

# LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

## KUNST



HENRY MOORE

1898 Castleford (Yorkshire) – Much Hadham (Hertfordshire) 1986

*Ideas for Wood Carving: Three Reclining Figures*

Pencil, charcoal, coloured crayon, watercolour, pen, ink and wash on paper.

Signed: *Moore* lower right and dated: 42.

579 x 459 mm

PROVENANCE: Leicester Galleries, London – Sotheby's, London, auction sale, 26 April 1961, lot 20 – Marlborough Fine Art, London (purchased at the above sale) – Mrs David Crackanthorpe (Sotheby's, London, auction sale, 3 April 1963, lot 145) – Piccadilly Gallery, London (purchased at the above sale) – Alice Harris, USA – Private collection

EXHIBITIONS: *Exhibitions of living Irish Art: new sculpture and drawings by Henry Moore*, Leicester Galleries, London 1946, no. 73 – *Henry Moore: Watercolours, drawings, lithographs*, Brook Street Gallery, London 1969, no. 8 – *Henry Moore*, Royal Academy of Arts, London 1988, no. 26 – *Henry Moore, Bronzen und Graphik*, Galerie Welz, Salzburg 1994, no. 29 (repr.)

LITERATURE: Ann Garrould (ed.), *Henry Moore: Complete Drawings 1940-49*, London 2001, III, no. AG 42.186, repr. p. 167

Henry Moore experienced anxiety and uncertainty at the outbreak of war in September 1939. Stone and wood, the raw materials for his sculpture, would soon be difficult to acquire. There was no point in starting new carvings of any size. He turned to drawings, albeit with a certain amount of trepidation.<sup>1</sup> But his mind was still drawn to sculpture and he continued to conceive ideas for future works during this period. As Moore himself explained: *My drawings are done mainly as a help towards making sculpture, as a means of generating ideas for sculpture, tapping oneself for the initial idea; and as a way of sorting out ideas and developing them.*<sup>2</sup>

The sculptural ideas for nearly all Moore's sculptures from the early 1920s to the late 1940s find their earliest expression in his sketchbooks and drawings. In the drawings of the late 1930s he began to define the space surrounding the sculptures/the relationships of the sculptures to the surrounding space. In some of the drawings he achieved a particular richness of texture by using a wax crayon base covered with watercolour over which he would draw with Indian ink. In almost all his drawings his main objective was to show three-dimensional form.<sup>3</sup>

Moore noted: *The construction of the human figure is much more difficult to get right than an animal or a tree. It isn't just academic training, it really is a deep, strong fundamental struggle when you are drawing the human figure.*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ann Garrould (ed.), *Henry Moore: Complete Drawings 1940-49*, III, Burlington (USA), 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Alan Wilkinson, 'Drawings for Sculpture', in *Henry Moore, Drawings Watercolours Gouaches*, exhib. cat., Galerie Beyeler, Basel 1970, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Wilkinson, *Pictorial Drawings and Drawings for Sculpture in Settings*, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Moore, quoted in Alan Wilkinson, op. cit., p. 66.

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The theme of the reclining figure appears at every phase of Henry Moore's career and springs from his obsession with the pull of gravity. His exploration of the reclining figure motif was to lead him to increasing abstraction as he turned towards experimentation with the elements of design. He would continually rework the motif in both his drawings and his sculptural works, repositioning, dividing and abstracting the body so that only its elemental nature remained intact.

The present drawing is related to an elmwood sculpture titled *Reclining Figure* which was realised on a monumental scale in 1945-6 [fig. 1]. Moore's sculpture - which is based on the uppermost figure in this drawing - retains much of the striking formal design/construction of his original conception of the motif.



Fig. 1: Henry Moore, *Reclining Figure*, 1945-6.  
Private collection