



# CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | LONDON  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 8 June 2016

## RARE HENRY MOORE MASTERPIECE *RECLINING FIGURE: FESTIVAL* TO LEAD SCULPTURE SECTION OF CHRISTIE'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY SALE

**\*ALONGSIDE IMPORTANT WORKS BY DAME BARBARA HEPWORTH & LYNN CHADWICK\***



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**London** - Henry Moore's ground-breaking 1951 modernist sculpture *Reclining Figure: Festival*, commissioned for the Festival of Britain in 1951, will lead the sculpture section of Christie's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary auction, *Defining British Art*, in London on 30 June (estimate: £15-20 million). It will be offered alongside further large-scale major British sculptures by Dame Barbara Hepworth, *Sea Form (Atlantic)*, 1964 (estimate: £3-5 million) and Lynn Chadwick, *Back to Venice*, 1988, which is offered from the artist's estate (estimate: £1.4-1.8 million).

### HENRY MOORE

**Cyanne Chutkow, Deputy Chairman, Impressionist & Modern Art, Christie's:** "*Reclining Figure: Festival* is one of the great masterpieces of Moore's oeuvre and is arguably his most masterful and elegant sculptural synthesis of form and space. Privately held in an American collection for almost a half century, this work is a testament to the owners' discerning and sophisticated artistic sensibility."

*Reclining Figure: Festival* was commissioned by the Arts Council of Great Britain for the 1951 Festival of Britain, where, as a focal point on the newly-built South Bank, it symbolised for many visitors the resilience and inventiveness of the British people in the wake of the Second World War. *Reclining Figure: Festival* is the artist's first, large reclining figure to have been cast in bronze and in many ways represents the pinnacle of Moore's repeated exploration, since

the late 1920s, of the reclining human form and his pioneering attempt to integrate this form with a sense of both landscape and space. Moore himself claimed that *Reclining Figure: Festival* is, the 'first sculpture in which I succeeded in making form and space sculpturally inseparable' and singled it out as one of the most important sculptures of his entire *oeuvre*.

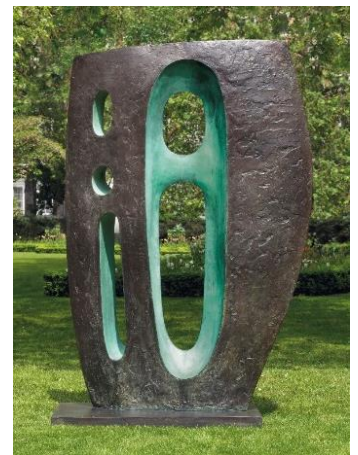
The complex, almost balletic interpenetration of material and space that combines together in *Reclining Figure: Festival* to form a single, united and yet still distinctly human image is something that marked both a peak and a turning point in Moore's work - a moment that represented the ultimate attainment of the artist's twenty-year pioneering exploration of the sculptural potential of the reclining figure tradition

Moore seems to have known from the outset that it would prove to be a landmark work in the history of his art and, in 1951, in conjunction with the filmmaker John Read, ensured that every stage of the genesis and realisation of this work was documented on film for what became the first of a series of ground-breaking documentary films by Read on the artist at work.

Created three years after Moore was awarded the International prize for sculpture at the 1948 *Venice Biennale*, one of an edition of five bronze casts and one artist's proof, *Reclining Figure: Festival* was made from Moore's plaster original, now in the Tate Gallery, London. The first bronze cast of the work that Moore made is the version that was displayed at the Festival of Britain in 1951, later acquired by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. The Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris also owns one cast. Christie's set a world record price for Moore when another cast from the edition was sold for £19,081,250 in London, February 2012.

#### DAME BARBARA HEPWORTH

*Sea Form (Atlantic)* is a large curved and free-standing bronze sculpture made by Dame Barbara Hepworth in 1964 (estimate: £3-5 million). Standing at over two metres high, it is one of a great series of large-scale bronze sculptures Hepworth made in the late 1950s and 60s in which she sought to invoke a deep sense of the human figure and the landscape through a single, generalised form that she hoped would be displayed in the open air. *Sea Form (Atlantic)* was produced in an edition of six bronze casts plus one artist's proof. Other casts are currently housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, the City of Norwich Museums, the Lyndon Sculpture Garden and the artist's estate, St Ives.



*Sea Form (Atlantic)* is one of an important group of bronze sculptures to which Hepworth gave the name 'Sea Form' on account of their resemblance to forms and feelings prompted in her by the sights, sounds and sensations of the Cornish coastline with which she said she had become 'bewitched'. The elegant human scale of the work, its simplified forms and sea-green coloured, oval hollows are all intended to evoke, in both a physical and material way, a sense of the experience Hepworth herself had while walking along the dramatic Atlantic coastline between St Ives and Land's End, taking in its jutting rocks, calm hollows, languid pools, windswept beaches and the ever-present 'infinite' of the sea. Hepworth's *Sea Form* sculptures were all made in bronze because it was this metal, she believed, that allowed her the lightness, flexibility and freedom to create forms evocative of the ebb and flow of the waves, the bend and curve of the wind and the roughness of the rocky coastline.

#### LYNN CHADWICK

Conceived in 1988, *Back to Venice* occupies a pivotal place in Lynn Chadwick's *oeuvre* (estimate: £1.4-1.8 million). It represents a moment of intense reflection for the artist as he looked back on a seminal moment in his career: his



Courtesy of The Estate of Lynn Chadwick and Blain|Southern, Photo: Steve Russell Studios

ground-breaking exhibition at the twenty-eighth Venice Biennale, in 1956, where he was awarded the prestigious International Grand Prix for Sculpture, beating more established figures including Alberto Giacometti and Giacomo Manzù to become the youngest post-war recipient of the award. It was this victory which truly launched Chadwick to international prominence, earning him a wealth of critical praise around the world, and cementing his position as a leading figure in the artistic landscape of post-war Britain. Representing the culmination of over thirty years of artistic experimentation and evolution, this monumental work from 1988 embodies many of the key stylistic and thematic features which Chadwick had explored over the course of his career.

In recognition of this extraordinary moment at the Biennale thirty-two years previously, Chadwick was invited to return to Venice in 1988 and create a large sculpture for the garden of the British Pavilion, to be sited alongside works by Anthony Caro, Phillip King and Joe Tilson. Wittily titled *Back to Venice*, the resulting artwork represents the summation of a number of the thematic concerns and motifs which had occupied Chadwick across the intervening decades, particularly the seated couple, and the tensions and relationships that arise between two forms when juxtaposed alongside one another.

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*Images available on request*

## Notes to Editors

**2016 marks Christie's 250th anniversary** which will be celebrated with a series of events and exhibitions. As the world's leading art business, Christie's has continued to be recognised as innovators in the art market, continually evolving and curating sales to create different perspectives of the art market and collecting trends. Over the last 250 years, Christie's has expanded its reach beyond the headquarters in London. Since 2012, Christie's has also included regular online sales across all collecting categories. [www.christies.com/250](http://www.christies.com/250)