

NEW PUBLIC SCULPTURE BY NAOMI PRESS IN CAVENDISH SQUARE, WESTMINSTER, LONDON

12th March 2012

On 12th March 2012 Westminster City Council will unveil a new work by internationally renowned artist Naomi Press. Standing at over three metres tall, *Solo II*'s installation in Cavendish Square follows on from the success of Press's acclaimed solo retrospective in London at Bermondsey Project Space in October 2011.

The installation forms part of Westminster Council's City of Sculpture festival to promote public art in the capital. Launched in 2011, the project will transform the city into an open air gallery as part of the build up to the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games and Diamond Jubilee.



Historically associated with the city's cultural elite, eminent figures who have lived or worked in Cavendish Square include the sculptor, Robert William Siever, and Dame Ninette de Valois, one of the founders of the Royal Ballet company. Press, who has exhibited internationally in New York, Johannesburg and Cape Town, has herself been a resident of Westminster since 2001.

Esteemed art historian and critic Edward Lucie-Smith, who curated Naomi Press's exhibition in London in October 2011, describes the artist as "a major Modernist sculptor with close connections, personal as well as artistic, to the fruitful alliance between British and American sculpture fostered by Clement Greenberg." Of her work he has commented: "A particular point of interest in her sculpture is its gestural forms which reflect Press's early training as a dancer (something that would surely have pleased Ninette de Valois)".

Cavendish Square's wide spectrum of artistic heritage is particularly relevant to Press. As a young girl Press's passion was for ballet. She states that the "bending and soaring steel of *Solo II* recalls the early excitement I experienced in dance". Since living in Westminster, Press's work has increasingly reflected the influence of the city. Her works in English heritage brick and terracotta, begun in 2000, show the influence of London's elaborate red-brick buildings; similarly her recent work in silvered bronze is inspired by London as a centre of the world of fashion. On the occasion of her recent London exhibition, curator and critic Robert Metzger wrote: "Her dazzling rich work in the present exhibition seems to have been shaped by the wind... Her tenacious determination to continuously explore and expand her materials and technique is what sets her apart from her peers." *Solo II* demonstrates her ease working with diverse materials in a variety of styles. In particular she praises stainless steel's "hardness and durability, alongside its reflective appearance, here brought to a high mirror finish".

The work is not only a celebration of Press's artistic journey but is also testament to the influential figures who have impacted her career. During a lecture tour in the early 1980's Press met Clement Greenberg who became her close friend and mentor. Through Greenberg,

Press met other practitioners of her art such as Anthony Caro as well as the painters Helen Frankenthaler and Kenneth Noland. “Clem encouraged my work in steel,” Press says “and it was through his eyes that I was exposed to the greatest sculptors of the 20th Century, David Smith and Anthony Caro.”

Cllr Robert Davis, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for the Built Environment said:

“Westminster City Council’s City of Sculpture festival has been a fantastic success, bringing some of the most exciting and imaginative pieces of art into the capital for the public to engage with. I am delighted that this latest addition by Naomi Press will be exhibited in Westminster’s Cavendish Square for all to enjoy.”

Solo II will be displayed to the public from 12th March 2012 and will remain on view through the Olympic Games.

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