

# MUSEO TAMAYO

Lynn Chadwick  
(London, England, 1914)  
Sitting Couple IV, 1974

Rufino Tamayo, in addition to being an artist, was also an art collector who created a collection of different artists from the 20th century that he later donated to the Tamayo Museum

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the inauguration of the Tamayo Museum, a selection of pieces from this collection is presented. One of these pieces is a sculpture by the English artist Lynn Chadwick entitled Sitting Couple IV.

Lynn Chadwick was a sculptor who was born in England in 1914 and died in that same country in 2003.

Chadwick did not have training as an artist, but studied architecture and worked as a draftsman for different architects. His training in technical drawing would later be reflected in the precision of the forms of his sculptures.

It is not until after the end of World War II that Chadwick began to create his sculptures. The first were mobiles with almost two-dimensional abstract forms, although little by little he was incorporating more volume and creating animal forms and finally human figures, although always working from abstract elements.

Lynn Chadwick belongs to a group of sculptors who were active during the post-war period in the United Kingdom, among which there were artists such as Henry Moore, Kenneth Armitage, Reg Butler or Barbara Hepworth: The sculpture of this period was characterized by the use of abstract forms, as well as an adventurous attitude in the use of materials and techniques.

Chadwick initially worked with materials such as steel, but in the 1950s he began to work with bronze, a material that allowed him to make editions of his sculptures. Unlike the materials he previously worked with, bronze sculpture requires moulds in which the material is emptied and therefore allows to make more than one copy.

Later he incorporated into his sculptures a new material in his time: Stolit, which is an industrial compound created with plaster and iron filings that allowed him to give a special texture to his work.

Sitting couple IV was made in 1974 and belongs to a series of works made by the artist at the beginning of that decade representing a couple made up of a man and a woman and of which there are about fifty different versions: Seated couples, reclining couples, standing couples or dancing couples were recurring themes in his work.

It is a work of small dimensions, although the museum's collection has another from the same series which is larger and is located outside the Tamayo Museum building. You might think that due to its size it is a piece that could be light, although being made of solid bronze it is much heavier than it appears.

It is of a dark and opaque colour, although with the light it can present brightness. The work has a rough finish to the touch with the exception of the characters' faces which are smooth surfaces. Bronze, like other metals, can feel cold or warm depending on the ambient temperature in which they are found.

The figures are made with very defined angles and edges that create the folds of the clothing and the only recognizable parts of the body: the heads and legs, unlike the rest of the sculpture, are the only elements that seem more fragile to the point that if these figures could stand up, their legs might not support the weight of the bodies.

The figures are seated side by side as if looking in the same direction although they are devoid of any facial features. Their clothes, which are just as abstract as their bodily attributes, do not reveal much about the identity of the characters either.

It can be said that his figures are archetypal, that is, they are standardized models and not a reflection of specific features of a person, to the point that in order to differentiate the male from the female, Chadwick created a code in which he decided that square heads would represent the masculine, whilst triangular heads would represent the feminine. He used this code of representation in all the sculptures he made on this subject.

When we look at the details of Sitting couple IV, as can be seen in other sculptures in this series, we discover moments of complicity between the two figures, in this particular case the sensation that the hand of the male figure rests on the female figure, in what could be read as a gesture of affection.

When talking about Chadwick's work, one usually talks about the tension between the internal and external structure of his sculptures, about how his geometric compositions are a reflection of his years as an architectural draftsman.

But beyond the tensions and architecture of his works, it is important to reminisce in artworks like Sitting couple IV that have the ability to represent the human figure and its daily actions, using abstract elements that, despite the rigidity of the materials used, are dynamic figures whose clothes seem to float as if pushed by the wind.