

Large Print Guide

Barbara Hepworth: Art & Life

27 May to 3 September 2023

[Enter Gallery 2 and start with the wall facing you:]

**Barbara Hepworth in her studio Palais de Danse, St Ives,
Cornwall, March 1961**

Photographic enlargement

Image courtesy The Barbara Hepworth Estate and Wakefield
Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield)

Totem, 1961-62

Marble

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth
Wakefield). Donated by Eric and Jean Cass through the
Contemporary Art Society, 2012

[Text panel:]

Barbara Hepworth: Art & Life

Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975) is one of the most important artists of the 20th century. She was at the forefront of multiple avant-garde art movements, with wide-ranging interests that infused her work. Deeply spiritual and passionately engaged with political and technological change, Hepworth focused on the dynamic physical encounter with sculpture and how this could allow the viewer to both reflect on and alter their perceptions and experiences of the world.

Starting from Hepworth's roots in Yorkshire, the exhibition encompasses the modernist carving that launched her career in the 1920s and 1930s, iconic strung sculptures of the 1940s and 1950s, and later large-scale commissions. This exhibition reveals how she integrated music, dance, science, space exploration, politics and religion, as well as events in her personal life, into her work, creating a singular vision of art and life.

[Turn round to face the entrance and move towards the text panel on the brown wall. Travel around the room in an anti-clockwise direction:]

Hepworth in Yorkshire

Jocelyn Barbara Hepworth was born in Wakefield on 10 January 1903. Her father was a civil engineer who became County Surveyor for the West Riding. Hepworth accompanied him on inspections around the county, later describing these early experiences in sculptural terms: 'Moving through and over the West Riding landscape with my father in his car, the hills were sculptures; the roads defined the forms'.

Hepworth attended Wakefield Girls' High School, where the headmistress, Miss McCroben, introduced her to sculpture: 'At the age of seven I sat in the lecture hall of a school of 600 girls with tightened nerves and muscles gazing on slides of the Pyramids, Greek temples and ancient sculptures. That first vision of "form" between heaven and earth never leaves me.'

Encouraged by McCroben to take the Junior County Scholarship exam to attend Leeds School of Art, Hepworth began her studies at Leeds in 1920, at the age of 17.

In 1921 Hepworth won a scholarship to study at the Royal College of Art, entering what she described as 'an expanding world'. While most sculpture at this time was made by modelling in clay, Hepworth was probably also taught some stone or wood carving, reflecting the rise in 'direct carving', in which the artist cut directly into the sculptural material.

Bottom:

Robin Hood's Bay, 1920

Watercolour on paper

In her youth Hepworth was immersed in a variety of Yorkshire landscapes that inspired her throughout her life. This work depicts the scenic town of Robin Hood's Bay on the North Yorkshire coast, including the house perched on the cliff edge where the family spent their summer holidays. Hepworth described getting up at dawn to paint 'undisturbed in a world of fantastic beauty. The rocky scars, the boats, sea and cliffs inspired me continuously'.

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield)

Top:

Portrait of George Butler, 1922

Pencil on paper

Hepworth began her studies at the Royal College of Art (RCA) the year after painter William Rothenstein had become the principal and invigorated the programme by inviting young contemporary artists to teach. Drawing was taught by Leon Underwood, who was also a carver and, as Hepworth praised, 'made one see in depth'. This early drawing, made in Robin Hood's Bay during the summer holidays from the RCA, reflects Underwood's style of drawing where volume and mass are conveyed on the flat page with minimal marks.

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Purchased with a V&A Purchase Grant, 2006

Bust of Mrs A. R. T. Richards (Quita), 1924–25

Bronze

When Hepworth arrived in Florence in 1924, on a West Riding Travel Grant following graduation, she spent her first months studying Romanesque and early Renaissance art and architecture in Tuscany. The couple she was staying with, Mrs A. R. T. ('Quita') and Captain Richards, offered her one of her earliest commissions, to sculpt a portrait bust of Quita. As Hepworth recalled, 'I worked the head in clay, and then the process of casting is to make moulds and make a plaster replica within the mould, which is then used to make the bronze.'

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Purchased, 2018

Portrait of a Woman, 1925

Charcoal, chalk and crayon

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Presented by the artist's daughters, Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness, through the Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate and the Art Fund

Portrait of a Man in Profile (John Skeaping), 1925

Charcoal, chalk and crayon

Hepworth met fellow artist John Skeaping while travelling in Italy, and they were married in May 1925. Her portraits of him made at this time use chalk and charcoal to create light and shade in a manner reminiscent of Italian Renaissance masters' studies. Hepworth wrote of her experiences in Italy, 'There had been something lacking in my childhood in Yorkshire, and that was light. In my early experiences the sun never shone enough, the atmosphere rarely cleared, shadows were never sharp, surfaces never brilliant. Italy opened for me the wonderful realm of light – light which transforms and reveals, which intensifies the subtleties of form and contours and colour.'

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Presented by the artist's daughters, Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness, through the Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate and the Art Fund

'Portrait of a Man in Profile (John Skeaping), 1925

Charcoal, chalk and crayon

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Presented by the artist's daughters, Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness, through the Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate and the Art Fund

Mask, 1928

Pentelicon Marble

This sculpture was shown in one of Hepworth's first exhibitions after she returned to London, at the Beaux-Arts Gallery in 1928 alongside Skeaping and engraver William Morgan, Skeaping recalled they sold all their works. The Times review noted Hepworth's particular sensitivity to materials, suggesting 'most of her carvings are designed within the cubical – or cuboid – mass as if they had been "found" in it.' Hepworth later recalled, 'at this time all the carvings were an effort to find a personal accord with the stones or wood which I was carving. I was fascinated by the new problem which arose out of each sculpture, and by the kind of form that grew out of achieving a personal harmony with the material.'

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Gift from Sir George Hill, 1947

Far right:

Drawing 'Kneeling Woman' [Figure Study of a Crouching Nude Woman], 1929

Charcoal and wash

This was one of the first works by Hepworth to be acquired into a major public collection, being purchased directly from the artist in 1931. Richard Bedford, Keeper of Sculpture at the Victoria & Albert Museum from 1924 to 1938, was an early supporter of both Hepworth and Skeaping, and instrumental in both purchasing work and introducing them to important collectors.

Victoria & Albert Museum

Right:

Seated Female Nude, 1928

Brown chalk, pen and ink

Victoria & Albert Museum

[Floor:]

Kneeling Figure, 1932

Rosewood

In 1931 Hepworth met artist Ben Nicholson and they became romantically involved as her marriage with Skeaping dissolved. By 1932, Hepworth and Nicholson shared a studio and their work was becoming more abstract. In Kneeling Figure Hepworth has carved directly into the hard Rosewood, it's simplified form showing the beginnings of her development into abstraction. Like many of her modernist contemporaries in the 1920s and 1930s, Hepworth visited the British Museum to study sculpture from Africa, Asia and Central America. This sculpture shows a particular debt to African carving, of which Hepworth was especially impressed, writing to Nicholson in 1932 of its 'warmth, creativeness [and] humanness'.

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Purchased by Wakefield Art Gallery in 1944, with the assistance of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Wakefield Permanent Art Fund and Wakefield Girls' High School Old Girls Association

[Text panel before the opening to the next gallery:]

Material Harmony

After graduating Hepworth travelled to Italy where she met fellow artist John Skeaping, whom she married in Florence in May 1925. Hepworth joined Skeaping in his training with a marble craftsman, learning 'that it was not dominance which one had to attain over material, but an understanding, almost a kind of persuasion, and above all greater coordination between head and hand'.

They returned to London in 1926 and began to establish their careers, moving to Hampstead in 1928. As Hepworth's reputation grew, so did her family. She remembered this as 'a wonderfully happy time. My son Paul was born [in 1929] and, with him in his cot, or on a rug at my feet, my carving developed and strengthened'. Hepworth's sculpture began to be more abstract, as she wrote in 1930: 'My trend is towards generalisation; but I have not dispensed with representation entirely; as I find that it is possible to take a pebble of fine and simple shape and carve in addition a sequence of planes suggestive of the human form.'

After she had triplets in 1934, with her second husband, artist Ben Nicholson, she noted, 'all traces of naturalism disappeared

and for some years I was absorbed in the relationships in space, in size and texture and weight, as well as the tensions between the forms.'

[Continue to the next text panel on the other side of the opening. Travel around the wall of the room in an anti-clockwise direction:]

'The forms which have had special meaning for me since childhood have been the standing form (which is the translation of my feeling towards the human being standing in landscape); the two forms (which is the tender relationship of one living thing beside another); and the closed form, such as the oval, spherical or pierced form (sometimes incorporating colour) which translates for me the association of meaning of gesture in landscape; in the repose of say a mother and child, or the feeling of the embrace of living things, either in nature or in the human spirit.' Barbara Hepworth

Looking back on her work, Hepworth identified three important forms to which she continually returned. The 'standing form', the 'two forms' and the 'closed form' are represented in these first

galleries, in sculptures made over four decades. The artist's use of a variety of materials, from different stones through to bronze and string, reveals her interest in colour and surface, and how the intrinsic properties of each material work in harmony with the form.

Hepworth associated the shapes of her sculptures with specific physical and emotional experiences, such as a figure standing at the top of a hill, or a mother holding a child. Much of Hepworth's art and life attempts this synthesis of material and idea, the singular and the universal, expressing our relationships with our surroundings and with each other. Though best known as a sculptor, these ideas can be seen in Hepworth's paintings, prints, drawings and rare textile designs, also displayed here, showing the rich dialogue between these different forms of art making.

Porthmeor, 1969

Lithograph

The three forms that Hepworth identified as having special meaning for her are found in her prints as much as her sculptures. In this case we see the 'oval, spherical or pieced form, sometimes incorporating colour' which she associates with 'gesture in landscape' and 'the embrace of living things'. The title refers Porthmeor Beach, a sweeping bay in St Ives, Cornwall, which inspired several of Hepworth's works. Hepworth took on a painting studio overlooking the beach in the early 1960s.

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Presented by the artist's daughters, Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness, through the Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate and Art Fund

Hieroglyph, 1953

Ancaster Stone

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Hepworth's work explored the relationship of two figures in varying degrees of contact and harmony. This occurred as her own relationship with Nicholson deteriorated and her work expanded into the public realm. In 1950 she represented Britain in the Venice Biennale, having previously felt she was overlooked by the selection committee for, as she lamented at the time, '1) Being a woman, 2) Being abstract, 3) Being young and 4) Being a wife and mother.' While in Venice she was struck by the way people responded to the proportions of the city's architectural spaces: 'They walked differently, discovering their innate dignity. They grouped themselves in unconscious recognition of their importance in relation to each other as human beings'.

Leeds Museums and Galleries. Given by the artist, 1968

Two Standing Nudes, 1947

Pencil and oil drawing on board

British Council Collection

Three Groups of Figures on a Pink Ground, 1949

Oil and pencil on board

Rugby Art Gallery and Museum. Presented by the Contemporary Art Society, 1951

Ballet (2): Giselle, 1950

Oil and pencil on board

UK Government Art Collection

Child with Mother, 1972

Marble

In late 1933, Hepworth exhibited sculptures at the Lefevre Gallery in London. A review of the show by Adrian Stokes in *The Spectator* paid particular attention to her 'Mother and Child' stone carvings: 'It is not a matter of a mother and child group represented in stone. Miss Hepworth's stone is a mother, her huge pebble its child. A man would have made the group more pointed: no man could have treated this composition with such a pure complacency. The idea itself is a spectacular one, but it gains from Miss Hepworth's hands a surer poignancy.' Hepworth returned to the theme of mother and child throughout her career. This sculpture was made just a few years before her death in 1975.

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield), on long loan from the Hepworth Estate

[Floor:]

Tides II, 1946

Plane wood painted white and blue

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield), on long loan from a private collection

Curved Form (Wave II), 1959

Bronze with steel rods

This is a variation of a sculpture that Hepworth had made in 1943–44. She later wrote about creating these encircling and open shapes: 'I had a studio room looking straight towards the horizon of the sea and enfolded (but with always the escape for the eye straight out to the Atlantic) by the arms of the land to the left and the right of me.'

Rachel Kidd, daughter of Barbara Hepworth, on long loan to The Hepworth Wakefield

Pierced Hemisphere, 1937

Serravezza marble

Around 1931 Hepworth began to experiment with carving holes into her materials allowing a fluid passage of light through the sculptures. The use of this new formal device intersected with her move away from figurative representation towards pure abstraction, where a hole could express the relationship between pure qualities of mass and space, and activate a new engagement with the viewer.

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Gift from Mr H. R. Hepworth, 1940

[Wall:]

Landscape Sculpture, 1947

Screenprint on silk

Hepworth was commissioned by Ascher to create one in their series of Artist Squares and wrote a short text to accompany her design. In this, she outlines the connection between abstract form and the experience of being immersed in nature writing, 'Colour and form go hand in hand – brown fields and green hills cannot be divorced from the earth's shape – a square becomes a triangle, a triangle a circle, a circle an oval by the continuous curve of folding: and we return, always, to the essential human form – the human form in landscape.'

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Gift from the Hepworth Estate, 2013

[Continue into the gallery on the right with the green back wall. Start with the text panel immediately to the left of the opening. Move round the space in a clockwise direction:]

Rhythmic Forms

Writing in the final section of her 1952 monograph, Hepworth outlined 'everything that goes to make up my usual working day ... My home and my children; listening to music and thinking about its relation to the life of forms, the need for dancing as recreation, and where dancing links with the actual physical rhythm of carving; the intense pleasure derived from tools and craftsmanship – all these things are daily expressions of the whole.'

Hepworth began titling works after musical terms, the first of these, Rhythmic Form (1949), made the year that she met composer Priaux Rainier, who gave her a copy of Igor Stravinsky's book, The Poetics of Music. Hepworth wrote enthusiastically: 'Stravinsky's chapter on composition corresponds so exactly to the creation of form that a mere half a dozen words only would need to be changed to make it a statement on sculpture.'

Rhythmic Form, 1949

Rosewood

British Council Collection

Costume design for 'Sosostris', a Clairvoyant for The Midsummer Marriage, 1954-55

Mixed media including metal, graphite and gouache on paper

Tate Archive: Presented by the Estate of Barbara Hepworth 2015

Sketches of forms to be carried by 'Tree Presences' for The Midsummer Marriage, 1954-55

Mixed media including graphite, ink and gouache on paper

Tate Archive: Presented by the Estate of Barbara Hepworth 2015

[Lower vitrine, left to right:]

**Costume design for the character 'Jenifer' for The
Midsummer Marriage, 1954–55**

Mixed media including graphite, ink and gouache on paper

Tate Archive: Presented by the Estate of Barbara Hepworth 2015

**Sketches of costume designs of 'Jenifer' and 'Mark' with a
blue background for The Midsummer Marriage, 1954–55**

Mixed media including graphite, gold and gouache on paper, on
board

Tate Archive: Presented by the Estate of Barbara Hepworth 2015

**Sketches of costume designs of 'Jenifer' and 'Mark' for The
Midsummer Marriage, 1954–55**

Mixed media including graphite, gold and gouache on paper

Tate Archive: Presented by the Estate of Barbara Hepworth 2015

Costume design for 'The He-Ancient', Priest of the Temple for The Midsummer Marriage, 1954–55

Mixed media including metal, graphite and gouache on paper

Tate Archive: Presented by the Estate of Barbara Hepworth 2015

Costume design for 'The She-Ancient', Priestess of the Temple for The Midsummer Marriage, 1954–55

Mixed media including metal, graphite and gouache on paper

Tate Archive: Presented by the Estate of Barbara Hepworth 2015

Costume designs for two of the 'Water Girls in Act II' for The Midsummer Marriage, 1954-55

Mixed media including graphite and gouache on paper, on board

Tate Archive: Presented by the Estate of Barbara Hepworth 2015

**Costume designs for the 'Tree Presences' for The
Midsummer Marriage, 1954–55**

Mixed media including graphite and gouache on paper

Tate Archive: Presented by the Estate of Barbara Hepworth 2015

**Costume designs for two of the 'Tree Presences' for The
Midsummer Marriage, 1954-55**

Mixed media including graphite and gouache on paper, on board

Tate Archive: Presented by the Estate of Barbara Hepworth 2015

[Top vitrine:]

Houston Rogers (1902–1970)

The Midsummer Marriage, 1955

Exhibition copies of vintage photographic prints

Private collection

[Wall:]

Douglas Glass (1901–1978)

**Barbara Hepworth with Designs for the Ritual Dances in The
Midsummer Marriage, c. 1955**

Photographic print

Towner Eastbourne

[Wall text:]

Hepworth on the Stage

In 1951 Hepworth designed the set and costumes for the Greek play *Electra* at The Old Vic, London, which is set in the aftermath of the Trojan War. The action takes place before the palace of Mycenae, with the god Apollo's temple on the left. Hepworth created Apollo in sculptural form using wire, positioned on a base with fluted corners that suggests a temple building or altar. Images of the actors praying to the sculpture illustrate Hepworth's assertion that 'a sculpture might, and sculptures do, reside in emptiness; but nothing happens until the living human encounters the image. Then the magic occurs – the magic of

scale and weight, form and texture, colour and movement, the encircling interplay and dance occurs between the object and the human sensibility.'

In 1954 the composer Michael Tippett, whom Hepworth had met through Rainier, invited Hepworth to design the set and costumes for *The Midsummer Marriage*, which opened at the Royal Opera House in 1955. Based on Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*, it followed two couples on their journey to marriage. Hepworth described her set: 'The colours of the main set were white – with black lines and primary blue. The vertical rectangles were of viridian green – Indian red and Venetian red with a large panel of ultramarine.' Her annotated costume designs show a focus on colour and material, and a sensitivity to the human form in movement. *Ritual Dances* set in the woods were accompanied by the most sculptural elements of Hepworth's design, and she wrote, 'The trees were verticals of wood with spaces for the dancers and a full play of changing light.'

Apollo, 1951

Painted steel rod

Tate: Accepted by HM Government in lieu of inheritance tax and allocated to Tate 2005, accessioned 2006

[Wall:]

John Vickers (1916 –1976)

Electra, 1951

Exhibition copies of vintage photographic prints

Private collection

Top right:

Costume Designs for 'Electra', c.1951

Mixed media including graphite, watercolour, gold and gouache on paper, on board

Tate Archive: Presented by the Estate of Barbara Hepworth 2015

[Wall text]:

Metal and Movement

In 1956, after a period of around 30 years, Hepworth returned to making sculptures in bronze. Casting in metal meant editions could be made of the same work, allowing more sculptures to be sold privately, placed in museum collections, and exhibited around the world as Hepworth's reputation grew.

More importantly, Hepworth found that working in metal expanded the possibilities of sculptural expression, writing: 'The problem is, how to extend the forms beyond the capacity of stone and wood? How to swing up and outwards when feeling cannot be contained by the block?' Certain ideas called for fluid forms, like the movement of dance and music, the ephemeral quality of spirituality, or the constant ebb and flow of the natural world.

In a notebook of 1961, Hepworth identified the disparate qualities she associated with 'metal and its properties': 'Fire, running metal, molten – passionate, arrested movement – inducement of sound and resonance', distinguishing these from sculptures made with 'sheet [metal] under tension', which she linked to 'related rhythms of curves'. This focus on movement is echoed in

her paintings of this period, which show a dramatic shift from controlled geometric lines to expressive brushstrokes and dynamic forms.

Forms in Movement (Galliard), 1956

Copper

This is made of copper sheet in tension articulating, as Hepworth described, the 'rhythm of the curves'. The sense of movement is highlighted by the title Galliard, which is a 16th century lively court dance. In 1953 Hepworth had founded the St Ives Festival of performing arts with composers Priaulx Rainier and Michael Tippett, which had a focus on music from the two Elizabethan eras, bringing 16th century music alongside contemporary compositions. Hepworth noted, 'The festival was originally conceived as an act of Praise. For centuries man has tried to offer the best that he could give to God, and by joining in this act of dedication with his fellow men he has replenished his faith in the true values of life and work [...] Art is a universal language – music has the power to unite us and transport our spirit.'

Private collection

Curved Form (Trevalgan), 1956

Bronze

This was first work that Hepworth had cast in bronze after a long period of carving in wood and stone. The sculpture takes its name from a particular place in Cornwall and was inspired by her embodied and spiritual experiences of being surrounded and embraced by landscape. She recalled: 'This "Curved Form" was conceived standing on the hill called Trevalgan between St Ives and Zennor where the land of Cornwall ends and the cliffs divide as they touch the sea facing west. At this point, facing the setting sun across the Atlantic, where sky and sea blend with hills and rocks, the forms seem to enfold the watcher and lift him towards the sky.' The arms of Curved Form (Trevalgan), thin and sinuous, bend and reach upwards with a lightness and tension granted by working in metal.

British Council Collection

Sea Form (Porthmeor), 1958

Bronze

The fluid form in this bronze sculpture conveys a spiralling movement similar to that of ocean waves and its title refers to Porthmeor Beach in St Ives. Hepworth saw a connection between the process of making sculpture in metal and the act of painting: 'I feel most strongly about the two mainstreams in contemporary sculpture carving on the one hand and a more fluid approach (in metal) which is perhaps nearer to the realism of painting than carving [...] both streams are facets of the sculptural idea – both essential and expanding and complementary.'

British Council Collection

[Floor:]

Orpheus (Maquette 1), 1956

Brass and string

The title 'Orpheus' references the mythical Greek musician and poet who taught the god Apollo to play the lyre. Orpheus was also the inspiration for a collection of Rilke's poetry, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, of which Hepworth owned two copies. The poetry may have formed a direct inspiration for these works, as Sonnet I opens, 'A tree ascending. O pure transcension / O Orphic song.' Hepworth drew a connection between the material form of the 'Orpheus' works and a sense of ascension, 'I found the most intense pleasure in this new adventure in material – and revelled in the lightness of poise and delicacy of forms which seemed nearer to the flight of birds and their form in flight rather than to more gravity-bound rocks and humans.'

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Accepted under the Cultural Gifts Scheme by HM Government from Kate Ashbrook, 2019

[Wall, moving around the space in a clockwise direction:]

Forms (West Penwith), 1958

Oil paint and graphite on hardboard

Tate: Presented by the artist 1964

The Seed (Project for Metal Sculpture), 1957

Ink on paper

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Presented by the artist's daughters, Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness, through the Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate and the Art Fund

Project (Spring Morning), 1957

Oil on board

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Presented by the artist's daughters, Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness, through the Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate and the Art Fund

Torso 1 (Ulysses), 1958

Bronze

Hepworth wrote of this work ‘the form of Torso (Ulysses) was inspired by the eager stance of a figure poised between sea and sky – a rhythm of form which has its roots in earth but reaches outwards towards the unknown experiences of the future. The thought underlying this form is, for me, the delicate balance the spirit of man maintains between his knowledge and the laws of the universe.’

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield), on long loan from the Hepworth Estate

Spring (Project for Sculpture), 1957

Oil paint and ink on board

The theme of ascension for Hepworth cut across the realms of creativity, spirituality and humanism and are visible throughout different media. In this painting, along with Project (Spring Morning) and Spring (Project for Sculpture) shown nearby, Hepworth translates the 'rising' movement in gestural oil paintings using thick, black calligraphic marks that sweep upwards. Despite the titles, these are not studies for particular sculptures, although there is a strong correspondence between the rising forms of her work in metal and these gestural paintings.

Tate: Accepted by HM Government in lieu of inheritance tax 2010 and allocated to Tate 2012

[Move to the final room, passing through the first gallery space.]

[Floor:]

Bicentric Form, 1949

Limestone

Hepworth explained this work as ‘a fusion of two figures into one sculptural entity’. It grew from her drawings of interlocking figures and she saw it as a development of her sculptures made of multiple forms. The merged figures express her interest in individual and social relationships and perhaps reference Cornwall’s ancient standing stones.

Tate: Purchased 1950

[Turn around. Move to the text panel to the right of the opening to this room. Move round the space in a clockwise direction:]

Science, Spirituality and Society

Hepworth's interest in science is clear from her work of the 1930s, when she was part of a network of artists, writers, political activists and scientists in Hampstead, London, while forming connections with the Parisian avant-garde. Her work became exclusively abstract and in 1933 Hepworth joined Abstraction-Création, a Paris-based group dedicated to non-representational art. She wrote in their journal that 'reality exists only within ideas', reflecting both her interest in mathematical forms and her increasing commitment to Christian Science, a religion that distinguishes between the 'mortal mind', which perceives the physical world, and the 'divine Mind', which represents the true, intangible nature of existence.

In Hampstead, Hepworth became close to the writer and activist Margaret Gardiner and her partner, physicist and crystallographer J. D. Bernal. Bernal wrote about Hepworth's work in an essay, 'Art and the Scientist' for the 1937 publication *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art*, drawing parallels between her sculpture and the laws of physics. Hepworth also wrote an essay in *Circle* titled 'Sculpture', in which she outlined the connection between geometric abstraction and its potential to inspire social change, 'The language of colour and form is universal and not

one for a special class... It is a thought which gives the same life, the same expansion, the same universal freedom to everyone.'

Right:

Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art, 1937

Publication, edition 1971

Circle was edited by architect Leslie Martin, artist Ben Nicholson, sculptor Naum Gabo, and designed by Hepworth and Sadie Speight. Hepworth contributed her essay 'Sculpture', which connects this art form to the laws of science: 'The consciousness and understanding of volume and mass, laws of gravity, contour of the earth under our feet, thrusts and stresses of internal structure, [...]and all laws of movement and equilibrium – these are surely the very essence of life, the principles and laws which are the vitalization of our experience, and sculpture a vehicle for projecting our sensibility to the whole of existence [...] These formal relationships have become our thought, our faith, waking or sleeping – [...] the solution to life and to living.'

Wakefield Art Gallery Archive (The Hepworth Wakefield)

Left:

Sculpture Record of Project – Monument to the Spanish War (1938–39)

Photograph taken by Hepworth

Hepworth supported the anti-fascist Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. Project – Monument to the Spanish War (1938–39), now destroyed, comprised five carved wooden forms. This photograph, from Hepworth's sculpture record for this work, shows a cylinder, sphere and cone surrounding a poised figure overseeing the construction with a single, deeply staring 'eye'. She recalled of the time this was made, 'lacking money, space and time I became obsessed by ideas for large works [...] for the first time I had to work imaginatively in maquette form and dream up some future monument'.

Wakefield Art Gallery Archive (The Hepworth Wakefield). Gift of The Hepworth Estate.

Drawing for Sculpture, 1941

Pencil and gouache on paper

In late August 1939, Hepworth and Nicholson took their children to stay with friends in Carbis Bay, Cornwall, accepting the invitation to leave London as war approached. Sculptural materials were scarce, and Hepworth required a special permit to acquire wood for carving. Drawings became her main creative outlet: 'In the late evenings, and during the night I did innumerable drawings in gouache and pencil – all of them abstract, and all of them my own way of exploring the particular tensions and relationships of form and colour which were to occupy me in sculpture during the later years of the war.' Hepworth described these crystalline paintings as 'sculptures born in the disguise of two dimensions'.

University of Leeds Art Collection

Curved Forms with Red and Yellow, 1946

Oil and pencil on board

British Council Collection

Turning Form, 1946

Pencil and oil on gessoed board

British Council Collection

Drawings were integral in the development of Hepworth's sculptures at this time. As Hepworth explained: 'I spend whole periods of time entirely in drawing (or painting as I use colour) when I search for forms and rhythms and curvatures for my own satisfaction. These drawings I call "drawings for sculpture"; but it is in a general sense – that is – out of the drawings springs a general influence [...] I like to think of the drawings as a form of exploration and not as a two-dimensional representation of a particular three-dimensional object.'

[Floor:]

Sculpture with Colour (Deep Blue and Red), 1941

Plaster, string and paint

Shortly after Christmas 1940, Hepworth and Nicholson moved their family into their own house, Dunluce. However, conditions were still cramped and Hepworth found herself with a lack of time or space to work, recalling: 'I could only draw at night and make a few plaster maquettes. The day was filled with running a nursery school, double-cropping a tiny garden for food, and trying to feed and protect the children.' *Sculpture with Colour (Deep Blue and Red)* is one such plaster sculpture, and shows Hepworth realising her drawings in sculptural form. When she began carving again in 1943 her forms had become more open, developing the interplay of different planes that were explored during this period.

Private collection

Conoid, Sphere and Hollow III, 1937

Marble

Hepworth studied and made drawings of mathematical and geometrical forms like that of this sculpture, perhaps inspired by her friendship with physicist J. D. Bernal. Bernal pioneered the use of X-ray 'crystallography', which made visible the molecular structures of natural materials.

Bernal had written about Hepworth's work in the art book *Circle*, noting that the mathematician and sculptor share an 'extraordinary intuitive grasp of the unity of a surface even extending to surfaces which though separated in space and apparently disconnected yet belong together'.

UK Government Art Collection

Oval Sculpture (No. 2), 1943, cast 1958

Plaster on wooden base

In addition to deriving from her interest in geometrical forms, Hepworth also suggested these curved, open sculptures were a direct response to living through wartime conditions. She wrote how they were 'wrested in the very face of adverse fate' and how she felt 'carried along in a rhythm which seems to turn hundreds of thousands of hammer blows into a fluid movement and I am carried on the crest. Perhaps joy and grief are now rightly mixed. Carving is for me simply an act of the appreciation of living, a joyful act, but one is torn and driven by alternating hope and despair.' Around the time Oval Sculpture was made, one of her daughters became ill with a rare bone condition and was hospitalised in January 1944, beginning years of treatment that would lead to the creation of the 'Hospital Drawings', shown nearby.

Tate: Presented by the artist 1967

[Move to the text panel on the blue wall and continue clockwise:]

Concentration, Movement and Gesture

‘In about the middle of 1947, a suggestion was made to me that I might watch an operation in a hospital. I expected that I should dislike it; but from the moment when I entered the operating theatre I became completely absorbed by two things: first, the extraordinary beauty of purpose and coordination between human beings all dedicated to the saving of life, and the way that unity of idea and purpose dictated a perfection of concentration, movement, and gesture, and secondly by the way this special grace (grace of mind and body) induced a spontaneous space composition, an articulated and animated kind of abstract sculpture very close to what I had been seeking in my own work.’

Barbara Hepworth

During the Second World War, one of Hepworth’s daughters became ill and required a series of operations. Hepworth got to know her surgeon, Norman Capener, who invited her to witness an operation following the war. The ensuing hospital drawings marked a return to figurative art from pure geometric abstraction, though Hepworth saw a connection between the two noting in

1949, 'I don't feel any difference of intention or of mood when I paint (or carve) realistically or when I make abstract carvings. The two ways of working flow into each without effort. It all feels the same – the same happiness and pain, the same joy in a line.'

Concentration of Hands, 1948

Oil and pencil on board

This work shows Hepworth's close attention to the hands of surgeons during an operation. She described this work as, 'a rhythmic concentration of hands with the guardian of the unseen patient in the lower half of the painting.' Hepworth was interested in the difference between active and inactive hands. After observing surgeons operating on a hand, she described 'the difference between physical and spiritual animation' from the 'the inanimate hand asleep and the active, conscious hand'.

British Council Collection

Prevision, 1948

Oil and pencil on board

This work exemplifies Hepworth's detailed studies of surgeons' hands and here the artist focuses on the preparatory process of putting on gloves. The carefully rendered forms of the fingers and wrist appear three-dimensional compared to the flat plane of the surgeon's torso, making the hands appear distinctly sculptural. Hepworth noted the title Prevision 'explains my idea – the hands in relation to what is to follow – in the operation about to take place. I have simplified everything to throw the head and hands into prominence.'

British Council Collection

Tibia Graft, 1949

Oil and pencil on paper

In 1953 Hepworth gave a lecture to a group of surgeons in which she outlined a connection between the work of doctors and artists. She said “the medical profession [...] seeks to restore and to maintain the beauty and grace of the human mind and body; and, it seems to me, whatever illness a doctor sees before him, he never loses sight of the ideal, or state of perfection, of the human mind and body and spirit towards which he is working. The artist, in his sphere, seeks to make concrete ideas of beauty which are spiritually affirmative, and which, if he succeeds, become a link in the long chain of human endeavour which enriches man’s vitality and understanding, helping him to surmount his difficulties and gain a deeper respect for life.”

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Purchased 1951

Fenestration of the Ear, 1948

Oil and pencil on gessoed board

Hepworth observed the Australian surgeon Garnett Passe performing ear operations several times. She noted, 'you can imagine how impressed a sculptor would be by the precision and delicacy of this particular operation. The long concentration, the minuteness of the work and the weight of the equipment, and the power of the control behind the work, produced a very different kind of composition.'

Leeds Museums and Galleries. Bought by the Leeds Art Fund, 1948

The Hands, 1948

Oil and pencil on panel

This work illustrates the medical team in discussion prior to an operation, in what Hepworth referred to as “a very moving moment (for me)”. One figure in particular stood out to Hepworth, who she called “my much loved character – the theatre sister. In her quiet stance and very tender hands I wanted to convey the whole background of incredibly intelligent and devoted work which is vested in her occupation and profession.” Hepworth’s attention to the sole woman in the team may have been another point of connection, as the artist herself often spoke of working in a male-dominated industry and the ‘deep prejudice towards women in art.’

Bristol Culture: Bristol Museums and Art Gallery

Sun Setting (from The Aegean Suite), 1971

Lithograph

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Presented by the artist's daughters, Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness, through the Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate and the Art Fund

Floor:]

Cone and Sphere, 1973

White marble

In what can be considered a further development of the single form and the standing figure, Cone and Sphere marries the pure geometry of Hepworth's earlier work with her later concerns. Shifting celestial bodies are evoked through incised, overlapping circles, while Christian Science symbolism is present in the seemingly balanced sphere. Marble was the material through which Hepworth had first come to understand the process of carving, in Italy nearly 50 years before this work was made. In her last years she returned to working in marble in earnest, and a review in The Sunday Times of these late 'white marbles'

declared the 'slow-flowing movement of the rounded and hollowed forms has never looked better'.

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield), on long loan from the Hepworth Estate

[Wall:]

Moon Play, 1972

Screenprint

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Presented by the artist's daughters, Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness, through the Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate and the Art Fund

Moon Landscape (from The Penwith Portfolio), 1973

Lithograph

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Presented by the artist's daughters, Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness, through the Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate and the Art Fund

Cool Moon (from The Aegean Suite), 1971

Lithograph

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Presented by the artist's daughters, Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness, through the Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate and the Art Fund

[Wall text:]

Sun and Moon

Hepworth lived in a time of astonishing technological advances, from the first passenger transatlantic flights in the 1930s to the beginnings of space exploration in the 1960s, and believed that the 'discovery of flight has radically altered the shape of our sculpture, just as it has altered our thinking'. In 1969 the first manned lunar landing took place. The moon became a repeated presence in Hepworth's work, with circles symbolising celestial bodies appearing across prints and sculptures made in a variety of materials. In a note titled 'The Sun and Moon', Hepworth reflected that observing these entities and interpreting their light effects in her work 'expresses my deep interest in a new sense of poetry in our scientific age'.

[Floor:]

Disc with Strings (Moon), 1969

Aluminium and strings

Hepworth's interest in flight and space exploration led to a series of works exploring the circular form with explicit reference to the moon. *Disc with Strings (Moon)* was made during the same year as the lunar landing in 1969. It is rendered in aluminium with the soft silver metal adding to its space-age sensibility and further divided into geometric shapes by interlacing strings. Two circles puncturing the surface could be seen as lunar craters, or the moon and sun moving across the sky.

Private collection

Four Hemispheres, 1970

Lead crystal

In 1962 the Goonhilly Satellite Earth Station was established in Cornwall with enormous satellite dishes to communicate with the Telstar satellite that relayed television, radio and telegraph signals through space. Hepworth visited the site in 1963: 'I was invited on board the first one [dish] when it began to go round, and it was so magical and strange. I find such forms of our technology very exciting and inspiring.'

Hepworth said of this sculpture, 'you might say that the Four Hemispheres equals the dishes at Goonhilly and the trackers of the sky.' Cast in lead crystal, the unusual medium confirms Hepworth's assertion in 1970 that her later work was, 'becoming more fluid and experimental, and may well involve new materials'.

Private collection

Six Forms on a Circle, 1967

Polished bronze

Hepworth wrote in 1971, 'the forces between the everchanging position of the sun and moon, and the effects upon sea and tide, and cloud and wind, which change the depth of shadow on forms have governed my life for a long time. I began to get more and more turn-tables and to try and assess my own changing movements in relation to the sun.' This is one of the works Hepworth placed on a turn-table so it could revolve, the polished bronze casting light and creating reflections in many directions. In 1969 she wrote to Nicholson, 'in a big work I want to see the sun or moon. In a smaller work I may want to lean in the hole. In "six forms on a circle" I may want to see every form all at once!'

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield), on long loan from the Hepworth Estate

[Move to the text panel on the red wall and continue anti-clockwise:]

Hepworth embraced the impact of scientific advances with a sense of spirituality, writing in 1966: 'I regard the present era of flight and projection into space as a tremendous expansion of our sensibilities, and space sculpture and kinetic forms are an expression of it; but in order to appreciate this fully I think that we must affirm some ancient stability.' Circular forms appeared in the painting, *Genesis III* (1966), floating amid a cosmic background of spattered ink. Its biblical title suggests a connection between the celestial forms and Hepworth's continued Christian faith. The repeated use of circles also reflects her commitment to Christian Science, the central text states that the 'divine Mind' – the spiritual entity of which all existence is a part – 'in perpetual motion. Its symbol is the sphere'. Writing in the *Christian Science Monitor* in 1965 Hepworth confirmed the impact of her faith on her art: 'A sculpture should be an act of praise, an enduring expression of the divine spirit.'

When asked about her future plans by *The Guardian* in 1973, Hepworth replied, 'I detest a day of no work, no music, no poetry... It's all brewing in my mind, all I want is time.' By 1974, due to illness, she was largely confined to the upper room at

Trewyn Studio, continuing to make sculpture with the aid of a few trusted assistants. She died in an accidental fire at the studio the following year. Her passion for making art remained undimmed to the end: 'I have never never, never felt bored with my work or in working. In fact, I get such intense and sensuous pleasure out of it that it is almost a Yorkshire sin!'

Genesis III, 1966

Oil and pencil on board

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield)

Sun and Moon, 1969

Lithograph

Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Presented by the artist's daughters, Rachel Kidd and Sarah Bowness, through the Trustees of the Barbara Hepworth Estate and the Art Fund

[Move to the final text panel, right of the exhibition exit:]

Single Form

Hepworth remained engaged with political debates in the post-war period. By 1952, Britain had become the third nuclear power, after America and the Soviet Union. The Labour Party, of which Hepworth would become a member in 1956, called for a moratorium on nuclear testing in 1954, but the government continued to develop nuclear weapons. Hepworth became an advocate for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, connecting the desire to protect life with her experience as a mother. In 1961 she co-authored a statement signed by artists, musicians and writers: 'Culture means the affirmation of life. There can be no true culture while we make stock-piles of nuclear weapons – they are the negation of life.'

In 1956, Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary General of the United Nations, selected one of Hepworth's sculptures for his office, starting a correspondence that became a friendship. They met in London when Hammarskjöld gave an address on the UN's diplomatic role in achieving global nuclear disarmament in 1958. Hammarskjöld had considered commissioning a sculpture for the UN Headquarters in New York, and the commission proceeded in

his memory following his death in a plane crash in September 1961. Hepworth recalled making Single Form (September) with Dag in mind, and this form evolved into the UN commission. As with her work in the 1930s, Hepworth saw the possibility for abstract sculpture to influence social change. Speaking at the unveiling of the Single Form in 1964 she described it as 'a symbol of both continuity and solidarity for the future.'

Single Form (September), 1961

Walnut

Tate: Presented by the executors of the artist's estate 1980

The unveiling of Single Form outside The United Nations, New York, June 1964

Film, 2 mins

Courtesy of the UN Audiovisual Library