



Lynn Chadwick. *Two Winged Figures (2)*, 1976. Bronze. 22 1/2 x 13 3/4 x 11 1/6 inches. Photographer: Eva Herzog. Courtesy of Lynn Chadwick Estate and Perrotin.



Lynn Chadwick. *Diamond Trigon II*, 1970. Bronze. 20 1/2 x 3 15/16 x 4 5/16 inches. Photographer: Eva Herzog. Courtesy of Lynn Chadwick Estate and Perrotin.

## LYNN CHADWICK

### HYPERCYCLE / CHAPTER II: ARCHETYPE (1963-1977)

CURATED BY MATTHIEU POIRIER

October 30 - December 20, 2025

**With their naturalist, near-abstract geometry, and spectral silhouettes, Lynn Chadwick's enigmatic figures left an indelible mark on 20th-century sculpture, standing alongside the works of Alberto Giacometti, Henry Moore, and Louise Bourgeois. The current exhibition, *Archetype*, focuses on the British artist's mature period (1963–1977) and forms the second chapter of *Hypercycle*—an ambitious three-part project spanning three continents and three years, presenting more than 120 of Chadwick's sculptures. It follows *Scalene*, which explored his early works (1947–1963) and was shown in 2024 in Paris at the Centre des Monuments Nationaux and at Perrotin. The third and final chapter will showcase Chadwick's late works (1978–1995) in Shanghai in 2026.**

In 1958, two years after winning the International Grand Prize for Sculpture at the Venice Biennale, Chadwick established his studio—and later his own foundry—at Lypiatt Manor, a secluded estate in the British Cotswolds. The former architect restored and expanded this once-ruined building, transforming it into a setting he viewed as an extension of his sculptural practice: a stage, or even a meta-work. Although the site remains private, it underlines the solemnity and gravity of his creations, which often recall primitive idols. The selection for the current exhibition draws partly on archival evidence of Chadwick's fascination with mythology and ancestral human artifacts. The critic Herbert Read invoked Carl

Gustav Jung when he described Chadwick's art as a “geometry of fear.” Among the figures from the psychoanalyst's “collective unconscious,” Read might also have discerned the silhouettes of the Shadow, the Warrior's armor, or the unshakeable Anima. For Jung, whose theories were rooted in the study of myths and the human psyche, archetypes are images and patterns that give form to the manifold expressions of psychic and spiritual energy.

Chadwick's angular, faceted sculptures evoke both the constructed and the organic—architectural forms, ship sails, aircraft wings, birds, bats, skeletons, and exoskeletons. His *Sitting Figures* and *Winged Figures* transcend individuality to become archetypes: universal emblems of strength, tension, duality, and inner transformation. “Whatever the final form, the force behind it is... indivisible,” he once declared, distilling geometric, human, and animal forms down to their psychic truth and timeless essence. Often paired in symbiotic couples (*Maquette II Two Sitting Figures*, 1971) or assembled in groups (*Five Sitting Figures 5*, 1975), these figures fuse modernist abstraction with archaic essentialism. They engage both eye and hand while stirring deep mythic memory, generating tension between instability, geometric fragmentation, material embodiment, and biomorphic abstraction. A vital energy animates this silent pantheon of imaginary archetypes—existing at the intersection of myth, biology, and mechanics—reflecting our own bodies or serving as armor into which we project ourselves to face the world, matter, and time.



Lynn Chadwick. *Pyramids XI*, 1965. Bronze. 25 5/8 x 22 13/16 x 11 13/16 inches. Photographer: Eva Herzog. Courtesy of Lynn Chadwick Estate and Perrotin.

To the utopian heroism of postwar modernism, Lynn Chadwick brought a troubled expressiveness and humanism. His structural archaism resonated with the reconstruction of Europe after World War II, yet never denied its destruction and scars. As a sculptor, he aligned himself with the pictorial logic of automatism, art informel, and abstract expressionism, insisting that sculpture should arise from an instinctive, pragmatic process. He worked without preparatory sketches, allowing forms to evolve organically—between mimetic realism and mathematical rigor. This approach drew him close to the then-fashionable biomorphism, which reintroduced the particularities of the living world into abstraction. The naturalism and “organic reality” Chadwick championed as early as 1955 were never symmetrical or predictable; they were shaped by tension, imbalance, and formal events. Abstract, three-legged creatures such as *Triad II*, *Tripod II*, and *Tripod III* (1964) or *Pyramids XI* (1965) approach geometry through the precarious fragility of living things, echoing the dynamic imbalance of the *Beasts* he had created the previous decade.

With a few notable exceptions, such as *Maquette Rocker I* (1977), Chadwick moved away from the actual movement of his early *Mobiles* (1947–1952). Yet dynamics remained central, shifting into the posture and bearing of his figures, and into their wings—whether spread wide or folded close to the body. This sense of motion also infuses the draped forms of works like *Cloaked Figure IV* (1977), *Walking Cloaked Figures I (2)* (1978), and *Cloaked Couple VII* (1978). Whether walking or standing still, their hieratic stance is never static but seems charged with an inner voltage, animated by the breath of a vital energy—lines of force the artist traced in space.

From the late 1960s onward, Chadwick began polishing sections of his sculptures to a mirror-like sheen—as in *Sitting Couple* (1973) or *Cloaked Figure VII* (1977)—to create stark contrasts with their otherwise matte surfaces. This technique disrupts their



Lynn Chadwick. *Monitor*, 1965. Bronze. 70 7/8 x 33 1/16 x 33 1/16 inches. Photographer: Eva Herzog. Courtesy of Lynn Chadwick Estate and Perrotin.

monolithic unity, introduces a dual rhythm, and reverses the image by drawing the surrounding environment into the work through reflection. On the rare occasions when he worked at a human scale, as in *Elektra I* (1968), the result forges an immediate connection with the viewer and subverts the notion of armor as purely defensive. This ambivalence between protective breastplate and decorative ornament recurs in the reflective surfaces of the geometric, cubic, or pyramidal heads of his solitary figures and couples. Chadwick establishes a charged relationship between his works and their spectators—a tension between vigilance and absorption. Even when their faces catch no light, we sense the presence of his “Watchers,” such as *The Watcher Maquette I* (1959) or *Watcher VI* (1961), observing us as we observe them. Though faceless—without eyes, mouths, or noses—they are not blind: their inward gaze seems to return our own. Or perhaps, as Chadwick once said of the Moai statues of Easter Island, they stare into the void—or even into space.

Surprisingly for bronze sculpture, Chadwick’s works turn our gaze back on itself: what we observe also seems to observe us. This is especially true of some of his most abstract pieces, such as *Monitor* (1965) or *Pyramids VI* (1965). Their circular openings—single or paired—function like oculi, watching us even as we look through them. These voids recall the colored glass elements Chadwick began embedding in his sculptures around 1950—spaces where eyes might naturally be expected. Echoing Naum Gabo’s and Henry Moore’s explorations of solid and void, this formal logic allows emptiness to shape form, integrating the surrounding space and allowing our gaze not just to enter the work but to see *through* it—or even *because* of it. The hollow eye socket of the cyclopean *Monitor*, or the relative headlessness of the *Teddy Boys and Girls*, *Elektra*, or *Watchers* series, does not suggest blindness. Instead, it provokes unconscious projection: these embodied archetypes, with their magnetic presence, seem to absorb and reflect our own emotions.