



## Reclining Male Nude

### Catalogue Number

HMF 72

### Artwork Type

Drawing

### Date

1922

### Dimensions

paper: 382 x 555 mm frame: 680 x 880 x 31 mm

### Medium

pen and ink, pencil, crayon, charcoal, wash

### Paper Support

cream medium-weight wove

### Signature

(added later) pencil l.r. Moore/22

### Ownership

The Henry Moore Foundation: purchased 1979

### More Information

In the 1920s Moore devoted a considerable amount of time to drawing from life. As a student at the Royal College of Art, he attended eight hours of life drawing classes each week. The instructor, Leon Underwood, who was himself a sculptor, encouraged students to explore the expression of three-dimensional form on a flat surface. Although Moore's primary interest was in sculpture, he considered Underwood's classes essential training and later described him as 'the only teacher I learned anything from in a useful way' (Roger Berthoud, *The Life of Henry Moore*, p. 57). By 1922, Moore's approach to life drawing was becoming more experimental. In this study of a male figure, Moore combines different media to communicate the tensions at work within this dynamic pose. Rhythmic strokes in pen and ink emphasise the arch of the spine and upward thrust of the ribcage. Flashes of green crayon dart across the abdomen, making visible the opposing forces stretching the skin between chest and pelvis. Lines of green crayon drawn down and along the foreshortened leg highlight its weight and volume, prefiguring the two-way 'sectional line' technique that Moore later developed. The sitter's face, roughly defined and anonymous, confirms Moore's focus on rendering the mass and weight of the figure, rather than its likeness. As the figure's extremities melt away in the most fleeting of marks, the sculptural presence of the remaining form is emphasised. Male subjects are relatively rare among Moore's life drawings of the 1920s and in his oeuvre, but he did return to male subjects in his coalmine drawings and warrior sculptures of the late 1950s. Moore said: 'To me a female figure is of more interest. The difference is not aesthetic, it's real. A woman has a different function, she is softer, she doesn't have the boniness' (Henry Moore and John Hedgecoe, *Henry Moore: My Ideas, Inspiration and Life as an Artist*, p. 31).