



# Henry Moore

John Hedgecoe

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**Not on display**

**Title/Description:** Henry Moore

**Artist/Maker:** John Hedgecoe

**Born:** 1966 - 1966

**Object Type:** Photograph

**Materials:** Photograph

**Measurements:** 515 x 415mm (framed)

**Accession Number:** 50267

**Production Place:** Britain, England, Europe

**Credit Line:** Donated by the Hedgecoe family

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In one of John Hedgecoe's most iconic images of Henry Moore, the sculptor holds his hands up to the camera, making a square. He frames his face and by suggestion frames his sculpture, as this is how he would use his hands as a viewfinder when considering his work. Hedgecoe explained, 'In any photograph of an artist you might expect the tools of the trade to feature prominently. In this portrait of sculptor Henry Moore, it is his hands that are held up to the camera, positioned as if sizing a block of stone'. [1]

This is one of several photographs from the shoot in which Moore dynamically activates his hands. In his book *Portraits*, Hedgecoe enigmatically captions one of these images as 'The hands that created so many works of art'. [2] Art historian Anne Wagner explains of these images, 'Hedgecoe was known for a practice of portraiture that aimed to turn his sitters into icons; in Moore's case this led to unexpected ways of positioning the artist's battered hands at the forefront of the image, and thus transforming them into a rhetorical motif.' [3]

Moore's hands appear in images of him by many photographers, as he handles or holds his work, emphasizing the physical connection between artist and artwork. Hedgecoe likewise centred the hands of many of his sitters, using the hands to emphasise their character or profession. The satirist Peter Cook moulds his face into a comedic shape with his hand, conductor Malcolm Sargent poses in action, and biologist Julian Huxley is captured mid-gesture.

Moore and Hedgecoe remained friends from their first meeting in 1956 until Moore's death in 1986 and during this time, Hedgecoe took around 6,000 photographs of Moore. [4] In some of his photography manuals Hedgecoe used his images of the sculptor as an example of how to take a prolonged portrait of a single subject. [5] As Hedgecoe explained, with photography 'you capture forever a frozen instant of time. But how much more meaningful those images can be is made plain when you see a progression of pictures of the same person taken over a long period of time.' [6]

His photographs of Moore formed the basis of four books, which incorporated Hedgecoe's photographs alongside Moore's words. Although he produced around 30 photography manuals, these were Hedgecoe's only books on a single subject.

Tania Moore, December 2020

[1] John Hedgecoe, *The Book of Photography: Simple Techniques for Taking Better Pictures* (London, New York, Munich, Melbourne, Delhi: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2005), p.101.

[2] John Hedgecoe, *Portraits* (London: Collins & Brown, 2000), unpag.

[3] Anne M. Wagner, 'Moore's Later Sculpture: The Space Between the Knuckles', in Anita Feldman (ed.), *Henry Moore: Late Large Forms*, ex. cat. (London: Gagosian, 2012), p.170.

[4] As estimated by Charlotte Bullions and Emily Unthank at the Henry Moore Foundation, 2020.

[5] John Hedgecoe, *Photographing People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), p.56.

[6] Ibid.

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## Further Reading

John Hedgecoe and Henry Moore, *Henry Spencer Moore* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1968)

John Hedgecoe and Henry Moore, *Henry Moore: Energy in Space* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1973)

John Hedgecoe and Henry Moore, *Henry Moore: My Ideas, Inspiration and Life as an Artist* (London: Ebury Press, 1986)

John Hedgecoe, *A Monumental Vision: The Sculpture of Henry Moore* (London: Collins & Brown, 1998)

Tania Moore, 'Portrait of a Friendship: John Hedgecoe's Henry Moore' in *Henry Moore: Friendships and Legacies* (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre, 2020)

Marin R. Sullivan, 'Henry Moore's Public Identity', in *Henry Moore: Sculptural Process and Public Identity*, Tate Research Publications, 2015,  
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/henry-moore/marin-r-sullivan-henry-moores-photographic-identity-r1151299>

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