

Press release: April 2026



Lucian Freud posing as a Henry Moore, 1983 by Bruce Bernard
© Estate of Bruce Bernard, courtesy Virginia Verran

Moore / Freud

13 June – 13 September 2026

Moore / Freud will be the first exhibition to explore the distinctive ways in which Henry Moore and Lucian Freud drew upon familial bonds and intimate relationships as crucial sources of artistic inspiration. Bringing together a focused selection of 20 works, including maquettes, works on paper, and paintings, the exhibition presents two towering figures of the 20th century side by side through a shared and deeply personal theme.

Contemporaries with interlocking social circles – though not closely associated in life – Freud and Moore shared an enduring fascination with the theme of family in their work, albeit interpreted through markedly different styles and approaches. Whilst Moore tended towards abstraction and Freud was deeply engaged with figurative realism, both artists demonstrated a profound sensitivity to human connection and emotional intimacy, sustained throughout their long artistic careers.

For both, ‘family’ was an important and recurring subject. Freud famously and repeatedly portrayed his close friends, lovers, and children, often downplaying the personal nature of these

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relationships through the titles he chose for his works. The exhibition features a number of Freud's portraits of his children – Bella, Esther, and Ali – where the familial relationship between artist and subject adds a striking dimension of intimacy. Bella Freud has described the experience of sitting for her father as deeply affectionate, intense, and, at times, stimulating, noting how it made her *“more conscious of his paternal attitude towards me... and the tenderness of our relationship and his affection and love.”*

Moore began to represent the family group in his maquettes and drawings from the 1940s – a theme he recognised as one of the most enduring in art. *“The Mother and Child is a theme that's been universal from the beginning of time. Some of the very earliest sculptures we have, from Neolithic times, are mothers and children.”* More than that, the depiction of mother and child became an irresistible obsession for him. He noted: *“There was a period when I could turn almost any little scribble or blot or smudge on a paper... I could look at it and in half a second I could see a mother and child.”*

While Moore's wartime Shelter Drawings vividly portray the vulnerability of families huddled together on the platforms of the London Underground in refuge from the falling bombs above, they also anticipate the more abstracted, organic shapes that would become a signature of his modernist sculptural forms. In these intimate works on paper, we see most clearly both the similarities and the points of greatest divergence between the two artists: the rounded, 'natural' line of Moore, juxtaposed with the angular geometries of Freud's drawings and etchings.

Moore / Freud places the work of both artists in direct conversation, pairing Moore's maquettes and drawings – where the artist's hand is more immediately evident than in his monumental outdoor sculptures – with Freud's intimate works, including paintings of fellow artist John Minton and a sensitive portrait of Freud's daughter Esther nursing her son, Albie.

As well as offering an opportunity to see masterworks by two of the 20th century's greatest artists together, the exhibition opens with a playful visual point of connection: Bruce Bernard's iconic photograph of Freud posing as a Moore sculpture. From this starting point, *Moore / Freud* considers the distinctive ways in which each artist approached the acts of looking, making, and representing, and the affinities revealed in their depictions of the familial.

Kathleen Soriano, Director at Hastings Contemporary said *“Moore / Freud provides a rare opportunity to view two titans of the 20th century in the same space, to consider their radically different approaches to a theme that resonates with us all - family.”*

Opening on Saturday 13 June, *Moore / Freud* is part of the summer season at Hastings Contemporary and will be on display alongside exhibitions by contemporary artists, Janaina Tschäpe and Miguel Rothschild.

Kathleen Soriano, commented *“For our summer season two significant international artists, Janaina Tschäpe and Miguel Rothschild, are flooding the galleries with strikingly different depictions of our seas. The upstairs galleries on the other hand provide an oasis of calm for two modern masters, also radically opposed in their styles, to a shared subject, that of family.”*

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Hastings Contemporary

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Visiting the gallery

Open Wednesday to Sunday and bank holidays, 11am to 5pm. Under 18s visit for free. Hastings and Rother residents can visit for half price, from just £5. Become a member for unlimited free visits, special invitations, discounts and more, from just £32 a year.

Press Enquiries

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Footnotes: **Quote 1**, Excerpt from Interview - Bella Freud in conversation with Dr Nicholas Cullinan at Sotheby's. Portraits from Chatsworth 2023. **Quote 2 & 3**. Excerpts from Interviews, Henry Moore Foundation archive.

Lucian Freud (1922–2011) was a German-born British painter, recognised as one of the 20th century's foremost figurative artists, renowned for his intense, psychologically-charged portraits and nude paintings. Moving to London in 1933 to escape the Nazis, he developed a signature style featuring thick impasto, and a muted palette. A leading member of the "School of London" painters, Freud played a crucial role in redefining contemporary portraiture through raw, unsparring depictions of subjects, including friends, family, Royalty and numerous leading figures of the 20th century.

Dorothea Wight and Marc Balakjian, Studio Prints, London. The etchings presented in this exhibition were all produced by Dorothea Wight and Marc Balakjian of Studio Prints, London. As well as working with many other acclaimed British artists Balakjian, worked closely with Freud for over 25 years on the development of this distinctive and acclaimed body of printed works.

Henry Moore (1898–1986) was a renowned English artist celebrated for his large-scale, semi-abstract bronze and stone sculptures, often depicting reclining figures and family groups inspired by natural forms. Born to a mining family in Yorkshire, he served in World War I before studying at the Royal College of Art. He became a major 20th century figure, known for his wartime shelter drawings and monumental public works.

Hastings Contemporary is a bold, independent arts charity in the heart of Hastings Old Town. Through ambitious exhibitions, partnerships and events, the gallery brings world-class art to Hastings for the benefit of everyone. With a programme anchored in ocean futures and sustainability, Hastings Contemporary brings together artists, scientists, fishing communities, and the public to explore new creative frontiers – all within an award-winning building on the town's historic fishing beach.