

OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

LYNN CHADWICK (1914-2003)



Cloaked Figure IX, 1978

Bronze

185 x 101 x 140 cms

(72.71 x 39.69 in)

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From the edition of 6 casts
Cast by Burleighfield 1989

Reference: Farr & Chadwick 770

Literature:

Lynn Chadwick Sculptor, Dennis Farr & Eva Chadwick, p.320, published by Lund Humphries, no. 770

Exhibited:

Marlborough Fine Art, London, Feb. – Mar. 1978 (another cast)

Since Chadwick was never academically trained in Sculpture – he studied as an architectural designer and engineer – his memorable figures rely less on conventional anatomic parameters like musculature of physiognomic features than on looming architectonic and monumental structures for their expressive effect. The later cloaked figures stand like majestic monarchs, their presence enhanced by the contrasting Gothic stonework and tracery of Lypiatt Park, the rambling medieval Costwoldian pile near Stroud Chadwick had made his home from 1958 onwards.

Dennis Farr and Eva Chadwick have written that by the 1980s, when 'Cloaked Figure IX' emerged from a flurry of smaller cloaked sculptures and maquettes, in single or double combinations, the female head has become either a pyramidal or diamond shape, the male more aggressively rectangular, yet always Chadwick looked for geometry and tension, even in his animalistic work, and tries constantly to avoid a static quality. In this regard, the internationally known and successful sculptor talked of emotional or psychological attitude emerging from the fundamental postures assumed by his welded or cast metal figures. Chadwick avoids the overtly narrative and prefers to integrate form and content in a seamless, though not inert, whole. The attitude appears to harbour the radical psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich's notation of body armour in which musculature is poised according to conditioning and deep-rooted psychological states. The pyramidal head and conic swellings identify the gently walking figure as female; her robes form part of taut, tent-like configuration. Its life-sized scale mitigates the impersonal effects of engineered streamlining that attended its production and helps it blend naturally into the social, as well as architectural, context.