

- **JACOB EPSTEIN 1880-1959**

- **Biographical summary**

- One of seven children of 1<sup>st</sup> generation Polish Jewish immigrants to New York.
- C1896-1904 Studied in New York and Paris. Illustrates *The Spirit of the Ghetto* with scenes of Jewish life on Lower East Side. Support from some wealthy New Yorkers.
- 1906 moves to London in 1906, his home for rest of his life. Becomes naturalised British in 1910.
- 1908 Becomes a **public figure of fame and controversy** , a sort of lightning rod for debate about aspects of modern art and morality.
- 1908-15 **Leading sculptor of avant-garde** pioneering direct carving and modernist emphasis of form influenced by archaic, African and Oceanic carvings. Friendship with Gaudier-Brzeska and members of the Vorticist group.
- 1920-30 Acclaimed portraiture in bronze counterpointed by controversial architectural and lifesize works,
- Exhibits regularly at the Leicester Galleries, Leicester Square. Early supporter of Henry Moore, initially seen as his protégé
- 1930 -50 **Wilderness years** – no large scale commissions . Produces carvings on elemental subjects but earns living through portraits and watercolours.
- 1950-59 **Indian summer**. Post war reconstruction and demand for dignified religious works bring about return to critical and public acclaim, rush of large architectural commissions, knighthood etc
- **Scottish connections**
  - His first wife, Margaret Dunlop
  - Work, mostly portraits, acquired by most Scottish public collections
  - Honorary degree from University of Aberdeen
  - 1961 Epstein Memorial Exhibition is art centrepiece of Edinburgh Festival and largest ever showing of his work in all media. 100,000 visit in 3 weeks.