

Marlborough

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MAGDALENA ABAKANOWICZ: SCULPTURE

MARLBOROUGH CHELSEA

MARCH 25-APRIL 24, 2010

The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce that an exhibition of work by renowned Polish sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz will open at Marlborough Chelsea on March 25, 2010. This show, her first in New York since 2005, will include work in aluminum, bronze, burlap and plaster, and follows recent solo exhibitions at the Palacio de Cristal, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid and Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, Valencia, both in 2008, and the Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro, Milan, in 2009. Several works will be on display in the 'Energy and Process' wing at the Tate Modern for the duration of 2010.

Abakanowicz is recognized as one of the most potent and unique voices in contemporary art with a distinct sculptural vocabulary that expresses a philosophical quest.

Abakanowicz's exhibition will include fifteen works from the new cycle *Anatomy* in which she has arranged single and multiple sculptures of human limbs formed in burlap – arms, hands, legs and feet – onto wood beams supported by steel armatures. *Anatomy 22*, 2009 (32 ¾ x 14 ¾ x 10 ¼ in.) depicts three delicate hands with fingers curved in and placed on a wood block. *Anatomy 18*, 2009 (48 x 27 ½ x 11 ½ in.) includes four legs with knees slightly bent through the top of the thigh that stand firmly on a wood beam. These sculptures are at once beautiful and unsettling, reminders of the fragile nature of the human condition.

Also included will be three life-size figures in cast aluminum and eight large figures in plaster and wood, ranging in height from five to almost nine feet. An example of the former is *Armament*, 2009 (64 ¼ x 32 ½ x 29 ½ in.), wherein a headless figure, body impressed with beams or slats, is seated on a chair, legs dangling above the floor. In addition to this group, a series of four bronze sculptures, entitled *Anonim 1* (19 x 8 x 11 ¼ in.) through *Anonim 4* (19 ½ x 9 x 10 ½ in.), depict human heads on long necks and recall her cycle *Anonymous Portraits*, 1989-90, made of cotton, resin, sand and wood. The show will also include three tall sculptures of birds in flight, soaring high on steel poles, that capture a magnificent feeling of lightness and energy, yet they are mutant, with distinct welded seams. As the artist has written, "Birds are for me just shapes from which I select a bit of their features... My imagination doesn't reproduce, but produces forms which are not needed in the world of nature, as they don't fulfill functions of creatures alive, growing and dying." (*Working Process e Non Solo*, Collezione Gori, 2002).

The art of Abakanowicz stands out as a major achievement because of its timeless gestalt, its power to invoke deep feeling, and its unique use of figural form as the embodiment of a visionary philosophy. Robert Hughes in *Time* magazine referred to its "dark vision of primal myth." Both Barbara Rose (*Magdalena Abakanowicz*, Harry N. Abrams, 1994) and Michael Brenson have written at length on the interpretation of her work. Brenson has said she has one of the most original minds he has encountered in an artist and Rose has written that "She is a shaman who receives and transmits messages in a visual language that is more universal than words."

Abakanowicz has had over 150 solo exhibitions in Europe, North and South America, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. She has had major shows at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Jardins du Palais Royal in Paris and the Muzeum Narodowe in Poznan. Among numerous prizes and distinctions Abakanowicz has received seven honorary doctorates from universities in Europe and the United States as well as the Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from France. She was also awarded the prestigious International Sculpture Center's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005.

In the past twenty years Abakanowicz has developed a number of site-specific sculpture installations that incorporate multiple figures or elements of increased scaled that suit her particular objectives in those environments. Among these are *Negev* at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 1987; *Space of Dragon*, Olympic Park, Seoul, South Korea, 1985; *Becalmed Beings*, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan, 1993; *Space of Unknown Growth*, Europos Parkas, Lithuania, 1997-98; *Unrecognized*, Citadel Park, Poznan, Poland, 2002; *Space of Stone*, Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, New Jersey, 2003 and, most recently, *Agora*, a sculptural group comprised of 106 unique cast-iron figures measuring over nine-feet tall that was permanently installed in Chicago's Grant Park in 2006.

Abakanowicz's work can be found in numerable public collections including the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Ludwig Museum, Cologne; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Museum of Modern Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; National Gallery of Art, Washington and the Sezon Museum, Tokyo, among others.

An illustrated catalogue will be available at the time of the exhibition.

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