



The Monumental Weight of Michael Heizer

David Behringer



Installation view, 2022

Michael Heizer is a legend. His name carries so much weight that I hold my breath before I round the corner of any museum where he's featured. His "negative sculptures" at Dia Beacon terrify and tempt me while "Levitated Mass" at LACMA in Los Angeles dares visitors to walk under a 340-ton boulder. Heizer's 50-years-in-the-making sculpture "City" will be one of the largest sculptures ever built when it's completed. You *feel* Michael Heizer's sculptures in your gut, and this current exhibition of new sculpture is no exception at Gagosian Gallery in New York.



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Gagosian Gallery holds five new sculptures from Michael Heizer's "Rock/Steel series," created in his Nevada studio over a 4-year period. Each sculpture is an interaction between a 14-23 ton boulder extracted from a quarry in Riverside, California, and a pair of huge interlocking steel polygons. In total, each sculpture weighs 27-40 tons.



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Beyond the play of danger and lyrical beauty, each sculpture is a paradox of weight. Heizer has the unique ability to transmit the gravity of extreme mass. Though there are larger boulders in Central Park, none feel as heavy as these.

But that weight is in contrast with the visual “lightness” of the steel. The flat surfaces neither bend nor buckle under the rocks and barely touch the floor. The pairing of those two opposites is as beautiful as it is unsettling. I’m entranced and nervous, as if circling a sleeping beast.



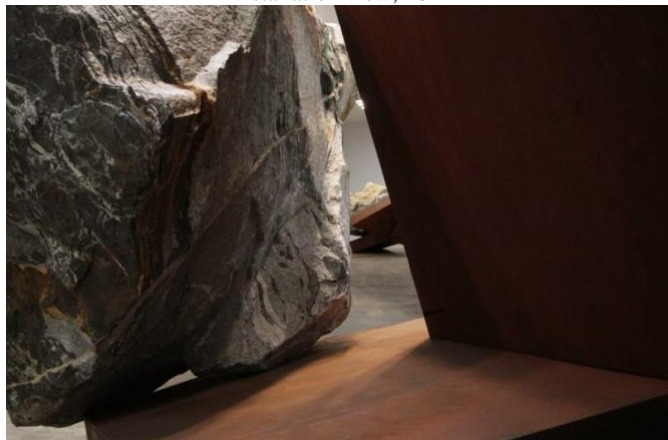
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The exhibition is on view at [Gagosian Gallery](#) through April 16th. Visit, stay, and circle each work to experience the play of forms, mass, material, and balance. If you're new to Heizer, I highly recommend watching [this documentary](#) about the journey of the aforementioned 340-ton-boulder in Los Angeles in 2012. Here's the trailer:

What: [Michael Heizer](#)

Where: [Gagosian Gallery](#), 21st St, New York, NY

When: March 3 – April 16, 2022

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