

DRAWING ROOM PROJECTS / NYC Victoria Munroe & Emily Goldstein

For Immediate Release

On view through April 1 at

VICTORIA MUNROE
fine art

67 EAST 80TH STREET #2 NEW YORK CITY
Open Wednesday-Saturday 11-5 & by appt

Costantino Nivola

The Modern Figure



M.01, 1969, concrete, paint, 19 x 9 1/2 x 3 3/4"

DRAWING ROOM PROJECTS / NYC is pleased to present two exhibitions at Victoria Munroe Fine Art. A separate press release is available for *ANTONIO ASIS: Paintings on Paper*. Both exhibitions will be on view through April 1, 2017.

COSTANTINO NIVOLA (1911-1988): The Modern Figure presents a selection of lyrical, small scale sculptures carved or cast from high and low materials into sensuous abstractions of the human form. Created between 1965 and 1984 in his East Hampton studio in concrete, marble, terra cotta or bronze, the intimate statues reveal Nivola's mythic vision for sculpture.

Born in 1911, Nivola's training as a Sardinian-born mason educated at the Istituto Superiore d'Arte in Monza, Italy, provided a unique foundation for the young artist once he settled in New York City in 1939. Surrounded in the 1940s and 50s by the AbEx community in New York City and East Hampton, his colleagues were other émigré artists who shared his passion for expressive materials for a new age. Nivola arrived at the epicenter of American mid-century modernism.

Standing proud as modern idols, the earliest works in the show are painted concrete and date to 1965. These commanding 20-inch-tall forms have a Mediterranean aura. Carved in wet concrete mixed with sand from the nearby Amagansett beaches and painted with triangles of archaic reds and orange, Nivola's sculptures evoke ritualistic masks and totems. Carving blocks of wet concrete with shims of wood, Nivola put a universal material to groundbreaking use for sculpture. Soon, his masonry techniques were noted by Eero Saarinen, José Luis Sert and Marcel Breuer, all of whom commissioned him to integrate his unique Arcadian sculpture into their concrete architecture of the 1960s and later.

In the following decades Nivola often worked on a monumental scale producing marble and concrete sculpture for public commissions of parks, corporate and university campuses, and museums in Europe and America. All along his studio practice allowed him to return to the intimate scale and direct techniques of working in wet clay, carving wax for the small bronzes he cast locally, and inventing iterative forms from



N31, 1980, marble, 5 3/8 x 5 3/8 3 3/4 "

the negative and positive molds and shapes his many methods required. During these years he made the dancing male figures in the show: one in clay and one in bronze. Side by side, one sees high and low artistic materials in a human comedy.

Nivola's expression of adoration of the female body in his sculpture is graceful and powerful. In the small black marble and bronze forms Nivola softens breasts and bellies into supple contours that become landscapes in the mind. Of particular note are the delicate, windswept female forms in pink terra cotta from 1982. Barely 7 inches high, their open vulnerability and attenuated forms recall Cycladic art.

Costantino Nivola fulfilled an artistic legacy that embraced a diverse range of mediums hard and soft, cast and fired, and most often carved in wax or wet concrete, ranging in scale from the diminutive to the monumental. Resourceful, prolific and tireless in his intellectual and artistic exploration of two and three-dimensional art forms, Nivola made a defining contribution to mid-century art and architecture.

Costantino Nivola's work is represented in noted international public collections including The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art and the Parrish Art Museum. The Nivola Museum, founded in 1995 in his hometown of Orani, Sardinia, houses the most comprehensive collection of his oeuvre.

The estate of Costantino Nivola is represented by The Drawing Room gallery, which is located at 66H Newtown Lane in East Hampton, New York.

For further information and reproduction quality images, please contact
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