

OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

LYNN CHADWICK (1914-2003)



Teddy Boy and Girl II, 1957

Bronze

87 x 35 x 36 cms

(34.19 x 13.76 in)

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Edition of 9

Cast at Pangolin Editions, November 2002

Provenance: The Artist

Landau Fine Art

Private Collection, UK

Exhibited: Venice Biennale 1956 (another cast)

Literature: *Lynn Chadwick Sculptor*, Dennis Farr & Eva Chadwick, p.142, published by Lund Humphries, no. 217

Other casts:

The Nelson Rockefeller Collection, NY

The family of the artist

The Royal Academy, London

Among the series of dancing couples Chadwick created, from 1954 onwards, *Teddy Boy and Girl* proved the most provocative. The very act of plucking a title from popular culture seemed calculated to raise critics' hackles – a 'catchpenny' trick as guileful as a song's refrain. For Chadwick it reflected both the playfulness often evident in his sculpture and a narrowing of the distance between art and reality: a confrontation that proved increasingly fertile. Such clashes could be merely allusive – in titles such as *Later Alligator* or *Moon of Alabama* – or, as in the case of *Teddy Boy and Girl*, point to imagery derived fundamentally from contemporary visual culture. Chadwick's first solo exhibition in the United States took place in April 1957 at New York's Saitenberg Gallery. The timing, less than a year after Chadwick's prizewinning contribution to the Venice Biennale, left scant time to create a completely new body of work. Thus it is unsurprising that many of the sculptures were variations on existing themes: continuations of the *Bird*, *Wigwam*, *Conjunction*, *Dance*, and *Teddy Boy and Girl* series.

Although clearly recognisable in terms of its generic subject, *Teddy Boy and Girl II* (1957) differs significantly from the version exhibited at Venice. Its silhouette is less angular, its clothing less crisp – in short, it is less stylised and altogether more *human*. By reducing the male's head (previously two formidable spikes) and lengthening its raised arms, Chadwick transforms the mood to gaiety. The theme is continued in the sculpture's crumpled surfaces and less severely tailored outfits. Still stylish, the composition suggests a joyous abandon to the music.