



Sheep Piece

Catalogue Number

LH 627 cast 0

Artwork Type

Sculpture

Date

1971-72

Dimensions

artwork (h x l x d): 570 cm artwork (h x l x d): 424 × 475 × 475 cm
weight uncased: 4200 kg

Medium

bronze

Signature

stamped Moore, 0/3

Ownership

The Henry Moore Foundation: gift of the artist 1977

More Information

Henry Moore's maquette studio overlooked a field where a local farmer grazed his sheep. In 1972, Moore began drawing the sheep from a small desk in front of the window. He said, '...I went on drawing, because the lambing season had begun, and there in front of me was the mother-and-child theme.' [1] Moore attributed his interest in the mother and child theme to the unending sculptural possibilities in the relationship between two forms, one large and one small. In Sheep Piece the two forms draw towards one another, gently touching, but their forms are ambiguous, encouraging a more fluid interpretation of their relationship. Moore said, 'One is solid and passive, resting firmly on the ground and strongly resistant - the other form, slightly larger and more active and powerful, but yet it leans on the lower form, needing it for support.' When Moore sited the work in the field, within sight of his maquette studio, he was delighted by the way the sheep and lambs interacted with the sculpture, congregating around its monumental forms in search of shade. In this context it is tempting to read the forms as a ewe and lamb, the ewe alert and attentive to the smaller lamb form which nestles beneath her. Today, Sheep Piece can be seen in the field where Moore sited it at Perry Green, where it remains just as popular with the new generations of sheep that graze there. Moore considered sheep 'just the right size for the kind of landscape setting that I like for my sculptures', as opposed to cows or horses which he felt would diminish the monumentality of his work. [2] There are three other casts of Sheep Piece, at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, USA; in the centre of Zurich, Switzerland; and at The Donald M. Kendall Sculpture Gardens at the PepsiCo World Headquarters in Purchase, USA. [1] Henry Moore quoted in Henry Moore's Sheep Sketchbook, Henry Moore and Kenneth Clark, Thames and Hudson, London, 1980. [2] Ibid.