

**SO SMALL BETWEEN THE STARS,
SO LARGE AGAINST THE SKY**

STUDIES FOR A MONUMENT:
NEW WORKS BY NEIL GOODMAN



BRAUER MUSEUM OF ART | JAN. 8 – APRIL 3, 2016

View of works in *So Small Between the Stars,
So Large Against the Sky* exhibition, 2016
Bronze, various sizes
Collection of the Artist



THE BRAUER MUSEUM OF ART is pleased to present new works in sculpture by the acclaimed artist Neil Goodman (b. 1953). The title of Goodman's exhibition, "*So Small Between the Stars, So Large Against the Sky*," is based on a line by the famed singer-songwriter-poet Leonard Cohen. The verse addresses the ambiguity of scale, how at once we are large and small, significant and insignificant. The remaining words of the exhibition title, "*Studies for a Monument: New Works by Neil Goodman*," reveal that while these pieces are finished works of art they are also smaller scale versions or prototypes for a major monumental sculpture conceived for the setting of Valparaiso University.

With major public works found throughout the Midwest, including permanent large-scale pieces at the McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago and the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University in Evanston, Goodman has established himself as one of the foremost sculptors working today. In the course of his career he has had more than 30 solo exhibitions, and his work has been reviewed in "*Art Forum, Art in America, Art News, Sculpture Magazine*," as well as numerous other periodicals, catalogs, and books. He was included as one of the artists representing the "*History of Art in Chicago, 1945-1995*" at the new Museum of Contemporary Art inaugural exhibition. Goodman has created numerous public and private commissions, and his work is found in collections throughout the country.

Goodman's abstract sculptures involve sophisticated explorations of formal issues, but concurrently they pulse with organic life. A walk through "*Shadows & Echoes*," the incredible sculpture garden that Goodman created for Indiana University Northwest, demonstrates to viewers that while Goodman's creations bend and twist and compress the space around them, the sculptures have a "breadth of life" and a vibrancy that both transcends and embraces their skillful manipulation of the elements of design. The 10 large-scale bronze works are substantial,



*Work in So Small Between the Stars,
So Large Against the Sky* exhibition, 2016
Bronze, 45 x 13 x 8 inches
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tangible forms that embrace the voids within them but that also in their surfaces and their distinctive configurations speak to the hand that carved, cast, and formed them. Like fossils, they are a record of the forms from where they came, while animating the space where they are.

Goodman's stylistic evolution unfolds as something of a continuum, with the organic qualities, even narrative qualities, mentioned above more pronounced in earlier works. Some of his bronze sculptures from the

early 1990s feature realistically portrayed fish, animal heads, and objects based on the still-life milieu. The compositions do not as much act as a foil to the other elements of the pieces as they lead viewers to relate all the components to each other, with patina and surface detail speaking to levels, stages of effect of the passage of time.

The Brauer Museum has in its permanent collection a 1998 bronze and limestone piece by Goodman that is intended for indoors; while the various parts that comprise the sculpture do not have literal identities or precise equivalents in the natural world, still the expressive surfaces and modulations of linear passages remind one strongly of bone. Those qualities, coupled with the particular pieces set atop the limestone base that seem specific in their forms and relationships to one another, carry forward a sense of a narrative tableau even though the engagement with realism is less than was evident in the past. The artist's use of limestone in the Brauer piece is both witty in light of these current points of discussion, with fish perhaps literally absent but sea creatures essentially present in the stone, and instructive, in the sense that Goodman grounds his works in a powerful sense of place. The

artist has spent enough time in Northwest Indiana to be aware of the region's existence as an ancient seabed and the importance of limestone to the area. In this way, Goodman's work embraces a long sense of history, reflecting on both the region's natural past as well as its present industrial landscape.

Some of the large scale works in the Indiana University Northwest sculpture garden (also shown in fiberglass form with dramatic effect at the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park at Governor's State University and the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis) resemble abridged, further abstracted versions of the individual bronze parts in the Brauer's sculpture, allowed to stand on their own and proclaim their identities in isolation. In these works especially, Goodman sculpts with both the forms and the space or spaces that exist within and around them. Site specificity as a concept stands out in high relief with these works that retain organic surfaces but focus attention more on the way the sculptures frame and interact the surrounding landscape. Walking through and around the sculptures yields new rewards at every turn, as the forms gain richness and complexity through their groupings and juxtapositions with the surrounding environment.



View of the *Shadows & Echoes* sculpture garden at Indiana University Northwest, Gary, Indiana



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Goodman's current body of work, including the sculptures in this exhibition, addresses issues of framing, but the works have greater mass; while some immediately preceding concentrate on a linear effect, these seem like shards that include an opening or window. As opposed to feeling like deliberate exercises in perspective and space, these new bronzes feel like they have grown more on their own, becoming broader in some areas and reacting to as opposed to defining the opening. As protean forms growing and transforming while paradoxically still, they define themselves in modest ways "between the stars" as mentioned in the exhibition title, small works or earthly endeavors that aspire toward the cosmos in their ambition. Against the sky, they not only call attention to the textures and patinas of their making but also isolate areas, moments in their windows, urging viewers to see all of which is before and beyond them. Goodman uses a modern vocabulary to direct focus on

the sublimity of the setting that includes them, and that may well go unappreciated if not for the artist's urging to edit, to frame, to see with the heart those views that unfold through the portal.

A monument at Valparaiso University is a large-scale realization of the aims offered through these smaller studies. Goodman will through the majesty of his treatment of bronze, bring into the world an object that delights with its organic surface, while it warmly prompts viewers to both see it and see through it. Through it, viewers can see a landscape stretching into the distance, back in time, so that the sculpture assumes a sense of familiarity as a guide. Like so many of his works, the sculpture will appeal to the hand, the eye, and the mind, reminding all of a continuity that is breathtaking in its magnitude but reassuring in its connection to our bodies and common histories.



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BRAUER MUSEUM OF ART

Valparaiso University, Center for the Arts | 1709 Chapel Drive, Valparaiso, IN 46383
P: 219.464.5365 | F: 219.464.5244 | gregg.hertziel@valpo.edu | valpo.edu/brauer-museum-of-art

Hours for fall and spring semesters when classes are in session:

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Wednesday	10 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Thursday & Friday	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday	Noon – 5 p.m.