

Press Release – 12 May 2015

REDISCOVERED, RARE PORTRAIT OF YOUNG BARBARA HEPWORTH  
IS GIFTED TO WAKEFIELD



THE PAINTING WILL GO ON PUBLIC DISPLAY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 90 YEARS  
IN A NEW EXHIBITION, *HEPWORTH IN YORKSHIRE* OPENING 16 MAY



The Hepworth Wakefield is delighted to announce the recent acquisition of a rediscovered, rare portrait of the young Barbara Hepworth. Generously gifted to the Wakefield Council Permanent Art Collection by a private American collector, the portrait will form the centrepiece of a new exhibition *Hepworth in Yorkshire*, opening at The Hepworth Wakefield on 16 May until 6 September.

This will be the first time in 90 years that the painting will be publicly shown and is considered to be the earliest known portrait of Barbara Hepworth, dated from around 1920, when Hepworth would have been 17 years old.

The portrait was painted by Royal Academician Ethel Walker, who lived part-time in Robin Hood's Bay on the North Yorkshire coast, where Hepworth and her family spent their summers and was most likely the location where they would have met.

Brought at auction for £1,000 as a 'portrait of a lady' it is only recently that the sitter has been identified as Hepworth, one of Britain's most significant artists, as Eleanor Clayton, Curator at The Hepworth Wakefield explains:

"In spring 2014 the Hepworth Estate was contacted by an American collector who wanted to determine the authenticity of a painting that was recently bought at auction. While undergoing conservation work the collector noticed that the portrait had an inscription on the back indicating that the sitter was Barbara Hepworth. Art Historian Dr Sophie Bowness, Hepworth's grand-

daughter and trustee of the Hepworth Estate was able to confirm that the girl was in fact Barbara Hepworth."

Simon Wallis, Director of The Hepworth Wakefield added: "We are thrilled to have this important work in our collection, thought to be the earliest portrait of Hepworth. We are sincerely grateful for the generosity of the collector in gifting this work to the people of Wakefield, for the wider public to enjoy in many years to come – I think it's wonderful to see Hepworth come home."

The *Hepworth in Yorkshire* exhibition offers an unprecedented insight into the earliest years of the life and work of Yorkshire-born artist Barbara Hepworth. Hepworth herself asserted that the experience of growing up in Yorkshire was hugely influential on her work. The exhibition will also exhibit for the first time family photographs and images of Hepworth's formative years, as well as some of her earliest drawings, paintings and sculpture that show Hepworth's natural gifts in these mediums.

*Head of a Lady* c. 1920 was made when Hepworth was at school, drawn in an autograph book and will also feature in the exhibition. One of just a few works remaining from Hepworth's teenage years, this will be the first time that this sketch has been publicly displayed. These beautifully executed drawings from Hepworth's juvenilia are unlike the work Hepworth is known for, taking inspiration from Victorian children's illustrators like Arthur Rackham.

For full details visit [www.hepworthwakefield.org](http://www.hepworthwakefield.org) or telephone 01924 247360.

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#### EXHIBITION FACTS:

Press Preview:	Friday 15 May 2015
Title:	Hepworth in Yorkshire
Dates:	16 May – 6 September 2015
Address:	The Hepworth Wakefield Gallery Walk, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF1 5AW
Telephone:	+44 (0)1924 247360
Admission:	Free
Website:	<a href="http://www.hepworthwakefield.org">www.hepworthwakefield.org</a>
Email:	<a href="mailto:hello@hepworthwakefield.org">hello@hepworthwakefield.org</a>
Opening Hours:	10am - 5pm Tuesday – Sunday 10am - 9pm Third Thursday of the month Closed Mondays (except local school holidays and bank holidays)
Travel:	By Train: the nearest stations are Wakefield Westgate and Kirkgate
By Car:	the gallery is situated off the A61, with nearby links to the M1 motorway. A pay & display visitor car park is located on Thornes Lane, WF1 5QJ, with free blue badge car parking on site
By Bus:	the gallery is situated on main bus routes and the FreeCityBus route (Mon-Sat, 9.30am-3pm)
By Bicycle:	bicycle racks are located by our main entrance
By Air:	the nearest airport is LeedsBradford
Polite Request:	The gallery should be cited in full, as The Hepworth Wakefield

Twitter: @HepworthGallery  
Facebook: TheHepworthWakefield  
Instagram: HepworthWakefield

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

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IMAGE CREDITS:

'Barbara Hepworth' c. 1920

Photography by Tom Arber. Image courtesy The Hepworth Wakefield/[www.hepworthwakefield.org](http://www.hepworthwakefield.org)

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