

The Museum of Modern Art

ARTIST BIOS

BARBARA CHASE-RIBOUD (b. 1939, Philadelphia, PA)

Barbara Chase-Riboud was born in 1939 in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania, USA). Since 1960 she has lived and worked between Paris, Rome, and Milan. A sculptor, poet, and novelist, Chase-Riboud began her artistic training at the age of 7, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Fleisher Art Memorial. She was just sixteen when The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York acquired—[Reba](#) (c. 1953-54). She was formally trained at Temple University and Yale, where she was the first Black woman to earn an MFA from the Yale School of Architecture. During her time at the American Academy in Rome she created her first bronze sculptures, and held her first solo gallery shows, in Rome from 1957-1959. It was a transformational residency, during which she also visited Paris, Egypt, Greece, and Turkey, expanding her artistic horizons beyond the Western tradition. A singular artist, in 1958 she innovated on the historical lost wax method of casting bronze. She settled in Paris in 1961 and married French Magnum photographer Marc Riboud. In 1967 she added fiber to these elements, devising the paradoxical sculptures for which she is renowned – steles composed of cast bronze folds seemingly supported by skeins of silk and wool cords, braids and twists cascading to the floor.

Since 1958 her sculptures and drawings which often monumentalize “the invisibles of history” have been widely exhibited at public and private institutions around the world. She has presented solo exhibitions at the Berkeley Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art and La Verrière in Brussels. In 2022 two concurrent international retrospectives opened *Monumentale: The Bronzes* at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation in St Louis, Missouri and *Infinite Folds* currently on view at the Serpentine Galleries in London, UK. Her memoir “I Always Knew” published by Princeton University Press October 2022 is now available around the world.

Works by Chase-Riboud feature in the permanent collections of: Berkeley Art Museum (California); the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York); The Museum of Modern Art (New York); the Newark Museum (New Jersey); the New Orleans Museum of Art (Louisiana); the New York Historical Society Museum (New York); the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Pennsylvania); the Smithsonian African American Museum (Washington, D.C.); the Studio Museum in Harlem (New York); the Centre national des arts plastiques (Paris), The Alberto Giacometti Foundation, Paris.

A scale model for Africa Rising, Chase-Riboud's award winning 1997 US General Services Administration commission for the New York African Burial Ground will be publicly exhibited for the first time in the United States in The Encounter.

The recipient of numerous awards, she was knighted by the French government as *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* in 1996. In 2021, she was awarded the Simone and Cino Del Duca Foundation Grand Artistic Prize. In January of 2022 she received the Legion d'Honneur and months later was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award by the International Sculpture Center.

Chase-Riboud is also well known for her literary work. She published her first collection of poetry, *From Memphis & Peking*, to widespread critical acclaim in 1974 and received the Carl Sandburg Poetry prize as Best American Poet for *Portrait of a Nude Woman as Cleopatra*. Her first novel, *Sally Hemings*, was published in 1979, and received the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize as best novel by an American woman.

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI (1901-1966)

Born in Stampa, Switzerland, in 1901, Alberto Giacometti was the son of Giovanni Giacometti, a renowned post-impressionist painter. He was initiated into the visual arts in the studio of his father and made, at 14, his very first works: Still life with apples, an oil painting, and a sculpted bust of his brother Diego.

In 1922, Giacometti left to study in Paris and entered the Académie de la Grande-Chaumière, where he took classes with the sculptor Antoine Bourdelle. At that time, he drew from models and became interested in avant-garde compositions, the post-cubists, among others, and in African sculpture.

In 1929, he started a series of flat women that drew the attention of the surrealist art scene. In 1930, Giacometti joined André Breton's Surrealist movement. He created "Objects with a symbolical function" evoking ambivalent drives and became the sculptor per excellence of the group.

From 1935, he distanced himself from the Surrealist group and focused intensely on the question of the human figure that was to remain his main subject of research throughout his life. He resumed modelling after a model, searching the adequate representation of the human body. After having spent the war years in Switzerland, on his return to Paris, he developed his research and gained finally recognition, entering the Pierre Matisse Gallery (New York) and the Galerie Maeght (France). His favorite models were those who were at his side: Annette, whom he married in 1949, and Diego, his brother. Working from models, he aimed at rendering them as he saw them, in their ever-shifting aspect. At other times it was anonymous figures, placed on pedestals that isolate them from the ground, or placed in 'cages' that frame a virtual space. "Standing Women" appear already at the end of the 1940s. In 1956, he created an emblematic group of ten "Women of Venice" in painted plaster for the Venice Biennale.

In 1958, he was invited to submit a project for the square of the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York. He chose to retake, in large dimensions, the three motifs that had haunted his whole oeuvre since 1948: a standing female figure, a walking man and a head. In the end the monument was not installed in New York, but at the Venice Biennale in 1962, where it won the Grand Prix for Sculpture. After the success of his retrospectives in Zurich, Bale, London and New York (MoMA, 1965), Alberto Giacometti passed away in January 1966 at the hospital in Coire, Switzerland.