

OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Moore, Henry (1898-1986)



Reclining Figure: Holes, 1975

Bronze

Signed and numbered on the base

Conceived and cast in 1975 and cast by Fiorini Foundry in an edition of 9 plus one artist's proof
12.5 x 23.29 x 8 cm. (4 7/8 x 9 1/8 x 3 in.)

OSBORNE SAMUEL LTD

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Provenance:

Gallery Kasahara, Osaka, Japan
Private Collection (Acquired from the above c.2003)
Osborne Samuel, London

Literature:

- A. Bowness, ed., *Henry Moore, Sculpture and drawings*, vol. 5, *Sculpture 1974-1980*, London, 1983, no. 656, p. 20 & p. 21
- Henry Moore: *Skulpturen, Zeichnungen, Grafiken* (exhibition catalogue), Galerie Ruf, Munich, 1983-84, no. 64, illustration of another cast n.p.
- John Hedgecoe, *Henry Moore: A Monumental Vision*, Cologne, 2005, no. 570, illustration of another cast p. 237
- Henry Moore *Back to a Land* (exhibition catalogue), Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, 2015, n.n., illustration in colour of another cast p. 126

This work is recorded in the archives of the Henry Moore Foundation under number 2019.4

Moore had always wanted to make a figure in wood with 'a bend in its pose'. His preference was for elm, and prior to the catastrophic arrival of elm disease he carved four over-lifesize sculptures. In 1975 he acquired a large elm tree, recently felled, and immediately began to carve the unseasoned wood. The process demanded particular attention, as Moore understood. Once finished, however, he regarded *Reclining Figure: Holes* (1976-78) as 'having something special and different from the others'.¹

The carving was documented, from start to finish, by the photographer Gemma Levine, and published as a photo-essay with comments by Moore.² In several images the plaster maquette can be seen as a tiny sculptural presence on top of the elmwood block, its softly modelled surfaces contrasting with the roughly chiselled planes of the figure, as it developed amid the studio detritus of tools, rulers, wedges and woodchips.

Cast in bronze, in 1975, *Maquette for Reclining Figure: Holes* is a tactile, enigmatic form. From the front it rests languorously, space entering the composition through voids where limbs arch and touch. Reversed, the salient feature is the curve Moore anticipated so keenly. These two facets are complementary yet unexpected. The opening-up of the figure might be regarded as purely practical (when translated into unseasoned wood, it encouraged even drying), yet it is also integral to the work's aesthetic – which unfolds as a lucidly structured, organic form.

1. Moore (1983), in Alan Wilkinson (ed.), *Henry Moore: Writings and Conversations* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2002), p. 305.
2. Henry Moore and Gemma Levine, *Henry Moore: Wood Sculpture* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1983). Some of the images were included in *With Henry Moore: The Artist at Work*, photographed by Gemma Levine (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1978), p. 94-108.

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Photograph by Gemma Levine of large elm carving with the plaster maquette of Reclining Figure Holes balanced on top

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