



RECONFIGURING  
**THE FIGURE**



Lynn Chadwick  
*The Stranger*  
1954, Bronze  
73 x 48 x 28 cm  
Edition 8 of 9

## RECONFIGURING THE FIGURE

I am lucky to have at home a beautiful bronze reproduction of a famous Upper Paleolithic figure found in Willendorf, Austria in 1908. Originally carved in limestone and tinted with red ochre, it is thought to have been created 30,000 years ago and whilst little is known about the context in which it was made, it is a profound reminder that humans have been making figurative sculpture for a very long time. From a sculpture making perspective, what is also remarkable is the simple idea that the same practical concerns have always applied - connecting us globally as a species back through millennia. Even with the most basic of tools, the urge to create representations of the figure, to explore through physical making what it is to be human, and to communicate our emotions and beliefs is extremely powerful.

As our ability to express human form progressed from these earliest of sculptures, so too did its capacity to convey our political and cultural views, and in the Western tradition this led to figurative sculpture becoming synonymous with portraying ideals of human form rather than confronting reality. *Reconfiguring the Figure* explores how British figurative sculpture has developed over the past seven decades, taking Lynn Chadwick as a starting point. It is an exciting and dynamic period in which figurative sculpture underwent a striking transformation from the neo-classical idealisation of the 19th century to works that have pushed the boundaries of figuration, renegotiating traditional aesthetics and ideals of beauty for emotional intensity and a deeper reflection of ourselves.

In the early 20th century, it was pioneering sculptors such as Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and Jacob Epstein who successfully introduced modernist abstraction to the figure, fighting an unsympathetic press and public for a new visual language. However these sculptures, whilst exploring abstraction still maintained a classical, majestic approach. It was not until the aftermath of the Second World War, that the vestiges of this classicism were truly banished by a generation of artists who were determined to express our human vulnerability. Many sculptors had experienced war first-hand in active service or if not, had certainly been exposed to the psychological impact.

Armed with new technologies such as welding this new generation of sculptors began to move away from soft modelling to construction to make works that could more accurately represent our existential anxieties, yet highlight human resilience and adequately communicate a rapidly changing post-war world.

The 1952 Venice Biennale was a watershed moment for repositioning British sculpture on the world stage by offering a platform for eight young sculptors to showcase a new approach to figurative sculpture. Among them were Lynn Chadwick and Geoffrey Clarke who had mastered welding on the same industrial course in 1950 enabling them to construct human form in a completely new way. In Chadwick's case, this was predominantly based on creating space frames with welded steel rods, filling the void from the inside out to create an exoskeleton that proudly bore evidence of its making process. Geoffrey Clarke on the other hand used his new-found technology to weld and forge linear figures which were in keeping with his distinctive, graphic language of sign and symbol to express our human condition and relationship with nature.

These angular sometimes spiky, skeletal forms were so different to previous expressions of the figure that viewers assumed that they conveyed a deep sense of vulnerability, dislocation and existential anxiety which resulted in the art critic Herbert Read's descriptor the 'geometry of fear' artists. However, humour was not altogether absent and in this exhibition we see the charming *Horse and Rider*, 1951 by Geoffrey Clarke joyfully combining his welded iron figuration with a piece of driftwood he found on a Normandy beach. Lynn Chadwick's *The Stranger*, 1954 was shown at a solo exhibition of his work at the following biennale in 1956 (where he won the International Prize for Sculpture over the emaciated and elongated figures of Alberto Giacometti), and in a similar vein to contemporary architects of the time explored how mass could be raised on slender, spindly legs and a human head could be reduced to a prehistoric looking beak that appeared no less human.

Eduardo Paolozzi, Kenneth Armitage and Reg Butler also exhibited at the 1952 Venice Biennale with slightly less spiky forms but were nonetheless committed figurative works. Paolozzi took a more surrealist or futurist approach by incorporating elements of the machine into his figures whereas Armitage rendered the figure down to soft rounded

Geoffrey Clarke  
*Horse and Rider*  
1951, Iron and driftwood  
79 x 104 x 31 cm  
Unique







Elisabeth Frink  
*Soldier's Head II*  
1965, Bronze  
38 x 29 x 36 cm  
Edition of 6

forms with spindly extremities, whilst Reg Butler 'knitted in steel' to create curvaceous yet linear figures that explored their relationship with space. In this exhibition, we have works that developed from this time and come from the latter decades of their careers such as *Vulcan*, 1999 the lame Roman God of the forge, a fabulous maquette for one of Paolozzi's last monumental works now sited at Edinburgh Park at 9 metres tall. As an example of a quieter yet no less powerful sculpture from the time, we are delighted to have been lent a touching and delicate family group, *Women with Children*, 1953 by Reg Butler's assistant and later partner, Rosemary Young.

For those sculptors born in the 1920s onwards who were young enough to be able to return to art schools after the Second World War, summer trips and scholarships to France and Italy exposed them to other figurative approaches. Whilst Auguste Rodin still exerted a powerful influence in France, Germaine Richier, Medardo Rosso, Alberto Giacometti and Marino Marini also offered inspiration to those such as Ralph Brown and Elisabeth Frink who enjoyed modelling the figure rather than constructing it using surface texture and form to express tension and energy. Frink as one of a small number of pioneering female sculptors focused on powerful full-bodied human and animal forms that focused on mass and surface to convey human dignity. Having been brought up in a military family, Frink in particular was drawn to exploring male duality and in this exhibition *Soldier's Head II*, 1965 depicts the epitome of a strong man with a broken nose that seems distinctly at odds with the delicate ribbon at the back of his head.

Snapping at the heels of this exciting period of British figuration, however, were the sculptors of the 1960s many of whom were turning their attention to abstraction and minimalism. Led by artists such as Anthony Caro, who had himself started his career creating voluptuous and powerful figures and had worked for Henry Moore, encouraged a move away from traditional representation after visiting America and seeing the work of David Smith. Within a few years figurative sculpture seemed unfashionable and stuffy so artists were forced to adapt. Whilst many remained faithful to figuration, we see a number of sculptors experimenting with new styles or experimenting with the exciting range of new materials to remain relevant. Ralph Brown, Kenneth Armitage and Reg Butler all explored smooth surfaces, Lynn Chadwick concentrated on geometric forms

that still retained an element of 'attitude' but were not immediately figurative, and George Fullard - whose bronzes of distorted heads he cast in bronze - turned to assemblage. *The Infant St George*, 1965 is one of his largest and most impressive works in this style and powerfully combines his experience of war in the roughly hewn wooden child's head, and its protruding gun with ironic humour in its golf club feet and the slender totemic parent pushing the young saint forward.

One artist who returned to figuration from the minimalist abstraction of the 'New Generation' was William Tucker. Having focused predominantly on smooth geometric forms to explore space and volume, Tucker left the United Kingdom in the 1970s for America and took the opportunity to revisit the figure by modelling in plaster on a monumental scale, a technique he still uses today. Combining his interest in abstraction with a degree in History from Oxford, he began to explore fragments of the figure that had connections to the past whilst continuing to explore mass and volume to achieve presence. Fragments of torsos, hands, heads, and feet took on a monolithic majesty that he also explored in his powerful charcoal drawings as we see here in his interpretation of a Greek nymph in *Maia II*, 1998.



William Tucker  
*Maia II*  
1998, Charcoal  
116.8 x 106.6 cm  
Unique

George Fullard  
*The Infant St George*  
1962-1963, Wood and metal  
211.5 x 115.5 x 124.5 cm  
Unique







Zac Eastwood-Bloom  
*Human Error - Maquette*  
2022, Mirrored mould  
blown glass  
98 x 122 x 30 cm  
Series of 3

In the following decades, British sculpture witnessed a resurgence of figuration through the works of artists associated with the new British sculpture movement such as Antony Gormley, Sarah Lucas, Yinka Shonibare and Damien Hirst. Whilst this also brought about a resurgence in bronze casting, the doors were blown wide open to what materials and processes could be used for figurative sculpture. Sarah Lucas used stuffed stockings to challenge the 'male gaze' whilst Gormley reasserted the human body as a means of philosophical and spiritual enquiry by casting his own body to explore presence, absence and space. Mark Quinn in the famous 'Sensation' exhibition of Charles Saatchi's collection at the Royal Academy in 1997 displayed *Self*, the transparent cast of his head containing his own frozen blood.

It is not surprising then that the twenty-first century has seen a continuation of sculptors pushing the boundaries of figuration in both approach and material. Indeed, two artists in this exhibition have harnessed digital tools to create their work. In Zachary Eastwood-Bloom's *Human Error*, 2022 classical busts created from AI-generated data but hand blown in silver mirrored glass blur the boundary between human and machine. Familiar yet uncanny, they reflect our image back at us, echoing the polished faces of Chadwick's later figures, but rendered in a digital age where identity itself is mutable. Angela Palmer's *The Last Frontier*, 2021 pushes the limits of the visible body altogether. Working with Harvard Medical School, Palmer used 1,000 micro-scans of the brain to painstakingly engrave by hand a three-dimensional image across twenty-eight layers of glass. The result is a luminous portrait suspended in space, extending sculpture into an extraordinary fusion of science and art, making the invisible visible.

Despite these exciting new tools, traditional materials continue to be relevant with artists continuing to choose to model in clay and plaster and cast in bronze and continue to expand the language of figuration. Thomas Merrett captures a singular moment coming across workmen with a listening pole in the early hours of the morning with his *Listener* series, Jon Buck simplifies the form of his brightly coloured *Pink Lady* but adds detail through an inscribed line, whilst Laura Ford's *Cat II: Days of Judgement*, 2012-2015 reimagines the human figure through animal form. Inspired by Masaccio's *The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*, as well as contemporary images of mass redundancies following

financial crashes, this tall, cat-like figure paces anxiously, embodying guilt and self-reflection. With humour and empathy, Ford captures the fragile tension between vulnerability and resilience that defines so much of contemporary life.

We hope that this exhibition gives a brief insight into the rich and dynamic progression of recent British figurative sculpture and underlines how sculptors continually reimagine the figure in response to our contemporary experience. Today, the figure is interpreted more broadly than ever and is no longer confined to purely bodily form yet it continues to be a potent means of expressing human presence and emotion beyond representation. Whilst each generation expands the language of figuration, they remain connected to Chadwick's legacy of experimentation. *Reconfiguring the Figure* reveals how the body, whether carved, cast, welded, or scanned, continues to serve as sculpture's most profound and adaptable vehicle for exploring what it means to be human.

POLLY BIELECKA  
Pangolin London

Angela Palmer  
*The Last Frontier*  
2021, Engraved on 28 glass plates  
200 x 96.5 x 96.5 cm  
Unique





# CATALOGUE





Rosemary Young  
*Women with Children*  
1953, Bronze  
21 x 38 x 11 cm  
Edition of 5  
Private Collection



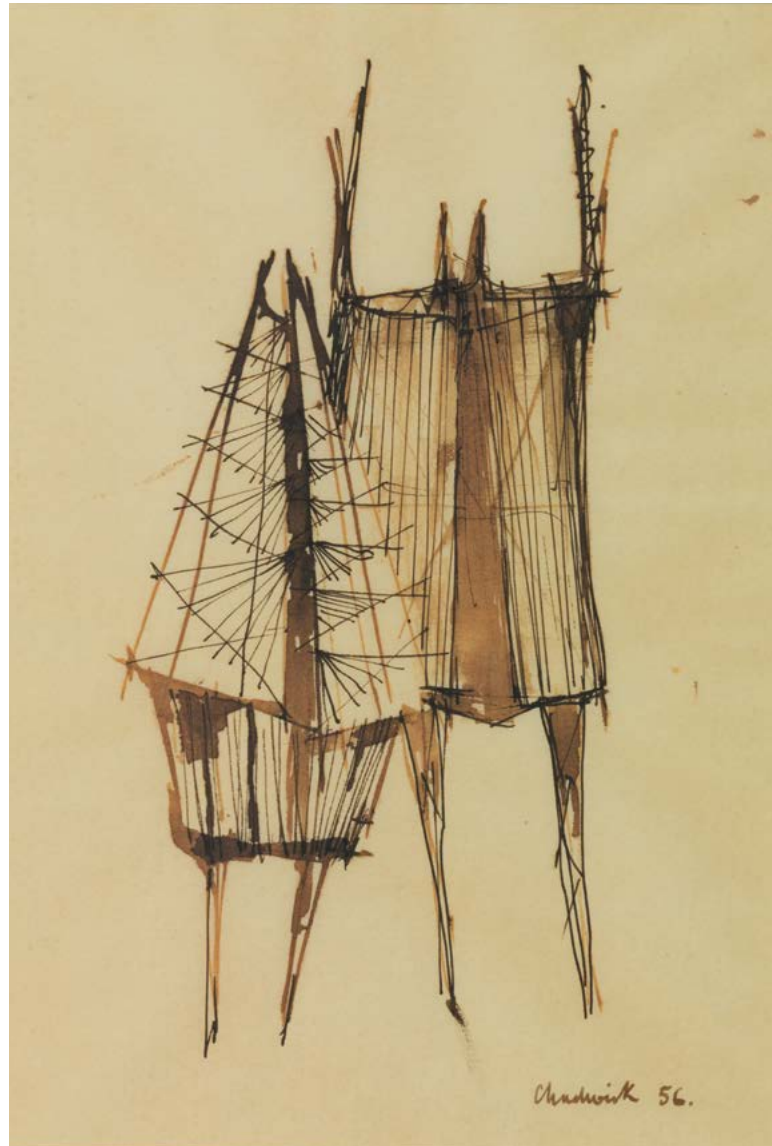
(LEFT)  
John Bridgeman  
*Figure with Bird*  
1949, Bronze  
27 x 11 x 4 cm  
Edition of 5



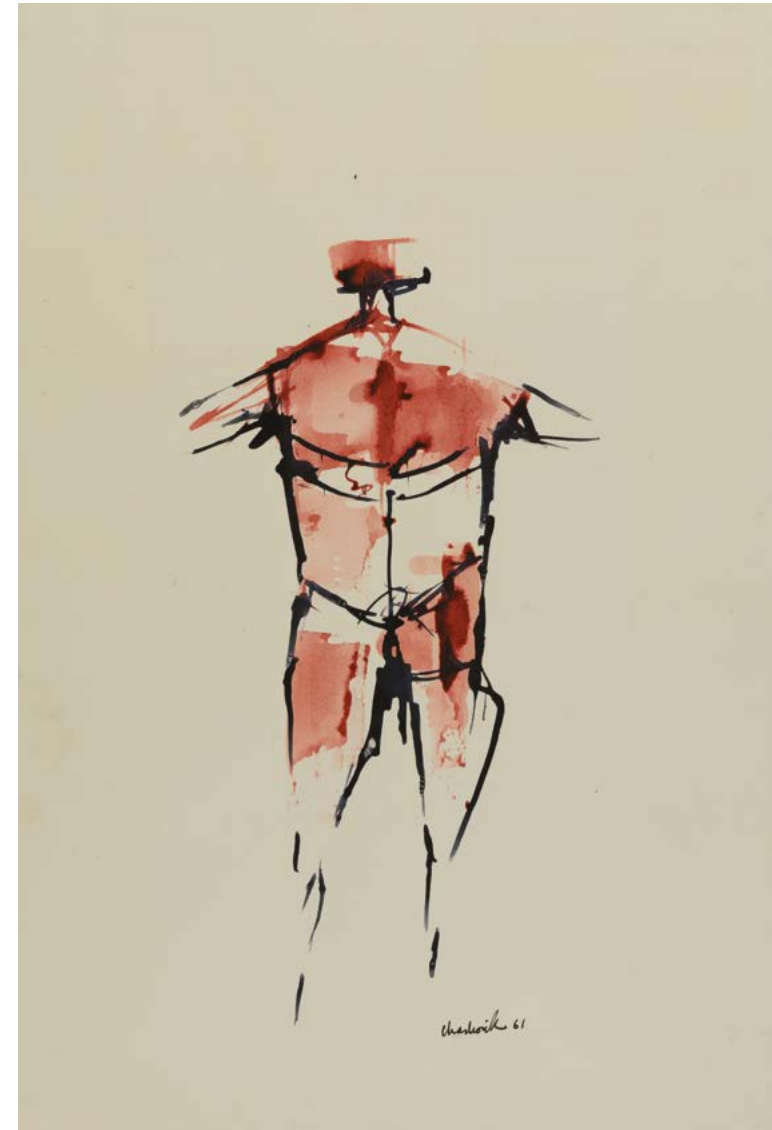
(RIGHT)  
John Bridgeman  
*Seated Girl I*  
c. 1950, Bronze  
21.5 x 11 x 14 cm  
Unique







(LEFT)  
Lynn Chadwick  
*Teddy Boy and Girl I*  
1956, Ink and wash  
50 x 42 cm  
Unique



(RIGHT)  
Lynn Chadwick  
*Standing Figure*  
1961, Ink and wash  
62.5 x 44 cm  
Unique

Bryan Kneale  
*The Brass Bedstead II*  
1956, Oil on canvas  
130 x 105 cm  
Unique







(LEFT)  
F.E. McWilliam  
*Study for Dance*  
1956, Ink  
51 x 66 cm  
Unique



(RIGHT)  
F.E. McWilliam  
*Cruciform*  
1959, Bronze  
36 x 18 x 7 cm  
Edition of 3

Ralph Brown  
*Tragic Group*  
1953, Bronze  
46 x 51 x 18 cm  
Edition of 8







(LEFT)  
Ralph Brown  
*Woman Bathing*  
1960, Bronze  
36 x 14 x 16 cm  
Edition of 9



(RIGHT)  
Ralph Brown  
*Brass Torso*  
1965, Bronze  
76 x 49 x 0.5 cm  
Edition of 8





(LEFT)  
John Hoskin  
*Untitled 7*  
1960, Gouache  
46 x 65 cm  
Unique



(RIGHT)  
John Hoskin  
*Figure*  
1957, Welded steel  
19 x 7 x 6 cm  
Unique





Lynn Chadwick  
*Maquette II Two Watchers V*  
1967, Bronze  
39 x 20.5 x 7.25 cm  
Edition of 4



(ABOVE)  
Reg Butler  
*Italian Girl*  
1963, Lithograph  
57 x 70 cm  
Edition of 65



(BELOW)  
Reg Butler  
*Girl*  
1968, Lithograph  
56.5 x 72 cm  
Edition of 65



Reg Butler  
*Figure 2 From Le Musée Imaginaire*  
1961, Bronze  
18 x 9 x 7 cm  
Edition of 9

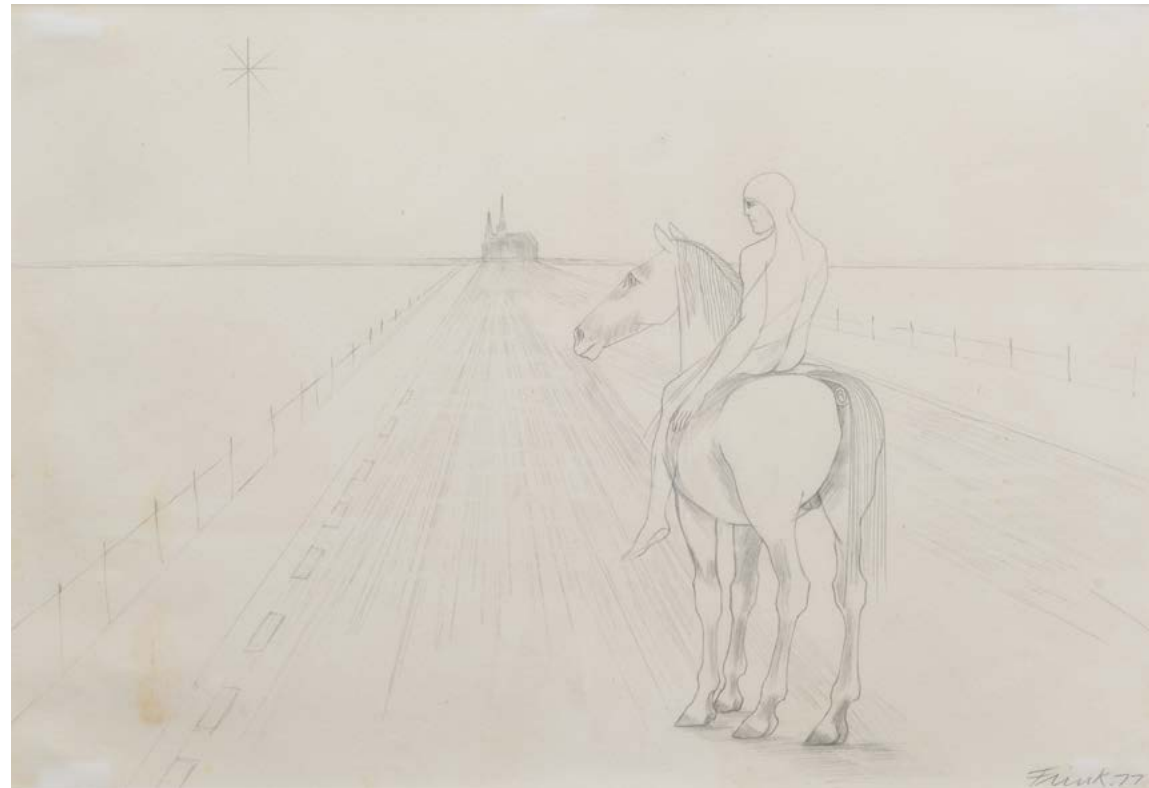


(LEFT)  
Michael Ayrton  
*Ker*  
1963, Bronze  
36 x 9 x 12 cm  
Edition of 9



(RIGHT)  
Michael Ayrton  
*Talos '63*  
1963, Pen and wash  
82 x 66 cm  
Unique





(LEFT)  
 Elisabeth Frink  
*On the Road to Chartres*  
 1977, Pencil  
 38.7 x 56.5 cm  
 Unique



(RIGHT)  
 Elisabeth Frink  
*Spaceman*  
 1960, Pencil  
 78 x 52.5 cm  
 Unique



(LEFT)  
Lynn Chadwick  
*Back to Venice*  
1980, Ink and wash  
40.5 x 55 cm  
Unique



(RIGHT)  
Lynn Chadwick  
*Maquette II Two Reclining Figures*  
1971, Bronze  
19 x 21 x 40 cm  
Edition of 6

Kenneth Armitage  
*Untitled*  
1972, Lithograph  
86 x 100 cm  
Edition of 200





Bryan Kneale  
*Clytemnestra*  
1986, Bronze  
49 x 19 x 23 cm  
Edition of 6





Lynn Chadwick  
*Stairs*  
1991, Bronze  
239 x 160 x 112 cm  
Edition of 9





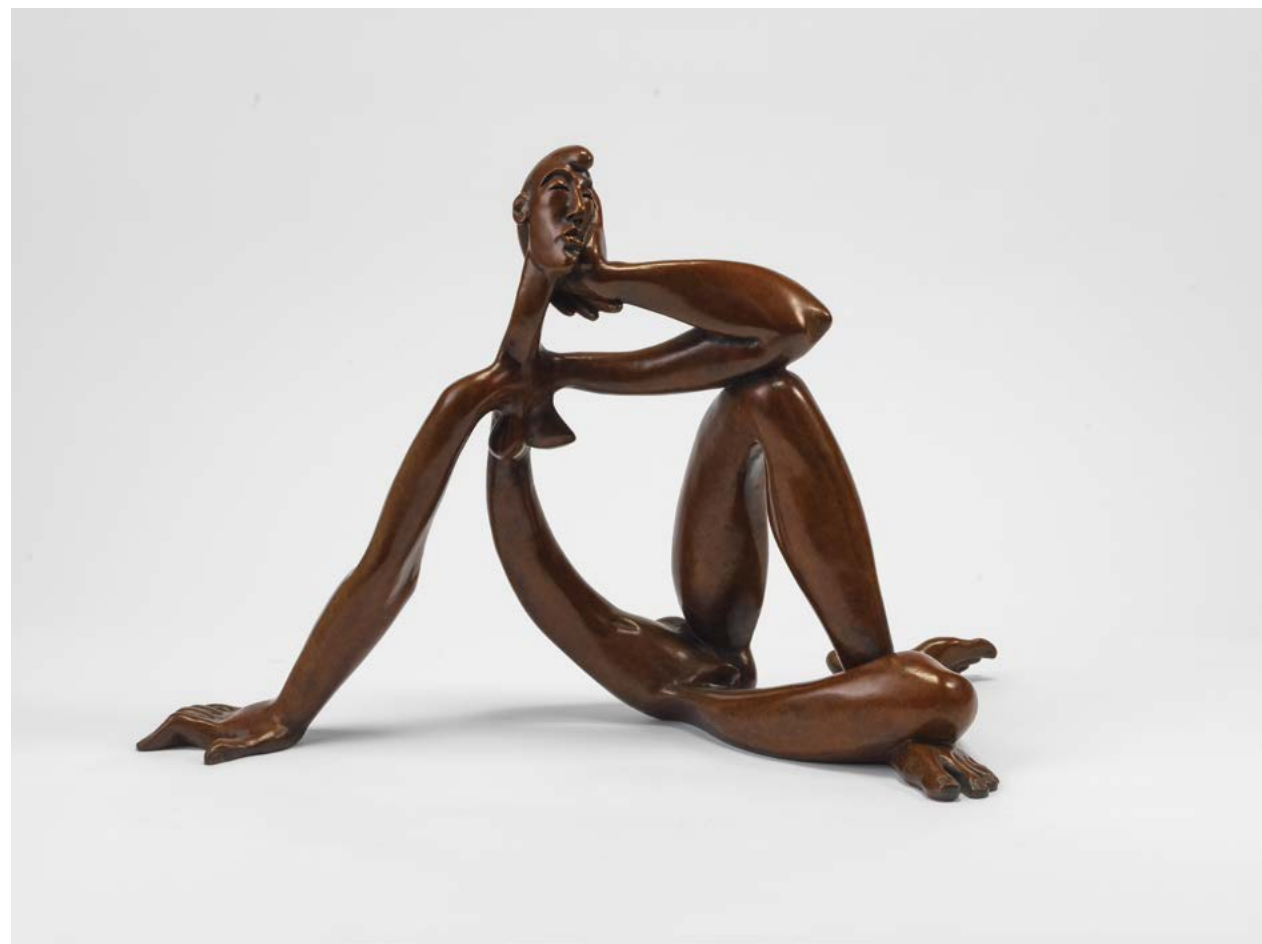
(LEFT)  
William Tucker  
*Study for Dreamer*  
1991, Bronze  
13.5 x 13 x 13 cm  
Edition of 6



(RIGHT)  
William Tucker  
*Dreamer*  
1990, Charcoal  
119.4 x 107.3 cm  
Unique



Jon Buck  
*Single Girl*  
1997, Bronze  
36 x 53 x 28 cm  
Edition of 10

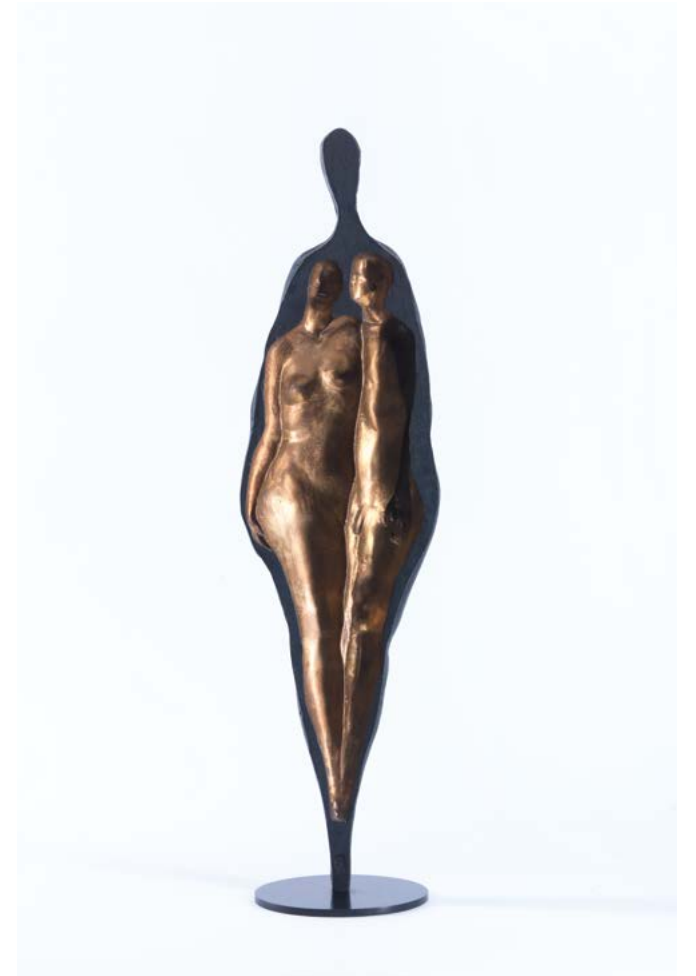


Anthony Abrahams  
*Looking, Not Looking*  
c.1996, Bronze  
56 x 14 x 18 cm (each)  
Edition of 9





(LEFT)  
Sue Freeborough  
*Touching the Inside*  
1996, Bronze  
14 x 20 x 9 cm  
Edition of 8



(RIGHT)  
Sue Freeborough  
*Shadows of Mnemosyne*  
2004, Bronze  
68 x 17.5 x 11 cm  
Edition of 10



Eduardo Paolozzi  
*Vulcan*  
1998, Plaster  
200 x 57 x 65 cm  
Unique



Glenys Barton  
*Birth*  
2002, Sterling silver  
15.5 x 15.5 x 14.5 cm  
Edition of 6



Jon Buck  
*Pink Lady*  
2005, Bronze  
51 x 40 x 10.5 cm  
Edition of 10





(LEFT)  
Terence Coventry  
*Woman Undressing*  
1998, Bronze  
60 x 22 x 29 cm  
Edition of 10



(RIGHT)  
Terence Coventry  
*Walkies*  
2009, Bronze  
33.5 x 40 x 17 cm  
Edition of 10



David Bailey  
*Adam*  
2010, Bronze  
60 x 55 x 22 cm  
Edition of 6





(LEFT)  
Abigail Fallis  
*Stainless Steel Head*  
2010, Stainless steel  
30 x 25 x 21 cm  
Edition of 6

(RIGHT)  
Abigail Fallis  
*Dummy Mummy*  
2010, Bronze  
75 x 43 x 18 cm  
Edition of 6







(LEFT)  
Breon O'Casey  
*Reclining Nude*  
2010, Acrylic on canvas  
95 x 125.5 cm  
Unique

(RIGHT)  
Breon O'Casey  
*Bather II*  
2006, Bronze  
81 x 45 x 27 cm  
Edition of 5





Laura Ford  
*Cat II: Days of Judgement*  
2012-2015, Bronze  
200 x 160 x 160 cm  
Edition of 5



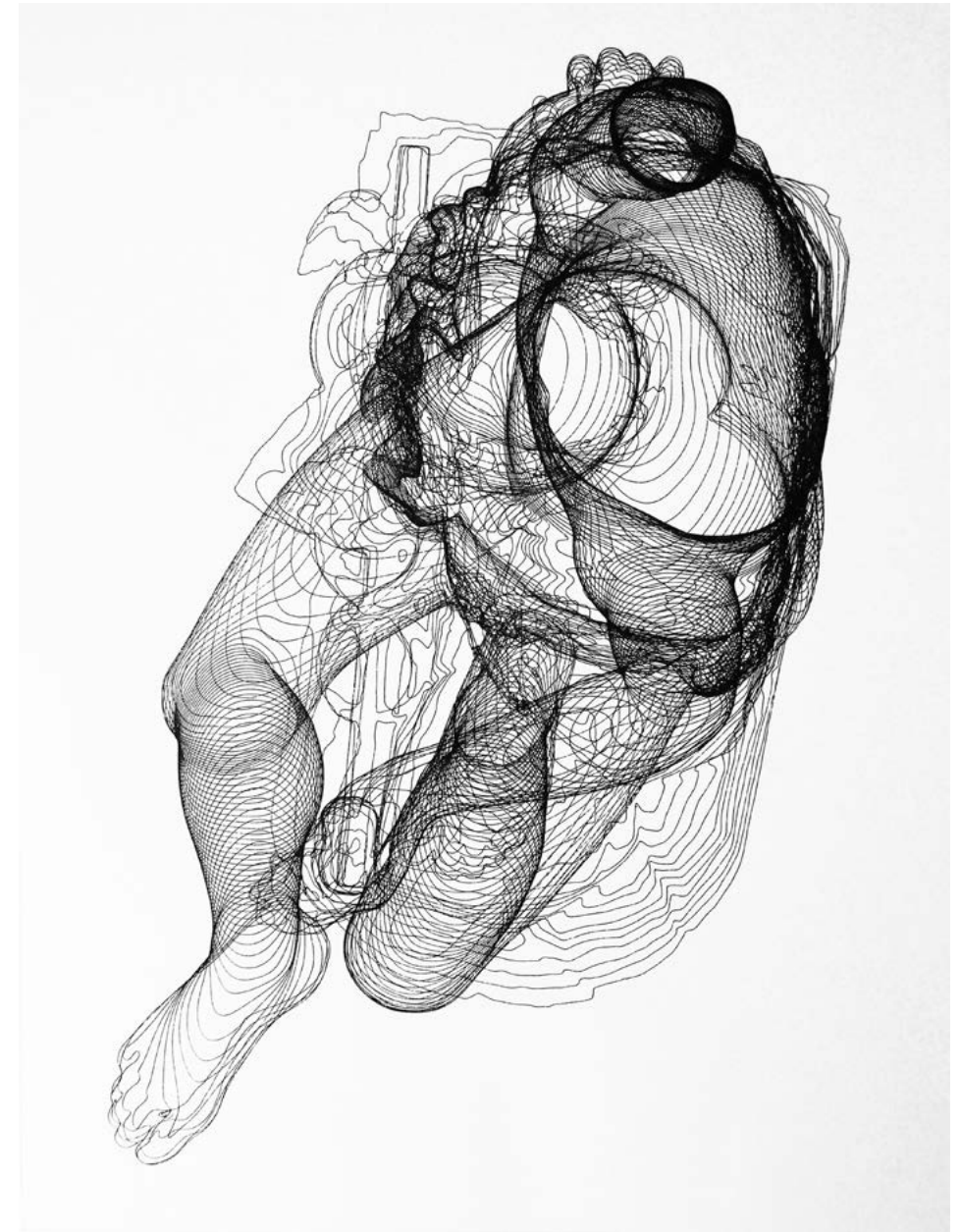




(LEFT)  
Zachary Eastwood-Bloom  
*MSNGR / Mercury*  
2017, Sterling silver  
19 x 14 x 14 cm  
Edition of 5

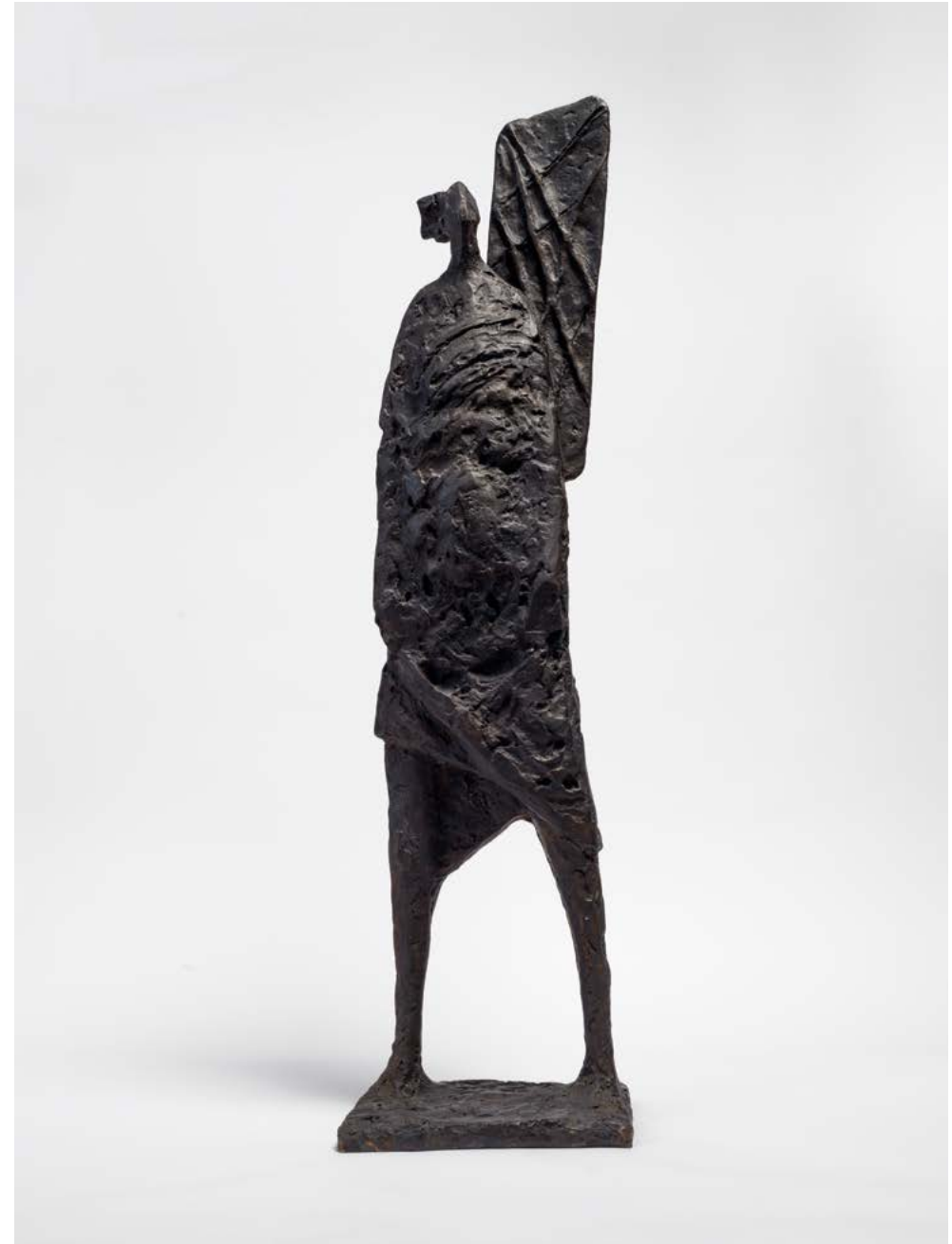


(RIGHT)  
Zachary Eastwood-Bloom  
*Study for Mercury*  
2017, Plotted ink drawing  
80 x 65 cm  
Edition of 10





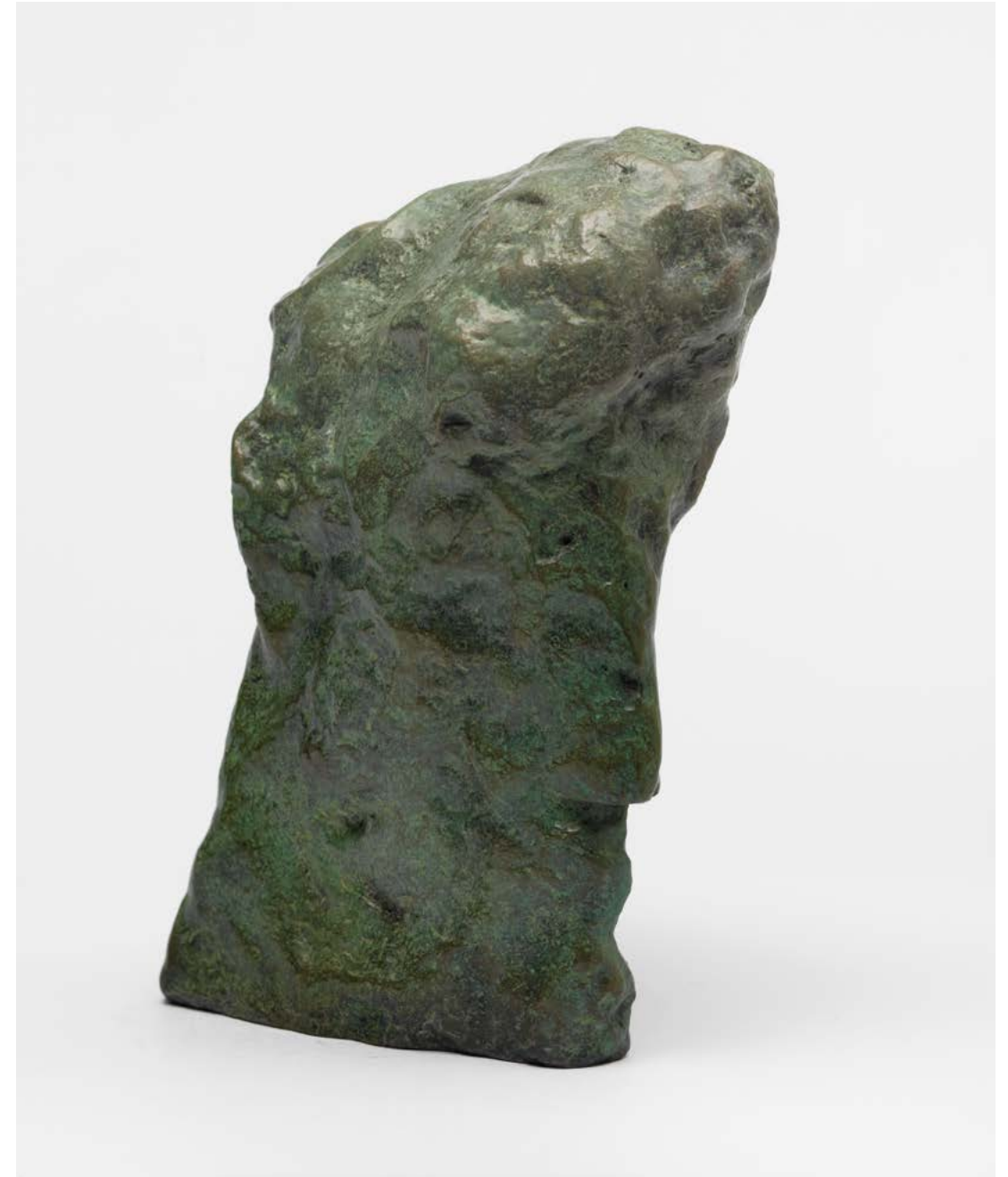
Victoria Atkinson  
*Osmond*  
2021, Bronze  
95 x 25 x 20 cm  
Edition of 8



(LEFT)  
William Tucker  
*A Bronze Head #13*  
2023, Charcoal  
and watercolour  
47.8 x 39.5 cm  
Unique



(RIGHT)  
William Tucker  
*Maud*  
2023, Bronze  
32.5 x 13 x 22 cm  
Edition of 6



Anastassia Zamaraeva  
*I caught a fish! I caught a fish (3)*  
2023, Stoneware clay and glaze  
38 x 16 x 22 cm  
Unique







(LEFT)  
Thomas Merrett  
*The Listener (Maquette)*  
2022, Bronze  
62 x 42 x 35 cm  
Edition of 3



(RIGHT)  
Thomas Merrett  
*Figure with Trees*  
2025, Bronze  
28 x 15 x 15 cm  
Edition of 3



(LEFT)  
Zachary Eastwood-Bloom  
*Hera*  
2024, Bronze  
40 x 17 x 10 cm  
Edition of 10

(RIGHT)  
Zachary Eastwood-Bloom  
*It was Hot the Night  
we Burned Chrome*  
2025, Stainless steel  
40.5 x 14 x 13 cm  
Edition of 8

(FRONT COVER)

Lynn Chadwick

*Stairs* (detail)

1991, Bronze

239 x 160 x 112 cm

Edition of 9

(BACK COVER)

Zac Eastwood-Bloom

*Human Error - Maquette*

2022, Mirrored mould blown glass

98 x 122 x 30 cm

Series of 3

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