

BARBARA HEPWORTH: BIOGRAPHY

British, 1903–1975, Wakefield, United Kingdom

An early pioneer of abstract sculpture, Barbara Hepworth is best known for her ovoid, biomorphic creations carved out of stone. Though her early works were more explicitly figurative, many of Hepworth's completely abstract works are recognized as vaguely feminine, given their smooth, rounded contours. One such sculpture, *Pierced Form* (1931), features innovative use of negative space in the form of a hole through its center, which would become a frequent motif in Hepworth's oeuvre. Later in her career Hepworth started making brass works, comprising thin curved planes and fine lines of string.

Hepworth distinguished herself as a world-recognized sculptor in a period where female artists were rare. Over the course of her career, the development of her sculptural vocabularies and ideas was complex and multi-faceted. Her work investigated "absence" in sculpture as much as "presence," and deeply considered the relationship of sculptural form to the spaces surrounding it.