



Animals in the Zoo - African Elephant

Henry Moore

Not on display

Title/Description: Animals in the Zoo - African Elephant

Artist/Maker: Henry Moore

Born: 1981 - 1982

Object Type: Graphics portfolio

Materials: Ink, Paper

Measurements: (Solander box: 67 x 51.7 x 4.4)

Accession Number: 41375B

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe

Copyright: © Reproduced by permission of the Henry Moore Foundation

In a BBC documentary, *Henry Moore at Home*, Moore described elephants as having ‘power, but a gentle slowness’. [1] He conveys this in the present etching, in which the heavy form of the elephant seems to fall backwards. Furthermore, he describes how they ‘could stand as a rock’. In 1981 Moore had created two lithographs of elephant’s heads and trunks, depicting in detail their rocky crevices. In 1983 Henry Moore published *Animals in the Zoo*, a portfolio of ten etchings and an additional two in the deluxe edition. Some of the animals are depicted before horizon lines, or the suggestion of a landscape, contradicting the title of the portfolio and implying that the animals are in open spaces, rather than at the zoo, to be viewed behind bars.

The etchings were created between 1981 and 1982 from earlier drawings copied from photographs taken by Moore’s assistant, Michael Muller, at London Zoo. By this time, Moore found etching difficult, although previously he had worked directly onto the plates, even having a printing press installed in his studio in 1970. *Henry Moore at Home* includes footage of animals in their cages in London Zoo, overlaid with Moore’s narration. He explains that ‘animals can teach you all sorts of things about sculptural form’. [2]

The portfolio in the Sainsbury Centre Collection, which includes *African Elephant*, is a prototype. The twelve etchings were sent to Baron Zuckerman OM, along with the text for Moore’s *Elephant Skull* album (1970), probably so Zuckerman could write his introduction for the *Animals in the Zoo* portfolio. In his introduction, Zuckerman wrote, ‘The animals which he has depicted are his own, seized with infinite sensitivity by his eye, in the same way that he had already seized what appears in that remarkable portfolio of etchings of the elephant skull, a vision that had never been given to any anatomist’. The lifelong friendship of Solly Zuckerman and Moore began when they met in the late 1920s in the Gardens of the Zoological Society of London, where Zuckerman was Resident Anatomist. Zuckerman later became Chief Scientific Advisor to the Ministry of Defence in 1960–5 and then Chief Scientific Advisor to the British government until 1969. He was involved in the founding of the University of East Anglia and became Professor at Large in 1969. His close relationship to the University meant that he gave his archive, along with this portfolio.

Tania Moore, September 2020

[1] *Henry Moore at Home - A Private View of a Personal Collection*, BBC documentary first aired 8 January 1974,
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/henry-moore-at-home--a-private-view-of-a-personal-collection/zmccpg8>

[2] Ibid.

Further reading

David Mitchinson, Henry Moore: Prints and Portfolios (Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 2010), pp.322-29.

Further Reading

Tania Moore, Henry Moore: Friendships and Legacies (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre, 2020)

Provenance

Given to Lord Zuckerman by Henry Moore in 1982.

Bequeathed to the Sainsbury Centre in 1993, with his archive to the University of East Anglia Archives.
