

LYNN CHADWICK
THE COUPLE





Dancers
1967, Bronze
Edition of 4
183 cm high

FOREWORD

THE COUPLE has been an enduring subject throughout Lynn Chadwick's long and productive career and it is therefore appropriate in this exhibition to look at the evolution of this theme from the first sculptures of the early fifties through to the stainless steel seated figures of the 1990's and celebrate its diversity.

The delicately constructed *Two Figures* and *Two Dancing Figures III* of 1954 brilliantly illustrate Chadwick's mastery of technique developed during his self-imposed training in welding at British Oxygen. The precise joining of the main structural rods and the elegant draughtsmanship work as a perfect complement to the subject matter; any hint of over-romanticism is skilfully eclipsed by the bold joining of the figures at the hip. This is an overt reference to contemporary dance further emphasised by the electrode-like construct of the bird-beak heads with just enough reference to tell the genders apart.

In *Dance III* 1955, the figures have become abstracted pyramids supported on stabiliser legs but retain the sharp beaks of opponents preparing for a contest. These figures along with others of the period have something of the architectural about them, they have been set dynamically to oppose each other and exude a vitality purely expressed by the abstract disposition of the lines, planes and angles.

During the late fifties and early sixties, Chadwick's dexterity in this method invigorated the most geometric of forms with vital energy and even at his most abstract retained a connection to the figures of which *Conjunction X* and *Split*, both paired down to essential elements, are good examples.

In the seventies, Chadwick returned to the figure un-ambiguously and progressively adopted the triangle and the square head as a shorthand device for the symbolisation of the male and female. Although more overt in this period, these elements have their origins rooted much earlier in the *Teddy Boy and Girl* draped coats and pencil skirts of the fifties where the triangle and the square themselves defined the female from the male. I once questioned him on the reasons for the blanked faces and his reply was 'No expression is an expression' and went on to explain that 'body language has more power in conveying mood and character than facial features which can be limiting'. He preferred to leave the attitude of the

figure itself to provide its identity and personality. This proved to be a very rich vein of inspiration for Chadwick and he made couples in numerous aspects and configurations; reclining figures, seated couples, hieratic kings and queens Egyptian in their serenity, walking figures, winged and cloaked where graceful arabesques and complex curves are constructed with the characteristic strength of the straight rod technique giving a robust structure to the most delicate of fabric-like folds.

In life, Lynn Chadwick enjoyed the company of women and this is abundantly clear in his work; the intimate interlocking of the two figures lying, sitting or standing, where the juxtaposition is the perfect foil of expression for posturing, intimacy and sexuality. However, as with all his sculpture, such expression was secondary to the formal concerns of drawing and mass, weight and movement, planes and textures which are co-ordinated in strictly sculptural arrangements. It is impossible somehow not to identify with these couples, not to recognise ourselves in these positions and put oneself into their situations however formal; the vitality of a dance, the pride and warmth of strolling hand in hand and the leisure of watching the world go by. In their dignity and self-contained understated energy, Chadwick's couples are a unique expression of the most fundamental human unit and a reminder of our most intimate and trusting moments.

RUNGWE KINGDON





(ABOVE)
Dance III
1955, Bronze
Edition of 9
53 cm high

(LEFT & PREVIOUS PAGE)
Two Dancing Figures III
1954, Bronze
Edition of 9
38 cm high

Two Figures
1954, Bronze
Edition of 9
31 cm high





*Third Maquette for
Teddy Boy & Girl*
1956, Bronze
Edition of 9
43 cm high





(ABOVE)
Encounter IV
1956, Bronze
Edition of 9
66 cm high



(LEFT)
Teddy Boy & Girl II
1957, Bronze
Edition of 9
87 cm high



(ABOVE)
Conjunction IV
1958, Bronze
Edition of 9
67 cm high



(RIGHT)
Conjunction II
1957, Bronze
Edition of 9
86 cm high





Maquette III
Two Watchers V
1967, Bronze
Edition of 4
29 cm high



Conjunction X
1964, Bronze
Edition of 4
71 cm high





(ABOVE)
Winged Figures
1971, Bronze
Edition of 6
18 cm high



(LEFT)
Two
1970, Bronze
Edition of 6
73 cm high



Maquette I Two Winged Figures
1973, Bronze
Edition of 6
21 cm high



(ABOVE)
Maquette VIII
Two Winged Figures
1973, Bronze
Edition of 8
39 cm high

(LEFT & RIGHT)
Pair of Sitting Figures I
1973, Bronze
Edition of 6
63 cm high



Two Reclining Figures
1974, Bronze
Edition of 6
84 cm long





Two Lying Figures on Base
1974, Bronze
Edition of 8
47 cm long



Winged Figures
1975, Bronze
Edition of 9
18 cm high



Reclining Couple II
1974, Bronze
Edition of 8
16 cm high



(ABOVE)
Pair of Sitting Figures IX
1975, Bronze
Edition of 8
32 cm high



(RIGHT)
Pair of Sitting Figures XII
1975, Bronze
Edition of 8
42 cm high



Winged Figures III
1975, Bronze
Edition of 8
35 cm high



(ABOVE)
Sitting Couple
1986, Bronze
Edition of 9
24 cm high



(RIGHT)
Maquette VII
Walking Couple
1976, Bronze
Edition of 8
39 cm high



Sitting Couple II
1980, Bronze
Edition of 9
47 cm high



(ABOVE)
*Group of Twenty
Miniature Figures*
1976, Bronze
Edition of 30
2.5 - 10 cm high

(LEFT)
Two Winged Figures
1976, Bronze
Edition of 8
56 cm high



(ABOVE)
Miniature
1976, Bronze
Edition of 30

(LEFT)
Group of Twenty
Miniature Figures
(detail)





Pair of Cloaked Figures
1977, Bronze
Edition of 8
25 cm high



*Back To Venice
(Small Version III)*
1988, Bronze
Edition of 9
26.5 cm high



(ABOVE)
Two Standing Figures
1977, Bronze
Edition of 8
20 cm high

(LEFT)
Maquette for Unity
1975, Bronze
Edition of 8
26 cm high

(RIGHT)
Standing Couple
1980, Bronze
Edition of 9
34 cm high





(ABOVE)
Cloaked Couple III
1977, Bronze
Edition of 8
26 cm high

(LEFT)
Walking Couple I
1987, Bronze
Edition of 9
40 cm high

Stairs
1990, Bronze
Edition of 9
105 cm high





(ABOVE)
Miniature Figure VI
1978, Bronze
Edition of 30
7 cm high



(RIGHT)
*Walking Cloaked
Figures V*
1978, Sterling silver
Edition of 20
8 cm high



(ABOVE)
Sitting Figures
1989, Bronze
Edition of 9
98 cm high



(LEFT)
Sitting Couple
1990, Welded
stainless steel
Edition of 9
65 cm high



(ABOVE)
Maquette IV Diamond
1984, Bronze
Edition of 9
29 cm high



(RIGHT)
Sitting Couple
1983, Sterling silver
Edition of 20
12 cm high



Diamond
1984, Bronze
Edition of 6
198 cm high

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