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***MATERIAL GIRLS* EXHIBITION INTRIGUES, AMAZES AND INSPIRES
AT REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM**

May 12, 2011 (BALTIMORE, MD) — Outside the front entrance of the museum sits *Vortex*, a large-sized piece of art made of volcanic stone, concrete, steel and smalti glass, by artist Martha Jackson Jarvis. This amazing sculpture is representative of the three-dimensional works in the *Material Girls: Contemporary Black Women Artists* exhibition at the **Reginald F. Lewis Museum on view until October 16**. Larger than life, eco-friendly, non-traditional and intriguing describe the works of eight women artists who shaped 38 artistic creations using a myriad of media. The artists use beads, glass, plastic combs, rubber tires, human hair, stone and more to produce innovative creations that amaze and intrigue.

Works on view range from intimate, handcrafted beadwork to oversized sculptures made of industrial materials weighing over 1,000 pounds. A new addition to the exhibition is a **touch panel** that allows visitors to touch and feel some of the materials used in the exhibition.

Chakaia Booker, Sonya Clark, Torkwase Dyson, Maya Freelon Asante, Maren Hassinger, Martha Jackson Jarvis, Joyce J. Scott and Renée Stout make up the impressive lineup of artists in *Material Girls*. Based in Baltimore, Virginia, New York and Washington D.C., these talented artists are at varying points in their careers.

“There is an incredible energy in the materials these artists use,” says exhibition curator Dr. Michelle Joan Wilkinson. “When I walk into the gallery, I am immediately transported to another place, and I lose myself in the dazzle of colors, textures, and ideas on display.”

Material Girls celebrates the traditions of skill, innovation and creativity practiced by black women, both past and present. Visitors of all ages will appreciate how artists can transform humble materials into magical sculptures. With many of the artists using recycled materials, the exhibition also reveals inventive ways to be environmentally responsible.

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“The choice of material and the narrative it tells inform the emotional response to the works as much as the form and content of the work itself.” —Bret McCabe, Arts Editor, *Baltimore City Paper*

“Whether with a West African-style mask festooned in car parts or a roll of ribbon with layers like rings on an ancient tree, the artists have all engaged three-dimensional space with their sculptures, installations and mixed-media assemblages.” —*Huffington Post*

“No matter which specific issue of material or material culture this group of artists explores, this exhibit clearly communicates the necessity for contemporary black women artists to push the boundaries of expression.” — Cara Ober, Arts Editor, *Urbanite Magazine*

“What makes this show so strong is that the materials are almost without exception used in the service of the artists’ meaning and intent....These women work in the traditions of their craftswomen make-do ancestors, who used the unwanted and discarded bits and pieces and they use the materials to achieve levels of power that would make their ancestors proud.” —Ellyn Weiss, *The Pink Line Project*

“These artists amply demonstrate that while they most certainly live in the material world, they are no mere inhabitants. They are its constructors and transformers.” —Lowery Stokes Sims, Foreword to *Material Girls* exhibition catalogue

“I wish I could live here.” —Visitor Comment, Reginald F. Lewis Museum

The *Material Girls* 48-page catalogue is available for purchase for \$20 in the museum shop during the run of the exhibition. For more information about the exhibition, go to <http://www.africanamericanculture.org/materialgirls.html>.

Material Girls - Artists

Chakaia Booker

A native of Newark, New Jersey, Booker is well-known for her use of recycled rubber tires as a medium for her art. Highly acclaimed by critics and the public, both nationally and internationally, the artist is the recipient of numerous awards. Her abstract sculptures engage environmental concerns as well as issues of class, race and gender. Booker was a featured artist in the Whitney Museum of American Art’s biennial exhibition in 2000.

Sonya Clark

Clark utilizes organic and commonplace objects—including human hair, plastic combs and thread—to create visually stunning references to the cultures of the African Diaspora. Clark is the recipient of many awards. Her work has been exhibited in over 200 venues in Europe, South America, Asia and Africa, and throughout museums in the United States. Clark is currently Chair of the Department of Craft/Material Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts.

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Torkwase Dyson

Based in Brooklyn NY, Dyson is currently a Visiting Artist at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her studio practice is informed by issues of sustainability, technology, architecture, materialism and imagination. She manipulates sound, water, cars, clothes, mirrors and earring cards into surreal works commenting on issues of environmentalism. Dyson participated in the 2010 biennial of the Whitney Museum of American Art. She is currently working on a sustainable public sculpture in Philadelphia, titled “We Glow In The Dark.”

Maya Freelon Asante

Freelon Asante’s work has been exhibited internationally and is included in the collections of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum and the U.S. State Department. Her latest work—a combination of tissue paper, printmaking, collage and sculpture—was hailed by the *International Review of African American Art* as “a vibrant, beating assemblage of color.” In 2010, she was awarded a residency at the C. Sylvia and Eddie C. Brown Studio at the Bromo Seltzer Art Tower in Baltimore.

Maren Hassinger

This Los Angeles native has mounted many solo exhibitions and participated in more than 120 group shows. Her work is included in public collections and in numerous catalogues. In her most well-known works, Hassinger sculpturally transforms industrial materials, such as wire cable, newspaper and plastic bags, into natural objects resembling trees and bushes. Hassinger is Director of the Rinehart School of Sculpture at the Maryland Institute College of Art, in Baltimore, where she has served since 1997.

Martha Jackson Jarvis

Three decades of this artist’s solid body of work with natural materials, including clay, glass, wood and stone, have resulted in numerous gallery and museum exhibitions nationwide. She has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Corcoran Gallery of Art and Maryland Art Place. Her sculptures and ceramics have also appeared in stirring group exhibitions at the South Carolina Botanical Garden and the African American Museum in Dallas.

Joyce J. Scott

One of the most significant artists living and working in Baltimore today, Joyce J. Scott was born in Baltimore and still lives in the neighborhood where she was raised. A sculptor, jeweler, printmaker, installation artist, performance artist and educator, she draws on influences as wide-ranging as her media: from African and Native American traditions to popular culture and racial stereotypes. Scott’s work focuses intently on expanding handcraft traditions in glass and beadwork.

Renée Stout

Stout grew up in Pittsburgh and in 1985 moved to Washington, D.C., where she began to explore the roots of her African American heritage. For her installations and mixed media assemblages, she looks to the culture and belief systems of African peoples and their descendants throughout the African Diaspora, as well as to the world and her immediate environment, for the inspiration to create works that encourage self-examination, self-empowerment and self-healing.

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Material Girls Exhibition Programs and Events

Sunday, June 12, 2 p.m.

Sundays @ 2 Films

“The Quilts of Gee’s Bend” (28 minutes)

This music-filled documentary narrated by women quilt makers introduces viewers to the fascinating world of this uniquely American art form.

Museum admission required.

Saturday, June 25, 1 p.m. & 2 p.m.

Dance Performance: Clothesline Muse

View visual arts interpreted through dance as Philly-based *Kariamou & Company: Traditions* performs a work inspired by *Material Girls* exhibition artist Maya Freelon Asante, who creates art using tissue paper.

Free admission (Part of Museum’s 6th Anniversary Celebrations)

Saturday, July 23, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Art Workshop: Mastering Beads with Joyce Scott

Construct a beadwork project with renowned *Material Girls* artist Joyce J. Scott and learn the peyote stitch and other stitching methods used in Joyce’s artwork. This workshop is open to all levels.

To register, please call (443) 263-1829. Cost: \$20 (for supplies and materials).

Saturday, August 13, Noon

Art Workshop: Recyclable Art and Metal (Ages 9 – 12)

Create an aluminum soda bug sculpture using recycled soda cans! Participants are asked to bring two empty soda cans for this project.

Museum admission required.

Saturday, August 20, 3 p.m.

The Art of Adornment: Transformation through Textiles

Celebrate the art of adornment with Januwa Moja, an artist and master designer with more than 40 years of experience creating wearable art. Come and view her vibrant, artistic fashions.

Museum admission required.

ABOUT REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM

Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture is Baltimore’s premier facility highlighting the history and accomplishments of African Americans with a special focus on Maryland’s African American community. A Smithsonian affiliate, the museum is the East Coast’s largest African American museum occupying an 82,000 square-foot facility with ample permanent and special exhibition space, interactive learning environments, auditorium, resource center, oral history recording studio, museum shop, café, classrooms, meeting rooms, outside terrace and reception areas. The museum is located near Baltimore’s Inner Harbor at the corner of Pratt and President Streets. The museum is also accessible on Baltimore’s Charm City Circulator Orange and Green Routes. For more information, please call 443-263-1800 or visit the museum’s website at www.AfricanAmericanCulture.org.

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