37 – Winged Victory of Samothrace

Hellenistic Greek. 190 BCE. Marble


- Also called Nike of Samothrace
- One of the most celebrated sculptures of the world
- Discovered in 1863
- 8 ft. high
- not to honor the goddess Nike (victory) – but to honor a sea battle!
- It conveys a sense of action and triumph as well as portraying artful flowing drapery, as though the goddess was descending to alight upon the prow of a ship.
- Same time and similar traits of the Laocoön group (see this artwork!)
- Right arm (missing) was believed to have been raised, cupped around her mouth, to shout “Victory”
- Head is missing
- 1950 – the right hand was found – no fingers
- scholars believe it was meant to be seen ¾ on the left (due to the finishing on the different sides – degree of finishing)
- partial inscription: “Rhodios” – commissioned to celebrate a naval victory by Rhodes, at the time the most powerful maritime state in the Aegean (weak)
- the sculptor is thought to be Pythokritos of Rhodes. (weak)
- Found on the Island of Samothrace
- Pedestal evidence sets the date . . .
- Parallels with figures and drapery from the Pergamon altar (# 38) seem strong
- Many copies
- Influenced 1913 sculpture Unique Forms of Continuity in Space, Umberto Boccioni (at MoMA)