

A woman is sitting on a stone ledge in a garden, leaning against a large tree trunk. She is wearing a dark dress and a light-colored headscarf. She is holding a small object in her hands and looking upwards. The background is filled with lush greenery and trees. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter.

Barbara Hepworth

Touch gives us a sense of living contact

Dr Jeanie Sinclair, Falmouth University



Barbara Hepworth, Peter Keen, mid 1950s
National Portrait Gallery © estate of Peter Keen / National Portrait Gallery



Barbara Hepworth, Peter Keen, late 1950s
National Portrait Gallery © estate of Peter Keen / National Portrait Gallery

1961

February, acquires the Palais de Danse, a former cinema and dance hall, opposite Trewyn Studio for use as a workshop, especially for works to be cast in bronze, and as a store and display space. Barbara Hepworth: Life and Work published, with a text by J. P. Hodin and a catalogue of the sculptures compiled by her son-in-law Alan Bowness. BBC television film Barbara Hepworth directed by John Read. Exhibition at Gimpel Fils, London, May–June.

1964

June, Hepworth attends the unveiling of the monumental Single Form at the United Nations Secretariat in New York, commissioned in memory of her friend Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary General of the United Nations, who had been killed in 1961. Exhibition at Gimpel Fils, London, in June. Visits Copenhagen in September for the opening of her exhibition organised by the British Council; it travels throughout Scandinavia.

1965

May, attends opening of her retrospective exhibition in the Rietveld Pavilion, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, Netherlands. Made a Dame Commander of the British Empire. Appointed a Trustee of the Tate Gallery (until 1972), the first female trustee. Cancer of the tongue is diagnosed; Hepworth is treated at Westminster Hospital, London.

1966

Barbara Hepworth: Drawings from a Sculptor's Landscape is published, with Hepworth's text A Sculptor's Landscape and an introduction to the drawings by Alan Bowness. Exhibitions at Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York, and at Gimpel Fils, London.

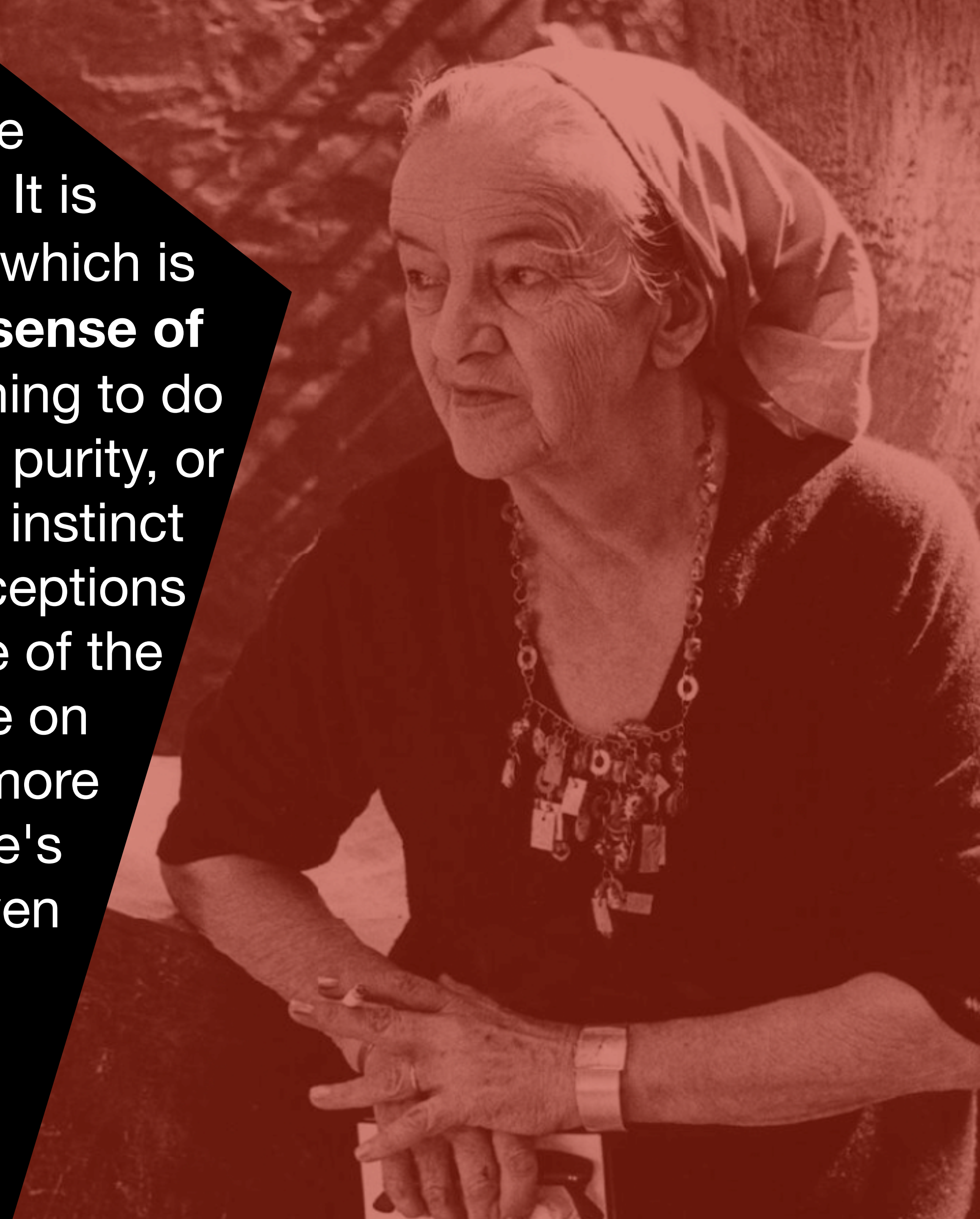
Barbara Hepworth, Crispin Eurich, 1961
National Portrait Gallery
© Crispin Eurich Photographic Archive



TOUCH

Sculpture communicates an immediate sense of life - you can feel the pulse of it. It is perceived, above all, by the **sense of touch** which is our earliest sensation; and **touch gives us a sense of living contact and security**. [...] That has nothing to do with the question of perfection, or harmony, or purity, or escapism. It lies far deeper; it is the primitive instinct which allows man to live fully with all his perceptions active and alert, and in the calm acceptance of the balance of life and death. In its insistence on elementary values, sculpture is perhaps more important today than before because life's continuity is threatened and this has given us a sense of unbalance.

The Ethos of Sculpture (in conversation with J.P. Hodin, 28 August 1959)





Barbara Hepworth, Ander Gunn 1960s



Barbara Hepworth, Crispin Eurich, 1961
National Portrait Gallery © Crispin Eurich Photographic Archive

the ordinariness, the unremarkable nature of archives

Carolyn Steedman, 2001



Barbara Hepworth, *Ida Kar*, 1961

© National Portrait Gallery

Barbara Hepworth, *J.S. Lewinski*, 1968
© The Lewinski Archive at Chatsworth / Bridgeman Images



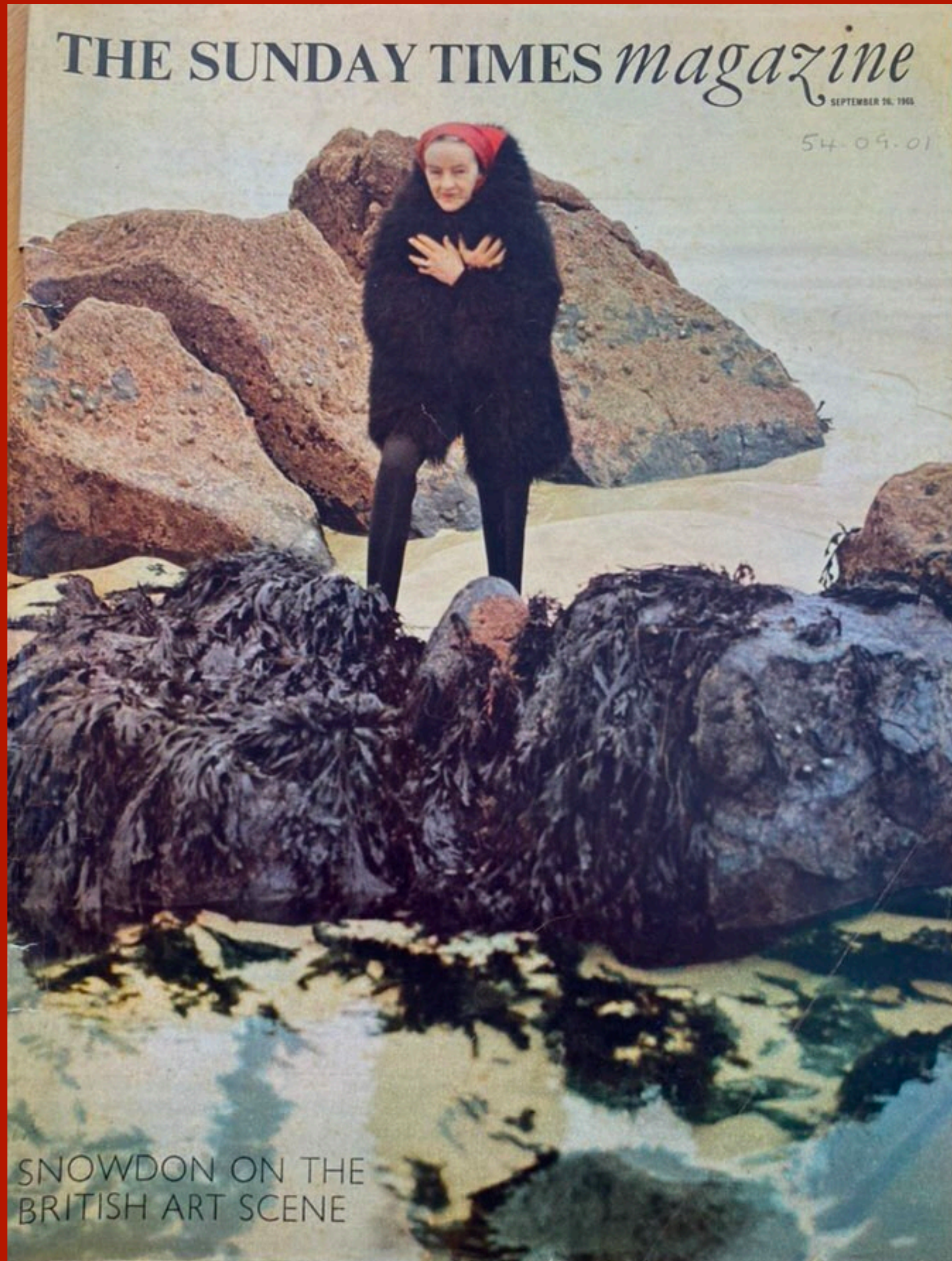


Barbara Hepworth, Ida Kar, 1961
© National Portrait Gallery



“Barbara was always fully made up, even in her working clothes, slacks and a blue smock, with her hair pulled back in a snood, when she emerged from her studio each day just before noon”

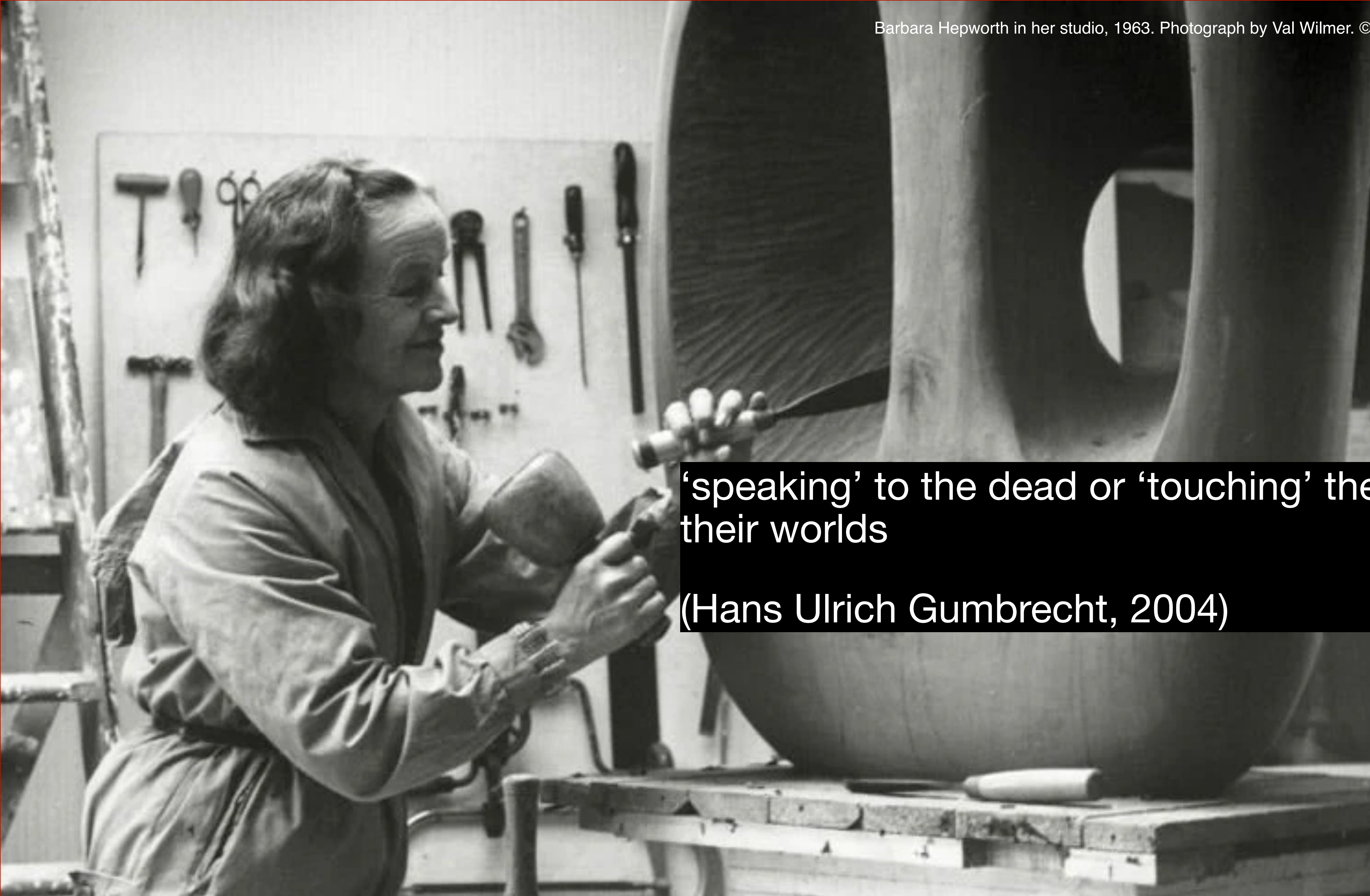
Brian Wall, Art Review,
September 1994



Sunday Times Magazine 26 September 1968

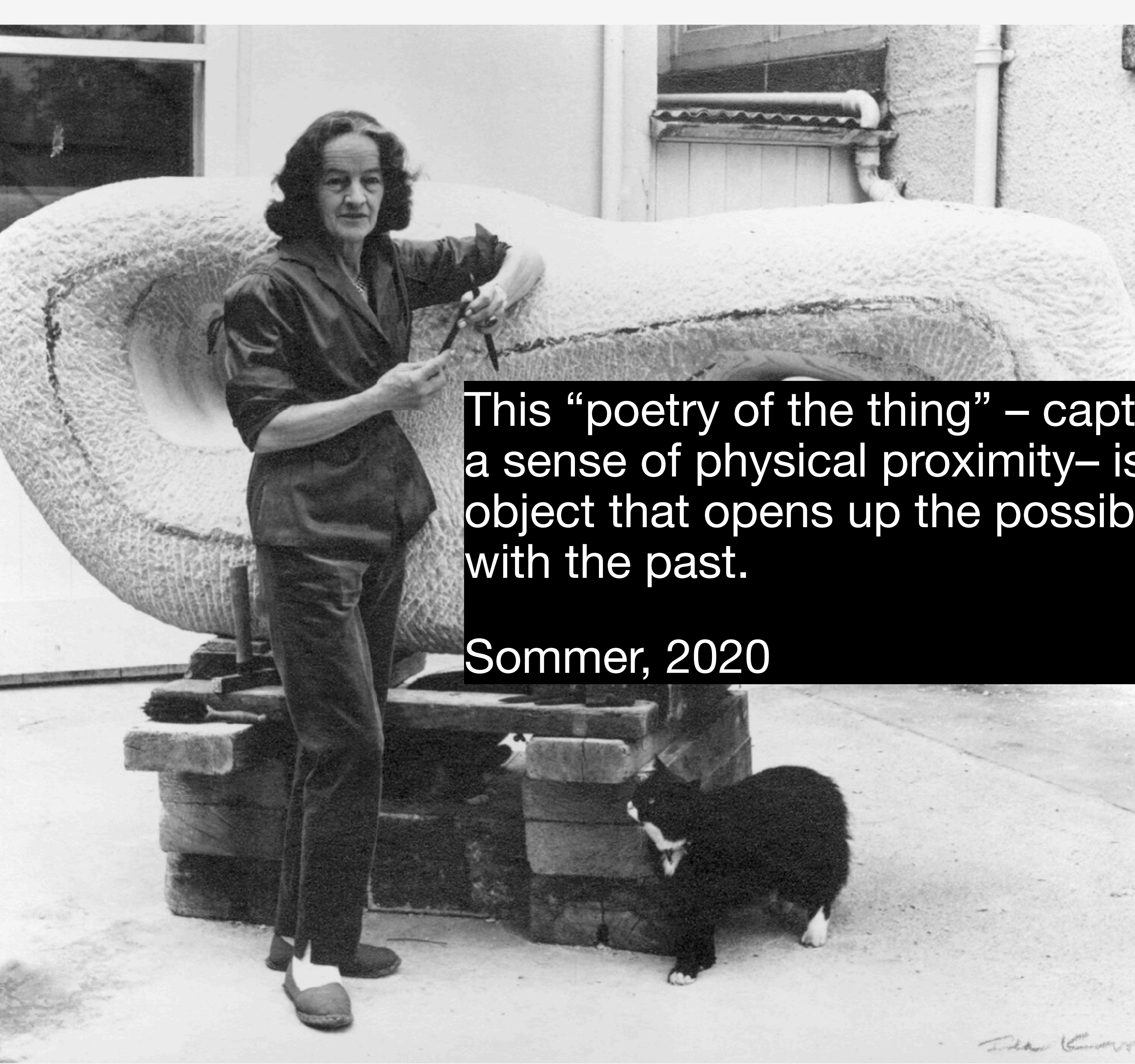


Barbara Hepworth, John Hedgecoe, 1970
National Portrait Gallery © John Hedgecoe / Topfoto



‘speaking’ to the dead or ‘touching’ the objects of
their worlds

(Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, 2004)



Barbara Hepworth with her cat Nicholas and her sculpture 'Reclining Form (Rosewall)' Ida Kar, 1961

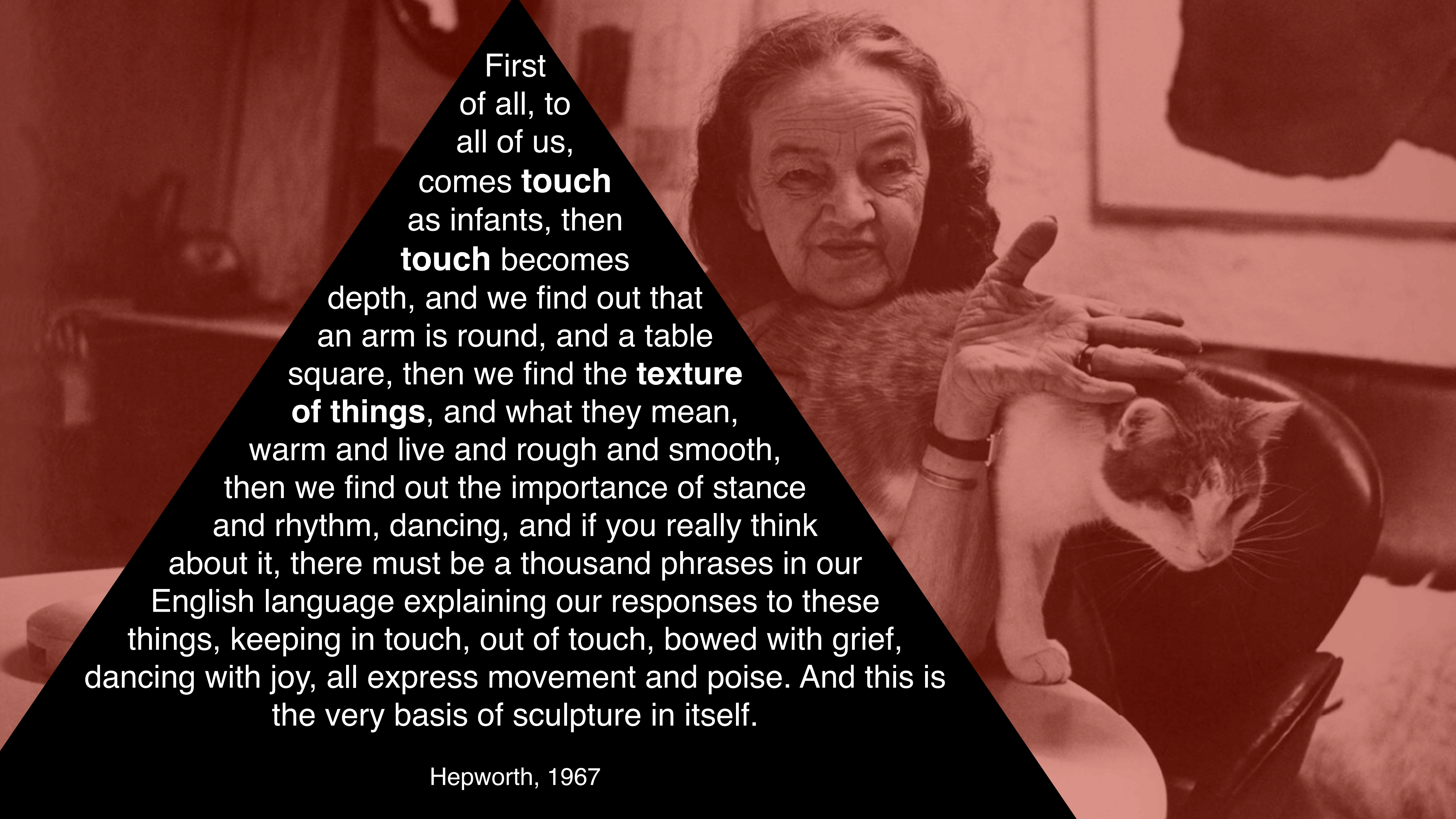
© National Portrait Gallery

This “poetry of the thing” – capturing what is “lost” through a sense of physical proximity– is precisely the aura of the object that opens up the possibility of an immediate contact with the past.

Sommer, 2020



Barbara Hepworth, Lord Snowdon
26 February 1964
National Portrait Gallery, © Armstrong Jones

A photograph of an elderly woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark top, sitting and petting a small white and black cat. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a kitchen or living area. The entire image has a reddish-brown tint. A large black triangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

First
of all, to
all of us,
comes **touch**
as infants, then
touch becomes
depth, and we find out that
an arm is round, and a table
square, then we find the **texture**
of things, and what they mean,
warm and live and rough and smooth,
then we find out the importance of stance
and rhythm, dancing, and if you really think
about it, there must be a thousand phrases in our
English language explaining our responses to these
things, keeping in touch, out of touch, bowed with grief,
dancing with joy, all express movement and poise. And this is
the very basis of sculpture in itself.

Hepworth, 1967

Sorry - I'm Tired & cannot spell.

54.35.03

from
DAME BARBARA HEPWORTH

TREWYN STUDIO ST IVES CORNWALL

6226

Mon-27/2/67

Dearest Janet - Thank you for your most Sweet letter. I was thinking of a commission & not asking for a gift! I would love to come to see you as soon as possible.

Alas my B'day was the worst day of pleurisy & I was pretty miserable but thanks to Roger, snapped out of it.

I have a supply of silver here & even began to design & make for a V & A show; but something intervened.

I know what I want to fit my Sari's but perhaps when we get together the jigsaw might make sense.

I have tried to simplify my London clothes - but found to my horror that I had lost my only brooch before the reception for the Queen! I was left with a safety pin for my left shoulder! Mercifully a friend in London lent me a brooch just in time.

I would love to

accept a simple circular pin for my shoulder as for my 65th B'day next year! I have 2 Banquets in April - would you have time?

As regards the necklace I had an idea about simple loops & some square forms hanging. I believe I began cutting them out but I have not the skill for jewellery. This I would love to be a commission please It would be such fun. please

I try to present an appearance in London (without marble dust) but alas time goes so fast I find myself a year later at the same reception in the same dress. Then I let the side down. Silver is gorgeous & sensitive. I have just managed to find my stock of silver & the shapes I cut out. It is at your disposal much love
Barbara

Whites insist that customers try it before
making up their mind
in haste please forgive

from
DAME BARBARA HEPWORTH D.B.E.

dearest Janet
I am sending this curious present
very early so that you can try
it out — & if you don't like
it at all, Whites of Fore St.
hold a credit card so that
you can swap it for linen
or towels or anything you do want.

My Slumberdown has transformed
my life. Ever since I discarded
all top sheets blankets & so forth
I have slept so much better &
am always warm.

There's no work & the cover is drip
dry.

TREWYN STUDIO

ST IVES 6226

CORNWALL

If you are already snug under
one then I'm sure there must
be utility things at Whites which you
can find instead. All my love for Christmas
Barbara

From
Dame Barbara Hepworth D.B.E.

Trewyn Studio
St Ives
Cornwall
6226

dearest Janet - I am more than
happy if the quilt suits you! I
am an addict & cannot think
why it has taken the British decade
to go continental.
I am still looking for the perfect
pillow. I think square? I know a place
I do hope you will go on liking
it. Much much love Barbara

The fig saw might make sense

54. 35. 11
from
DAME BARBARA HEPWORTH TREWYN STUDIO ST. IVES CORNWALL 07 3670 6226
TR26 1AD

22nd. November, 1973.

Mrs. Janet Slack
Sycamore Cottage
Hellesvean
St. Ives Cornwall.

My dearest Janet

Thank you so much for a wonderfully happy and refreshing party last night. It was a pleasure to see Marjory and Bernard and a joy to me being in your house again.

As usual, your food was completely gorgeous and I am longing to ask you sometime how to make that marvellous jellied soup.

I was looking round everywhere to see where Roger had parked his carvings and was longing to ask him; but the moment did not come. Perhaps he has put them all in your new beautiful big room? I also wanted to ask about your own work -- you keep so quiet about it although I hear you are doing a great deal.

It was wonderfully kind of you to include me last night and it was especially exciting for me as I had not been out for so long.

Dear Janet, thank you so very much and I hope perhaps we can meet again before long if you can spare the time to come down here. It sounds as though your Christmas will be a very full one and exciting for you.

With all my best love,

ever Barbara

Sunday

My dearest Janet

Thank you so much for the wonderful party. Everybody was so gay & happy — but they always are in your house!

I was immensely refreshed & up for work earlier than usual: & I do thank you for asking me.

When Sarah & Alan come I want to give a 'palais' party, but I could not think of it without you & Roger. I will ring you up to see when you both might be free.

With all love to you both
Barbara

& much love to you all

Trewyn Studio

Sunday.

My dearest Janet — Thank you so much for asking me to your lovely party last night. So many beautiful & happy faces. And gorgeous food — I don't know how you do it. My loaf is a marvellous present — thank you for it. As for your 'new room' — it was such a surprise & quite changed my idea about your position in the landscape. It must be a joy to have made it so lovely.

With all my thanks again
& much love to you all

Barbara

THANK YOU

Archives

Jacques Derrida

“Nothing is less reliable, nothing is less clear today than the word ‘archive’”: The archive as a metaphor for remembering and forgetting, and a tool of psychoanalysis

Michel Foucault

Archive as power structure: “It is the general system of the formation and the transformation of statements”

Carolyn Steedman

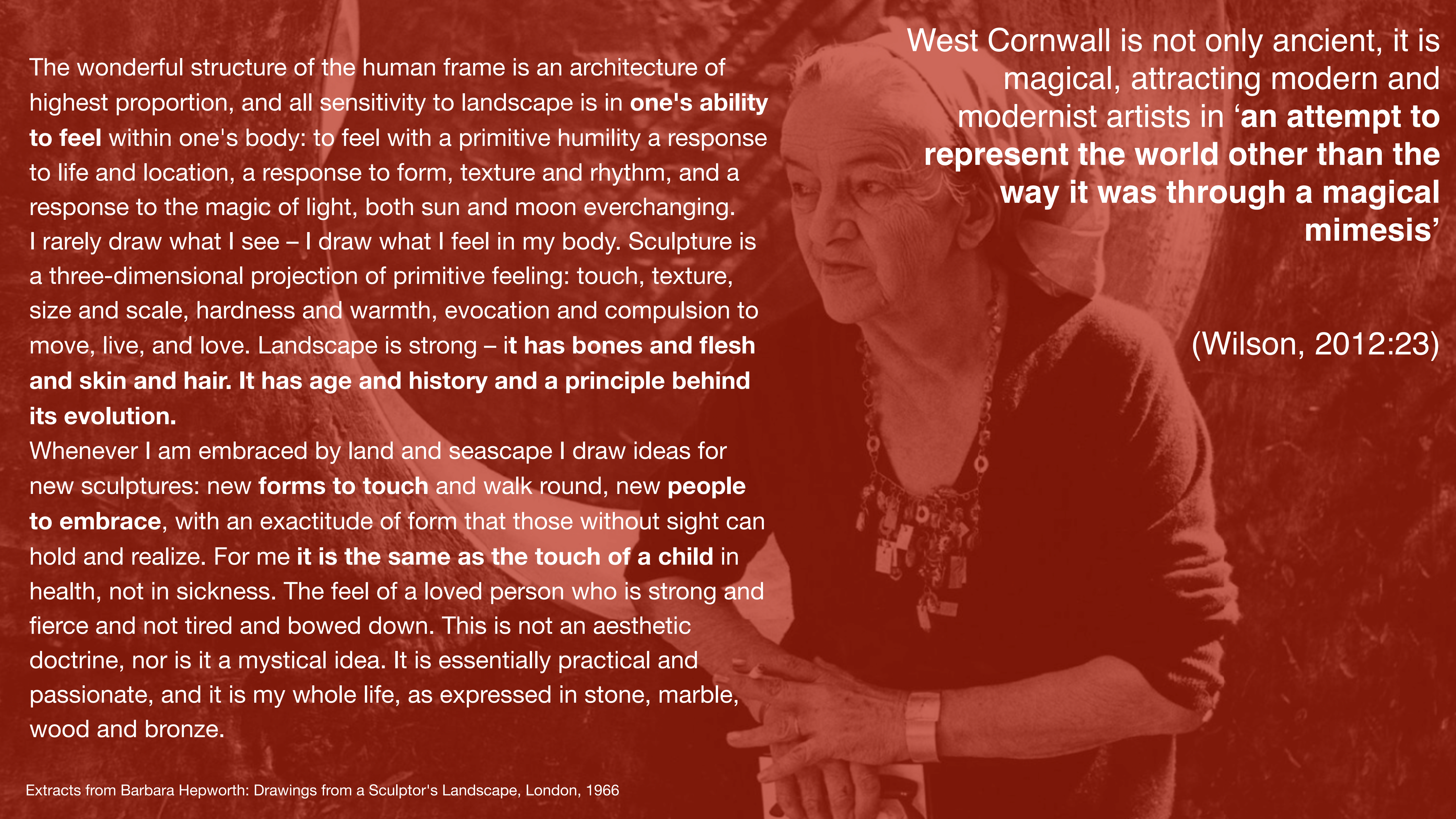
Archive as material objects: “the ordinariness, the unremarkable nature of archives”

Barbara Hepworth, Lord Snowdon
26 February 1964
National Portrait Gallery, © Armstrong Jones



MAGIC





The wonderful structure of the human frame is an architecture of highest proportion, and all sensitivity to landscape is in **one's ability to feel** within one's body: to feel with a primitive humility a response to life and location, a response to form, texture and rhythm, and a response to the magic of light, both sun and moon everchanging. I rarely draw what I see – I draw what I feel in my body. Sculpture is a three-dimensional projection of primitive feeling: touch, texture, size and scale, hardness and warmth, evocation and compulsion to move, live, and love. Landscape is strong – **it has bones and flesh and skin and hair. It has age and history and a principle behind its evolution.**

Whenever I am embraced by land and seascape I draw ideas for new sculptures: new **forms to touch** and walk round, new **people to embrace**, with an exactitude of form that those without sight can hold and realize. For me **it is the same as the touch of a child** in health, not in sickness. The feel of a loved person who is strong and fierce and not tired and bowed down. This is not an aesthetic doctrine, nor is it a mystical idea. It is essentially practical and passionate, and it is my whole life, as expressed in stone, marble, wood and bronze.

West Cornwall is not only ancient, it is magical, attracting modern and modernist artists in '**an attempt to represent the world other than the way it was through a magical mimesis**'

(Wilson, 2012:23)

The witch of St Ives: She is our greatest ever female artist but did Barbara Hepworth REALLY 'bewitch' fellow artists and discard husbands and children in relentless pursuit of perfection?

By MARK HUDSON FOR EVENT MAGAZINE

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Interest in Hepworth is at a high. Her first major London exhibition in half a century opens at Tate Britain on June 24. Entitled **Barbara Hepworth: Sculpture For A Modern World**

[Scroll down for video](#)



“When Barbara was talking to you she’d always be feeling something,’ says David Lewis, 93, who worked as Barbara Hepworth’s secretary in the early Fifties. “She’d be grasping a teacup, a stone, her leg or gripping the edge of a table, rubbing it with the palm of her hand, spreading out her fingers. She was intensely tactile, and that fed into her work, her feel for stone, marble and bronze.”

David Lewis in Daily Mail, 13 June 2015

