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**BLACK WOMEN PRESENT THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORKS IN *MATERIAL GIRLS* EXHIBITION AT REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM**

**January 25, 2011 (BALTIMORE, MD)** — Thirty-eight three-dimensional works of art by eight black women artists will be featured in the special exhibition, *Material Girls: Contemporary Black Women Artists* at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum from **February 12 to October 16, 2011**. This exhibition celebrates the traditions of skill, innovation and creativity practiced by black women, both past and present.

*Material Girls* features an impressive lineup of artists at varying points in their careers including Chakaia Booker, Sonya Clark, Torkwase Dyson, Maya Freelon Asante, Maren Hassinger, Martha Jackson Jarvis, Joyce J. Scott and Renée Stout. This exhibition highlights the materials they prod, ply and piece together in works that play on unique cultural meanings, personal memories and social agendas.

Curated by Dr. Michelle Joan Wilkinson, Director of Collections and Exhibitions at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, *Material Girls* explores the intersection of art and craft with works of art made with both traditional mediums—wood, clay, paper and glass—and non-traditional ones—rubber tires, plastic bags, model cars and human hair. Works on view feature intimate, handcrafted beadwork to monumental sculptures with industrial materials weighing over 1,000 pounds.

“The caliber and creativity of these artists is astounding,” notes Dr. Wilkinson. “Their sculptural works have a highly sensory appeal, ranging from the gleaming visual surfaces of hand blown glass to the coarse textures of volcanic stone. A key concern is environmental issues, and many of the artists use recycled materials in their works.”

“This original exhibition is a landmark moment in the museum’s history,” says Executive Director Dr. David Taft Terry. “*Material Girls* is a contemporary art exhibition that draws on the history of African American material culture. We are delighted to work with such an esteemed group of black women artists.”

## *Material Girls/2*

The *Material Girls* 48-page catalogue will be available for \$20 in the museum shop during the run of the exhibition.

### **Artist Biographies**

#### **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.

#### **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 currently 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.

***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](http://www.AfricanAmericanCulture.org).*

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