

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

Photo credit: Donald Holifield

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.