

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

No. 79  
Monday, June 27, 1966  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

---

NAKIAN by Frank O'Hara. 56 pages, 80 illustrations. \$4.95 hardbound, \$2.95 paperbound. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York; hardbound edition distributed by Doubleday and Company, Inc.

---

NAKIAN by Frank O'Hara, the first study of one of America's foremost modern sculptors, has been published by The Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with a major exhibition of his work. The monograph traces the nature and origins of Nakian's art from his early realistic style of the 30's through the growth of a personal expression in drawings and terra-cottas in the late 40's to the sensuousness of forms and surfaces in his recent monumental sculptures of steel, plaster and bronze—abstract interpretations of mythological themes.

Frank O'Hara, Associate Curator of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions, is director of the Museum's exhibition, which will be on view through September 5. Mr. O'Hara is a well-known poet and playwright who has been closely associated with the abstract expressionist movement in this country. He has written many critical articles and is the author of a monograph on Jackson Pollock, the catalog of the Museum's 1960 exhibition New Spanish Painting and Sculpture, and, most recently, of Robert Motherwell.

The Museum's monograph also includes a detailed biographical outline by William Berkson and an extensive bibliography compiled by Elita Taylor, which, combined with Mr. O'Hara's analysis, provide a thorough insight into the work of this leading American artist. The 80 illustrations reproduce Nakian's sculpture at various stages of his development, including a number of works now lost or destroyed, and photographs of the artist and his environment.

Mr. O'Hara observes, "Nakian's work methods are a combination of Renaissance studio practice and the immediacy of Oriental calligraphers. In drawing, whether with brush on paper or with knife in wet clay or plaster, he demands completion by his action at the time of inspiration. A similar spontaneity is his goal in sculpture."

(more)

Nakian's evolving style, while personal, was closely related to that of the abstract expressionist painters. His early terra-cottas, for example, show affinities with de Kooning's paintings of women, begun in the same period. This new interpretation led to the plastic innovations of his later work in plaster, bronze and steel -- Leda and the Swan, The Rape of Lucrece, Mars and Venus, Hecuba, The Birth of Venus and the recent Judgment of Paris.

Reuben Nakian was born in the United States of Armenian parentage in 1897 and grew up in New Jersey. Encouraged to study art by his parents, Nakian attended the Art Students League briefly and then worked as a professional illustrator. From 1916 to 1920 he served as an apprentice to the sculptor Paul Manship and was trained by Manship and his chief assistant, Gaston Lachaise, with whom Nakian shared a studio from 1920 to 1923.

Nakian's work was first exhibited in 1922 and his first one-man show was held four years later at the Whitney Studio Club. He was included in "46 Painters and Sculptors Under 35 Years of Age" held at The Museum of Modern Art in 1930, the year after the Museum opened.

In 1961 a one-man show of Nakian's work was presented at the VI Bienal in São Paulo, Brazil, as part of the U.S. representation, organized by The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art and later shown at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. A retrospective exhibition of his work was given at the Gallery of Modern Art in Washington, D.C., in 1963.

Nakian won an invited competition among five major American sculptors for the sculpture installed in 1961 on the facade of the Loeb Student Center, New York University. His bronze, Voyage to Crete (1960-1962), purchased by Lincoln Center, is now in the New York State Theater, and his La Chambre à Coucher de l'Empereur was included in the White House Festival of the Arts in June, 1965.

NAKIAN is available in two editions: paperbound, \$2.95, by mail from the Museum and at the Museum Bookstore, and hardbound, \$4.95, at the Museum and distributed by Doubleday and Company, Inc.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Review copies, photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Patricia B. Kaplan, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. CIRCLE 5-8900.