

***MAKING IT MODERN* EXHIBITION**

Docent Summary Notes on BIOMORPHISM

WILLIAM BAZIOTES – American, *Desert Animal*, influenced by European Surrealists and automatism, a method of allowing the subconscious to produce images (drawing without conscious intent). Using this technique he created biomorphic images. Most images still retain some figurative elements, which may be related to his early work with stained glass. Lyrical works which suggest dream like states pulled from the subconscious.

JOAN MIRO –Spanish, a Surrealist who also used automatism in his image making. Experimented and became more abstract over time, simplified figures sometimes created with a single line or biomorphic shape limited palette, deceptively simple compositions.

BARBARA HEPWORTH – British, *Two Forms with White*, friend of Henry Moore, embraced biomorphic abstraction but remained rooted in nature. The two lightly curving vertical elements could be two standing figures, two rocks, trees, etc. The forms are elegant, balanced, rhythmical, and suggest vitality. The forms reflect Hepworth's personal language of purified contours and relationships.

MANUEL FEIGUERES – Mexican artist, *Contribution*, goal was to create form that creates space, and movement that creates space. *Contribution* in its slowing, polished form, appears fully abstract, but one view reveals the structure of a face with a forehead, nose, lips, and a hanging shape that can be read as a tear. Rhythmical, positive and negative space, biomorphic, abstract, organic, and smooth.

JACK ZAJAC –California artist, *Big Skull and Horn in Two Parts IV*, while a teenager began working at the Fontana Steel Mills in the mid 40's, took art classes at Scripps College, worked originally in figurative and later in larger format, more biomorphic and organic. The ram's skull, which is a symbol of mortality, is a recurring subject in Zajac's oeuvre. Working in different-size formats gave him the idea to separate the skull from the horn. Ted Weiner met him in the 60's and not only bought his work but promoted it. Zajac is still alive and lives in Santa Cruz

HENRY MOORE was the most important British sculptor of the 20th century and the most acclaimed sculptor of the post-war period. Strongly influenced by the ethnographic collections of the British Museum, Mayan Chacmool figures, and memories of his early childhood and England. *Woman* features a pregnant elongated female form. Surrealism helped shape his mature style, and encouraged his love of biomorphic shapes, as displayed in this piece.

JEAN ARP –French, is a one man show. He could make anything into art. Best-known for his biomorphic sculptures, and one of the most versatile creative minds of the early 20th century, he fashioned sculptures out of plaster, stone and bronze, and also expressed himself in paintings, drawings, collages, and poems. His approach to form, referred to as organic abstraction, was consistent. His wavy lines suggest plants, body parts and other natural motifs, while remaining entirely abstract. Transformation, growth, metamorphosis are among the dominant themes in his work. His abstract compositions suggest organic forms. One of the first artists to make randomness and chance part of the work.