

Neil Goodman:
"Sound of the Woods" at the Nate
with
"Gateways and Rudders"

When Lewis Manilow invited Mark di Suvero in 1968 to “set up shop” on the land that is now Governors State University, it sparked a spirit of invitation, welcome, inclusion, and creativity that endures today. The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, named for Lew’s father and now called theNate, serves as an art lover’s destination to encounter world renowned artists’ monumental outdoor masterworks, a regional school student’s mind-expanding, action-packed field trip, a health-conscious neighbor’s fitness path like none other, and a nature lover’s dream-come-true prairie restoration, monarch waystation, and photo opportunity.



Through his reputation and the work he began in 1968, Mark di Suvero’s presence invited regional artists to arrive and assist. The exhibition “*The Sculptor, the Campus, and the Prairie*” in 1976 caught the attention of art critics and established the unlikely pairing of a small, liberal arts state university, and world-class sculpture, both set into a natural prairie setting.

Over the years, the permanent collection has grown through commissions, donations, long and short-term loans.



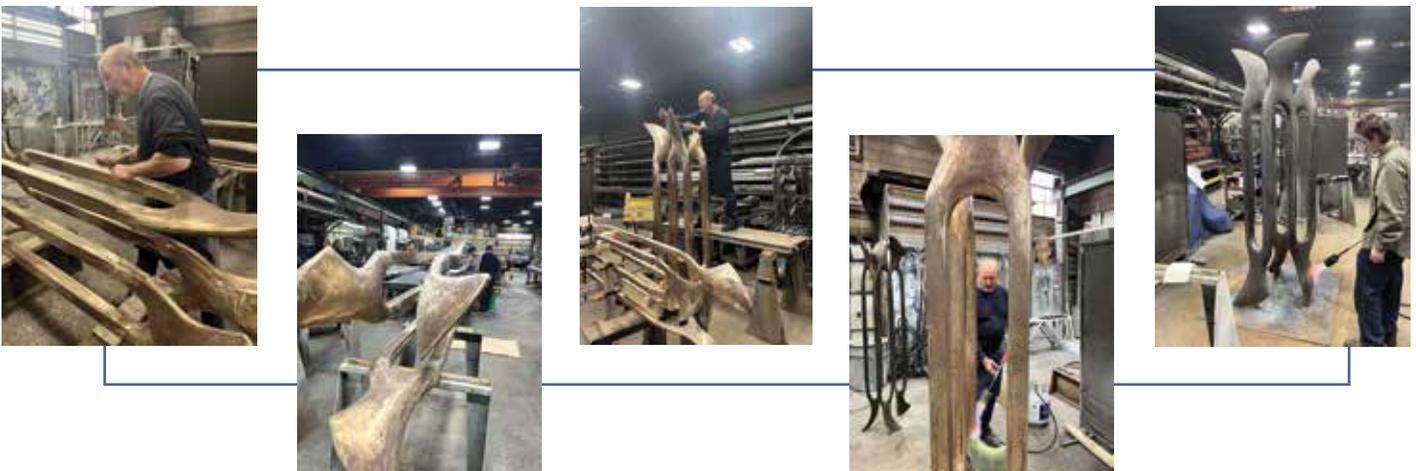
In 2010, artist Neil Goodman was invited to exhibit a body of work in the “*Solo Exhibitions*” series at theNate, and in 2019 he was invited to return as a visiting artist with “*Rudder*” which was on view through 2022. Because Neil’s artwork resonates with and is distinct from the work in the collection, the idea for a permanent new acquisition arose.



To celebrate the arrival of the new acquisition *“Sound of the Woods”*, an exhibition of related smaller works, *“Gateways and Rudders”* was organized for the Visual Arts Gallery at GSU. The gallery visitor is invited to take a deep dive into the working styles and methods of the artist, and to explore and discover how the gallery exhibit relates to the new sculpture sited across the lake.

For nearly forty years, Goodman’s work has been strongly influenced by the postindustrial landscape of the south side of Chicago and Gary Indiana, but in a recent move to the central coast of California, a landscape of rolling arabesque hills, beach towns, and the geometry of vineyards has been finding its way into the artist’s practice. Hence the work incorporates both past and present, as locale and environment have always been strongly incorporated into Goodman’s sculptures.

“Gateways” implies a passage from one state of being to another, both metaphorical and physical. The sculptures consist of an organic geometry that is soft, curved, and systematic. *“Rudders”* connote steering or directing. The void at the center of the form acts as a tool for looking, as the viewer both gazes at and through the sculpture, enhancing their perceptions of the surrounding landscape. Like ocean front cliffs, the sculptures hover between uncertainty and stability, and guide us like tenuous rudders through space. The sculptures’ mass frame the interior void, seemingly creating both volume and dimensionality within their portals. This contradiction is at the heart of the work, as emptiness is substance, and equal partners in the sculpture’s composition.



With the addition of *“Sound of the Woods”*, and through the siting of it across the lake and around the bend from *“Stargazing with Contrails”* by Terry Karpowicz, the visitor’s experience deepens and expands because of the sequence of artworks, contrasts of materials, themes, scale, texture, color, and form. The visitor approaches *“Sound of the Woods”* within the context of the other masterworks of theNate, with their stories echoing and reverberating like nature’s melodies, like the sound of the woods.



Stargazing with Contrails

The Advisory Board for theNate and the entire Governors State University community are excited to welcome *“Sound of the Woods”* to the collection at theNate, and the GSU campus – the jewel of the Chicago Southland.



Sunday, June 23, 2024

Dedication of *"Sound of the Woods"*

2 p.m. reception at the **Visual Arts Gallery**

2:30 p.m. remarks

3 p.m. walk to site across the lake
for ribbon cutting

"Gateways and Rudders"

Visual Arts Gallery

Exhibition Dates: June 3 – 30, 2024

*the***Nate**
NATHAN MANILOW SCULPTURE PARK



1 University Parkway, University Park, IL 60484
www.govst.edu/sculpture/

