



Family Group

Henry Moore

Not on display

Title/Description: Family Group

Artist/Maker: Henry Moore

Born: 1945

Object Type: Drawing

Materials: Charcoal, Paper, Pencil, Watercolour, Wax crayon

Measurements: Unframed: (h. 440 x w. 440 x d. 1 mm) Framed: (h. 685 x w. 623 x d 53 mm)

Accession Number: 98

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe

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Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

In the 1940s Moore began to represent the family group in a number of maquettes, sculptures and drawings. Each represented two adults with one or two children. He started to explore the subject in a sustained way thanks to a commission from Henry Morris, the Chief Education Officer in Cambridgeshire. Morris had a new conception of colleges for primary, secondary and adult education, which would act as a cultural, leisure and social centre for the entire community. He commissioned Moore to create a sculpture for Impington Village College.

Morris approached him when the College first opened in 1939, but the funds were not raised until five years later, in 1944, when Moore began to develop his ideas. Appropriate to its context, Moore conceived a family group – his first sculpture on the theme. He filled two sketchbooks with ideas, then created eight maquettes on the subject. Unfortunately none were selected for the commission as the committee rejected the idea.

Coming after his terracotta maquettes, the present drawing was not a study for the sculpture, but a fully worked drawing in its own right. *Family Group* differs from many of Moore's wax-relief drawings, in that the wax marks the background, so the watercolour distinguishes the figures. Three-dimensional form is implied through the contour lines that Moore described as 'sectional' lines. They delineate the curves of the figures, both horizontally and vertically.

Tania Moore, September 2020

TO-BE-REPLACED-WITH-A-GAP

Like Brandt, the subject of the family occupied Moore. However, in contrast to Brandt's Depression-era scenes of hardship in the home, Moore's drawings and sculptures of family groups were made towards the end of the war and into the beginning of the post-war period. The works offered a vision of a then-typical nuclear unit – usually a mother, father and two children – at an optimistic time of reconstruction when Britain was moving towards a progressive welfare state.

Exhibitions

'Henry Moore at Dulwich Picture Gallery', Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, 12/5/2004 - 12/9/2004

'Bill Brandt / Henry Moore', The Hepworth Wakefield, UK, 7/2/2020 - 1/11/2020

'Bill Brandt | Henry Moore', Sainsbury Centre, UK, 3/12/2020 - 11/4/2021

Further Reading

Steven Hooper (ed.), Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, volume 1 (Norwich: University of East Anglia, 1997)

Ann Garrould, Anita Feldman Bennett and Ian Dejardin, Henry Moore at Dulwich Picture Gallery (London: Scala Publishers, 2004)

Martina Droth and Paul Messier, Bill Brandt | Henry Moore (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020)

Tania Moore, Henry Moore: Friendships and Legacies (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre, 2020)

Provenance

Purchased by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from Roland Browse and Delbanco in 1948.

Donated to the University of East Anglia in 1973 (Sainsbury Centre).
