

## New York

## Marianne Weil

Kouros Gallery

There were depths to this exhibition that made it more than just a look at Marianne Weil's work of the past few years. The steadfastness of bronze and the strength of the artist's relationship with the material were pervasive. This work is not about sending something out to the fabricator or turning something into bronze because



Tarxien, 2003. Cast bronze, 32 x 10 x 9 in.



Weil's references—from cultural anthropology to the body—are strictly her own, though, and more easily compared to her baby-boomer generation's attraction to Surrealism and biomorphic forms. Many things are touched on—geology/landscape, natural history/botany, and human histories (both collective and personal). In fact, it's amazing what a diversity of potentialities Weil's vertically oriented, upright forms embrace—almost literally. In silhouette, many

**Left: Marianne Weil, *Mound Dweller*, 2003. Cast bronze, 23 x 5 x 7 in. Above: installation view**

of the works stand like people or confront like torsos. By extension, some come across as armor (one 2003 piece is titled *Shield*; others resemble helmets). From here, it's a short leap to pod or vessel forms.

But these works are rarely just about their shapes: Weil goes to town on the surfaces. There are openings and gouges, incisions and striations, hatching and relief. The show's one bas-relief, *During the Fall I and II* (1999), encapsulates all of this, bringing home aspects of Weil's work that approach painting. (The exhibition's small selection of monoprints nicely fleshed out this aspect of the work.) There are multiple tones of patina, as well as a variety of surface incident, from raised still-life elements to a pyramidal relief form, to an etched grid, to a hatched design and outlined and cut-out triangles. The upright *Homage to Troy* (2002) has a sun-baked, dried-out-looking yellow patina, highly effective in capturing the ravages that seem to have been visited upon this blunt, almost stump-like form. *Mound Dweller* (2003) is a gem, with its primitive utilitarian form embellished with, among other things, tiny holes, checkerboard designs, and a circular opening at the top. The piece, like many others, offers a different interpretation from every angle.

the career says "it's time." For Weil, it's always been bronze time, and, in fact, this show marked a first foray into making a couple of sculptures in editions, rather than as unique pieces.

Weil works with bronze as a material, from modeling the pieces directly in wax to applying the patinas. There is a hands-on sculptorliness to the work that reveals its roots in a postwar vocabulary—from artists like Ibram Lassaw to Germaine Richier.

*Knap of Howar* (2003) presents the most obvious example of the fork-like shape that tops a couple of pieces, variously suggesting psychological and physical twinning or splitting. *Tarxien* (2003) hints at early stages of human evolution. This highly evolved sculpture is characterized by square openings and tabs that give tantalizing views into and even through its form. *After Cloud* (2003) is the most like a torso, with its hint of cut-off shoulders at the top. Many of the pieces, similarly, present an area of smoothed-off surface where it seems as if some amputation or excision has taken place. Intimacy and public address exist here side by side. The inspiration behind each of these works always seems to be a broad and far-reaching humanity.

—Cynthia Nadelman