

# GAGOSIAN

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Gagosian New York to Present Exhibition of New Rock and Steel Sculptures by Michael Heizer

Opening March 3, 2022

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Michael Heizer, *Rock Steel #4*, 2021, A588 weathering steel and rock, 13 feet 6 inches × 11 feet 8 inches × 18 feet 7 inches (4.1 × 3.6 × 5.7 m) © Michael Heizer. Photo: Michael Heizer

*The rocks are replacements for the art object—something in lieu of a consciously created, highly surfaced, highly detailed, academically studied work of fine art. A piece of rock in exchange for all that. What carries it? Massive weight.*

—Michael Heizer

**NEW YORK, February 22, 2022**—Gagosian is pleased to present an exhibition of five new sculptures by Michael Heizer from the *Rock/Steel* series (2017–) along with five new works on paper.

The sculptures on view in the gallery at 522 West 21st Street were made at Heizer’s studio in Nevada over a four-year period. They combine angular steel structures with rocks ranging from 14 to 23 tons in weight, which were extracted from a quarry in Riverside, California. The rocks and steel in conjunction weigh from 27 to 40 tons. The interplay between these two differently textured and colored components, and between the positive and negative spaces they establish, is key to the works’ impact, as is the relationship of the viewer’s body to their monumental heft. The *Rock/Steel* works relate to sculptures from throughout Heizer’s life’s work. These include *Negative Megalith #5* (1998), which is on long-term loan to Dia Beacon from the Menil Collection, Houston; *Levitated Mass* (2012) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; *Displaced/Replaced Mass* (1969–77), in the

collection of the University of California, Los Angeles; and *Elevated, Surface, Depressed* (1969–77), in the Margulies Collection, Miami; as well as other works in private collections.

Over the past five decades, Heizer has redefined the possibilities of sculpture through a focus on scale, mass, and process. His earth-moving constructions, paintings, and drawings explore the relationships between positive and negative space with unique force, evoking a sense of transcendence. In the five sculptures on view, Heizer continues to pursue this endeavor, exploring other ideas regarding geology in five accompanying works on paper. The latter feature enlarged images of volcanic ejecta from Mono Lake, California, which have been screenprinted, sprayed with gouache, and worked in paint stick and colored pencil. These works were completed recently, some two decades after they were begun.

As a young artist in 1960s New York, Heizer was making shaped geometric canvases which he called “displacement paintings” or “negative paintings.” In 1967, in the Sierra Nevada mountains, he excavated cuts in the earth, translating his earlier paintings into three-dimensional form. Such “sculptures in reverse” became the basis of an artistic strategy in which Heizer used the land as his medium. In 1970, he began *City*, a project in the Nevada desert inspired in part by Native American traditions of mound building and the pre-Columbian ritual cities of Central and South America. Other major bodies of work include “negative wall sculptures” featuring rocks set into negative rectangular voids and various underground works with rocks in concrete liners.

**Michael Heizer** was born in Berkeley, California, in 1944, and lives and works in New York and Nevada. Collections include the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Dia Art Foundation, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Menil Collection, Houston; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, Netherlands; Kunstmuseum Basel; and Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy. Solo exhibitions include Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, Netherlands (1979); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1984); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1985); and Fondazione Prada, Milan (1996). Permanent installations include *Adjacent, Against, Upon*, Myrtle Edwards Park, Seattle (1976); *Levitated Mass*, 590 Madison Avenue, New York (1982); *45°, 90°, 80°*, Rice University, Houston (1984); *Dissipate* (1968–70), *Isolated Mass/Circumflex* (1968–78), and *Rift* (1968–82), Menil Collection, Houston; *North, East, South, West*, Dia Beacon, NY (1967–2002); *Tangential Circular Negative Line*, Fondation Air & Art, Sierre, Switzerland (1968–2012); *Levitated Mass*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2012); *Collapse* (1967–2016) and *Compression Line* (1968–2016), Glenstone, Potomac, MD; and *Double Negative* (1969), a land sculpture owned and managed by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, on public view on Mormon Mesa, NV.

Heizer’s land sculpture *City* (1970–), located within the Basin and Range National Monument in Nevada, is operated by the Triple Aught Foundation. It is not yet open for public visitation.

#MichaelHeizer

## **MICHAEL HEIZER**

Opening reception: Thursday, March 3, 5–7pm

March 3–April 16, 2022

522 West 21st Street, New York

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## **Press**

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