

PRESS RELEASE

Lynn Chadwick *Retrospective for two gardens*

Museo del Giardino di Boboli – Giardino Bardini
9 May – 30 August 2015

Lynn Chadwick (1914–2003) was one of the most important sculptors of his generation and one of the masters of mid-20th century British sculpture. His work graces the collections of the world's leading museums including the MoMA in New York, the Tate Gallery in London and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. His talent first gained international recognition in 1952, when he was a member of the collective that introduced the new generation of British sculptors to the world at large in the Venice Biennale, where he was to receive the International Sculpture Award two editions later, in 1956. His international career effectively took off at that moment, allowing him to play a leading role at the São Paulo Biennale and to show his work in the most prestigious institutions in New York, Paris and Brussels. We have not seen Chadwick's work here in Italy for many years, the last significant presentation of his sculptures having been held in 1962 when Giovanni Carandente invited him to take part in an exhibition entitled *Sculpture in the City* in Spoleto. He subsequently donated one of his works to the city, where it is still on display today.

The project devised for the Museo del Giardino di Boboli and the Giardino Bardini comprises a total of twenty-four sculptures spread out over the two parks, creating an itinerary designed to focus attention on the two sites' orographical, monumental and scenographic features.

The opportunity to display Lynn Chadwick's work in these two Florentine gardens owes a great deal to the completion of a sculpture park for his work in Lypiatt Park in England, which is home to almost all of the pieces selected for this project.

The relationship between nature and artifice is the *leitmotif* underlying the creation of the Boboli Gardens, and the gradual integration of the two themes of garden architecture and sculpture reaches one of its loftiest peaks in this Medici palace park. The same *leitmotif* is also found in the Giardino Bardini, which acquired its present form in the early 19th century and in which different styles and cultural approaches to garden architecture, ranging from the Romantic to the Chinese Garden, sit harmoniously with the garden's original calling as a fruit orchard. The hybridisation of subjects designed to evoke a naturalistic concept of representation, typical of Lynn Chadwick's art, melds seamlessly with the natural artifice of the display of nature in the two gardens. Elements of fauna of metamorphic aspect combined with a careful selection of flora constantly hark back to a rapport with a concept of totally controlled art, in which nature is tamed and dominated by man.

The primary characteristic of Lynn Chadwick's sculpture resides in the ever present and identifiable role and notion of the artist's manual efforts. His work is the product of an idea developed in an initial study and then translated in its final dimensions into a rapport with the environment due to host it. This method reveals the artist's need to underscore the creative element both materially and conceptually. His surfaces, handled like a skin and modelled in every detail, are the result of a compositional approach that changed over the years from an initial virtually anatomical style to a predominantly geometrical idiom. The geometrical idiom comes to the fore primarily in his steel sculptures, which have something of the feel of origami to them, using geometry to display their expressive naturalism in full. This approach to composition in the form of intersecting planes and axes creates idiosyncratic relationships between the structure and the composition, impressing a combination of order and disorder on his work. In developing this relationship, the artist triggers a

dynamic interweave of biomorphic components in which creatures part human, part animal and part insect are defined in their own unique shapes. The triangulation of these three elements spawns an almost mechanised depiction of nature, regulated by a creative mind capable of controlling and of composing the rapport between man, machine and nature.

The artist also shows an interest in having his work viewed from above, from a distance, an element to which his personal history as a pilot is undoubtedly germane. His urgency impresses a dynamism on his work that links it both to flight – for instance in *The Stranger*, dated 1956, a crucial sculpture for his own career and for the generations of British artists who have come after him – and to a certain lightness, in opposition to the stability tying it to the ground on which it sits.

Movement and stasis, the two keys to interpreting Lynn Chadwick's work, are concepts strongly linked to his training as an architect, a profession which he never actually took up but which gave him a strong notion of compositional regularity, turning lines drawn on paper, – the blueprint for an architect's design – into volumes standing in a space.

The project is curated by Alberto Salvadori, director of the Museo Marino Marini and of the Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze's Contemporary Art Observatory (OAC). The exhibition, with a catalogue published by Sillabe, is promoted by the Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo, by the Regional Secretariat of the Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo per la Toscana, with the Ex Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico ed Etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Firenze, the Museo del Giardino di Boboli, Firenze Musei, the Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze and the Fondazione Parchi Monumentali Bardini e Peyron

The exhibition comprises a total of twenty-three large and medium-sized sculptures. Fourteen of these will be on display in the Museo del Giardino di Boboli from 9 May to 9 June. A few of the sculptures will have to be removed for technical and organisational reasons after that date, but the remaining sculptures will continue to offer the public a representative overview of the Lynn Chadwick's work.

The exhibition is held in collaboration with The Estate of Lynn Chadwick and supported by Blain | Southern

PRESS OFFICE

Salvatore La Spina - Tel. (+39) 055 290383 - Cell. (+39) 331 5354957 - s.laspina@operalaboratori.com
Barbara Izzo and Arianna Diana - Civita - Tel. (+39) 06 692050220-258 - Cell. (+39) 348 8535647 -
izzo@civita.it - diana@civita.it