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## ***Making A New World: Karin Jonzen and The World Health Organisation in New Delhi and Geneva in the early 1960s***

Sculpture acquired a new and unprecedented role in post-war Britain as the art form for embodying and conveying the social and cultural ideals of a 'New Britain' under the newly elected Labour Party in 1945.<sup>1</sup> One of its first outdoor manifestations was the 1948 'Open Air Exhibition of Sculpture' in Battersea Park, organised by the London County Council in collaboration with the newly formed Arts Council of Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> Karin Jonzen (née Löwenadler), born to Swedish parents in London in December 1914, was the youngest sculptor to contribute to this exhibition at the age of thirty-three and was one of only four women to show alongside the thirty-one European and British male sculptors.<sup>3</sup> Her terracotta *Fountain Figure* (1946) of a semi-kneeling female nude emphasised the solidity and roundness of the youthful form.

In 1951, Jonzen's sculptures reached a wider public through their inclusion in Herbert Read's Penguin publication of *Contemporary British Art* in January and her commissions for the nation-wide Festival of Britain. For the Southbank in London, Jonzen produced the over life-size female figure for the Sport Pavilion, *Figure Symbolizing Youth, Open Air and Sport (A Dance Begins)*, 1951. Dramatically situated on a plinth in the waters of a boat dock near Waterloo Gate, the monumental figure of terracotta-coloured plaster was seen to represent the themes of youth, health and post-war regeneration (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> At the accompanying Battersea Park open air exhibition, organised by the LCC and the Arts Council, Jonzen showed the terracotta *Seated Nude* (1951, fig. 2) commissioned by the Arts Council. It

subsequently became the first sculpture by a woman to be purchased for the Arts Council Collection.<sup>5</sup>

As the above suggests, in the post-war austerity years Jonzen's work was part of the wide spectrum of largely figurative work that constituted contemporary sculptural practice in Britain.<sup>6</sup> Her simplified figures, typically in richly coloured terracotta, were seen to represent a strand of modern 'classical sculpture' informed by the work of Aristide Maillol (1861–1944).<sup>7</sup> This included sculptors such as Frank Dobson (1886–1963) and Dora Gordine (1908–1991) who had established their careers in the mid 1920s. By contrast, Jonzen (under her maiden name of Löwenadler) had trained from 1932 to 1936 at the Slade School of Art,<sup>8</sup> and then at the City and Guilds Art School in 1937.<sup>9</sup> In 1939 she was awarded the British School of Rome Prize for Sculpture only to have the two-year residency thwarted by the outbreak of war.<sup>10</sup> Jonzen's post-war figures represent a break from her pre-war carved work and can be seen as a commitment to making a new and harmonious world through the modelling of the human form.<sup>11</sup>

By the mid 1950s, things were very different for Jonzen.<sup>12</sup> Against the backdrop of the intense international promotion of Henry Moore (1886–1986) and Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975), and Herbert Read's launch of the 'geometry of fear' sculptors at the 1952 Venice Biennale,<sup>13</sup> Jonzen's idealised and fulsome figures that were rarely based on a life model were out of fashion and she relied largely upon teaching and portrait commissions.<sup>14</sup> Having separated from her husband Basil Jonzen (1913–1967) – the painter and art dealer whose increasing alcoholism had resulted

in substantial debts – Jonzen had no studio, and lived with her teenage son in a series of rooms in north London.<sup>15</sup>

In the context of the swiftly changing landscape of British sculpture from the mid 1950s, my focus here is on two previously neglected UK commissions that Jonzen completed in the early 1960s for the United Nation's specialist agency, the World Health Organisation (WHO). Jonzen - a little researched figure in British sculpture - briefly discusses the commissions for the WHO headquarters buildings in New Delhi and Geneva in her 'autobiographical notes', first published in 1976.<sup>16</sup> Beyond this, the commissions have been forgotten in the histories of post-war sculpture. This is surprising given the importance of the United Nations (UN) and its specialist agency UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) in the commissioning of sculpture by Moore and Hepworth in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It is also intriguing that at a time when Jonzen's overtly figurative sculpture was out of favour in Britain that she should be commissioned to produce work for such a high profile global organisation as the WHO.

In this article I establish the hitherto overlooked histories of Jonzen's sculptures commissioned as government gifts to the WHO by drawing upon previously unpublished archive material in the WHO archives in Geneva and New Delhi, and the National Archives in London. This research includes an analysis of the works both in relationship to the architecture of their respective buildings and the WHO's ideals of making a new world dedicated to health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being'.<sup>17</sup> Through this, I offer new perspectives on Jonzen's sculptural

practice and the significance of the commissions in the context of post-war British sculpture and its promotion at home and abroad.

### **The World Health Organisation: New Delhi and Geneva**

The formation of the UN and its specialist agency, the WHO, were direct responses to the outbreak of World War Two at a global level. The United Nations Charter, developed to maintain international peace, uphold international law and protect human life, was adopted on 25 June 1945 by fifty-one member states and took effect on 24 October 1945. The Charter included the setting up of a global health organization and, on 22 July 1946, the WHO Constitution was signed in New York by the then sixty-one countries of the UN. The main objective of the Constitution was 'the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health'. Significantly, health was defined as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.'<sup>18</sup>

On 7 April 1948, after an intensive interim planning period, the WHO became a legal entity with its international headquarters established in Geneva, Switzerland in the UN Office at the Palais des Nations, the former purpose-built 1930s headquarters of the League of Nations. Six regional WHO headquarters were consequently created between 1948 and 1952 to meet the particular needs of each of its geographic areas designated as Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, Europe, South-East Asia, the Americas and the Western Pacific. Examples of the WHO's early global advocacy programme were the 1950 Mass TB immunization, the malaria and smallpox

eradication programme, and the improvement of maternal and child health, nutrition, environmental health and sanitation.<sup>19</sup>

Jonzen's first WHO commission was for the new South-East Asia Region Headquarters in New Delhi. This was the first of the six regional headquarters established in 1948, a year after India's Independence from Britain. The UK government was a member state of the region 'representing Maldives', a British protectorate that had to wait until 1965 to gain full independence. The New Delhi headquarters were housed in a series of temporary government buildings and it was only in August 1958 that the Indian government allocated a plot of land on the Indraprastha Estate for a purpose-built WHO building to accommodate its much-expanded personnel. In January 1959 Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India (a principal leader of the pre-independence Indian nationalist movement), approved the estimated cost of the building designed by the modernist Indian architect Habib Rahman (1915–1995).<sup>20</sup> Rahman, the Senior Architect at the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) in New Delhi had trained in America at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and worked with Walter Gropius in the mid 1940s before returning to India in 1946 on the eve of independence.<sup>21</sup> Personally known to Nehru, Rahman was the most experienced modernist architect in India and shared the Prime Minister's vision of New Delhi as a modern and post-empire capital.

Significantly, once Rahman was appointed as the architect the WHO paid for him to visit Manila in the Philippines to see the recently completed regional headquarters of the Western Pacific and to meet with its architect, Alfredo J. Lux.<sup>22</sup> This was the first commissioned WHO building and its broadly international style architecture in

concrete, glass and aluminium is indicative of the WHO's desire for streamlined buildings, associated with efficiency and transparency, that could also incorporate regional architectural elements.

Construction work began on the New Delhi headquarters on 4 February 1960,<sup>23</sup> and Nehru inaugurated the building on 24 April 1963 as 'The World Health House'. The striking international style building (subsequently demolished in the summer of 2019)<sup>24</sup> was constructed of concrete, with glass curtain walls and aluminium framing. It consisted of a six-storey office building connected to a low-slung auditorium-cum-conference block (fig. 3). A key feature of the iconic building was the white external staircase that extended from the first floor of the auditorium to ground level and spanned a lily pool. It was here that Jonzen's sculpture was later placed as the British government gift to the WHO.

As the WHO committee meeting minutes show, as early as 12 August 1959, before construction work began, the offering of gifts for the new Headquarters building was anticipated from participant regional nations, including the UK, and Portugal and France (both representing parts of India).<sup>25</sup> The choice of gift 'representative of the art, skills and culture of their countries' was left to each participant member state. The majority of gifts were cash donations, then materials such as timber and marble, furnishings, decorative panels and carpets.<sup>26</sup> In 1961 the UK government offered a sculpture that 'will be located in the lily pond facing the main entrance.'<sup>27</sup> The UK choice can be seen as part of the on-going championing of British sculpture abroad and the tendency to regard the art form as the most appropriate for post-war international organisations following the high profile commissions of Moore for the

UNESCO headquarters in Paris in 1955 and of Hepworth for the UN headquarters in New York in 1961.

Little is known about the actual commissioning process of the New Delhi sculpture except that it was negotiated through the Ministry of Health in London and approved by the Foreign Office under the United Nations (Economic and Social) Development Department. There is no archival evidence to suggest that it was an open competition and it is therefore highly probable that Jonzen was either personally recommended to the Ministry or put forward by one of the many professional societies she was a member of, or exhibited with such as the Royal Society of British Sculptors (now The Royal Society of Sculptors), the Royal Academy of Arts, or the Royal Society of British Artists. Jonzen had some experience of sculptural commissions for new buildings through the Leicestershire Council LEA Schools project in 1952,<sup>28</sup> and more recently the London County Council's 'Patronage of the Arts Scheme' where she produced a bronze *Mother and Child* for the Sydenham Hill Estate in London in 1960.<sup>29</sup> Almost certainly her work for the Festival of Britain that celebrated female youth, health and vitality, as briefly discussed above, would have been known and be seen to be in accord with the WHO's expansive definition of health and well being.

Given the WHO's mission, we might further conjecture that Jonzen's participation in the Artists' International Association (AIA) exhibitions, an organisation committed to the 'Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy and Cultural Development' would have been relevant.<sup>30</sup> Potentially, it may also have been known that Jonzen had almost died of advanced tuberculosis in the early 1950s, having unknowingly contracted it during her wartime ambulance work.<sup>31</sup> Jonzen, who had an unusually wide-ranging



knowledge of classical and modern philosophy, has also been characterised by her eternal optimism, youthful enthusiasm, and high-mindedness.<sup>32</sup>

What we do know about the New Delhi commission is that *Youth* (1963, fig. 4) arrived at the WHO in New Delhi in the summer of 1963, a few months after the headquarters inauguration. Unusually, the free standing, bronze resin sculpture represented a life-size young male rather than the female form that Jonzen had previously used in large-scale works. The broad-shouldered, muscular youth is represented as arrested in mid-stride, the head turned to the right and looking downwards at his upraised hand as if caught in a moment of thoughtful reflection. The composition is striking in its juxtaposition of the exaggerated muscularity of the open pose of the youthful body - heightened by the textured handling of the surface - with the quiet stasis of the youth's gaze focused on the outstretched hand. If the pose of the figure and the animated surface muscularity has echoes of Auguste Rodin's famous striding *St. John the Baptist* (1878–1880), Jonzen's figure by contrast embodies a calm and youthful innocence of a pre-adult male contemplating the body and at ease in the world.

As photographs of the now destroyed sculpture in situ in 1964 and 1965 show (fig. 5), the figure on a shallow plinth was placed near to the auditorium building, mounted atop rocks, overlooking the lily pond. Hence, a visitor on entering the WHO compound grounds would have encountered the sculpture to the right of the office block, en route to the main entrance of the building, and would look up at the turning figure (framed against the geometric screen of the background link building), gesturing toward the undulating pool of water.<sup>33</sup>

Some indication of how the UK gift was received can be gleaned from the English-language Indian press that offer insights into the sculpture's wider context, its relationship to the architecture of the building, and the meanings it engendered in relationship to the WHO's mission. The art critic of the New Delhi *Statesman* opened with the observation that the custom of presenting 'objet d'art characteristic of each land ... has its drawbacks. Incongruous objects in sundry styles are difficult to fit with the overall design of the architecture; though there are a few exceptions, such as the Paris headquarters of UNESCO.'<sup>34</sup> After briefly mentioning some of the New Delhi gifts that included marble tables from Afghanistan, paintings and ornaments from Indonesia and a mural, Jonzen's work is described as follows: 'Far more pleasing is a life-size bronze figure of a healthy youth' in a style 'just post-Rodin. It has movement and health' and 'it makes a pleasant diversion from the straight lines of the building, standing as it does near the entrance, over a small ornamental pond. The texture is warm; the patina is beautiful.'<sup>35</sup> The reference here to the sensorial affects of the sculpture is a reminder of the embodied encounter that we can only imagine from extant photographs.

The formal presentation of the sculpture by the UK High Commissioner Sir Paul Gore-Booth to the Regional Director of WHO, Dr C. Mani, took place on 1 August 1963. Images from *The Hindustani Times* show the presentation by the poolside with the sculpture centre stage and a separate close-up of the serene face of the *Youth*.<sup>36</sup> *The Indian Express* reproduced a photograph of the High Commissioner closely observing the work in situ with the white exterior staircase visible in the background. The accompanying text extensively quoted the High Commissioner's speech stating

that the work 'symbolised youth, health and vigour' and - alert to the significance of gift giving - that it 'marked a departure from pragmatic aid to aesthetic co-operation.' The speech further highlighted the sculpture's significance by presenting it as 'a gift from the young people of Britain to the youth of South-East Asia. A befitting present to the World Health Organisation which was devoted to the promotion of the ideal of better health.'<sup>37</sup> The Regional Director's acceptance speech referred to the sculpture as 'a symbol of international co-operation and solidarity.'<sup>38</sup> These tenets were central to the operation of the WHO and of particular relevance in a region experiencing the affects of decolonisation and conflicting inter-nation interests.

As an act of cultural and political diplomacy, the commissioning of Jonzen's figurative sculpture for the WHO building can be seen as effective on several levels. *Youth* carried the obvious representational connotations of the importance of the healthy, young, male body for ensuring future continuity and, as I propose, the interiority of the figure could also be seen as embodying the WHO utopian ideal of health as 'complete physical, mental and social well-being'. Set against the architecture, Jonzen's bronze-coloured sculpture provided the visitor with both a material and spatial contrast with the architecture's form and materials, and introduced a note of sensuous colour that focused attention on the human body at the centre of the headquarters' activities. Based on the work's reception, the Ministry of Health approached Jonzen within a few months to discuss a second WHO commission that would further promote the importance of British sculpture.

In Geneva, the need for a purpose-built global headquarters had become evident by the mid 1950s with the expansion of the WHO's international activities. The rural site

offered by the Swiss Federation in 1959 was on a sloping hill overlooking the Palais des Nations and Lake Geneva, with a view of the Alps beyond. The planning of the new headquarters and the commissioning process was overseen directly by the then WHO Director-General, Dr Candau.<sup>39</sup> Following a semi-open architectural competition in late 1959 where fifteen international architects were invited to submit anonymous designs, the winner of the first prize was announced in May 1960 as the leading Swiss architect Jean Tschumi (1904–1962).<sup>40</sup>

From the detailed architectural brief we know that the WHO wanted a building that would primarily ‘facilitate rational organisation of its many global functions’ (including flexible office space, an efficient transportation system for documents across and between floors, a library, a multi-media information centre and board room). Other criteria identified were the use of the highest quality materials without excessive decoration, and the need for the building to fit into the surrounding landscape, and to be cost-effective.<sup>41</sup> Tschumi was known for his detailed drawings that considered all aspects of a building, including interior furnishings and the surrounding landscape, and he had just completed the nearby Nestlé Headquarters (1960) that included the commissioning of contemporary art works.<sup>42</sup>

Tschumi’s declared aim in his ‘open and simple design’ for the WHO was to create ‘the impression of calm’.<sup>43</sup> The international style building consisted of two contrasting parts linked by a spiral-shaped gallery on stilts: the large concrete, eight-storey office block with windows framed by aluminium sun visors and a glass façade enveloped in aluminium lattice cladding, and the single-storey Executive Council room of white marble (fig. 6). Beneath the façade’s overhang were two garden areas

with fountains. Following the architect's unexpected death in January 1962, the completion of the building was passed to the Lausanne-based architect Pierre Bonnard who had previously worked with Tschumi and his architectural team and was equally known for his care to detail.<sup>44</sup>

The planning of the building extended to the choice of gifts invited by the Director-General from participant members. Governments were alerted to the request of gifts from the beginning of the building's construction and in a follow up letter of May 1962 Candau emphasised the importance of ensuring that they could be integrated 'effectively within the building and in a way that will preserve the overall architecture harmony.'<sup>45</sup> The detailed list attached (prepared in consultation with the architect) specified what was needed and also carried the caveat that acceptance of a gift would be subject to the architect's approval. The categories of specified gifts were materials for the interior finishing of the building, furniture, carpets, equipment and works of art.

Based upon Foreign Office correspondence in The National Archives in London and the WHO archive in Geneva, the commissioning process for Jonzen's second sculpture is more fully documented. We know that she was approached in 1963 by the Ministry of Health to submit some ideas for the UK gift. By early February 1964, Jonzen's travel costs were finally secured from the Treasury,<sup>46</sup> and in a letter to Geneva, dated 8 June 1964, the Ministry confirmed the UK gift as 'a piece of original sculpture in bronze designed for display in the garden', and referred to the success of Jonzen's New Delhi sculpture and to the 'preliminary sketches already sent to Geneva'.<sup>47</sup> The letter further noted that Jonzen 'would like to visit the site in early

September if you think the building will be sufficiently far advanced by then for an adequate impression to be gained.’ The one surviving ink and wash drawing in the WHO archive shows that Jonzen’s original conception was of an elongated, standing male youth with upward stretching arms (fig. 7).

In September 1964 Jonzen visited the headquarters as planned. She later described this as going ‘with three ideas’ and ‘discussing them with eight people. I thought it would take at least a week, but within one hour and a half we had all agreed.’<sup>48</sup> The Ministry similarly deemed the visit a success and a detailed two-page letter to the Foreign Office, dated 26 October, recapped on the Treasury discussions and on Jonzen’s visit where she took a ‘number of models to chose from’.<sup>49</sup> The female torso was selected and its placement agreed ‘just off the approach drive outside the library.’ Describing the sculpture rather ambiguously as ‘a very beautiful manifestation of a generous, inclining female form’, the Ministry letter stressed that it would fit well with the ‘very modern’ building that it was designed for, and that the sculptor was now keen to do the first cast. The letter ended: ‘Incidentally, I should perhaps mention that she offered to do a complete and joyous figure for Geneva but agreed with the experts on the spot that the torso convention would be more appropriate in this case.’ Enclosed with the letter was an updated Jonzen CV, press cuttings from New Delhi, and a photograph of the work that shows the almost complete clay sculpture, prior to a first casting in plaster (fig. 8).

While the Ministry letter is clear that it was the WHO (and presumably the architect) who chose the female torso over the proposed ‘complete’ figure, the question of what the sculpture might represent was unstated. The photograph of the headless and

armless female torso would have been the first image of the work to be seen by the Foreign Office. The close-up frontal view of the open legged torso arising from the unworked base and the dramatic play of light on the rough surface of the clay places the emphasis on the breasts, the stomach and the lower pelvic region of the female form. This overt focus on the reproductive aspects of the female torso may well account for the Ministry's need to reassure that 'experts' in Geneva had selected the work.

Although the Foreign Office had agreed the commission on the 29 October,<sup>50</sup> a letter to the Ministry from the art critic Neville Wallis, dated 31 October 1964, suggests further reassurance was sought. Wallis, a supporter and long-standing friend of Jonzen since the mid 1940s, offered his assessment of the torso that he had recently seen as a small statuette at the Leicester Galleries and 'greatly admired.'<sup>51</sup> He continues:

'Both as critic of *The Observer* and of *The Spectator* I have often written in praise of Karin Jonzen's sculpture and in particular for giving her figures a significance and grandeur beyond a purely realistic rendering. The torso in which you are interested ... does seem to be ideally suited to the purpose in mind, a symbol both of fertile strength and compassion of motherhood and possessing a classic beauty which is rare in this country today.'<sup>52</sup>

Wallis' interpretation of the 'timeless and universal' torso as a symbolic representation of female fertility, procreation and nurture may well have accorded with the 'symbolism' that Jonzen later refers to as being understood 'right away' by

the WHO Committee during the Geneva visit.<sup>53</sup> For the government departments involved, however, the key point was that Wallis' letter affirmed the suitability of the torso and represented the 'expert advice' needed in case 'we do come up against awkward questions.'<sup>54</sup>

The follow up correspondence with Geneva was more straightforward. On 11 November 1964, a Ministry letter confirmed the success of Jonzen's visit and the agreed placement of the sculpture in the corner of the garden outside the library (rather than in the executive council garden).<sup>55</sup> It also offered an update on the sculptor's progress: 'Mme Jonzen is now finishing the work, and although the bronze is not yet ready, I attach a reproduction to give you an idea of the first cast.' The accompanying photograph in the WHO archive (dated 11 November 1964 on the reverse) shows the first cast of the life-size torso in plaster. Two further photographs of the latest casting showing front and back views were sent to Geneva on 20 November 1964 with a brief note: 'This is now about to be cast in bronze'.<sup>56</sup> Photographs were sent on the same day to the Foreign Office (fig. 9).<sup>57</sup>

The bronze was cast in December and shipped to Geneva in early January 1965. Safe arrival of the bronze torso was confirmed on 31 January 1965.<sup>58</sup> Just over a month later the Ministry received a letter from the Director-General stating that the gift of the sculpture had been accepted by the Standing Committee and that the best location for the work would be determined in agreement with the architect.<sup>59</sup>

Photographs of the completed bronze torso of December 1965 and 1966 show the work before and after its installation. The two (reverse printed) close-ups of the torso



taken in London, just before the work was shipped, show the complexities of its form from a foreshortened side and front view. In the former, the long sweeping curve of the figure leaning dramatically away from the viewer accentuates the prominent breasts and the strength of the striding figure. From the front, the torso appears to slightly incline with the upper part turning forward so that the light picks out the shoulder bone, the breasts, the rounded stomach and pelvis in contrast to the muscular and thick set thighs and truncated lower limbs that create the striding pose, set on the sloping, black polished stone base (fig. 10).

Photographed in situ in 1966, the torso appears differently once again, set on a high white plinth with the horizontal lines of the building just visible between the bushes in the background (fig. 11). Seen from this perspective and heightened by the dramatic fall of light and shade on the richly textured bronze surface, the emphasis is on the dynamic pose of the rising female torso that turns downwards toward the viewer while asserting its strength and vitality through the wide hips and muscular lower body. As with *Youth*, the form suggests a classical source but the assertive striding pose of the nude female torso and its dynamism deviate from these conventions, as does the roughened bronze surface.

On the day of the building's inauguration on 7 May 1966,<sup>60</sup> *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* announced the presentation of Jonzen's bronze sculpture but there are no known accounts of how Jonzen's work was received in Geneva. Unlike in New Delhi, there was no formal presentation ceremony due to the sheer number of nation members contributing gifts to the global headquarters. Instead, photographs and details of the gifts were published in the *World Health* magazine issue of June–July

1966 and in a commemorative Album.<sup>61</sup> We know, however, that Britain was one of the few nations to present sculpture and it is highly likely that Jonzen's was the first sculpture to be placed outside and in close proximity of the building.<sup>62</sup>

While we don't know how the figure was received or interpreted by visitors, the headless and armless female torso was a frequent subject for modern European sculptors from Edgar Degas (1834–1917) and Rodin to those such as Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957), Alexander Archipenko (1887–1964) and Jacques Lipchitz (1891–1973) that Jonzen had admired as a student.<sup>63</sup> The form was often associated with primordial forces and/or universal values that rejected or bypassed the particularities of a specific time or nation. That said, Jonzen's monumental torso is highly unusual in its reference to the physical strength required to reproduce and nurture and its allusion to the act of giving birth. In the context of the WHO's global headquarters building, the torso can be seen, I propose, as conveying the significance and power of the (timeless) female as life giver and nurturer and, perhaps more obliquely, of alluding to the WHO priority of maternal healthcare. Notably, this is the first time that Jonzen had chosen to use the truncated torso with all of its associations with universality to embody ideals of health, vitality and strength. Not least, through the wide-ranging documentation of this commission we gain a rare insight into Jonzen's working methods from sketch to full-scale clay model - produced within a month of her visit to Geneva – to plaster cast and final bronze. The achievement of this international commission may well have contributed to Jonzen's election as an Associate of The Royal Society of British Sculptors in 1966 and a Fellow in 1967.<sup>64</sup>

Within the wider context of post-war Britain, Jonzen's commissions for the WHO may be seen as a continuation of Britain's promotion of its political and cultural power abroad through the medium of sculpture, building on the highly public lineage of Moore's monumental *Reclining Figure* (1957–8), carved in travertine marble, to sit outside the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, and Hepworth's colossal bronze *Single Form* (1961–64), unveiled on 11 June 1964 outside the United Nations Plaza in New York. Of course, Jonzen's works are not of the same magnitude in terms of prestige size or cost. Moore and Hepworth's works received significant international media attention: Moore's sculpture weighing a total of thirty-eight tons is over sixteen feet long and eight feet high, while Hepworth's twenty-one foot high, oval form was the largest work she had produced.<sup>65</sup> Most strikingly, Moore and Hepworth works are abstracted forms that, while referencing the human figure, do not overtly engage with the multiple aims of UNESCO or the UN, in Hepworth's memorial to UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld.<sup>66</sup>

Jonzen's works for the WHO, by contrast, were for a UN specialist agency that had a more singular and identifiable global mission: the attainment of health for all. Unlike the UN and UNESCO who directly commissioned contemporary artists for their new global headquarters as well as receiving gifts from nations, foundations and individuals, the WHO only acquired art works as gifts from member nations. Hence, the UK commissioning of sculpture is significant and, by default, Jonzen's remit was specifically to produce works of direct relevance, which she did through the male and female form that symbolized ideals of health and well being. In this context, I suggest the role of Jonzen's works were different to the commanding and publically accessible siting of Moore and Hepworth's works. Jonzen's work were placed *inside*

the grounds of the respective WHO headquarter sites in New Delhi and Geneva, in close proximity to the main entrances of both buildings. Hence they were encountered by visitors in the more intimate landscape surroundings of the architecture where their scale and positioning offered opportunities to reflect on the human body that was at the centre of the WHO's mission.

### **Concluding Reflections**

Through this exploration I have proposed that the UK commissions provided Jonzen with an opportunity to realize her conception of the symbolic power of the presence of the human figure in relationship the ideals of the WHO and to create two distinctly different works that provided a material and spatial contrast to the architecture, and offered visitors points of encounter and reflection on health and well being. The sculptures significantly expand our knowledge of Jonzen's commissioned work for architecture and show how her continuing commitment to imagining a new, albeit utopian world, through the human figure took different forms and could play an important material and symbolic role for a post-war global organisation. In this sense Jonzen's works disrupt and complicate the dominant history of post-war British sculpture that places emphasis on the search for the new as a succession of sculptural revolutions. They remind us of the strands of figuration and the multi-generational practices that co-existed and intersected as part of British sculpture at home and abroad, and the role that different UK government departments played.

In 1971, the commission for the redevelopment of the Guildhall Plaza in London enabled Jonzen to produce a monumental outdoor public sculpture in relation to

architecture in the UK. Here Jonzen renewed her focus on youth, well-being and optimism through the two-figure composition in bronze of *Beyond Tomorrow* (1972, fig. 12) that further extends her sculptural vocabulary. Jonzen had intended the couple's gaze to look toward the proposed City of London Exhibition Hall, making visible the planning and workings of the Corporation. Instead, equally as fittingly, they gaze toward the Guildhall's Education Office.<sup>67</sup> Prior to this commission, Jonzen had secured a studio flat in Chelsea following her father's death and remained there until her own death in 1998.

Jonzen's career spanned over sixty-five years and demonstrates the tenacity, resilience and adaptability needed to survive as a figurative sculptor during a period of intense social, political and artistic change. As the painter Carel Weight observed in the catalogue marking her first solo exhibition in 1974, 'She is one of the small band of important sculptors left in this country who derive their inspiration from the human figure'.<sup>68</sup> A regret is that her archive has not yet entered the public realm.

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<sup>1</sup> Labour, '*Labour Party Manifesto 1945, Let Us Face the Future: A Declaration of Labour Party Policy for the Consideration of the Nation*', <http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1945/1945-labour-manifesto.shtml>, accessed 15 September 2022. See M. Garlake, *New Art New World: British Art in Postwar Society*, New Haven and London, The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> *Souvenir Catalogue of the Open Air Exhibition of Sculpture At Battersea Park, May to September 1948*, (exh. cat.), London, LCC, 1948.

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<sup>3</sup> The Battersea exhibition included 43 sculptures in total: 31 male artists contributed 39 works. Four women artists contributed one work each: Karin Jonzen (1914–1998), *Fountain Figure*; Dora Gordine (1895–1991), *Reclining Figure*; Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975), *Helikon* and Gertrude Hermes (1901–1983), *Leda and the Swan*.

<sup>4</sup> H. Casson, 'South Bank Sculpture', *Image*, 7, 1952, pp. 48–60. See R. Burstow, 'Modern Sculpture in the South Bank Townscape', in E. Harwood and A. Powers (eds), *Festival of Britain*, Twentieth Century Architecture 5, London, The Twentieth Century Society, 2001, pp. 96–106; C. Jolivet, 'London Pride: 1951 and Figurative Sculpture at the South Bank Exhibition', *Sculpture Journal*, 17. 2, 2008, pp. 23–36.

<sup>5</sup> The work was included in the Arts Council Collection's UK touring exhibition, 2020–23. N. Rudd, *Breaking the Mould, Sculpture by Women Since 1945*, London, Hayward Publishing, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Two Jonzen terracotta sculptures were reproduced in E. Newton, *British Sculpture 1944–1946*, London, John Tiranti Ltd, 1947.

<sup>7</sup> *Some Modern Sculpture: with a background of Old Masters* (exh. cat.), Roland, Browse and Delbanco, London, 1946.

<sup>8</sup> Löwenadler was one of five new Diploma students, all women, studying sculpture under Alfred H. Gerrard (1899–1998), *University of London, University College, Calendar, Session 1934–35*, London, Taylor and Francis, p. 498; p. 525. These included Joan Moore (1909–1996) who married Kenneth Armitage in 1940, and (Hilda) Mary Lucas (1912–1999) who married William Scott in 1937. K. Jonzen et al, *Karin Jonzen Sculpture*, Cambridge, Silent Books, 1994, pp. 12–14.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13–15. Löwenadler focused on direct carving and submitted a life-size female figure to The British School at Rome in 1937 that achieved the official status of runner-up (*Proximie Accessit*).

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<sup>10</sup> In 1939, using the Slade facilities and in competition with Kenneth Armitage (1916–2002), Löwenadler won the Sculpture Prize with a three-figure pieta, modelled in clay and cast in plaster. The scholarship entries were shown at The Imperial Institute, South Kensington from 31 May 1939. Photographs of the entries and of Jonzen’s pieta were reproduced in *The Times*, 3 May 1939, p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> For an account of Jonzen’s wartime decision to persevere with the human figure see Jonzen et al, as at note 8, pp. 17–19.

<sup>12</sup> Jonzen et al, as at note 8, p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> H. Read, ‘New Aspects of British Sculpture, in British Council’, in *The XXVI Venice Biennale: The British Pavilion*, London, Westminster Press, 1952.

<sup>14</sup> Jonzen taught at Thanet School of Art (1955–58), St. Martins School of Art (1956) and Extra Mural Art appreciation at the University of London (1965–71). In 1962, her portrait heads in bronze resin included those of Sir Hugh Casson and Lord Constantine.

<sup>15</sup> Jonzen et al, as at note 8, pp. 17–18. Between 1959 and 1962 Jonzen lived at three different addresses, M. Hallett, et al., (eds), *The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition: A Chronicle, 1769–2018*. Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2018, <https://www.chronicle250.com>, accessed 15 September 2022.

<sup>16</sup> K. Jonzen et al, *Karin Jonzen Sculptor*, London, Bachman and Turner, 1976, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> World Health Organisation, Constitution of the World Health Organisation. [https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1948/04/19480407\\_10-51\\_PM/Ch\\_IX\\_01p.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1948/04/19480407_10-51_PM/Ch_IX_01p.pdf), accessed 15 October 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> World Health Organization, *The First Ten Years of the World Health Organization*, Geneva, 1958.

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<sup>20</sup> World Health Organization and M. G. Candau, *The Work of WHO, 1959: Annual Report of the Director-General to the World Health Assembly and to the United Nations*, 1960, p. 73. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/85722>, accessed 25 October 2022.

<sup>21</sup> See Special Issue 'Tribute Habib Rahman', *Architecture + Design, A Journal for the Indian Architect*, Vol Xii, No. 2, March–April 1966.

<sup>22</sup> WHO, Regional Office for South-East Asia, 'SEA/RC12/12 - Permanent accommodation for the regional office for South-East Asia', 12 August 1959, p. 1, <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/204578>, accessed 28 October 2022.

<sup>23</sup> WHO, Regional Office for South-East Asia, *Fifty Years of WHO in South East Asia, Highlights: 1948–1998*, New Delhi, 1999, p. 37.

<sup>24</sup> See R. Rahman, 'WHO demolition and the new building to come', 20 July 2019, <https://architexturez.net/pst/az-cf-189260-1543465826>, accessed 5 November 2022.

<sup>25</sup> WHO, as at note 23, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> WHO, Regional Office for South-East Asia, SEA/RC14/2, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Regional Director to the Regional Committee for South East Asia*, 1961, pp. 39–40, <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/130740>, accessed 25 October 2022.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>28</sup> See T. Cavanagh and A. Yarrington, *Public Sculpture of Leicestershire and Rutland*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2000.

<sup>29</sup> See D. Pereira, "'Art for the 'Common Man': The Role of the Artist within the London County Council, 1957-1965'", unpub. PhD thesis, University of East London, 2008; T. Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of South London*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2007, pp. 380–381.



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<sup>30</sup> Jonzen exhibited in the AIA and Free German League of Culture exhibition (1941), 'Sculpture in the Home' (1945) and 'Sculpture and Sculptors' Drawings' (1948). See R. Radford *Art For a Purpose The Artists' Association 1933–1953*, Winchester, Winchester School of Art Press, 1987, pp. 192–194.

<sup>31</sup> Jonzen et al, as at note 17, p.19.

<sup>32</sup> See Jonzen et al, as at note 8; E. Lucie-Smith, 'Obituary: Karin Jonzen', *The Independent*, 2 February 1998, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Reproduced in situ, from different views, in Jonzen et al, as at note 17, p. 41; 'Tribute', as at note 21, p. 61, and *Fifty Years of WHO*, as at note 23, p. 41. The demolition of the WHO building in summer 2019 included the pond and the adjacent Jonzen sculpture. E-mail, author with the WHO, 3 February 2022. A new Headquarters is currently under construction.

<sup>34</sup> Anon., 'British Bronze for the World Health House', *The Statesman*, India, 31 July 1963.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Anon., 'Bronze statue presented to WHO office', *The Hindustan Times*, India, 2 August 1963.

<sup>37</sup> Anon., 'Statue for WHO House', *The Indian Express*, India, 2 August 1963.

<sup>38</sup> *The Hindustan Times*, as at note 36.

<sup>39</sup> WHO, 'Executive Board, twenty-fourth session, Geneva, 1 and 2 June 1959, resolutions', Annexe 6, 1959, pp. 61–62,

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/85720>, accessed 25 October 2022.

<sup>40</sup> WHO, 'Thirteenth World Health Assembly, Geneva, 3–20 May 1960: Part I: resolutions and decisions', Annexe 12, 1960, pp. 77–82.

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/85728>, accessed 25 October 2022.

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<sup>41</sup> WHO, 'Executive Board, 24, Rules governing a competition for the construction of a building for WHO', 2 June 1959, pp. 12–21,

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/135305>, accessed 5 November 2022.

<sup>42</sup> See J. Enckell Julliard (ed)., *Nestlé art collection: édition anglaise*, JRP Ringier, Geneva, 2016.

<sup>43</sup> WHO, as at note 39, p. 78.

<sup>44</sup> WHO, 'Executive Board, 30, Report of the Standing Committee on Headquarters Accommodation (fourth session)', 28 May 1962,

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/136407>, accessed 5 November 2022.

<sup>45</sup> WHO, 'Executive Board, 30, Report of the Standing Committee on Headquarters Accommodation (third session)', 28 May 1962, pp. 77–82,

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/136406>, accessed 5 November 2022.

<sup>46</sup> London, The National Archives (TNA), FO 371/178445, Letter from H.N. Roffey, Ministry of Health to Kenneth Pridham, Foreign Office, 26 October 1964.

<sup>47</sup> TNA, FO 371/178445, Letter from H.N. Roffey to Kenneth Pridham, 8 June 1964.

<sup>48</sup> 'Complete, by Karin', unidentified press cutting, May 1966, Private Archive, London.

<sup>49</sup> Letter, as at note 45.

<sup>50</sup> TNA, FO 371/178445, Letter from Kenneth Pridham to H.N. Roffey, 29 October 1964.

<sup>51</sup> A bronze statuette of *Torso*, 7 ¼ inches, (no. 103) was shown at The Leicester Galleries in August–September 1964: *Catalogue of the gallery group exhibition of paintings, drawings and sculpture. Part 2* (exh. cat.) Ernest Brown & Phillips, The Leicester Galleries, London, 1964.

<sup>52</sup> TNA, FO 371/178445, Letter from Neville Wallis to H. N. Roffey, 31 October 1964.

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<sup>53</sup> Jonzen et al, as at note 16, p. 19.

<sup>54</sup> TNA, FO 371/178445, Letter from H. N. Roffey to Kenneth Pridham, 2 November 1964.

<sup>55</sup> Geneva, The WHO Archive, Letter from H. N. Roffey to Mr A. Velot, 11 November 1964.

<sup>56</sup> The WHO Archive, Letter from H. N. Roffey to Mr A. Velot, 20 November 1964.

<sup>57</sup> TNA, FO 371/178445, Letter from H. N. Roffey to Kenneth Pridham, 20 November 1964.

<sup>58</sup> The WHO Archive, Letter from Mr A. Velot to Mr Lawrence, Ministry of Health, 31 January 1965. The terracotta maquette for the torso was exhibited in Jonzen's solo exhibition at the Fieldborne Galleries in 1974 (M 6, 22 x 14 ins) and casts could be purchased in terracotta (price on request), or bronze (£3,250) or bronze resin (£2,000) in editions of 9. *Karin Jonzen*, 29 May–19 June 1974 (exh. cat.), Fieldborne Galleries, London, 1974.

<sup>59</sup> TNA, FO 371/178445, Letter from Dr. C. Candau Director-General of WHO to Mr Lawrence, Ministry of Health, 4 March 1965.

<sup>60</sup> 'Headquarters of the World Health Organisation, Geneva; Architects: J. Tschumi & P. Bonnard', *Technique des Travaux*, July–August 1967, pp. 244–256.

<sup>61</sup> The photograph reproduced in this article was taken for the Special Issue and the Album in 1996.

<sup>62</sup> By 16 May 1966, eighty-one nations had contributed gifts. The majority were of cash, materials or furnishings. Malta and France each contributed a painting, the latter by the Greek-born French modernist painter Mario Prassinos (1916–1985) and Argentina gifted a statue although it is unknown whether this was installed inside the building or in the grounds. WHO, 'World Health Assembly, 19, Headquarters

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accommodation: voluntary contributions from governments,' 1966,

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/89376>, accessed 25 October 2022. In 2022

the original headquarters building is currently being restored and the work is in storage.

<sup>63</sup> Jonzen et al, as at note 17, p. 13.

<sup>64</sup> 'Minutes of Council Meetings', Royal Society of British Sculptors, Thursday 24 November 1966, p. 398.

<sup>65</sup> Hepworth's *Single Form* was commissioned by Jacob Blaustein, former United States delegate to the UN and gifted to the UN. See C. Pearson, 'Hepworth, Moore and the United Nations: Modern Art and the Ideology of Post-War Internationalism', *Sculpture Journal*, 6, 2001, pp. 89–99.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> P. Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture of the City of London*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2003, pp. 192–193.

<sup>68</sup> Karin Jonzen, as at note 58, Foreword.