

# Intentional/ Accidental Emptiness Exhibition

Megan Newcomer



### *Winged Victory of Samothrace*

This piece is a marble Hellenistic sculpture of Nike that was created in the 2nd century B.C. It was originally created as a monument of the winged goddess of victory (Nike of Samothrace), which was “standing in the prow of a ship set on a low plinth” (Hamiaux). This sculpture is most beautiful for its intricate forms and proportionate body. It is large, about nine feet tall. Despite its height, the figure seems light, and extremely balanced, as if poised. Though the arms and head were broke off many hundreds of years ago, that gives the figure a sense of wisdom, knowing that it had lived through generations. There is an aesthetic that comes with this emptiness, thought it was initially disliked, in contemporary time it has become praised.

1. *Winged Victory of Samothrace*. 2nd century B.C, Hellenistic. Marble. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

## *Fragments*

In *Fragments*, we see a progression of time in the three repeated bodies, 100 x 115 x 42 centimeters. The first sculpture starts with the feet and a red bag on the ground. The second sculpture is a man without the core of the body and head, carrying the red bag. The last sculpture is the same as the second, but with the head. The idea of this evolution is in a way a representation of time. However, since Catalano did not fill in the middle of the body, we can imply there is still more time to evolve (into perhaps another sculpture). Catalano purposely created this emptiness making us questions whether the figure is filling out, or deteriorating. Either way, this give it a mysterious beauty created through intentional emptiness. Though *Winged Victory of Samothrace* uses negative space as well, it is used to create a different aesthetic.

2. Catalano, Bruno. *Fragments*. 2016. Bronze. Modus Art Gallery, Paris.





### *Giovanni*

Very similar to *Fragments*, this is another Bruno Catalano piece. One difference to note, however, is that this is only one figure with missing pieces, which gives us a different meaning as compared to three figures. This piece feels as though he has lost a piece of himself and he is traveling to find it. Whereas *Fragments* looked like the person was growing into themselves. The element of negative space is why this piece would fit into intentional emptiness. However, the difference between this piece and *Winged Victory of Samothrace* is that these missing elements are purposeful and give it a different kind of aesthetic. Where one may read *Winged Victory of Samothrace* as wise, this piece reads as lost.

3. Catalano, Bruno. *Giovanni*. 2016. Bronze. Bruxelles Gallery, Paris.



### *The Dying Gaul*

According to Violaine Boutet de Monvel, *The Dying Gaul* was inspired by a Hellenistic sculpture (same period as *Winged Victory of Samothrace*). According to Monvel, "Daniel Arsham has always been fascinated with the diagrams one can find below reassembled sculptures in museums, which show the portions of the figures that were found and also those that were reconstructed by conservators. To add to the mystery of his fictional archeology, he intentionally leaves these kinds of breaks within his final casts." Therefore, this artist mixed both the accidental emptiness that he finds in his archeological digs, with intentional emptiness in his final execution. This is a perfect piece to tie the exhibition together because it gives a sense of what this theme can do to the aesthetic *and* the meaning of a sculpture.

4. Arsham, Daniel. *The Dying Gaul*. 2015. *Selenite, hydrostone*. Galerie Perrontin, Hong Kong.

Thank you for coming  
to this exhibition.

## Works Cited

- "Boutet De Monvel, Violaine. "Galerie Perrotin 2015." *Galerie Perrotin 2015*. Galerie Perrotin, n.d. Web. 01 Mar. 2017
- "Bruno Catalano." *Galleries Bartoux*. Galleries Bartoux, n.d. Web. 15 Feb. 2017.
- Hamiaux (M.) , Laugier (L.) and Martinez (J.-L.) Eds *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*. Paris: Musée du Louvre and Somogy, 2015. Pp. 197.