

Right: Henry Moore's "Two-piece reclining figure No. 4" and "Two-piece reclining figure No. 1" both 1954, bronze. Below right: Barbara Hepworth's "Oval form", 1952, bronze. Pictures by Peter Johns.

Progress in the park

BY NORBERT LYNTON

IT'S a brave sculpture that stands up to grass, trees and flowering rhododendrons. The rhododendrons at Battersea are doing particularly well just now and it says much for the Greater London Council's exhibition in the park that the sculptures cope so well with the scale, the variety, the mobility and the colour of nature.

But then this is an unusually young and bright and colourful show. The GLC started the open-air exhibitions in 1948—the last one, in 1953, was the first—and had them organised by special committees. The result, inevitably, was rather chaotic. There was a lot to be said for showing a great variety of work, but there was too much bowing in too many different directions.

The GLC rightly put the selecting and organising one to one man, Alan Bowness. Whether or not one agrees with his choice, and I do to a large extent, the result is an exhibition no part of which looks apologetic or shamed. He has picked what he wanted and his interest is communicated quite clearly throughout. At the head of his list, rightly and inevitably, stand those great hardy animals of British Sculpture, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. Moore looks stronger than he has of late, with two examples from his "Two-piece reclining figure" series.

There are also works by other well-established sculptors, such as F. E. McWilliam, Professor Bernard Meadows, Robert Adams and Kenneth

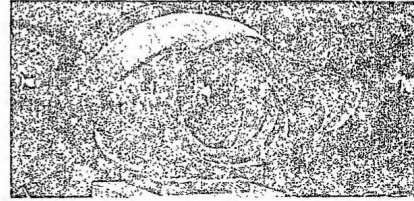
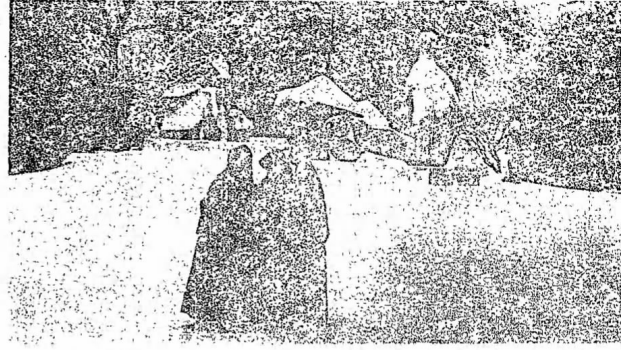
Armitage, who have repeatedly contributed to these exhibitions. One notes the absence of Reg Butler and Lynn Chadwick. But the dominant tone is set by the twelve newcomers to Battersea, out of a total of twenty-eight exhibitors, and by their immediate precursors in age and reputation, such as Anthony Caro, Hubert Dalwood and William Turnbull.

If you climb the little mound near the entrance to the exhibition enclosure, and stand between the two Armitages up there that seem themselves to be watching over the assembly, you can get something approaching a bird's eye view of a good part of the exhibition. Immediately below you is Hubert Dalwood's shining aluminium fantasy, "Mirage," a combination of architectural and natural forms incorporating its own vertical reflection. On your left is a new work by John Hoskin, a tough and confident construction in galvanised steel. To your right you can see a black and relatively solemn welded sculpture by Brian Wall. But your general impression is one of colour and lightness.

William Turnbull's and Anthony Caro's pieces, in the middle distance, are brightly coloured and penetrate rather than occupy the space reserved for them. Caro's lime green sculpture, "Prima Luce," seems to me the best thing he has done in the last two or three years. Nearby is an excellent piece by Philip King, an overlapping arrangement of repeating forms called "Slant"—repainted,

like two or three other works in the exhibition, to hold its own against nature.

A number of other works, particularly those of David Hall, David Annesley and Kim Lim, help to make this into a particularly vivid exhibition. There is also one especially handsome piece, the only work from abroad: David Smith's "Cubi XII" in shining stainless steel, included as a tribute to the outstanding American sculptor who died last year. There will be a commemorative exhibition of Smith's work at the Tate Gallery in August and September. The Battersea exhibition closes at the end of September.



Norman Lynton on Battersea Sculpture

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