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**VICTORIA MUNROE**  
fine art

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**COSTANTINO NIVOLA (1911-1988): *Sculpture & Sandcast Relief***  
October 9 - November 23, 2024  
Presented by DRAWING ROOM PROJECTS



M05, 1959, concrete, paint, 28 ¼ x 20 ¼ x 1 3/8"



M16, c. 1980-1982, concrete, 14 x 25 ¼ x 6"

On view October 9 through November 23, 2024, Victoria Munroe Fine Art is delighted to announce *Costantino Nivola (1911-1988): Sculpture & Sandcast Reliefs*, an exhibition presented by Drawing Room Projects. The exhibition spans four decades of Nivola's figurative sculpture, including a brilliant fresco from 1959, important examples of his innovative sandcast reliefs, and sculptures in concrete, marble, terracotta and bronze.

Nivola's natural intuition about materials and proportion began with his early practice as a Sardinian mason and grew from his training in design and architecture at the Instituto d'Arte, Monza, Italy in 1935. Nivola immigrated to New York City with his wife Ruth Guggenheim in 1939, via Milan and Paris where he was trained in painting, architecture and design. Their move to The Springs in Long Island in the late 1940s placed the Nivolas at the center of the birth of Abstract Expressionism that was underway in the studios of his friends Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Mark Rothko. Other artists in their community included émigré artists renowned for their original, radical responses to the contrast of life between the wars in Europe and America.

Drawn to the qualities of both high and low materials in modern art, Nivola was a master of traditional sculpture techniques as well as an innovator of methods for large scale mural reliefs. Sculpting in bronze, wet concrete, marble and terracotta he reimagined the modern idol after Cubism at the peak of Abstract Expressionism. By 1953, Nivola's ambitious sandcast process for wall reliefs won him the commission for a grand architectural mural for the first Olivetti showroom in America in New York City. Collaborations with noted international architects inspired by the success of his Olivetti mural continued through the 1980s with numerous prestigious public commissions on buildings designed by Eero Saarinen, Jose Luis Sert, Ivan Chermayeff and Marcel Breuer. Several reliefs in this exhibition are maquettes for those important and monumental public and private commissions.

Each of the pedestal sculptures stands proud and timeless in space, and slim terracotta figurines recall the silhouettes of Cycladic art. In the bronze casts from the 1980's Nivola refined the sleek silhouettes of his dancing Sardinian figures; the classic, dark brown patina gives the proportions a profound unity of form. In contrast, the diminutive chunky cubistic bronzes suggest man as architecture. In translucent black, pink and white marble, Nivola's figures embody both ancient and modern traditions.

Nivola's lyrical opus of figurative sculpture stands in contrast to his vision and execution of the sandcast reliefs in which he explored flatness and shadow, resonant concerns of Abstract Expressionism. His existential representations of the human figure hover on the brink of pure abstraction.

(over)

Costantino Nivola's work is represented in noted international public collections including Magazzino Italian Art, 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 55 Main Street, 2nd floor in East Hampton, New York.



A01 (*St. Louis Relief*), c. 1963, sandcast plaster relief, 15 ½ x 43 ½ x 7/8"



N55, 1982, marble, 6 x 9 ¾ x 1"



C23, 1962, clay, 16 7/8 x 17 x 1 5/8"



M55, c. 1958-1961, concrete, paint  
7 5/8 x 12 ¼ x 7 5/8"

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