

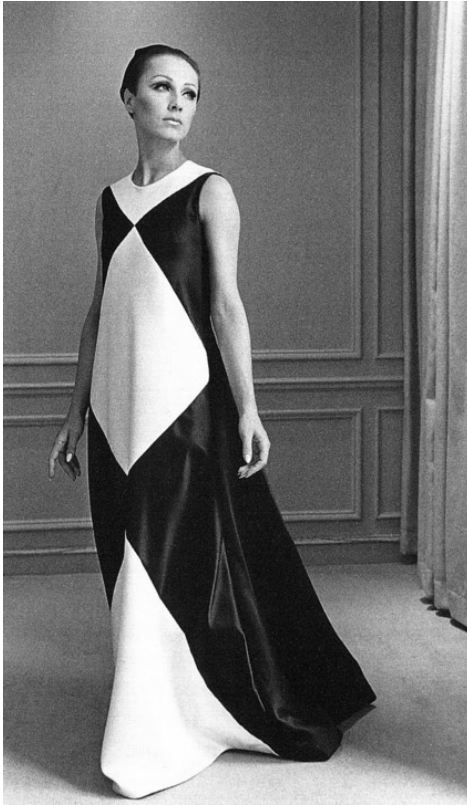
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LYNN CHADWICK

SUBLIMINAL INFLUENCES

27 OCTOBER 2021 - 15 JANUARY 2022

PANGOLIN
LONDON



(LEFT)
Halston Harlequin Dress, 1966,
Bergdorf Goodman

(RIGHT)
Lynn Chadwick
Diamond Trigon I
1970, Bronze, Edition of 6

Pangolin London are thrilled to present a museum-quality exhibition of carefully selected work by Lynn Chadwick, exploring the subliminal influences that inspired this giant of twentieth century sculpture through the decades.

Lynn Chadwick (1914-2003) is a leading figure in the history of British and European sculpture in the mid and late 20th century. Often misunderstood as not being 'in touch', this exhibition exposes how many of the major events of the 20th century affected and were explored by Chadwick.

Indeed Chadwick's frame of reference came from a wide range of sources - from ancient to contemporary art, nature to behavioural science, and fashion to architecture. This exhibition highlights how throughout the six decades of his career, Chadwick would often change and adapt his work responding to the *zeitgeist* of the time.

Whilst Chadwick consistently resisted talking about his works in terms of any direct influences or inspiration, the close working relationship and friendship of Pangolin Directors Claude Koenig and Rungwe Kingdon combined with extensive research has resulted in a unique exhibition that offers a revolutionary way of exploring Chadwick's work through the images he may have seen and digested.



(LEFT) Lynn Chadwick, *Two Dancing Figures III*, 1954, Bronze, Edition of 9

(RIGHT) A Bison, Wounded and Disembowelled, Lascaux Cave, France. © Ministère de la Culture - Médiathèque de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / image IGN

It is impossible not to associate the changes in Lynn Chadwick's work to his movements and visual experiences of the world. These subliminal influences are not only apparent in Lynn's work but were also in the minds of the public at the time; their responses to the novelty of Chadwick's art derived from the same original imagery.

RUNGWE KINGDON

Pangolin London hope this exhibition will be seen as a prelude to what should be a major museum show. It will be followed by a beautifully illustrated publication published by Pangolin in Spring 2022.

FURTHER INFORMATION

A number of themes are explored in the exhibition that can be linked to influences in Lynn Chadwick's work ranging from Paleolithic art to contemporary events such as the Sputnik crisis. To give a flavour we discuss a few of them here:

ANCIENT ART

The extraordinary discovery of the Lascaux Caves in September 1940 led The Arts Council in London to welcome one of the first exhibitions of Palaeolithic art in 1954 which displayed the drawings by Abbé Breuil. There were very few representations of human beings in the works, but those that appeared represented bird-headed men engaged in hunting. The show was attended by more than 15,000 people, and it was around this time that Chadwick started creating figures with beaks and bird-shaped heads, such as *Conjunction*, 1953 or *Two Dancing Figures III*, 1954.



(LEFT) *Tower of Babel I*, 1963, Welded Iron, Unique,
 (RIGHT) *La Cité Radieuse*, from the *Unité d'Habitation* buildings
 designed by Le Corbusier, built from 1947-52. © Illustrated
 London News Ltd/Mary Evans



ARCHITECTURE

Chadwick's creative process was also strongly influenced by his early experience working as an architectural draftsman for the Modernist architects of 1930s Britain. He took great inspiration from Rodney Thomas, Ernő Goldfinger and Le Corbusier, whose interests in contemporary European architecture and design had a significant effect on the construction of his sculpture and sometimes even gently mocked their utopian visions. For example Chadwick's *Tower of Babel I*, 1963 is constructed of a bulky geometric form raised on slender legs, alluding to the pilotis first introduced by Le Corbusier and widely used by the architects of the time.

FLIGHT

Serving as a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy during World War II, Chadwick flew Swordfish aircraft made of thin layers of metal braced by frames, much like his sculptures. He had a fascination for flight and wings, and was particularly interested in the dare-devil aviation pioneers known as the 'birdmen' Leo Valentin and Clem Sohn. Indeed, Chadwick developed his dancing figures of the mid 1950s by adding bat-like wings poised on tapered legs. When Chadwick attended the opening of London's Gatwick Airport in 1936, Sohn spun out of control and ended up severely injured. Both Valentin and Sohn tragically died in flight, under the age of 40. Their images were celebrated all over the world inspired many other artists and musicians including César, Elisabeth Frink and The Beatles to name a few.



WEARING THE WINGED AND TAILED SUIT IN WHICH HE "FLEW" LIKE A BIRD: MR. CLEM SOHN.
According to the reports from America, Mr. Clem Sohn, a "stunt" airman and parachutist, flew like a bird at a recent demonstration over Daytona Beach, Florida, wearing the suit here seen. He jumped out of an aeroplane and went through all the movements of natural flight. He finally descended by parachute.



(TOP LEFT)
'Wearing the winged and tailed suit in which he 'flew' like a bird: Mr Clem Sohn'
© Illustrated London News Ltd/Mary Evans
(TOP RIGHT)
The Stranger
1954, Bronze
Edition of 9



(BOTTOM LEFT)
Maquette III Teddy Boy and Girl
1957, Bronze
Edition of 9
(BOTTOM RIGHT)
Dancing the 'Dig It' Fred Astaire & Paulette Goddard, Paramount film 'Second Charms' introducing Hollywood's slick new dance craze the 'Dig It'. The Sketch magazine, February 12, 1941 © Illustrated London News Ltd/ Mary Evans

CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

The popular fashion trends of the time also feature in Chadwick's work. *Teddy Boy and Girl II* references the flamboyant fashion of the 'teddy boy' subculture of the 1950s, including drainpipe trousers and pleated coats. The male partner, chunky and rectangular in form, with arms upraised, is set against the elegant, elongated pyramidal shape of the female partner.

Michael Bird has argued that this was "probably the first sculptural celebration of contemporary youth culture" (Bird 2014, p.12). As the Teddy Boys were perceived to be violent, Bird argues that in choosing the title, Chadwick was being provocative: "Teddy Boys, who with their girls could be found loitering, with actual or imagined intent, on the provincial streets of Stroud and Gloucester as in London or Brighton, brought out the bourgeoisie-baiter in Chadwick. He selected his title to this end" (Bird 2014, p.78).



(LEFT) Figures from Ahu Tongariki, Rapa Nui (Easter Island) © Vic Kress
(RIGHT) *Maquette for the Watchers*, 1961, Bronze, Edition of 6

This exhibition gives us the opportunity to examine Lynn Chadwick's work in a new light, showing him to be impressively inventive and versatile as he responded to the changing face of the 20th century.

Combined with scholarly research and exclusive access to the Lynn Chadwick estate, a carefully selected array of sculpture, including loans from the family collection, will be exhibited together with an impressive range of rare drawings never-before-seen in London. Illustrations of specific influences will also be presented alongside the work, highlighting the breadth and depth of Chadwick's inspiration.

I would say that it is the 'feeling' of works of art which would inspire me rather than the technical execution so that I have not felt the need to follow a style or even for that matter to evolve a style of my own, other than what I hope is a continuity of 'feeling'[,] [T]o choose an example of work which inspires me[,] If I am specific I would choose, at random, the Easter Island figures.

Lynn Chadwick. Letter to J.P. Hodin, 6 February 1958, Tate Archive.

Lynn Chadwick: Subliminal Influences, October 2021 – January 2022

For further enquiries contact Melonie Gault | melonie@pangolinlondon.com

PANGOLIN LONDON, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9AG

T: 020 7520 1480 www.pangolinlondon.com