

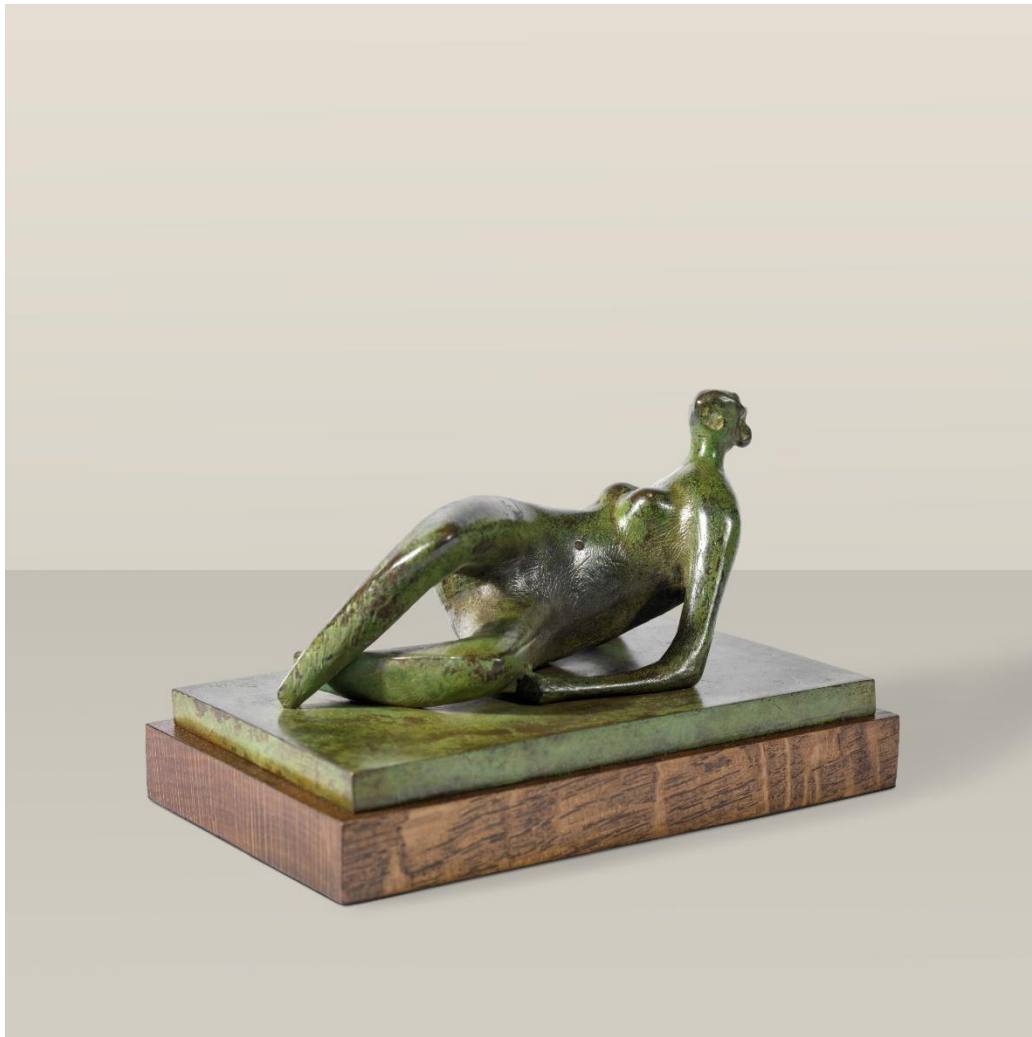
RICHARD GREEN

FINE PAINTINGS • ESTABLISHED 1955

HENRY MOORE OM CH
Castleford 1898 - 1986 Much Hadham

Ref: BR 51

Reclining nude: Crossed feet



Signed and numbered on the base: *Moore 9/9*

Bronze with green and brown patina: 3 ½ x 6 ¼ x 3 ½ in / 8.9 x 15.9 x 8.9 cm

On a wooden base: ¾ x 6 ⅝ x 4 in / 1.9 x 16.8 x 10.2 cm

Conceived in plaster and cast in 1980 at Fiorini in a numbered edition of 9 plus one artist's copy

LH 788

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Provenance:

Philip & Muriel Berman, Pennsylvania, acquired directly from the artist, April 1981
Sotheby's New York, 5th November 2004, lot 280;
private collection, acquired from the above

Exhibited:

Collegeville, Pennsylvania, Ursinus College, Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art, *Henry Moore Relationships, Drawings, Prints and Sculpture from the Muriel and Philip Berman Collection*, 1993-1994

Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Henry Moore: A Centennial Salute. An Exhibition in Celebration of Philip I Berman*, 30th July-29th November 1998, no.18, illus. p.30

Literature:

Alan Bowness (ed.), *Henry Moore, Complete Sculpture, 1980-86*, vol. 6, Lund Humphries, London 1988, p.37, no.788, another cast illus. p.36

The artist's proof (cast 0) of this sculpture is part of the Henry Moore Foundation collection.

Henry Moore wrote in 1968, 'From the very beginning the reclining figure has been my main theme. The first one I made was around 1924, and probably more than half of my sculptures since then have been reclining figures.'¹ In his monograph published the same year, David Sylvester suggests the number is even higher, that two thirds of Moore's full length figures are reclining and deeply connected to the artist's interest in the natural world: 'Moore's figures, of course, represent nothing but themselves, but are made to look as if they themselves had been shaped by nature's energy. They seem to be weathered, eroded, tunnelled into by the action of wind and water...He evidently perceives the energy and power and mystery he seeks less in specifically human properties than in properties also attributed to forms of landscape.'² Revisiting and refining this recurring theme, which gave the artist the greatest compositional and spatial freedom, *Reclining nude: Crossed feet* appears in colour, texture and form, to beautifully reflect this organic association.

This sculpture was purchased directly from the artist by Philip I Berman, art collector, philanthropist and chairman of the Philadelphia Museum of Art from 1989 until 1997. *The New York Times* records that Berman and his wife, Muriel, gave \$1 million to the capital campaign that raised \$63.4 million for the museum, which was used to endow the curatorship of 20th century art. The museum also named its prints and drawings gallery after the couple following a gift used to acquire Old Master drawings from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in the 1980s.³ The Bermans private art collection included works by Rembrandt, Cassatt, Chagall, Rauschenberg and, of course, Moore.

¹ Henry Moore cited in John Hedgecoe (ed.), *Henry Spencer Moore*, Nelson, London 1968, p.151.

² David Sylvester, *Henry Moore*, Frederick A Praeger, New York 1968, pp.5-7 cited in *Henry Moore: The Reclining Figure*, exh. cat., Columbus Museum of Art, 1984, p.135.

³ *The New York Times*, 2nd December 1997.

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In 1977 Moore had been so successful that he decided with his family to establish the Henry Moore Foundation, to encourage enjoyment and opportunity in the arts, in particular sculpture, and in 1982, the Henry Moore Sculpture Gallery and Centre for the Study of Sculpture opened in Leeds. Following the celebration of his 80th birthday in 1978, Moore continued to create and innovate at Perry Green; translating recent drawings into tapestries which were exhibited at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. In 1981 the British Council staged the largest ever exhibition of Moore's work (so far) which toured Madrid, Lisbon and Barcelona.

*'From the very beginning the reclining figure has been my main theme. The first one I made was around 1924, and probably more than half of my sculptures since then have been reclining figures.'*⁴

Moore's enthusiasm for the reclining figure continued amidst a sequence of new themes throughout his career, allowing him to pursue unexpected formal possibilities: 'I want to be quite free of having to find a 'reason' for doing the *Reclining Figures*, and freer still of having to find a 'meaning' for them. The vital thing for an artist is to have a subject that allows to try out all kinds of formal ideas – things that he doesn't yet know about for certain but wants to experiment with, as Cézanne did in his 'Bathers' series. In my case the reclining figure provides chances of that sort. The subject-matter is given. It's settled for you, and you know it and like it, so that within it, within the subject that you've done a dozen times before, you are free to invent a completely new form-idea.'⁵

⁴ The artist cited in J. Hedgecoe and H. Moore, *Henry Spencer Moore*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1968, p.151.

⁵ The artist cited in John Russell, *Henry Moore*, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London 1968, p.28.

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