

NewArtCentre.

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Press Release

BARBARA HEPWORTH: FORM AND THEATRE

In the Artists House
23 May – 26 July 2015



The focus of this small display in the Artists House is Barbara Hepworth's great interest in theatre, music and dance. These art forms provided inspiration for the rhythm, movement and space which we often find in her sculpture. More directly, they also led to her involvement in a play and an opera during the 1950s and a connection with the campaign to rebuild the Globe Theatre on the Southbank.

In 1951 Hepworth created designs for a new production of Sophocles' *Electra* at the Old Vic. Her contribution included a sculpture (BH 167) made from painted steel rods and which depicted the god Apollo in abstract form. In the original theatrical photographs, the sculpture looks at once three dimensional and linear; the rods define volume, yet have a graphic quality. Hepworth subsequently visited Greece for herself in 1954, which inspired a number of later sculptures. The trip also gave a confidence and authenticity to her designs for the first production of Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* at the Royal Opera House in 1955. In her *Pictorial Autobiography* she describes how the opera 'asked, in both its allegorical meaning and its symbolism, for a new discipline; also for a new tradition, perhaps related to the formality of Greek theatre...' (1970).

Shortly after *The Midsummer Marriage*, Hepworth began experimenting with new shapes and materials; 'Forms in Movement (Pavan)' (BH 211), which was later cast in bronze in 1967, and 'Forms in Movement (Galliard)' (BH 212) date from this pivotal period in her career; in both works Hepworth merged the theme of dance with the idea of flight, and named them after two sixteenth-century dances. In comparison to 'Pavan' and 'Galliard', Hepworth's 'Sphere' (BH 561), 1973, has a distinctly sci-fi appearance, though it also contains an historical reference. It was developed from an earlier work for the Globe Theatre Trust following an invitation from Sam Wanamaker, who was leading the campaign for the modern reconstruction of the theatre. The first cast remains there still.

To accompany *Barbara Hepworth: Form and Theatre*, **The Bronze Garden by Leo Geyer** will be performed at the exhibition opening on Saturday 23 May at 2pm. Geyer has adapted his original composition, inspired by Hepworth's 'Sphere with Inner Form' at St Ives, for five musicians and will also conduct. The performers will be: Alto Flute - Katy Ovens; Violin - Tim Rathbone; Viola - Emily Pond; Cello - Michael Newman and Harp - Olivia Jageurs.

PRESS PREVIEW: Saturday 23 May 2015. Free bus from London departing Tate Britain (Millbank) at 10 a.m. and leaving Roche Court at 3 p.m. Please contact the New Art Centre to reserve a place. For further information about the exhibition and for images, please contact Stephen Feeke on 01980 862244 or nac@sculpture.uk.com.