

# INSIDE NEW YORK's 'Best Picks'

By Joan H. Allen, Editor



## Barbara Chase-Riboud - Malcolm X: Complete, A Major Art Exhibit!



**Barbara Chase-Riboud with Malcolm #15, #16 and #17**  
Photo credit: Grant Delin; Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York



**Joan H. Allen, Challenge Editor and INSIDE NEW YORK host and Barbara Chase-Riboud**  
Photo credit: Donald Holifield



**Barbara Chase-Riboud at her home/studio "La Chenillère" in Pontlevoy, France, 1969**  
Photo credit: © Marc Riboud and © Barbara Chase-Riboud; Courtesy of Barbara Chase-Riboud papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University

It has taken 50 years and it's now complete. Barbara Chase-Riboud—Malcolm X: Complete, an exhibition celebrating her series of monumental bronze and fiber sculptures that the artist has created over the last half-century in honor of the slain human rights leader has opened at the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery. The exhibition is her second large-scale solo show at the gallery.

"It's epic because it stretches from the first Malcolm X steles which I did in 1969 to the last five and the whole suite is 20," Barbara Chase-Riboud told INSIDE NEW YORK. For over five decades, Chase-Riboud has created abstract art with a deep and nuanced understanding of history, identity, and a sense of place. Her celebrated work operates on several dichotomies that have become central to her practice: hard/soft, male/female, flat/three-dimensional, Western/non-Western, stable/fluid, figurative/abstract, powerful/delicate, brutal/beautiful, violence/harmony. In 1958, she developed her own particular innovation on the historical direct lost-wax method of casting bronze sculpture. Creating thin sheets



**Joan H. Allen and Barbara Chase-Riboud looking at one of her sculptures in the exhibit, Barbara Chase-Riboud - Malcolm X: Complete at the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery.**

of wax that she could bend, fold, meld, or sever, she developed singular models that she would then bring to a local foundry for casting. This new approach to a centuries-old process enabled her to produce large-scale sculptures comprised of ribbons of bronze and aluminum. In 1967, she added fiber to these metal elements, devising the seemingly paradoxical works for which she is most renowned — sculptures of cast metal resting on supports hidden by cascading skeins of silk or wool so that the fibers appear to support the metal. In 1969, Chase-

Riboud created Monument to Malcolm X: Complete, a series of 7 Américains de Paris show held at the Galerie Air France in Manhattan. This work, as art historian Pellom McDaniels writes: "marked the arrival of her signature style. It appeared to represent a fallen robe or garment on a surface [reminiscent of] marble...The composition and presentation reached back to Chase-Riboud's observations of the reclining Buddha...in China that she described as 'beautifully calculated pattern of flat overlapping folds that are incised as drawing rather than carved as

sculpture." The idea to develop a series of steles in tribute to Malcolm X—who was assassinated in New York City on February 21, 1965—was sparked in response to the energy and political/cultural discourse Chase-Riboud experienced in the summer of 1969 at the Pan-African Cultural Festival. Barbara Chase-Riboud—Malcolm X: Complete will be the first time that 14 of the 20 steles are shown together. Chase-Riboud's frequent return to Malcolm X as a subject over the past 50 years is an indication of his continued relevance for our contemporary



**Malcolm X #17, 2016, polished bronze and silk, 92" x 41" x 36" / 233.7 x 104.1 x 91.4 cm**  
Photo credit: Joshua Nefsky; Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York

world. Although the series of steles may be complete, the work undertaken by Malcolm X and other leaders in the global struggle for human and civil rights is far from being so. This exhibition is not only a contribution to the preservation of the memory of Malcolm X but also an acknowledgment of the push for global justice that he continues to inspire. INSIDE NEW YORK will broadcast a portion of our exclusive interview with Barbara Chase-Riboud, next Saturday, October 7th at 8:30 p.m. and Monday at 11:30 a.m. on MNN5 on TWC 1993 and MNN2 (TWC 56, RCN 83, FIOS 34) on MNN.org and Livestream. Barbara Chase-Riboud - Malcolm X: Complete will be on exhibit through November 4th at Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 100 11th Avenue (at 19th Street) New York.