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Media Contacts:

Samantha McCoy

443-263-1815

mccoy@maamc.org

Cherrie Woods

443-263-1812

cherriew@maamc.org

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

November 15, 2010 (BALTIMORE, MD) — Eight contemporary black women create and display their three dimensional works of art in the special exhibition, *Material Girls: Contemporary Black Women Artists* at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum from February 11 to October 16, 2011. This exhibition celebrates the tradition of skill, innovation and creativity endemic to black women both past and present.

Over thirty-five pieces of art made with both traditional mediums—wood, paper and glass, and non-traditional ones—rubber, plastic, rocks, model cars and human hair, reveal the works of an impressive lineup of artists at varying points in their careers. The artists are Maya Freelon Asante, Chakaia Booker, Sonya Clark, Torkwase Dyson, Maren Hassinger, Martha Jackson-Jarvis, Joyce J. Scott and Renee 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.

The exhibition is loosely inspired by ideas in Alice Walker's seminal essay, "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens," about the artistic contributions of black women that go unnoticed. Walker traces the unsung creativity of women like her mother, whose passion for gardening was as much an "art" as Walker's prize-winning writing.

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. It depicts how contemporary black women artists have and continue to be on the cutting edge of artistic experimentation.

"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."

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“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.”

Artist Biographies

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.”

Chakaia Booker

A native of Newark, New Jersey, this artist received her BA in Sociology from Rutgers University in New Brunswick and went on to earn a Masters in Fine Arts from the City College of New York. Booker is well-known for her use of recycled rubber tires as a medium for her art, which has been highly acclaimed by critics and the public. Her abstract sculptures engage environmental concerns as well as issues of class, race and gender.

Sonya Clark

Clark utilizes organic and found objects to create visually stunning references to the cultures of the African Diaspora. Clark is a graduate of the Art Institute of Chicago and Cranbrook Academy of Art and a recipient of many awards including a Pollock Krasner. Her work has been exhibited in over 200 venues in Europe, South America, Asia and Africa, and throughout museums in the USA, including the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art (DC) and the Museum of Arts and Design (NY).

Torkwase Dyson

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

Maren Hassinger

This Los Angeles native has mounted many solo exhibitions and participated in more than 120 group shows. Her work is included in more than 34 catalogs and in the public collections of AT&T and Pittsburgh Airport. 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.

Martha Jackson-Jarvis

Three decades of this artist’s solid body of work 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 including “Where Nature and Culture Meet” at the South Carolina Botanical Garden and “Contained and Uncontained” at 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. Descended from generations of quilters and craft artisans, Scott is a multidimensional artist working in sculpture, jewelry, printmaking, installation and performance. She draws on influences as wide-ranging as her media: from African and Native American traditions to popular culture and racial stereotypes.

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.

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PRESS IMAGES



SONYA CLARK, *Plain Weave* (detail), 2008, plastic combs, thread.
Courtesy of the artist.



MAYA FREELON ASANTE, *Time Lapse*, 2006, Tissue paper and ink.
Courtesy of the artist.



RENÉE STOUT, *The Thinking Room*, 2006, Mixed media installation.
Courtesy of the artist and Hemphill Fine Arts.



MARTHA JACKSON-JARVIS, *Umbilicus*, 2006, Volcanic stone, glass, wood.
Courtesy of the artist.