



When Sam Spiczka was growing up on his parents' farm in Minnesota, he liked to walk the fields, especially in winter. One day, as he tells it, he found the skeleton of a boar "weathered and whitened by the sun," dug it out of a bramble patch, and stored it in a cardboard box. He treasured these bones, which were like "beautiful jewels—natural, physical memories of what was." Today,

Spiczka makes sculpture on the family farm and says that he got the most useful part of his education there, looking at the ground, collecting what he found, and helping in his father's metal shop, where he learned how to weld young and absorbed the family work ethic.

Spiczka's constructed steel and wood sculptures marry organic form to geometric structure. Animal bone shapes at a variety of scales comprise the core of each sculpture. Spiczka often combines bone forms with the dodecahedron, a twelve-sided polygon whose every side is a pentagon. Ancient Greece equated the dodecahedron with the stuff of which the constellations and heavens are made. It's one of the five Platonic solids—and the Greeks called it the most beautiful of forms.

*Daedalus* (2005) is a 7-foot-high, vertical wall-mounted construction in Cor-Ten steel, stainless steel, and wood. At its top is a shoulder blade form with the center cut out. The middle, which projects 18 inches from the wall, is a dodecahedron. A tail-like string of bone forms points downward at the bottom end.

Spiczka designed *Daedalus* on paper, then constructed the dodecahedron from lengths of wood, flat metal sheet for the connecting brackets, and stainless steel bolts whose presence suggests how it was assembled. He fabricated the bone forms by bending and welding an outline framework of half-inch steel rod, then filled this in with shorter lengths of rod until the spaces between the rods were small enough so he could cover them with steel plates.

Cutting pieces of plate to fit, he pressed and welded them onto the framework, welded the plate edges together, and ground down the seams. This gave him a metal surface whose irregularities reveal the armature of rods beneath. Weathering rusts the sculpture such that people think it's carved from wood. *Agamemnon* is a powerful,



EXHIBITION: *Daedalus*, 2005. Cor-ten steel, stainless steel, wood, 7 x 3 1/2 x 1 1/2 ft.; *Daedalus* (detail).