

**Lynn CHADWICK**

*The Philadelphia Inquirer,*

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ARTIST LYNN CHADWICK ARE NOW ON VIEW AT LEHIGH UNIVERSITY.*

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# **SCULPTURES MAKE A LAST TOUR STOP THE WORKS, MOSTLY BRONZES, OF ENGLISH ARTIST LYNN CHADWICK ARE NOW ON VIEW AT LEHIGH UNIVERSITY.**

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Lynn Chadwick's sculptures have been on an exhibition circuit lately to museums in far-flung places. They are now stopping for a lengthy sojourn closer to home.

What prompted this flurry of activity was that a collection of 137 works by this prominent English sculptor, mostly bronzes, was under wraps at Ursinus College's Berman Museum for a decade or more and demanded to be seen. These are pieces that Philip and Muriel Berman had collected and given to that institution.

So International Art and Artists Inc., a Washington nonprofit group, stepped in, organized a show of more than two dozen works with the cooperation of the 86-year-old artist, and sent it on the road to Tennessee, Indiana and Ohio art museums.

Now it has come to Bethlehem, Pa. Featured in its last stop on that yearlong venue is an outdoor exhibition of large bronzes on the leafy terraced slopes of Lehigh University near the University Center building. The display continues inside the building, its smaller pieces, such as preliminary sketch models, on view there in the Girdler Gallery.

The overall effect of the presentation is quite memorable - like a vast and beautiful, if a bit eerie, stage set for some grand medieval reenactment amid a phalanx of fine old campus buildings of russet stone and among towering oaks and beeches.

Chadwick was a practicing architect until he served as a naval aviator during World War II. Afterward, he became a self-taught sculptor, initially influenced by Julio Gonzalez and Philadelphia's own Alexander Calder.

Chadwick enjoyed spectacular success during the 1950s, amid the rampant diversity and experiment that defined that first full postwar decade of modern sculpture. He even captured the first prize in the Venice Biennale in 1956, among many other honors.

And yet, because Britain was both an island of independent status and a part of Europe and its culture, many English artists seemed more aware of movements at home than abroad.

Eventually this allowed even Chadwick's 1950s innovations to be brushed aside and seen in that light, as reactions to a dominant local trend. For in the mid-1960s, both in this country and Europe, sculpture was radically redefined to embrace many kinds of work existing in three-dimensional space.

During that period, Chadwick's art went into a tailspin until the '70s, when he made a comeback. Still, the playing field was never quite the same, and people on both sides of the Atlantic wondered: Is Chadwick still relevant?

A hint of an answer is forthcoming in this show of bronzes done between 1954 and 1984, with its focus on three distinct themes in Chadwick's work.

First comes the pure abstraction of pyramid, cylinder and tripod shapes. Next are the animals set forth in triangulated volumes. And most numerous of all are the strangely arresting male and female human figures, usually in pairs. These are either seated, standing or striding and have symbolically simplified heads and rudimentary bodies on stalk-like legs, and sometimes flowing draperies.

Strongest in this show are the standing figures, noteworthy for the quiet menace Chadwick's best work most often has conveyed, rather than the seated couples, which simply present themselves in the role of mute companions.

A welcome liveliness is felt here whenever Chadwick contrasts certain static standing figures with the swirling drapery of a cloak they are wearing. Other figures are brought to life, however, by Chadwick's handling of the tensions between the abstract and representational elements.

Certainly breathtaking and full of commanding presence as the finest pieces are, Chadwick's sculptures ultimately are symbolic works.

They remain even now deeply rooted in a 1950s need that many of the world's artists felt during that tumultuous yet productive decade, as they painted and sculpted, hoping with every fiber of their being to drive off the anxieties, fears and traumas of the war years just ended.

A mid-century magic clings to this work.

Lehigh University, the campus and the University Center's Girdler Gallery, University and Memorial Drive, Bethlehem. To Dec. 31. Daily 8 a.m.-10 p.m. (610-758-4836). Free walking tours of the sculpture show on Sept. 14 (led by Ricardo Viera), Sept. 28, Oct. 12 and 26, Nov. 9, each at 12:15 p.m. starting at the flag pole in front of University Center.

Main Line Art Center. A juried members' show on a landscape theme at Main Line Art Center featured a soothing 38-item display by 26 area artists - their works chosen from 150 entries by Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts curator Sylvia Yount.

Prize winners who mostly merited their awards are Ann Martin, Ken Dirsra, Bobbie Adams, Ruth Humpton, Evie Liebowitz, Todd Keyser and Lorie Balistocky.

Main Line Art Center, Old Buck Road at Lancaster Avenue, Haverford. To Friday. Mondays-Thursdays 10 a.m.-8 p.m. (610-525-0272).

"A Mile of Art." A milelong informal exhibit of 35 area artists will be featured in Bryn Mawr's Lancaster Avenue storefront windows, sponsored by Bryn Mawr Business Association, from tomorrow through Saturday. Ricki Petersen and Bill Severson are cochairs. (610-525-2366).

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