

# Jacob Epstein

## *Genesis* 1929 – 1931

### Marble



Jacob Epstein's *Genesis* shows a woman in the late stages of pregnancy. It is carved out of marble and is extremely heavy. It was first exhibited at Bluecoat in 1931 when nearly 50,000 visitors paid sixpence (about 2.5p in today's money) to see what was considered Britain's most shocking sculpture. It was brought to Bluecoat to raise money to help fund the building. 86 years later, *Genesis* returned to Bluecoat during the building's 300th anniversary year in 2017.

In 1931, the sculpture divided opinion. Some people thought it was beautiful and others that it was shocking, ugly and not even art. The artist regarded his sculpture as very calm and peaceful.

## THINK ABOUT

- Do you like *Genesis*? If so, why?
- Does this art work shock you? If so, why?

## TALK ABOUT

- Do you like *Genesis*?
- Does this art work shock you? If so, why?
- Why do you think this art work might have shocked people in 1931?
- Would you have queued and paid to go and see *Genesis*?

## FIND OUT ABOUT

- Have there been any art works in recent years that have shocked people? You might consider artists whose work has caused controversy, like Tracey Emin or Damien Hirst.

## Activity

There were many newspaper articles written about *Genesis* when it was on display at Bluecoat in 1931 and also when it was exhibited previously in London and Manchester. Write your own newspaper article about the sculpture including your personal opinions on the piece. Try and present a balanced argument.

You can use quotes from original newspaper articles or interview your classmates to get different opinions on the sculpture. Remember to include some facts about the art work including:

- The artist's name
- What the sculpture is made of
- Why it was exhibited at Bluecoat.

Think of a catchy headline to grab people's attention and make them want to read your article.

## Learning aims and outcomes

The children will:

- learn more about different artistic movements
- learn more about different types of thinking
- learn more about the lives of people in the past
- use their own thoughts, feelings and ideas
- discuss their ideas in a group