

# RICHARD GREEN

FINE PAINTINGS • ESTABLISHED 1955

HENRY MOORE OM CH

Castleford 1898 - 1986 Much Hadham

Ref: BR 23

## *Family group*



Signed lower right on the back of the base and again lower right on the bench: *Moore*

Bronze with a dark green patina: 5  $\frac{1}{8}$  x 3  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 2  $\frac{3}{8}$  in / 13 x 9.5 x 6 cm

On a slate base: 3  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 4  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 3  $\frac{7}{8}$  in / 1.9 x 12.1 x 9.8 cm

Conceived in terracotta in 1945 and cast *circa* 1945 by Charles Gaskin,  
The Art Bronze Foundry, London, in an unnumbered edition of 7

LH 239

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## *Provenance:*

Berkeley Galleries, London;  
Sir Duncan Oppenheim (1904-2003), acquired from the above in July 1945

## *Exhibited:*

London, Berkeley Galleries, *Henry Moore: Sculptures and Drawings*, 26<sup>th</sup> March-21<sup>st</sup> April 1945, no.5, as *The Family*, illus., another cast

London, Whitechapel Art Gallery, Arts Council exhibition, *Painting, Sculpture and Drawing in Britain 1940-49*, 1<sup>st</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> November 1972, no.173, as *Sketch Model for Family Group*, another cast; this exhibition travelled to Southampton, City Art Gallery, 16<sup>th</sup> December 1972-13<sup>th</sup> January 1973; Carlisle, Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery, 20<sup>th</sup> January-11<sup>th</sup> February 1973; Durham, DLI Museum and Arts Centre, 17<sup>th</sup> February-11<sup>th</sup> March 1973; Manchester, City Art Gallery, 17<sup>th</sup> March-8<sup>th</sup> April 1973; Bradford, City Art Gallery, 14<sup>th</sup> April-6<sup>th</sup> May 1973 and Aberdeen, Museum and Art Gallery, 12<sup>th</sup> May-3<sup>rd</sup> June 1973

London, Tate Gallery, *The Henry Moore Gift*, 28<sup>th</sup> June-28<sup>th</sup> August 1978, illus. p.24, another cast  
Coventry, Mead Gallery, University of Warwick Arts Centre, *Henry Moore: Sketch-Models and Working-Models*, May-June 1990, no.9, another cast; this exhibition then travelled to Huddersfield Art Gallery, Huddersfield, June-August 1990; Library Arts Centre, Wrexham, August-October 1990; Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol, October-November 1990; Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne, December 1990-January 1991; Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, January-March 1991; Smith Art Gallery, Sterling, March-April 1991

London, *Imperial War Museum, Special Exhibitions: Henry Moore*, September-November 1998, another cast

Mexico City, Museo Dolores Olmedo, *Henry Moore y México*, 4<sup>th</sup> June-9<sup>th</sup> October 2005, no.33, illus. p.63 (another cast)

## *Literature:*

James Johnson Sweeney, *Henry Moore*, exh. cat., Museum of Modern Art, New York 1946 (terracotta illus. p.89)

David Sylvester, 'The Evolution of Henry Moore's Sculpture II', *Burlington Magazine*, vol.90, no.544, July 1948, p.193, another cast illus.

David Sylvester (ed.), *Henry Moore Complete Sculpture 1921-48*, Vol 1, Lund Humphries, London 1957, p.15, no.239

Ionel Jianou, *Henry Moore*, Arted, Editions d'Art, Paris 1968, p.74, no.226

John Hedgecoe and Henry Moore, *Henry Moore*, Simon and Schuster, New York 1968, no.9 (another cast illus. p.177)

Claude Allemand-Cosneau, Manfred Fath and David Mitchinson (eds), *Henry Moore: From the Inside Out: Plasters, Carvings and Drawings*, Prestel, Munich, New York 1996, no.51 (terracotta illus. in colour p.113)

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The terracotta from which this bronze was cast was given to The Henry Moore Foundation by the artist in 1977. Other bronze casts are in the collections of Tate, London<sup>1</sup>; the Art Museum at the University of Toronto and the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago.

This significant small-scale *Family group* was cast in bronze from a terracotta model Moore made for Village College Impington. Postponed by the advent of war, Moore returned to the idea in 1944 when the commission was temporarily revived and began making note-book drawings of family groups from which he made a number of small maquettes. A drawing also entitled *Family group*, 1945 (HMF 2330 / AG 45.3) has been identified as the preparatory sketch for this maquette and shows the three figures fully conceived, with their positions the same in the final sculpture. Moore was delighted in 1947 to receive a second public commission for a family group from John Newson, the Director of Education for Hertfordshire, for Barclay Secondary School, designed by FRS Yorke and Partners, as it provided an opportunity to realise his ideas on the subject on a large scale. Having visited the site, Moore chose from his previous models on the theme, enlarging a terracotta maquette of 1945 from which the present work was cast. Moore made four large bronze Family groups for the project during 1948–49, the main sculpture situated at Barclay School, Stevenage, with the other three in the collections of the Tate Gallery, London; the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the private collection of Nelson Rockefeller, New York.

This poignant bronze is very close to the large final work, differing only in the head of the male. Moore explained: ‘In the small version the split head of the man gives a vitality and interest necessary to the composition, particularly as all three heads have only slight indications of features. When it came to the life-size version, the figures each became obviously human and related to each other and the split head of the man became impossible, for it was so unlike the woman and the child.<sup>2</sup> The distinction between the male and female in the present work is also emphasised in the representation of their legs. In earlier three-figure family groups the fabric lying across their thighs unites the parents, here it is wrapped tightly around the mother’s lower limbs while the father’s are left unconstrained. The gaps between his legs and hers reveal the opening beneath the bench which had in previous versions been solid. The increase in light and space around the figures emphasises their greater flexibility as they twist towards their child, their arms interlocking, ‘forming a knot between them, tying the three into a family unity.’<sup>3</sup>

For Penelope Curtis, previously Director of Henry Moore Institute and Tate Britain, ‘this maquette is a particularly felicitous arrangement, having a unified resolution that brings with it

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<sup>1</sup> Alice Correia, ‘Maquette for Family Group 1945 by Henry Moore OM, CH’, catalogue entry, March 2014, in *Henry Moore: Sculptural Process and Public Identity*, Tate Research Publication, 2015. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/henry-moore/henry-moore-om-ch-maquette-for-family-group-r1147453>

<sup>2</sup> The artist cited in C Allemand-Cosneau, M Fath & D Mitchinson (ed.), *Henry Moore: From the Inside Out, Plasters, Carvings and Drawings*, Prestel, Munich 1996, p.113.

<sup>3</sup> The artist cited in J Hedgecoe and H Moore, *Henry Spencer Moore*, Simon and Schuster, New York 1968, p.177.

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both alertness and balance. One can also read this series, which spanned a decade from 1944, as being Moore's own answer to the new ethos in British sculpture after the war, which returned to a much more recognisable human figure, and responded to the new opportunities for public sculpture arising out of state support for the arts within a culture of reconstruction. Moore was a generation older than the new wave of British sculptors who took the stage after him at the Venice Biennale, whose style was angular and anxious, and it is likely that Moore's comparative wholeness accorded better with people who wished to celebrate the arts of peace, rather than those of the cold war.<sup>4</sup>

The abstract British sculptor, Sir Anthony Caro, who was Moore's apprentice for two years at this time and taken on to help with casting in bronze, helped to patinate the life-size sculpture using nitric acid and writes in the same publication: 'Family Group I have always thought very authoritative, very strong...I do feel that Henry was making extremely good work when I was there, becoming more and more comfortable with bronze. It was a fruitful and fresh moment in his long career.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Penelope Curtis in *Celebrating Moore, Works from the Collection of The Henry Moore Foundation Selected by David Mitchinson*, Lund Humphries, London 1998 (paperback 2006), no.155, pp.220-221.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Caro, *Celebrating Henry Moore, ibid.*, no.156, pp.221-222.