

# RICHARD GREEN

FINE PAINTINGS • ESTABLISHED 1955

HENRY MOORE OM CH

Castleford 1898 - 1986 Much Hadham

Ref: BR 45

## *Family group*



Signed on the back of the bench: *Moore*

Bronze with a brown & green patina: 5 ¼ x 4 ½ x 2 ½ in / 13.3 x 11.4 x 6.4 cm

On a slate base: ¾ x 5 ¼ x 3 ½ in / 1.9 x 13.3 x 8.9 cm

Conceived in terracotta in 1944 and cast in 1945 by Charles Gaskin, The Art Bronze Foundry, London in an unnumbered edition of 7 plus one artist's copy  
LH 227

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## *Provenance:*

Waddington Galleries, London;  
private collection, Europe, *circa* 1995, acquired from the above

## *Exhibited:*

London, Berkeley Galleries, *Henry Moore: Sculpture and Drawings*, March-April 1945, no.6,  
another cast  
London, Tate Gallery, *Henry Moore*, 17<sup>th</sup> July-22<sup>nd</sup> September 1968, no.61, terracotta  
Florence, Forte di Belvedere, *Mostra di Henry Moore*, 20<sup>th</sup> May-30<sup>th</sup> September 1972, no.52,  
terracotta  
London, Tate Gallery, *The Henry Moore Gift*, 28<sup>th</sup> June-28<sup>th</sup> August 1978, another cast  
London, Imperial War Museum, *Henry Moore: War and Utility*, September 2006-February  
2007, another cast

## *Literature:*

Herbert Read, *Henry Moore Sculpture and Drawings*, Lund Humphries & Company, London  
1949, no.106e (another cast illus.)  
Will Grohmann, *The Art of Henry Moore*, Thames and Hudson, London 1960, p.8, no.120  
(another cast illus.)  
Alan Bowness (ed.), *Henry Moore, Sculpture and Drawings: Sculpture 1921-48*, London 1965, vol.  
I, p.143, no.227 (another cast illus.)  
Herbert Read, *Henry Moore: A Study of his Life and Work*, Thames and Hudson, London 1965,  
illus. pl.135, p.157 (another cast)  
Robert Melville, *Henry Moore Sculpture and Drawings 1921-1969*, Thames and Hudson, London,  
1970, no.316 (terracotta illus.)  
David Sylvester (ed.), *Henry Moore Complete Sculpture 1921-48*, vol. I, Lund Humphries,  
London 1990, p.14, no.227, p.143 (terracotta illus.)

Other casts from this edition of *Family group* are in the public collections of the Tate,  
London<sup>1</sup> and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie.

This small-scale *Family group* was cast in bronze from a terracotta model Moore made for a  
public commission for Village College Impington, suggested by the architect Walter Gropius  
in the late 1930s. The school aimed to employ the progressive educational ideas of Henry  
Morris, the Director for Education in Cambridgeshire, in particular that rural schools should  
provide facilities for parents as well as children, with space for films, plays and lectures, so as  
to become the social centre of the community. This notion of family unity was to be realised  
in Moore's sculpture.<sup>2</sup> The artist later recalled, 'I think from that time dates my idea  
for the family as a subject for sculpture. Instead of just building a school, he was going to  
make a centre for the whole life of the surrounding villages, and we hit upon this idea of the

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<sup>1</sup> See Alice Correia, 'Maquette for Family Group 1944, cast 1944-5 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-familygroup-r1147453>.

<sup>2</sup> A detailed account of the commission is recalled by the artist in Philip James, *Henry Moore on Sculpture*,  
MacDonald, London, 1966, pp.224-229.

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family being the unit that we were aiming at.<sup>3</sup> Postponed by the advent of war, Moore returned to the idea in 1944 when the commission was temporarily revived and began making ‘drawings in note book form of family groups. From these notebook drawings I made a number of small maquettes... Some of the maquettes were ideas for bronze, but most of them were for stone because for the Impington school I felt stone would be the suitable material.’<sup>4</sup> Moore developed a number of versions on the theme between the autumn of 1944 and the spring of 1945, filling almost two sketchbooks with drawings of family groups. The closest to the present work is *Family Groups: Ideas for Sculpture*, 1944 [HMF 2229 / AG 44.56], which features a fully realised preparatory sketch in the top half, with the position of all three figures and the blanket corresponding with the final sculpture. In conversation with David Sylvester in 1963, Moore suggested that these were the last important works to have been developed from drawings, stating that: ‘The Family Group ideas were all generated by drawings.’<sup>5</sup>

Moore was inspired by the family group from the early 1940s, though it has been customary to attribute his interest in the subject to the longed-for birth of his only child, Mary, in 1946. Following the end of the Second World War, Moore’s *Family group* sculptures took on even greater significance as symbols of familial strength, protection and nurturing. The three-member family naturally evolved from the artist’s Mother and child theme, which had appealed to Moore because of its significance throughout the history of art, for the emotive relationship it represented and for its potential for formal development between figures. In this gentle group, the parents sit closely side by side, the man’s right hand resting on the woman’s shoulder, while she holds in place the child who sits on her thigh. The parents’ legs are aligned, their knees touching and covered by a long piece of drapery incised with horizontal lines which undulates over the curves and recesses of their limbs.

The commission for Village College Impington finally failed due to lack of funds, but in 1953 Moore received another public commission from the newly formed Harlow Art Trust in Hertfordshire, and feeling the family group an appropriate subject, selected the present work to carve an enlarged version in Hadene stone, which became known as the *Harlow family group*, 1954–5 [LH 364]. A few miles from his home at Perry Green, Moore had watched Harlow grow over the years from a small scattered rural population to a thriving new town of 70,000. (At the time the press dubbed Harlow, ‘Pram Town’ on account of its growing population of young families). Writing of the new town’s exceptional collection of art, Moore credited the Trust’s first Chairman, Sir Philip Hendy, previously Director of the National Gallery, and Sir Frederick Gibberd, who prepared the original plan and placed the sculptures in the town, stating ‘As can be seen in Harlow, when sculpture is related to the space in which it stands, both the sculpture and the scene itself gain thereby.’<sup>6</sup> In the same publication, Gibberd writes of the Trust’s ‘preference to contemporary British sculpture and in particular to afford young sculptors an opportunity for their work to be seen in a

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Moore cited in Alan Wilkinson (ed.), *Henry Moore: Writings and Conversations*, Lund Humphries, Aldershot 2002, p.89.

<sup>4</sup> The artist cited in A Wilkinson (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.273.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Moore in ‘Henry Moore Talking to David Sylvester’, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1963, transcript of *Third Programme*, broadcast BBC Radio, 14<sup>th</sup> July 1963, Tate Archive TGA 200816, p.16.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Moore, ‘Preface’, *Sculpture in Harlow*, The Harlow Development Corporation 1973, unpaginated.

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permanent setting...the opportunity of acquiring a work by the world's greatest sculptor was all that mattered to the Trust – the siting of Henry Moore's Family Group was left to him.<sup>7</sup>

The sculpture's original landscape setting was the common near St Mary-at-Latton church in the Mark Hall North area of Harlow surrounded by greenery and open space, but later after a figure was damaged in the 1960s, it was restored and re-sited in the town centre. After suffering similar damage in the 1980s, the sculpture has remained indoors at the Gibberd Gallery, Harlow since 2004.

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<sup>7</sup> Sir Frederick Gibberd, 'Introduction', *ibid.*