

= Knife Edge Two Piece 1962 ? 65 =

Knife Edge Two Piece 1962 ? 65 is an abstract bronze sculpture by Henry Moore . It is one of Moore 's earliest sculptures in two pieces , a mode that he started to adopt in 1959 . Its form was inspired by the shape of a bone fragment . Moore created the sculpture from an edition of 10 working models in 1962 ; these working models are now in public collections . Moore created four full @-@ size casts between 1962 @-@ 1965 , with one retained by him . The three casts are on public display on College Green in Westminster , London , Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver , and the garden at Kykuit , the house of the Rockefeller family in Tarrytown , New York . Moore 's own cast is on display at his former studio and estate , ' Hoglands ' in Perry Green , Hertfordshire in southern England . A similar work , Mirror Knife Edge 1977 (or Knife Edge Mirror Two Piece) , is displayed at the entrance to I. M. Pei 's east wing of the National Gallery of Art in Washington , D.C. The Westminster cast was donated by Moore through the Contemporary Art Society to what he believed was the City of London , but its actual ownership was undetermined for many years . The Westminster cast subsequently fell into disrepair , and was restored in 2013 after it became part of the British Parliamentary Art Collection ; it was granted a Grade II * listing in January 2016 .

= = Background = =

By 1960 Moore was moving on from his earlier works , directly inspired by the human form and with textured surfaces , such as Draped Seated Woman 1957 ? 58 , to more rounded abstract shapes , inspired by the shapes of stones or bones . Moore made a connected work in 1961 , also inspired by bone , Standing Figure (Knife Edge) (LH 482) .

= = Working model = =

In 1962 Moore created an edition of 10 working models (LH 504) for a new two @-@ piece sculpture . The Tate Gallery in London acquired a small working model in 1963 . Other working models are in the collections of the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague , the Didrichsen Art Museum in Helsinki , the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester in Rochester , New York , and the Kunsthaus in Zurich . Moore planned the full @-@ size sculpture to be over 10 feet high , large enough for a person to walk between the two elements .

= = Sculpture = =

The full @-@ size sculpture , catalogued as " LH 516 " , was cast in an edition of four (or " 3 + 1 " ; one being retained by the artist) . Moore was inspired by the " lightness and strength of bone fragment " in creating the piece . The full @-@ size sculptures , 366 centimetres (144 in) long and weighing about 3 tonnes (3 @. @ 3 tons) , were cast by Hermann Noack in Berlin .

The second cast of the work is located in Abingdon Street Gardens (better known as College Green) in the City of Westminster . The other full @-@ size casts are located near the Bloedel Floral Conservatory in Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver , donated by Prentice Bloedel ; near the Rose Garden of the Rockefeller family house at Kykuit at Tarrytown , New York . Moore donated his artist 's copy (0 / 3) to the Henry Moore Foundation in 1977 , and it is displayed at Perry Green , Hertfordshire .

Moore made a larger and reversed version of the sculpture , Mirror Knife Edge 1977 or Knife Edge Mirror Two Piece (LH 714) ? which is 5.34x7.21x3.63m or about 17.5x23.7x11.9 feet and weighs about 15 short tons (14 t) ? which was commissioned for the entrance to I. M. Pei 's east wing of the National Gallery of Art in Washington , D.C. The work is carefully cleaned and conserved each year to maintain the distinction between its shiny and patinated surfaces , as the artist intended .

= = Westminster cast = =

The second cast of Knife Edge Two Piece is located in Abingdon Street Gardens , also known as College Green , opposite the Palace of Westminster in London . In 1965 Whitney Straight , the chairman of the Contemporary Art Society , wrote to Charles Pannell MP , the Minister of State for Public Buildings and Works to tell him that the society was " considering the possibility of ? making a gift of a substantial work of art to be erected at some suitable site in London " . The Contemporary Art Society met with Henry Moore to discuss their proposal and Moore subsequently chose the site at Abingdon Street Gardens for the sculpture . Moore waived his usual fee , and the Contemporary Art Society paid for the cost of the casting . The sculpture was unveiled by Robert Mellish , the Minister of Public Building and Works , on 1 September 1967 .

Moore liked the site so much that he did not even visit an alternative site in Hyde Park ; he felt that the sculpture might have been lost in such a big park , recalling an experience he had trying to find the sculpture Riva by Jacob Epstein in the park . He welcomed the fact that the sculpture would be next to a public path and would have seating nearby to allow contemplation , and compared the gardens favourably with the setting for Hubert Le Sueur ' s equestrian statue of Charles I at Charing Cross , ? which , in order to look at closely and appreciate in detail , you have to risk your life in crossing a maze of traffic ? . The siting of the sculpture was disliked by some , with Neil Marten MP asking Parliament why " this lovely part of Westminster should be littered with something that looks like a crashed unidentified flying object . "

Moore believed he had donated the work to the City of London , but the Henry Moore Foundation believed it was owned by the City of Westminster , and its delivery was accepted by the Ministry of Public Building and Works . The land where it is situated was a bomb site in the Second World War , and is owned by the Parliamentary Estate ; Westminster City Council operates a car park underneath . The sculpture was moved and placed on a plinth in 1969 . No formal arrangements were ever made for the ownership and care of Knife Edge Two Piece , and it fell into a state of disrepair . Though it is worth an estimated £ 5m , no conservation work ever took place on the sculpture , and its ownership was unresolved until the House of Commons agreed to take responsibility for it . Knife Edge Two Piece entered the Parliamentary Art Collection in 2011 . It was granted a Grade II * listing in January 2016 .

= = = Restoration = = =

The Chair of the House of Commons Works of Art Committee , Frank Doran MP , had been concerned by the appearance of the sculpture and enquired of the Minister for Culture , Communications and Creative Industries , Ed Vaizey MP , what plans there were for its care and maintenance . Vaizey replied that the House of Commons should take ownership of the statue and responsibility for its care . Vaizey subsequently described Knife Edge Two Piece as " one of the most televised works of art in London " . Restoration work was originally planned to be completed in time for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London , but was not begun until February 2013 .

Due to a lack of maintenance , the protective lacquer covering Knife Edge Two Piece degraded and exposed the surface of the sculpture to the elements . This resulted in oxidation of the bronze metal . Subsequent deterioration of the patination and years of graffiti scratched into the surface resulted in further corrosion . The conservation aimed to remove the remaining protective lacquer and surface dirt , and to remove the result of corrosion and oxidation from the sculpture , and take the surface back to the bare metal . Following the removal of graffiti the sculpture was repatinated to return it to its original colour . It was finally waxed with a weatherproof surface to protect it from future damage . The conservation work was undertaken by Rupert Harris Conservation , working in consultation with the Henry Moore Foundation . The cost of the conservation was £ 16 @, @ 190 , with £ 11 @, @ 000 contributed by the Henry Moore Foundation .