



Two Figures (Pick-a-back)

John Davies

On display

Title/Description: Two Figures (Pick-a-back)

Artist/Maker: John Davies

Born: 1977 - 1980

Object Type: Sculpture

Materials: Fibre, Paint, Resin, Wood

Measurements: h. 1930 x w. 1372 x d. 1526 mm

Accession Number: 782

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe

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Davies's earliest figure compositions presented groups of men, as many as four, in theatrical situations dressed in something like formal evening wear (see Whitechapel, 1972: pls. 1-9). Gradually he has reduced the complexity of his figures' circumstances and, correspondingly, eliminated their dress. By the time he made this sculpture, Davies was using figures naked from the waist up, and this particular group was one of several dealing with the theme of figures carrying one another.

Part of the decision to pursue this notion came from Davies's wish to make sculptures dealing with two heads in close proximity, and a 'pick-a-back' composition allowed him to do this. In this sense, and in its great formal restraint, *Two Figures* is a direct extension of *Lesson* (object 641), but the questions raised in the mind of the viewer are rather different. Why one figure should be carrying the other is a mystery. Is, for example, the figure being carried because of weakness or through some privilege? Such specific questions can never be answered, but to ask them is an understandable impulse when confronted by these enigmatic figures.

Graham Beal, 1997

Entry taken from Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection 3 volume catalogue, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997).
