

# Marlborough

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## CHAKAIA BOOKER *RECENT WORK, 2003-2009* MARLBOROUGH CHELSEA: APRIL 30-MAY 30, 2009

The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce that a major exhibition of recent works by Chakaia Booker will open at Marlborough Chelsea, 545 West 25th Street, on April 30 and continue through May 30, 2009. This will be the artist's third solo exhibition at Marlborough Chelsea.

Over the past ten years, Chakaia Booker has gained significant acclaim and support from critics, museum curators and directors and art collectors for her highly expressive, socially evocative sculptures made principally from rubber tires. With good humor Booker has proclaimed herself to be the "Rubber Queen." Her use of rubber as a trademark sculptural material began in the mid-1990s and she has since recycled countless Goodyears, Firestones and Michelins into highly expressive sculptures.

Regarding her work Booker recently stated: "As a conceptual analogy, I usually start with the rubber tire itself. It's about mobility, growth. They've used it on the moon. In a large way, it's our method of communication. For example, a wall or relief using old tires suggests archaeological finds and the deciphering of patterns and textures into new languages or new symbols. The tire-making industry says that the patterns in the tires function to "wick away water" in wet weather. But where did the idea come from? Where does information begin? These same patterns may have been a means of communication some time in the past; they may translate into a way of writing, a language or physical tool that actually performs. Something of an analogy for this can be seen in the translation of pictographs into jewelry. My intention is to translate materials into imagery that will stimulate people to consider themselves as a part of their environment—one piece of it. Whether I use an architectural format or something to look at, I believe art should dialogue with viewers.

As Grace Glueck stated in her *New York Times* review of Chakaia Booker's 2002 exhibition at Marlborough Chelsea: "Old tires never die, but in Ms. Booker's hands they become pure poetry."

The exhibition will feature 13 sculptures in the artist's signature medium of sliced, cut and reconstructed rubber and rubber tires, and will showcase the complete range of Booker's formats, including pedestal and totem pieces, wall-mounted reliefs, and her most recent large-scale freestanding works. The exhibition will include such seminal works as 2003's dramatically gestural wall relief *Twist of Fate*; 2006's *Conversion*, an exuberant work that pushes both the material and means of construction to new highly expressive extremes; and 2007's *Muse*, whose seemingly serene organic shapes flow, mix and fall as if propelled by Miles Davis' muted trumpet pushing out "In A Silent Way." At 201-inches-long *The Fatality of Hope* from 2007 will also be shown.

Highlights of the exhibition include the 2008 larger scale sculptures *One Way* and *Holler*, both of which were recently exhibited outdoors as part of *Chakaia Booker: Mass Transit*, a public art installation in downtown Indianapolis, Indiana. At an imposing 8-foot tall, *Holler's* protruding slices of mixed rubber stack one on top the other forming feverishly intense patterns that define forcefully undulating forms. By contrast, the 9-foot tall

*One Way* is composed of sinuous curves that seem to allude to figurative forms or gestures.

In her recent essay on Booker's work for the Katonah Art Museum, NY, Lowery Sims points out that "Booker's ambition and achievement locates her in the class of sculptors such as Louise Nevelson, Ursula von Rydingsvard or Nancy Rubin. And her working method aligns her with their distinctively materialist approach to their work. The story of Booker's initial engagement with tires is by now urban history: how she was able to take advantage of discarded tires that littered the landscape of the New York City. This relegates them to what this writer has described as 'Rumpelstilskin's Gold' - something of value created out of nothing."

Born in Newark, New Jersey in 1953, Chakaia Booker realized her interest in art through her observation and participation in the textile work of her grandmother and sister. Her earliest works were in the form of utilitarian pottery and woven baskets and she soon incorporated a vast variety of found objects and raw materials in her aesthetic practice. Booker's formal education, in sociology, was completed at Rutgers University in 1976 and later at the City College of New York, where she earned an MFA in 1993. The artist lives and works in Manhattan and Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Chakaia Booker has exhibited both nationally and internationally. Recent exhibitions of her sculpture include 2006's *Forefront: Chakaia Booker* at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; 2008's *Rubber Made: Sculpture by Chakaia Booker* at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO; 2008-2009's *Chakaia Booker: Mass Transit*, a public art installation in downtown Indianapolis, IN commissioned by the Arts Council of Indianapolis that is her largest outdoor urban exhibition thus far; and 2008-9's *Inside Out* at the Elmhurst Art Museum, Chicago, Illinois. An exhibition of Chakaia Booker's work will be held at the Katonah Museum of Art, New York, from May 2 through October 4, 2009. Recent group exhibitions include The Metropolitan Museum's *Provocative Visions: Race and Identity – Selections from the Permanent Collection, 2008-2009* and *Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary*, Museum of Arts & Design, New York, 2008.

Booker was a 2002 recipient of the prestigious Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award, and a 2005 recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in New York, NY.

Booker's work can be found in numerous public collections, including the Birmingham Museum of Art, AL; Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, Grand Rapids, MI; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington, DC; Neuberger Museum of Art, State University of New York, Purchase, NY; The Newark Museum, NJ; New Orleans Museum of Art, LA; The New School for Social Research, New York, NY; Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH; Queens Museum of Art, NY; Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, NY; and The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY.

An illustrated catalogue, with an essay by Lowery Sims, will accompany this exhibition.

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