



INSPIRATIONS WITH DANIEL CHADWICK

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Edited by Roshni Radia

Daniel Chadwick's art rebuffs the current trend found in contemporary art – in fact, his work seems to be the complete antithesis, soothing the weary worker after a long day, relaxing and enveloping them in contemplative beauty.

His principal works are mobiles – kinetic solar systems that revolve in complete and complex balance (both literally and metaphorically), providing the exhausted employee with a perfectly ordered universe where everything has a place. Each mobile changes and adapts to the amount of light streaming in through the windows, something that Chadwick is passionate about.

“Generally speaking, the more light, the more movement. I have a disc mobile in the living room and initially one is not aware of it until

it starts to move as the sun comes out – then there is a double pleasure. My workshop comes alive on a sunny day, some of the pieces start to move on the floor and I have quite literally lost a few as they have escaped out of the doors!”

Even when light is reflected through his incredible kinetic mobiles, the reflections create another dancing piece of organic art. Chadwick describes these coloured moving shadows as nothing but “a bonus” since it is not the focus of the work.

“I have however, been working on some ‘reflection’ pieces where many small mirrors are attached to a flexible membrane which then moves by pneumatic means. These results are interesting as no order is apparent



TWO SYSTEMS OF BLUE
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PLANES OF ROTATION

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Daniel Chadwick

and instead they seem to move randomly in all kinds of inexplicable ways.”

But everything Chadwick creates has a zenith and for these new pieces he promises shoaling fish, flocks of starlings and even Brownian motion.

“I don’t create logic out of chaos; order is only logical. A mobile is a bit like a tree – as its branches get bigger they must also get stronger. Calculating how big or strong the structure has to be to carry the load is a nice, very simple logic.”

His attention to detail is even more of a balm to the tired commuter, reflecting the organic perfection found in nature. Nothing is going to go wrong, especially in the mobiles – the order between space, time and form will never collapse in on itself. Chadwick’s static sculptures retain the same technical precision and perfectionism that is so prevalent in his kinetic mobiles. They are just as flawless in their finish and it is a testament to Chadwick’s skill that he can provoke the same awestruck, inquisitive and playful response from audiences in both areas of his work, especially since he insists that his attention to detail is nothing more than a hobby.

To create such methodical, balanced movements Chadwick uses the lightest, strongest materials available.

“Acrylic sheet is an old favorite of mine – it’s tough and stable. Carbon fibre rod is good for structure but ultimately stainless steel does the job better for most things because it incredibly durable and it can be kept clean, welded and mended easily.”

Because of his careful choice of materials, Chadwick’s work is incredibly tactile and durable, but he argues that they don’t reflect societal or religious views – instead they are purely a natural or organic observation. Owner of a pub and Lypiatt Park – one of the most beautiful and historical private estates in Gloucestershire, Chadwick’s art revels in the organic beauty and harmony of his environment.

“Having such lovely surroundings makes me happy,” he muses, “and that makes me make things which are more optimistic. My father’s sculptures were always pointy while mine have always tended to be curvy – he had a much sharper jagged drawing style.”

Lynn Chadwick was an extremely successful sculptor but he never wanted his son to follow in his footsteps,

“father put us off trying to be artists, since it wasn’t a good prospect back then. So instead I studied science then engineering. I started trying to be an engineer but I didn’t have the discipline, or rather I found it boring at the time.”

Early on in his career, Chadwick dipped his toe in architecture, working for the prestigious Zaha Hadid Architects.

“Working for Zaha, while invaluable, made me realise that I didn’t want to be an architect. I gained the ability to see spaces from drawings and to visualise 3D space and volumes but I found the work unsatisfying – I wanted to make my own work instead of Zaha’s. Someone commissioned me to make them a hanging sculpture for their hall and someone else saw it and wanted one for themselves too. This was what I wanted to do but Zaha didn’t want me to leave, so I left anyway and never finished my degree in Engineering Design.”

How different things would have been if he had decided to stay and complete his degree – Daniel Chadwick the Artist might have been replaced by Daniel Chadwick the Architect. Thankfully though, he did shift from one to the other, something that the art world is incredibly grateful for. For far too long fustian and pompous art has been all that is fashionably accepted and Chadwick’s art, which doesn’t scream, shout or throw a tantrum at viewers to see more, has finally come back into fashion.

“The words ‘engineering’ and ‘design’ used to be such dirty words in the art world, but the way I see it it’s all the same skills, just different levels of self importance.”

Many of Chadwick’s sculptures have a strong sexual presence. Instead of being brazen, works such as *Prickle* and *Worm* use shape and colour to help exude a confident, *private* sensuality, which is suggestive and not descriptive. It isn’t hard to imagine a secret agent seducing a beautiful enemy spy under *I am the Greatest* or *Mother and Child* – they are the type of sculptures that anyone with a modicum of artistic taste would fall in love with.

The organic presence of all of Chadwick’s work has led to a firm friendship with Damien Hirst.

“I met Damien in a bar and stayed up drinking with him all night and the next day and the night after that. That cemented a friendship that has lasted even though neither of us really drinks anymore.”



Does this mean that collaboration between the two is on the cards?

"I'm sorry to say that I don't really enjoy working with other artists. I know I would have to be very pushy to get my input across and my ego just isn't all that big with respect to art. I have only ever worked with Damien in a technical way, helping him with motors or pumps and don't have any plans to anything more than that. However, funnily enough, I am actually working with my wife [the illustrator, Juliet Chadwick] at the moment – together we are making a large oil painting."

Chadwick has exhibited extensively in the UK and abroad, with work currently on display in almost every bank in the city of London, in the headquarters of a number of companies including Crest, Pfizer and Tetrapak and in Gloucester Cathedral for a few months at the end of this year. He designed an elephant, called *Polyphant*, for the Elephant Parade, London's largest outdoor art exhibition (so far) and has had Lily Allen ask if she can record an album in his house. For Daniel Chadwick, the master of organic perfection, art and science are the ideal bed-fellows and each and every single one of his pieces, whether they be mobiles or not, achieves a therapeutic outcome because of their mechanistic origin.

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