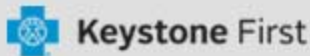




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Lifestyles

Malcolm X inspired sculptures come to Art Museum

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Posted: Sunday, July 7, 2013 12:00 am

Bobbi Booker | 0 comments



For more than four decades, Barbara Chase-Riboud has integrated mediums and materials in uniquely expressive ways to create a remarkable body of literary and visual arts. This fall, the Philadelphia Museum of Art will present the first comprehensive survey of her iconic "Malcolm X" steles.

Chase-Riboud's sculptures dedicated to Malcolm X have been likened to contemporary interpretations of the steles erected in various parts of the ancient world to commemorate important people and events.

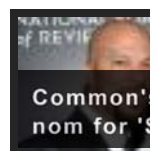
Cast from cut and folded sheets of wax, the sculptures combine bronze, manipulated into undulating folds and crevices, with knotted and braided silk and wool fiber. This expressive melding of forms and materials was explained using an illustrated press presentation in New York City where PMA Exhibition Assistant John Vick reviewed the chronology of the artist's life, career and body of work.

"It is an exhibition that will be in two of our spacious

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Barbara Chase-Riboud's "Malcolm X #10, 2007." — Photo/Barbara Chase-Riboud

galleries in the heart of our Modern and Contemporary Collections. It is an exhibition that is the artist's first major exhibit in over a decade, and the first ever to focus on her groundbreaking series of sculptures dedicated to the civil rights leader Malcolm X. Now, one of these works was acquired by the Museum in 2001, 'Malcolm X #3 (1969),' represents her signature style of

working, which she developed in Paris in the late 1960s.

To make these works, she takes these large sheets of wax and folds them together, and sort of cuts them and sutures them together with hot knives and various instruments; cast them in bronze at a foundry in Milan; rigs them up on this steel scaffolding and then beneath them hangs these invariably wool, silk or synthetic material, or 'fiber skirts' — and that's a term she sometimes use to describe them — below. The ultimate effect when that is impressive when you see these in person — and they do stand some 10-feet tall — is an effect that suggests this metamorphosis of materials and an integration of seemingly opposite or conflicting qualities, themes or ideas."

The artist developed the first four sculptures in this series in 1969, inspired by the Civil Rights Movement and her political and personal experiences living in France and traveling to North Africa, China and the Soviet Union. Chase-Riboud returned to the series in 2003 and again in 2007 and 2008, creating a total of nine additional works. With related sculptures and drawings, the exhibition brings together more than 40 works from the United States and Europe in the artist's first solo museum exhibition in more than 10 years.

Born in Philadelphia and educated at the Philadelphia High School for Girls, Temple University's Tyler School of Art, and the Yale University School of Design and Architecture, Chase-Riboud has lived in Paris since 1961.

She is an internationally acclaimed visual artist, who is also an award-winning poet and writer, most notably known for the 1979 historical novel, "Sally Hemings." In 1996, she was knighted as Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. The Museum will offer a poetry reading with Barbara Chase-Riboud on the evening of Sept. 11, 2013, at 6:30 p.m.

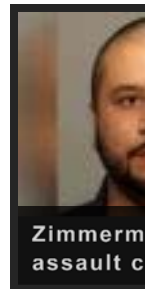
"Barbara Chase-Riboud: The Malcom X Steles" will be on exhibit from Sept. 14–Dec. 8 in the Modern and Contemporary Galleries of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2600 Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

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