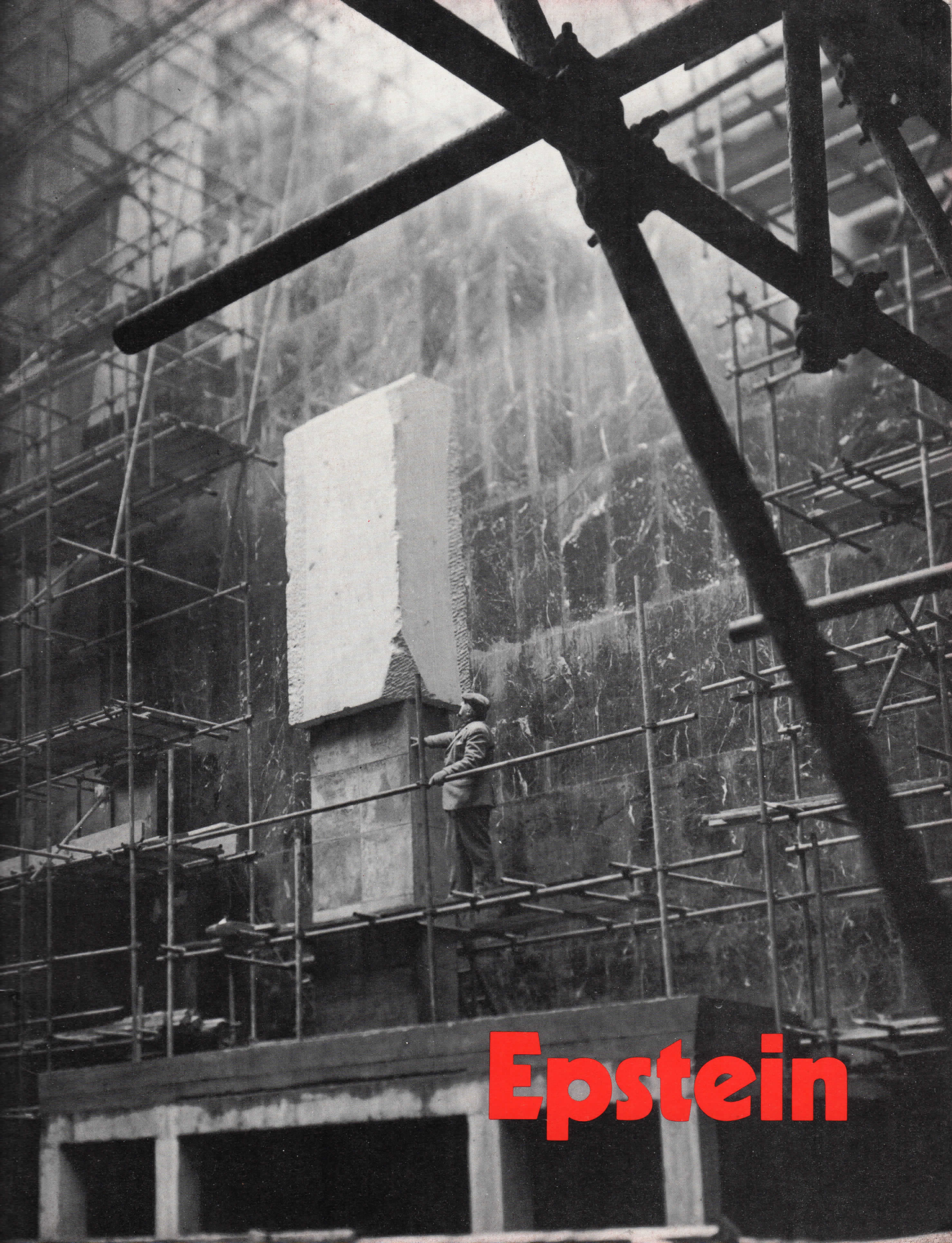

Epstein



Epstein Centenary 1980

18th November - 18th December

Bronzes, drawings and watercolours

BEN URI ART GALLERY

21 Dean Street London W1

Foreword

To mark the centenary of Sir Jacob Epstein's birth, the Ben Uri Art Society is delighted to present this exhibition of his work. Epstein's reputation as one of the modern masters of sculpture is now firmly established, but few artists have been subjected to so much vilification for the greater part of their lives. Yet he bore it all with dignity, confident of his powers to make a worthwhile contribution to the arts of mankind.

I knew Epstein well, and was impressed by his warmth, his generosity and his commitment to the human ideal. Epstein was deeply conscious of his Jewish background, and he once declared that 'Jewish art is translated through a Jewish temperament in whatever subject the Jewish artist may engage himself'. Epstein was a Patron of the Ben Uri Art Society and had close connections with some of its leading members. It is therefore particularly appropriate that this Centenary Exhibition should be held in the Society's gallery.

Our warmest gratitude is due to the owners, both public and private, who have kindly lent works for the exhibition, and to the sponsors whose generous contributions have made possible this event. A list of their names will be found on a following page.

We wish to record our thanks to Arnold Haskell, Simon Wilson and Josef Herman for their illuminating essays in the catalogue, and to Geoffrey Ireland and Judy Goldhill for providing photographs. We are greatly indebted to Alice Schwab, Chairman of the Art Committee, Zena Flax, Abram Games and Barry Fealdman for their assistance in organising the exhibition and preparing the catalogue in co-operation with our Curator, Agi Katz, and to Evelyn Silber of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery for her invaluable advice.

Alexander Margulies

Chairman Ben Uri Art Society

front cover:

Jacob Epstein starting work on his last stone carving, the TUC War Memorial, Great Russell Street London

from **Henry Moore**

Jacob Epstein was a great sculptor and had a big influence in the world of sculpture, particularly in England. It was through him that sculpture became important to a large number of people who otherwise never thought of it.

Looking back now, he bore the brunt of public criticism, in fact he took the brickbats and made the way easier for sculptors like me, coming after him.

And personally I owe a great deal in my sculptural career to Jacob Epstein. He wrote a most generous foreword to my first exhibition at the Leicester Galleries in 1931, and encouraged me by buying my sculptures and my drawings, which pleased me enormously.

Henry Moore

from **Lord Clark**

I am very glad that the Ben Uri Art Gallery is planning an exhibition to celebrate the centenary of Jacob Epstein.

From about 1910 to 1930 Jacob Epstein was the best artist working in England, and he defended most nobly the repeated assaults of philistinism. He started as a master of style; he ended as a master of truth. Looking back on his work it is incredible that he was once insulted and abused.

Kenneth Clark

from **Sir Hugh Casson** *President of the Royal Academy*

The 65th Anniversary of the Ben Uri Art Society is an occasion for celebration, very fittingly being marked by an exhibition of the work of Sir Jacob Epstein, an artist whose sincerity and energy so enriched the world.

An anniversary provides a suitable opportunity for assessing past achievements and for acknowledging past services but, if fully used, should also be an encouragement to look ahead and plan for the future. A retirement age of sixty-five is mercifully not applicable to a continuing society. Its virility is being constantly renewed, albeit tempered by experience, and I have every hope that this will be so for many years to come with the Ben Uri Art Society – long may it flourish.

Hugh Casson

from **Anthony Caro**

When I was first a student Jacob Epstein was, without any doubt, the first and most advanced sculptor working in England.

I remember the excitement and shock that his 'Genesis' created. Every public work he did, his 'Madonna and Child' in Cavendish Square, surprised young sculptors and made them reconsider their own work.

The bronze portrait heads he made, particularly the men, have been unsurpassed since his death. They have life and generosity of spirit and these are indeed great gifts in the making of art.

Anthony Caro

from **The Hon Mrs Wynne Godley**

I am delighted that the Ben Uri Gallery is giving an Exhibition in honour of my father's birth centenary, and pleased that you are showing such a collection of magnificent portraits.

Kitty Godley



Jacob Epstein 1880-1959

by Arnold Haskell

It is a hundred years since the birth of Jacob Epstein. Half a century ago I wrote a book of conversations with him starting a friendship that lasted until he died. Once again there are echoes of the great 1908 scandal of his carvings for the British Medical Association Building that became Rhodesia House and that is now Zimbabwe House.

It is time for a total reassessment of this great sculptor's work, hidden for so long under irrelevant trivialities that have nothing to do with art. In writing of him I must be careful to remember what he told me during our first talk, "Don't make the mistake of thinking that a work of art can be explained. My sculpture is sufficient explanation in itself. You can only say 'look' and help to fill in the background."

Jacob Epstein came at the wrong time for a true understanding of his work. Rodin was downrated and misunderstood; in Britain popular taste was for the academic. The work of Brancusi, Giacometti and Moore was not generally known. Epstein had tremendous admiration for Giacometti, Brancusi, Modigliani and Picasso. He was among the first to sing the praises of Moore. From the first the press made him a subject of attack, malicious, stupid and misinformed. They quoted a handful of academic sculptors, among them Sir Reginald Blomfield and Sir Reginald Frampton (sculptor of the Nurse Cavell Memorial) backed up by Sir Frank Dicksee, the facetious judge, Lord Darling, a postman, a policeman and a schoolboy. None of this surprised Epstein though undoubtedly it distracted him and certainly cost him many opportunities while in his prime to work with architects. Towards the end of his life he worked with a feverish haste to make up for lost time that certainly hastened his death. What hurt were the attacks of the so called *avant garde*, Roger Fry and the Bloomsbury Group from whom he might have expected a vigorous defence in spite of the anaemia of their own work. They would praise him in the first few paragraphs of any article and then, to quote Epstein, "there was always the limiting word *but*", followed by a list of what they considered his shortcomings. This charge of *épatisme* must now be forgotten though it cannot be ignored in any discussion of Epstein's sculpture.

Epstein's early work, represented by **The Rock Drill** was a daring experiment in semi-abstraction, of man turning into machine. Such work did not satisfy him for long. His subject was 'man touched by God'. He saw himself as a sculptor in the great European tradition, a *humanist* whose inspiration came from Donatello. The word *humanist* must not hide the fact that Epstein was deeply religious though did not



above: Memorial to the Victims of two World Wars, 1958. TUC Building, Great Russell Street WC1

left: Interior, Epstein's home and studio Hyde Park Gate, London



Madonna and Child, 1951 (Convent, Cavendish Square W1)

follow the teaching of any one church. His **Lazarus, Ecce Homo, St Michael** and **Madonna and Child** are surely the finest religious sculptures in England since the Reformation.

There are two misconceptions that existed and may still exist. The first that all Epstein's work came under African influence. This he attributed to the fact that he had many African models, that "people lumped together African, Chaldean and Indian quite loosely merely to simplify something that does not enter into their experience. I am interested in the negro type of beauty but the results are purely traditional and European in technique. The fact that I had a Russian or an Indian model would not mean that I was influenced by Russian or Indian Art". The other misconception was the *mystique* that made carving into a nobler art form than modelling. With time the critics began to admire the portrait busts and continued to deplore the carvings.

"I am a sculptor," said Epstein. "The distinction is purely an imaginary one, except to the artist in the actual execution of his work." He goes on to make an illuminating distinction between two of his best known works, one carved, the other modelled. "In the **Visitation** I have treated the same subject as in **Genesis.** The interest in the first is in an individual, the second a symbol. The interest in both is sculptural, something that is not taken into consideration by the majority. People will readily identify with the first, 'poor woman', but in the second case the spectator may strongly resent the fact that the sculptor's imagination differs from his."

I well remember his retort to a journalist who asked him why Genesis was so ugly. "A matter of taste. Some people may think you handsome, to me you are not." He went on to say that people saw his portraits of women as if they were choosing a wife, admired a landscape if they had spent a holiday in the region.

Epstein was a man of wide culture, music played a large part in his life. He was well read, especially in poetry. One had only to know him well, to hear him discuss the giants he revered, to perceive his extraordinary humility. His passionate flair as a collector testified to his kinship with his fellow artists, whether from Ancient Greece, from Africa, India, Egypt or New Guinea. He was a magnificent draughtsman and had a great love of colour. His biblical watercolours reveal this and have an affinity with those of Chagall.

I can only repeat *look*, without the prejudice of the past and enjoy the work of a master.

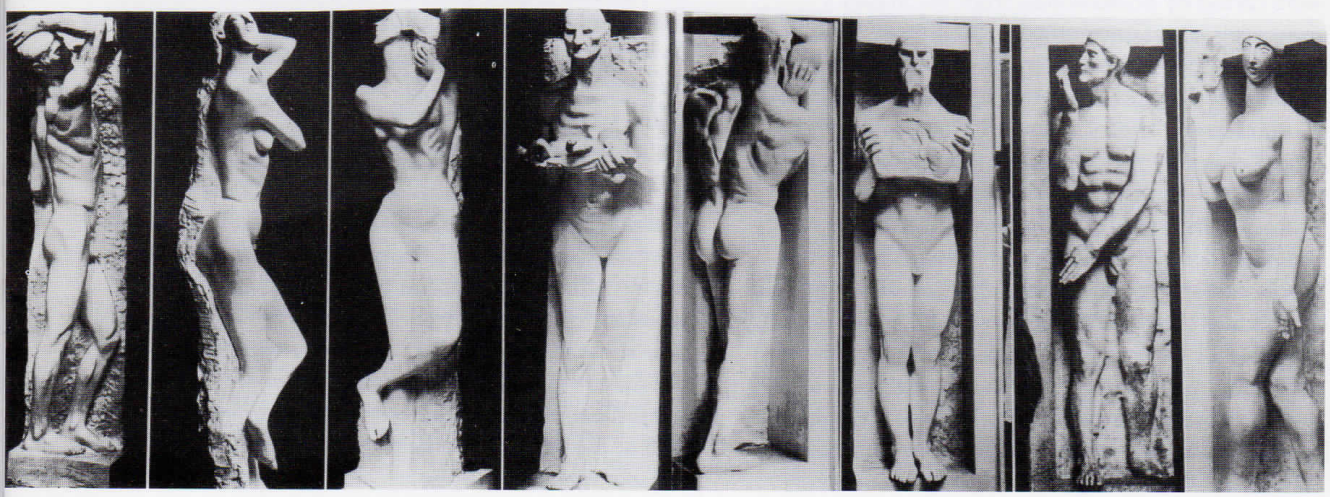
Jacob Epstein
pioneer of modern sculpture – the early years

by Simon Wilson

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries sculpture took very much a second place to painting as the medium for fine art in Europe. A renaissance of sculpture was brought about single-handedly by the French artist, Auguste Rodin, during the period from his exhibition of *The Age of Bronze* in 1877 to his death in 1917. His first great successor was the Rumanian-born Constantin Brancusi who from 1907 onwards rapidly modified the tradition of sculpture revived by Rodin (that of Michelangelo) and gave it a new and modern form. This was in turn immediately taken up by Epstein and carried to Britain where it found a fertile soil and led to the emergence in the 1930s of two world-class sculptors, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth and to the development of a school of sculpture in Britain which has flourished mightily in the postwar period. Epstein was the father of modern British sculpture and, more generally, one of the pioneers of modern sculpture in the whole Western world, both through the force of his style and to some extent through the intense controversy aroused by his work throughout his life which firmly established in the public mind the idea of the artist as sculptor.

Epstein was born in New York USA on 10 November 1880 of Polish-Jewish parentage. He attended the Art Students League *c.* 1896. In 1902 the proceeds of a commission to illustrate Hutchins Hapgood's *The Spirit of the Ghetto* enabled him to go to Paris. He studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and Académie Julian, then settled in London in 1905 becoming a British citizen in 1907. In the same year he received his first major commission, to carve eighteen over-life-size figures for the sides of the British Medical Association building in the Strand. These figures were later virtually destroyed because, apparently, they became unsafe but the remnants can still be seen *in situ*. Photographs of them in their original state reveal that Epstein was still at this stage under the influence of Rodin but they already have a highly personal expressive power as well as being fully accomplished technically. Their theme is, broadly speaking, the cycle of life with particular stress on procreation, something which remained central to Epstein's art.

Figures for the BMA building, 1907 (now Zimbabwe House) Strand WC2





Sunflower, 1910 (Anthony d'Offay)



Female Figure in Flenite, 1913
(Trustees of the Tate Gallery)

This theme and the emphatic nudity through which it was expressed resulted in the first of the public rows over Epstein's art and accounts of this and later controversies can be found in Epstein's autobiography *Let there be Sculpture* (1940).

In one respect, however, the Strand statues (as they are known) marked a break with Rodin; they were carved by Epstein himself whereas all Rodin's marbles were carved by professionals from the master's maquettes, a not uncommon procedure at the time. Indeed, the fact that the Strand statues are carvings rather than bronzes is in itself significant. Rodin, like all nineteenth-century sculptors, was essentially a modeller in clay for eventual casting in bronze and attached no importance to carving as a creative process in its own right. The revolution in sculpture brought about by Brancusi and pursued by Epstein was in part the result of their adoption of carving and specifically *direct carving* as a means. Carving *directly*, the sculptor works on the block with his own hands and without a maquette so that the final form of the sculpture evolves through the process of its making. In fact Epstein did make maquettes for the Strand statues but their strength and vitality undoubtedly stem partly from having been carved by their inventor's own hand. In any case, also in 1907 Epstein made a smaller carving which appears to be fully direct, **Rom**, a head of a child based on Romilly John, son of Augustus John, now in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. He followed this in 1910 with a large **Maternité, A Sun God** and **Sunflower**. These works are increasingly simplified in form, particularly the **Sunflower** (private collection, London), and show the influence of archaic (Egyptian) and primitive (African) art which Epstein studied both in Paris and London and, in the case of African art, had also begun to collect. These influences were an other vital ingredient in early modern sculpture.

In 1908 Epstein had been commissioned to produce a monument for the tomb of Oscar Wilde in Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris. He eventually carved it in London from a twenty-ton block of Hopton Wood stone in 1911-12 and took it to Paris for installation. The Wilde monument is a highly personal tribute to the poet, showing him in Epstein's own phrase as 'a winged demon angel' carved in high relief into the side of the massive block. This sculpture caused another major row, again because of its nudity, the

cemetery authorities refusing to allow it to be unveiled until a cache-sexe was provided. However, the really crucial event of this visit to Paris was Epstein's meeting with Brancusi, then in the full flood of his first maturity. The impact of his work on Epstein was profound, Epstein receiving from a greater artist abundant confirmation of the rightness of the direction he was himself already taking in some of his work. On his return to England he shut himself away in a remote part of Sussex called Pett Level and, for three years, until 1916, produced a group of carvings which constitute his great contribution to the early history of modern sculpture. The most important among them are the three groups of mating doves (second group in the Tate Gallery, London), the two large marble Venuses standing on mating birds (Baltimore and Yale University), the pregnant female **Figure in Flenite** (Epstein's term for the stone called serpentine) in the Tate Gallery and the **Mother and Child** (Museum of Modern Art, New York). During these few years he also produced one major work of a different kind **The Rock Drill.** This was the result of the influence of the Futurism of Marinetti and of Epstein's brief association with the British cubo-futurist group, the Vorticists, led by Wyndham Lewis. This sculpture consisted in its original state of a mechanistic plaster figure of a man mounted on a real mining drill and was undoubtedly one of the great works of Futurist sculpture. It is also important as an early contribution to that other major technique of modern sculpture besides direct carving – construction (see Picasso, Gabo). Epstein soon dismantled it and preserved only the torse which, cast in bronze, is now in the Tate Gallery.

After the hiatus of the First World War Epstein continued to produce, at regular if longish intervals, great monumental carvings on primitive and religious themes in which he continued the vision and approach of his early years. At the same time he began to work increasingly in bronze producing great religious works in this medium. He also developed the interest he had always had in portraiture to become the greatest of all twentieth century portrait sculptors.

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Torso in metal from the Rock Drill, 1913
(Trustees of the Tate Gallery)

Jacob Epstein – the man

by Josef Herman

Every artist living in a community other than that of his native land must expect some degree of suspicion. After all, nobody has asked him to make his home there. He arrives with a parcel of hidden gifts that the indigenous people are not sure they want. For his part, to prove himself often implies a refusal to assimilate traditional modes which are not his. A trial of strength follows, a battle not always fought in a fair way. But no matter who the stranger, it is he who started it. He is the intruder. If his intentions – however disinterested – do not manifest themselves in a way which is acceptable to the 'natives', they may be mistaken for arrogance – as Epstein's were.

There was no precedent for Epstein in English sculpture. His blunt humanity, his pathos, his lack of reserve, his unashamed wearing of his heart on his sleeve, are qualities not easily detectable in an Englishman nor indeed in English art, but they were his, from his mysterious parcel of gifts, and also from his Jewish background. The roots of Epstein's attitudes lie within the wider European tradition. Many of his conflicts in England can be put down to a collision of temperaments. But that is not all. To appreciate more fully Epstein's position in English life and art, something else has also to be considered: English sculpture – what there was of it – was due to come out of its doldrums and it was pure coincidence that it was Epstein the stranger and not a native Englishman who made the first move. And the way is never smooth or easy for pioneers. He was one of a handful of artists, but in sculpture he was alone.

The generation which followed, though willing to acknowledge his pioneering spirit, saw no relevance to their problems in the direction he had taken. True, there was none; theirs were problems limited to their time, his preoccupation was with history at large. He could have lived in any of the last six centuries and been equally at home. He happened to live in ours. He was in the great tradition of well-made sculpture, of naturalism-plus. Others were on a feverish quest to make sculpture new. They left him at a revered distance – well, perhaps not always revered. And if Epstein had good reason to lose patience with the way sculpture was going, he showed little desire to affect its course. He stood aside, though not always silent. He remained alone and undisturbed in his ways. And so he produced masterpieces of a highly personal order. To think there are still 'connoisseurs' and even artists who sneer at the very mention of his name!

His gift lay in his sense of clay, and what a sense it was! I once arrived at his studio when he was working from memory on the head of a child. I stood behind him and he merely said: 'One minute, Herman, and I will be with you'. And he carried on. Every modeller, when pulling a piece of clay from the larger lump, presses it between his index finger and his thumb to tell whether it has grit in it – if it has, he throws it away and pulls another bit. Thus around my feet there was soon a small pile of rejected flakes of clay. I bent down and took one of them in my hand and I could not believe my eyes. And I took another flake and another – each flake was already a recognizable Epstein long before it had any form. He had his genius in his fingertips, not metaphorically but literally! But this very sense of his for clay has often been held against him – 'Epstein? He is merely a modeller!' – and it is not only the ignorant who say this! The twentieth century has done much to revive the art of carving. Because of this, all the prestige of sculpture goes to the carver. This, typically of our time, is to make a mountain out of a mole-hill! The art of sculpture can only be limited by the nature of an artist's gifts and not by a definition. Who is to say that a sense of clay is less of a sculptural gift than a sense of stone or wood? Epstein's failings as a carver prove nothing; in his early days under the influence of tribal African carvings he produced a sufficient number as good as any of his contempories'. The fact is, however, that his greatness lies in his bronzes.



To Epstein, material was not an end in itself. In this also he differed from other sculptors of our time. While others made a great to-do about the material and explicitly linked it to the mystery of *nothingness,* Epstein took his material for granted and filled it with strong emotions, so that his surfaces suggest the animation of life. His style, and he was fully aware of it, was something elementary, pre-conditioned by nature, as all individual, true styles are. In an age when style is thought to be an invention (a gross one at that!) he was once again bound to cause some misunderstanding.

Epstein, like other great lone wolves of our time, did not labour to convince mankind about artistic causes. Whatever he achieved in style was by way of searching for a strong and exact expression. Here, once again, I need to draw attention to the significance of the texture of his work; the rugged pattern engages all our attention, and before we are aware that it makes a neck, an eye, or hair, we are presented with emotional confidences at once primitive and refined, intense and direct. We are faced with a scorching sensitivity, dazzling our defences and making us see humanity in an art which, expressing itself through a subject, transcends it. Matter becomes alive because of spirit within it.

He worked around a theme, a universal theme, of man. To that theme he devoted all his conviction, trusting his two thinking hands and being guided by them. He linked one work to another with that secret logic of his inner vitality, and instead of a concept of art we are left with something much rougher, less elegant, not always easy to bear, something so elemental it is almost as if we were being made aware that we are born with a cry!

He grew old, but not disappointed, nor frightened, nor bitter. The last time I saw him was near the Burlington Arcade. He was as alive as a young tree! His creative powers had not left him. 'Not yet,' he said, laughing. He must have still been full of them when he died.

from 'Related Twilights' (Robson Books 1975)

Catalogue / bronzes

1 Nan the Dreamer 1911
Bronze 5½ ins
Lent by Editions Graphiques Gallery

Nan was a gipsy model of whom Epstein made a number of drawings from one of which he sculpted this work.

"Nan Condron was a gipsy and a professional model – a big angular woman with a stately carriage who wore her long hair hanging straight down her back. She also posed for Orpen and Rothenstein, but becoming devoted to Epstein, she gave up working for other artists for several years. She seldom spoke and asked for nothing except to be taken to the music-hall once weekly." (Buckle: *Jacob Epstein Sculptor)*

2 Euphemia Lamb 1911
Bronze 21 ins
Lent by The Fine Art Society Ltd

Euphemia Lamb was a favourite model of several artists. Her English features had a special attraction to Epstein.

3 Jacob Epstein – self 1912
Bronze 19½ ins
Lent by the Margulies Collection

Epstein modelled himself wearing his working cap. It shows him in full vigour of youth and optimism. He executed this bust following his creation of the Oscar Wilde tomb at the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.

4 Bust of Meum 1916
Bronze 17 ins
Lent by the Arts Council of Great Britain

Meum Linsell-Steward was well-known in theatrical circles, being one of Mr Cochran's 'Young Ladies'.



Jacob Epstein – self, 1912 (Margulies Collection) Catalogue no 3

5 Duchess of Marlborough 1917
Bronze 20 ins
Lent by Editions Graphiques Gallery

Gladys Deacon, who later became the Duchess of Marlborough, was American with an European upbringing. She mixed in the artistic circles of Paris. When she met Epstein in Paris, she was happy to have found a 'young genius'. They became friends and she tried to help Epstein by finding commissions for him.

6 Mask of Meum 1918
Bronze 10½ ins
Lent by Editions Graphiques Gallery

This work is one of three masks Epstein executed between 1916 and 1918. It is thought that the idea of making masks (a face without a back) was derived from African sculpture in which he was passionately interested.

7 Fifth portrait of Peggy Jean 1920
Bronze 7 ins
Lent by Mr and Mrs Dennis Abrahams

During the first three years of her life Epstein executed at least ten studies of his daughter, Peggy Jean.

8 Miriam Plichte 1921
Bronze 25 ins
Lent by Editions Graphiques Gallery

Miriam Plichte was a Russian girl of whom Epstein made two busts.

9 Jacob Kramer 1921
Bronze 25½ ins
Lent by the Trustees of the Tate Gallery

This is considered to be one of Epstein's best portrait busts. In his *Autobiography* Epstein wrote: "The Leeds painter, Kramer, was a model who seemed to be on fire. He was extraordinarily nervous. Energy seemed to leap into his hair as he sat, and sometimes he would be shaken by queer tremblings like ague."

Kramer was a leading Jewish artist, born in the Ukraine who settled in England in 1900. He studied at the Slade. Jacob Kramer was active at the Ben Uri Art Society in its early days in the East End.

(This work was planned to be included in a Deposition Group but this was not carried out. It was also one of the models for the work 'Risen Christ'.)

10 Dolores 1923
Bronze 22½ ins
Lent by the Margulies Collection

This is an early version of the third portrait of Dolores. "Of all the girl models . . . none was more flamboyant than Dolores". (Buckle: *Jacob Epstein Sculptor)*

"She became the High Priestess of Beauty and this role she carried to ridiculous lengths. In the studio she was the devoted model; never allowing anything to interfere with posing, taking it seriously; a religious rite." (Epstein: *An Autobiography*)

11 Actress 1923
Bronze 21 ins
Ben Uri Art Gallery – Permanent Collection

A rare study of a woman which is unrecorded in the main reference books on Epstein's works. It was presented to the Ben Uri Art Society by Mosheh Oved.



Jacob Kramer, 1921 (Trustees of the Tate Gallery)
Catalogue no 9

12 The Weeping Woman 1923
Bronze 23 ins
Lent by the Leicestershire Museum of Arts

This is the first bronze portrait bust in which Epstein depicted movement. The model presented herself to Epstein in his studio. She was weeping and complaining over the loss of her son. This inspired Epstein to include her as the mourning Magdalen in the Deposition Group, which was never executed.



The Weeping Woman, 1923
(Leicestershire Museum of Arts)
Catalogue no 12

13 Professor Samuel Alexander OM 1925
Bronze 21 ins
Ben Uri Art Gallery – Permanent Collection

Distinguished Australian-born philosopher. Came to England in 1878 and remained here until his death in 1938. From 1893 he occupied for over thirty years the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Manchester. His great work *Space, Time and Deity* was published between 1916 and 1918. In his book *The Jews of Britain,* Paul Emden wrote of this distinguished thinker that he "was the first British philosopher to attempt a system of philosophy that by his austere life, kindliness of disposition and devotion to science, of all modern philosophers, most nearly suggested Spinoza".

14 Mosheh Oved 1926
Bronze 16 ins
Ben Uri Art Gallery – Permanent Collection

Mosheh Oved was a well-known figure in Jewish circles. His jewellery shop 'Cameo Corner' was a meeting place for Jewish intellectuals. He was a founder member of the Ben Uri Arts Society and took a prominent part in its activities. He donated three of Epstein's sculptures to the Ben Uri Gallery's Permanent Collection – The Actress, Professor Samuel Alexander and his own portrait bust.

Mosheh Oved was also a prolific writer – author of the autobiographical *Gems and Life* and *Book of Affinity* – a quasi-philosophical work with overtones of Jewish mysticism, illustrated with seven coloured drawings by Epstein.

15 Rabindranath Tagore 1926
Bronze 20 ins
Lent by Mrs C Abrahams-Curiel

Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, won the Nobel prize in 1913 with his *Gitanjali* – a book of poems.

"He posed in silence and I worked well . . . At the finish of the sittings usually two or three disciples, who waited in an ante-room for him, took him back to his hotel . . . The manners of Tagore were aloof, dignified and cold, and if he needed anything only one word of command escaped him to his disciples. It has been remarked that my bust of him rests upon the beard, an unconscious piece of symbolism." (Epstein: *An Autobiography*)



Rabindranath Tagore, 1926 (Mrs C Abrahams-Curiel)
Catalogue no 15

16 **Head of Madonna** (Sunita) 1927
Bronze 21 ins
Lent by the Sacerdoti Collection

Amina Peerbhoy under the name of Sunita was Epstein's best known model. She, with her son Enver and her sister Anita (both of whom left their husbands) lived with the Epsteins and were his models. Between 1925 and 1933 Epstein made many drawings – some of Sunita alone, a great number of Sunita with Enver (nearly a hundred) and dozens of Sunita with Anita.

This bust was cast from another work 'Madonna and Child' for which Sunita posed with her son Enver. On finishing the work, the "model remarked that she could not possibly look as good as I had made her" (Epstein: *An Autobiography*).

"In the bust of Sunita, Epstein seized on the brooding, tragic nature of the sitter's beauty which was to create the dominant mood of the 'Madonna' . . . Sunita was a tall woman with huge head, and far from Madonna-like. She could find no food or drink fierce enough in taste, and used to put pepper in her whisky." (Richard Buckle: *Jacob Epstein Sculptor)*

17 **Paul Robeson** 1927-28
Bronze 14¾ ins
Lent by Mr and Mrs S E Kesten

Epstein went to New York in 1927 with his family. He met Robeson, the singer, who took them round Harlem. He sang lullabies to Epstein's daughter Peggy Jean. Epstein made sketches of Robeson from which he created this bust.



Head of Madonna, (Sunita) 1927 (Sacerdoti Collection)
Catalogue no 16



Epstein photographed with his stone carving 'Night'. The maquette for this carving is shown in the exhibition, Catalogue no 18.

18 Night 1928
Bronze maquette 14½ ins
Lent by Mr Philip Dyer

Epstein was commissioned to make two groups for the London Underground Headquarters buildings in Westminster. One is 'Day' (depicting father and son) and the other is 'Night'. Epstein had decided to base the latter carving on the theme of 'Pietà'. He did several sketches with a mother holding a sleeping child on her lap. It was from one of these that he did a small plaster clay cast from which this work was cast in bronze. "Her face is Chinese or Mongolian and she emanates a Buddhist calm." (Richard Buckle: *Jacob Epstein Sculptor*)

19 Mrs Godfrey Phillips 1928
Bronze 17½ ins
Lent by the Trustees of The Tate Gallery

Mrs Godfrey Phillips was the wife of an industrialist. She was a great patron of the arts.

20 Israfel (Sunita) 1930
Bronze 21 ins
Lent by The Margulies Collection

The model is Sunita, but this time idealised and therefore called 'Israfel'. There is a serious expression on her face – more so than in works carried out earlier. This is partly achieved by the scooped out, hollow eyes. This portrait was the model for 'Lucifer' twelve years later.

21 Man of Aran ('Tiger' King) 1933
Bronze 17 ins
Lent by a private collector

'Tiger' King was an Irish fisherman who was the principal character in the film *Man of Aran*, directed by Robert Flaherty.



Mrs Godfrey Phillips, 1928 (Trustees of the Tate Gallery) Catalogue no 19



Israfel (Sunita), 1930 (Margulies Collection)
Catalogue no 20

22 Professor Albert Einstein 1933
Bronze 19½ ins
Lent by Mr and Mrs J J Wallis

Epstein was asked to execute a portrait bust of Professor Einstein after the latter's arrival in England in 1933.

In his *Autobiography,* Epstein says "His glance contained a mixture of the humane, humorous and the profound. This was a combination that delighted me. He resembled the ageing Rembrandt."

23 Dr Chaim Weizmann 1933
Bronze 18 ins
Lent by The Margulies Collection

The bust of the Zionist leader and first President of Israel is executed in a "bold Impressionist manner". (Richard Buckle: *Jacob Epstein, Sculptor)*

24 Rani Rama 1934
Bronze 21 ins
Lent by Editions Graphiques Gallery

Rani Rama was a Siamese model and dancer.

25 Olive 1934
Bronze 15 ins
Lent by Editions Graphiques Gallery

Olive was about eleven years old when her parents brought her to Epstein. The expression is unusually serious for a child modelled by Epstein.

26 Rose 1934
Bronze 16 ins
Lent by William Margulies

27 Fourth portrait of Leda (with cockscomb) 1940
Bronze 11 ins
Lent by Editions Graphiques Gallery

Leda was one of Epstein's granddaughters.

28 Piccaninny 1940
Bronze 9 ins
Lent by Mr and Mrs Kenneth Snowman

"Epstein conveyed something of that wondering angelic quality which is peculiar to Negro children." (Richard Buckle: *Jacob Epstein Sculptor*)



Dr Chaim Weizmann, 1933 (Margulies Collection)
Catalogue no 23



Judith Margulies, 1949 (Sacerdoti Collection)
Catalogue no 33

29 **Ian** (Ossian) 1942
Bronze 10½ ins
Lent by Mrs Harriette Snowman

Ian was Epstein's grandson – son of his daughter Peggy Jean and Norman Hornstein.

30 **Alexander Margulies** 1942
Bronze 16½ ins
Lent by the Margulies Collection

Alexander Margulies has been Chairman of the Ben Uri Arts Society since 1965. He was a friend and patron of Epstein.

31 **Betty Peters nude study** 1943
Bronze 14 ins
Lent by Editions Graphiques Gallery

It was the first time for many years that Epstein undertook nude studies.

32 **Head of Kitty** (with curls) 1944
Bronze 15 ins
Lent by a private collector

Kitty was Epstein's second daughter. Her hair-style, following the fashion of the forties, appears to be the most striking feature of this work.

33 **Judith Margulies** 1949
Bronze 13¾ ins
Lent by the Sacerdoti Collection

This is another example of Epstein's superb skill in portraying children.

34 **Esther with flower** (Third portrait) 1949
Bronze 30 ins
Lent by a private collector

Esther was Epstein's youngest daughter. This is the last of his portrait busts of her.

35 **Ann** 1949
Bronze 7¼ ins
Lent by the Hon Mrs Wynne Godley

Epstein's grand-daughter, elder daughter of Kitty and Lucien Freud.

36 **Dr Ralph Vaughan-Williams** 1950
Bronze 15½ ins
Lent by Sir Robert Mayer

"He reminded me in appearance of some eighteenth-century admiral whose word was law." (Buckle: *Jacob Epstein Sculptor)*

This is one of Epstein's most popular works.

37 **First portrait of Annabel Freud** (with bonnet) 1953
Bronze 7 ins
Lent by a private collector

Annabel was Epstein's youngest grand-daughter.

Catalogue / drawings and watercolours

drawings

1 **Girl in profile** 1903
Pencil drawing 14 x 12 ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

2 **Standing nude seen from the rear** 1903
Pencil drawing 17¼ x 11 ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

Epstein spent three years studying sculpture in Paris (1902-1905). It was at the Académie Julian that he decided to switch to drawing from life and these two drawings are the product of this period.

3 **Sketch study for bas-relief 'Mother and Child'** 1905
Pencil drawing 14 x 20 ins
Lent by the Hon Mrs Wynne Godley

4 **Portrait of Nan** 1909
Pen and ink drawing 14½ x 9 ins
Lent by a private collector

See notes for 'Nan the Dreamer' Bronze no 1.

5 **Sketch for the tomb of Oscar Wilde** 1911
Pencil drawing 11 x 11½ ins
Lent by Simon Wilson

6 **Negress lying down** 1925
Pencil drawing 18 x 22 ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

7 **The little Negress** 1928
Pencil drawing 18¾ x 22 ins
Lent by the Trustees of the Tate Gallery

8 **Negress** 1928
Black chalk 18 x 22 ins
Lent by the Trustees of the Tate Gallery

9 **Nude Negress lying down** 1928
Pencil drawing 17 x 22 ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery



Nude lying down , 1930
(Editions Graphiques Gallery)
Catalogue no 14



above left: Nude seated on bed 1929 (Editions Graphiques Gallery) Catalogue no 11
below right: Rebecca (seated pregnant nude) 1930 (Editions Graphiques Gallery) Catalogue no 12

10 **Two nudes** (Sunita, Anita) 1928
Pencil drawing 18 x 21½
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

Sunita and Anita were two Indian sisters who modelled for Epstein. See notes on 'Madonna' (Sunita) Bronze no 16.

11 **Nude seated on bed** 1929
Pencil drawing 22 x 17 ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

12 **Rebecca** (seated pregnant nude) 1930
Pencil drawing 21 x 16 ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

Rebecca – a coloured entertainer – was half Jewish and half Negro.

13 **Seated pregnant woman** 1930
Pencil drawing 20 x 16 ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

14 **Nude lying down** 1930
Pencil drawing 18 x 22 ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

15 **Two girls asleep** 1930
Pencil drawing 19 x 22 ins
Lent by Mr and Mrs J Goldhill

16 **The Indian sisters** 1933
Pencil drawing 18½ x 22 ins
Lent by a private collector

17 **Jackie** 1935
Pencil drawing 17 x 21 ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

Jackie was Epstein's son – sometimes referred to as Ragamuffin – whose pictures and sculpture are representative of Epstein's great gift for modelling children.

18 **Jackie smiling** 1936
Pencil drawing 22 x 17½ ins
Lent by the Mercury Gallery



Watercolours

19 **Sunita lying down** 1928
Watercolour 17 x 22 ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

20 **Nude in bed with blue coverlet** 1928
Watercolour 17½ x 22½ ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

21 **Reclining nude**
Watercolour 22½ x 15¾ ins
Lent by Collection T G Rosenthal

22 **Epping Forest** 1933
Watercolour 31 x 25 ins
Lent by a private collector

During the summer of 1933 Epstein painted nearly a hundred watercolours of Epping Forest where he rented a cottage. He also produced a large number of flower studies in watercolour. These all sold well – at a time when a number of monumental carvings proved to be unsaleable.

23 **Trees** 1933
Watercolour 31 x 25 ins
Lent by a private collector

24 **Epping Forest** 1934
Poster 40 x 50 ins
Lent by London Transport Executive

Works with religious themes

25 **King Solomon** 1923
Watercolour 23 x 17½ ins
Lent by the Editions Graphiques Gallery

26 **Solomon looking through the lattice**
(Song of Songs) 1930
Watercolour 27 x 32 ins
Lent by Mrs Elizabeth Rosenthal



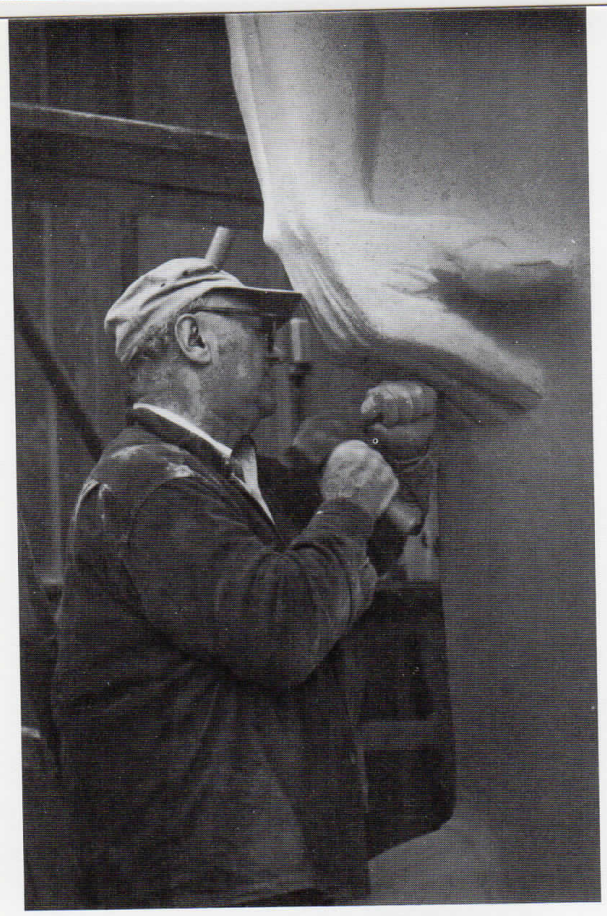
King Solomon 1923 (Editions Graphiques Gallery)
Catalogue no 25

In 1930 Epstein wrote the following to Kathleen Garman from Epping Forest:
"It is raining all the time. I have nothing to read except an old bible. I keep reading Genesis and have made some drawings."

This was the beginning of his series of Old Testament drawings which were exhibited at the Redfern Gallery in 1932.

27 **Study sketch for 'Jacob and the Angel'** 1939
Pencil and wash 22 x 17 ins
Lent by a private collector

'Jacob and the Angel' was a carving executed in 1940 in which Epstein showed Jacob's internal struggle, leading to the understanding of the purpose of Creation. "This the sculptor has represented by showing Jacob at the pinnacle of sexual fulfilment." (Buckle: *Jacob Epstein Sculptor*)



Jacob Epstein

Biographical notes

1880 Born November 10 of Russian-Polish parents in Hester Street, East Side, New York. One of a large family, third of eight children.

1896-1901 Drew long before he sculpted. Made many drawings of Jewish types. Illustrated *The Spirit of the Ghetto* by Hutchings Hapgood. Began sculpting at night classes under George Grey Bernard.

1902 Hapgood's book published. From the fees for the illustrations paid his fare to Paris. Studied at the École des Beaux Arts and later at the Académie Julian.

1904 Trips to Florence and London. Modelled head of baby, the earliest portrait bust known to have survived.

1905 Moved to London and took a studio in Camden Town. Visited New York but returned immediately and moved into a studio at Fulham. Met Muirhead Bone, Augustus John and other members of the New English Art Club.

1907 First commission to carve eighteen figures for the British Medical Association building in Agar Street, Strand. Moved to Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.

1908 Controversy in the press about the Strand figures. Received first portrait commissions.

1910 Carved **Maternité**, **Sun God** and **Sunflower**.

1911 Commissioned to carve the **Tomb of Oscar Wilde** for the Père Lachaise cemetery, Paris.

1912-1913 In Paris for the completion of the Wilde tomb. Met Picasso, Brancusi, Modigliani and Paul Guillaume. Returned to England and settled at Pett Level, near Hastings. Involved in the Vorticist movement. Exhibited with Gaudier-Brzeska at Goupil Gallery.

1913 Original member of the London Group where **Rock Drill** (in plaster) was first exhibited. First one-man show at the Twenty One Gallery, Adelphi, London.

1913-1916 Carved **Venus**, three groups of **Doves**, flenite carvings and **Mother and Child**.

1917 **Venus** carvings and bronzes shown at the first Leicester Galleries exhibition.

1919 Statue **The Risen Christ**, begun in 1917, completed. *75 Drawings* by Epstein published.

1920 Bernard van Dieren's *Epstein* published with fifty illustrations.

1921 Met Kathleen Garman whom he later married.

1924 Exhibition at Leicester Galleries. Commissioned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to carve a memorial to W H Hudson — **Rima** (in Hyde Park).

1925 **Rima** unveiled, causing controversy.

1926 Work on **The Visitation** in Epping Forest.

1927 **Madonna and Child** completed. Visit to America.

1928 Took house at Hyde Park Gate — his home for the remainder of his life. Commissioned to carve **Night and Day** for the London Transport Underground Headquarters building (55 Broadway, SW1)

1929-1931 Completion of **Night and Day** — after which he received no commissions for 22 years. **Genesis** completed and exhibited at Leicester Galleries. Series of illustrations to the Old Testament. *The Sculptor Speaks*, Conversations with Arnold L Haskell, published by Heinemann, 1931.

1932 Exhibition of Old Testament drawings at Redfern Gallery.

1933 Sculpted bust of Einstein. Painted nearly a hundred watercolours of Epping Forest. Exhibitions at Leicester Galleries (including **The Sun God**) and at Arthur Tooth & Son.

1935 Exhibition at the Leicester Galleries, including **Ecce Homo**. Statue unsold for 25 years. Further exhibitions of watercolours at Redfern Gallery. Designed and painted for ballet *David* — his only work for the stage.

1937 Carved **Consummatum Est**, later exhibited at the Leicester Galleries, provoking controversy.

1938 Commissioned to illustrate *Les Fleurs du Mal* of Baudelaire, exhibited at Tooth's Galleries.

1939 **Adam**, begun in the previous year, exhibited at the Leicester Galleries, bought by a showman, exhibited in an Oxford Street fun-fair, then taken on tour for side-shows.

1940 *Let There be Sculpture* – Epstein's autobiography published by Michael Joseph. Exhibition of bronzes and flower paintings at the Leicester Galleries.

1941 Work on **Jacob and the Angel.**

1942 **Jacob and the Angel** exhibited at the Leicester Galleries. Working on **Girl with Gardenias.**

1945-1946 Modelling a series of nude figures. **Lucifer** exhibited at the Leicester Galleries. Purchased by a Trust, it was presented to The Fitzwilliam Museum first, the Victoria and Albert Museum subsequently, then to the Tate Gallery but all rejected it. Finally it was accepted by the Birmingham Art Gallery.

1949 Completed **Lazarus.**

1951 **Youth Advancing**, commissioned in 1950, exhibited at the Festival of Britain 1951. **Madonna and Child** commissioned for Cavendish Square by the Convent of the Holy Child Jesus. **Lazarus** unveiled in open air exhibition at Battersea Park.

1952 Major retrospective exhibition organised by the Arts Council at the Tate Gallery. Work on the **Social Consciousness** group for Philadelphia.

1953 Finished modelling **Social Consciousness. Christ in Majesty** commissioned for Llandaff Cathedral. Awarded DCL at Oxford.

1954 Received knighthood. Invited to work in large studio by the Royal College of Art. Work on three bas-reliefs and giant figure for Lewis's Building, Liverpool, and **Christ in Majesty** for Llandaff Cathedral.

1955 Commissioned to execute statue of Smuts for Parliament Square and **St Michael and the Devil** for Coventry Cathedral. Went to USA for the unveiling of **Social Consciousness** in Philadelphia.

1956 Unveiling of **Smuts** statue and of work on the Lewis's Building.

1957 Carving of **War Memorial** for TUC Building. Completion of **St Michael and the Devil. William Blake Memorial** unveiled at Westminster Abbey.

1958 Portrait of **Princess Margaret.** Despite ill health started work on the **Bowater House Group. TUC Memorial** unveiled.

1959 Number of portraits executed. Completed work on the **Bowater House Group** on the morning of August 19 and died the same night.

Exhibitions after Epstein's death

All those listed below are one-man shows

1959	November	Memorial Exhibition of Bronzes This was the first show following his death	*Ben Uri Art Gallery, London*
1960	June-July	Sculpture and Drawings	*Leicester Galleries, London*
1961	March-April	Drawings and Sculpture	*Auckland City Art Gallery, New Zealand*
	Aug-Sept	Memorial Exhibition	*Edinburgh Festival*
	Nov-Dec	Memorial Exhibition (organised by the Arts Council)	*Tate Gallery, London*
1962	June-Aug	Epstein (organised by the Welsh Arts Council)	*Llandaff, Swansea and Haverfordwest*
	Sep-Nov	Sculpture and Drawings	*Leicester Galleries, London*
1964	June-July	Exhibition of Bronzes and Drawings	*Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield*
1965	April	Retrospective Exhibition of Sculpture	*Hecht Downtown Store, Washington DC USA*
	July-Sept	Sculpture, Paintings and Drawings	*New Metropole Arts Centre, Folkestone Kent*
	Sept-Oct	Exhibition of Sculpture and Painting	*The Rye Art Gallery, Rye Sussex*
1966	Sept-Oct	Exhibition of Drawings, Watercolours and Sculpture	*Mercury Gallery, London*
1968	Sept-Oct	The Schinman Collection (Bronzes, Watercolours and Drawings)	*New Jersey State Museum, USA*
1969	March-April	Drawings and Watercolours	*Mercury Gallery, London*
1971	June-July	Sculpture and Drawings 1900-1932	*Leicester Galleries, London*
	Oct-Nov	The Schinman Collection	*Lowe Art Museum, Florida USA*
	December	The Schinman Collection	*Danenberg-Roman Galleries, New York USA*
1973	Oct-Nov	The Rock Drill Period (Sculpture and Drawings)	*Anthony d'Offay, London*
1977	Aug-Oct	Exploring Collections	*The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa*
1980	Oct-Nov	Rebel Angel	*Birmingham City Museum*
	Nov-Dec	Display of work from own collection	*Tate Gallery, London*
	Nov-Dec	Epstein Centenary Exhibition Bronzes, Drawings and Watercolours	*Ben Uri Art Gallery, London*

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Bowater House Group 1959
Hyde Park London

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