (Orkney) - a new icon for Orkney

10 October 2015

The Pier Arts Centre in Stromness, Orkney has made an exciting new addition to its unique collection of art. Two Forms (Orkney), a sculpture by Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975).

Image



Barbara Hepworth's Two Forms (Orkney)

Two Forms (Orkney) has been purchased by the centre, thanks to grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) and other national funding bodies. It will go on display at the gallery in Stromness from 10 October, the first time the sculpture has been seen in public since the Tate Gallery's 1968 Barbara Hepworth retrospective in London.

Carved in slate in 1967, the work was offered for sale from a private collection in Switzerland at a recent auction of British art at Christie's London. The work was acquired with support from the NHMF, the Art Fund, the National Fund for Acquisitions, managed by National Museums Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government, and the Henry Moore Foundation. Further support from the Porthmeor Fund helped secure the work. The centre's own contribution, which enabled applications to the main supporters, was provided by the Friends of the Pier Arts Centre.

The sculpture will now go on permanent display at the Pier Arts Centre alongside works from the collection, which includes other significant carvings by Hepworth as well as works by the pioneering Russian artist Naum Gabo and British Modernist Ben Nicholson among others. Further new acquisitions, including an animated film by the late Scottish artist Katy Dove, will also be shown highlighting the way the Pier's unique collection has grown over recent years.

Dr Sophie Bowness, art historian, Trustee of the Hepworth Estate and granddaughter of Barbara Hepworth commented: "There is a real sense of home-coming in the Pier's acquisition of the exquisite slate carving *Two Forms (Orkney)*. The work commemorates the close friendship between Barbara Hepworth and Margaret Gardiner, without which the Pier Arts Centre would perhaps never have come into being, four years after Hepworth's death."

Hepworth and Margaret Gardiner (1904-2005), the founder of the Pier Arts Centre, met in London in the 1930s and became close friends and confidants. Gardiner was to become one of Hepworth's key early patrons, supporting the artist in times of need through friendship and the purchase of work in the 1930s and 40s. The friendship between Hepworth and Gardiner is documented through a large volume of correspondence, now cared for by Tate Archive and through a memoir of the artist written by Gardiner in 1982.

Dr Bowness added: "The work also alludes to the remarkable Neolithic monuments of Orkney which Hepworth never saw herself but which are close counterparts of the standing stones of her adopted home, the Penwith peninsular in west Cornwall - two places so remote geographically from each other but with many points of contact between them."

Neil Firth, Director of the Pier Arts Centre said: "Through Hepworth's aesthetic genius this piece has the power and beauty to explain simply the sophisticated reasoning behind Margaret Gardiner's decision to establish a gallery in Orkney and to gift her remarkable collection to its people. As such, the work will gain a

central position in the centre's presentation of its collection."

Support to acquire the work for the Pier Arts Centre Collection has been secured from several key funding bodies. The funding package includes a £456,500 grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

Fiona Talbott, Head of National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: "This sculpture exemplifies the work of Barbara Hepworth, one of the pre-eminent British artists of the 20th century. It's also a highly symbolic piece for the Piers Art Centre. The National Heritage Memorial Fund therefore felt it was vital to support this purchase, ensuring people can see *Two Forms (Orkney)* for the first time in nearly 50 years in what is clearly its natural home."

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund, added: "This important sculpture adds an iconic example of Hepworth's later carving style to that of the group of early works by the artist already in the collection. The centre's collection is truly the pre-eminent centre for Hepworth's work in Scotland and we are delighted to support this excellent new acquisition."

Dr Hazel Williamson, National Fund for Acquisitions Manager, said: "We are delighted to provide support towards this significant acquisition which vividly expresses the founding elements of the Pier Arts Centre's unique collection."

Interest in the work of Barbara Hepworth has recently been concentrated by a major exhibition of the artist's work currently on show at Tate Britain. The exhibition, *Barbara Hepworth-Sculpture for a Modern World*, is the first major survey of the artist's work at Tate in London since the 1968 retrospective and includes many of her finest works. Five works from the Pier Arts Centre's own collection are included in the exhibition which runs at Tate Britain until 25 October and is touring to the Kröller-Müller Museum in the Netherlands and the Arp Museum in Germany next year.

Notes to editors

Funding for the sculpture consisted of –

- The National Heritage Memorial Fund
- The Art Fund
- The National Fund for Acquisitions
- The Henry Moore Foundation
- The Porthmeor Fund

- The Friends of the Pier Arts Centre

About the Art Fund

The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. In the past five years, the Art Fund has given £34million to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections. The Art Fund also helps museums share their collections with wider audiences by supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, including ARTIST ROOMS and the 2013-18 Aspire tour of Tate's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* by John Constable, and makes additional grants to support the training and professional development of curators.

The Art Fund is independently funded, with the core of its income provided by 117,000 members who receive the National Art Pass and enjoy free entry to over 230 museums, galleries and historic places across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibition. In addition to grant-giving, the Art Fund's support for museums includes the annual Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year, a publications programme and a range of digital platforms. Find out more about the Art Fund and the National Art Pass at [Art Fund website](#).

About the National Fund for Acquisitions

The National Fund for Acquisitions, administered with Scottish Government funding by National Museums Scotland, contributes £150,000 each year towards the acquisition of objects for the collections of museums, galleries, libraries and archives throughout Scotland. Find out more about the work of the NFA at the [National Fund for Acquisitions website](#).

About the Pier Arts Centre

The Pier Arts Centre's entire collection is a Recognised Collection of National Significance to Scotland.

Pier Arts Centre receives regular funding from Creative Scotland. This supports the organisation to play an important role within the visual arts in Orkney, hosting a programme of local, national and international exhibitions and events, providing more people with the opportunity to engage with art of the highest quality.

The Pier Arts Centre is open Tuesday-Saturday 10.30am – 5.00pm. Admission is free.

The Pier Arts Centre is a registered charity No. SC 014815.

Further information

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