

BILL HODGES GALLERY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bill Hodges Gallery Announces First-Ever Sculpture Exhibition
Masters of Sculpture

529 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011

12 May – 31 August 2022



NEW YORK, NY, 4 May 2022 – Bill Hodges Gallery proudly announces its first exhibition devoted entirely to sculpture. This carefully curated exhibition, *Masters of Sculpture*, will draw from the gallery's more than 40 year collection, to display more than 150 years of Black history, from emancipation to the present day.

Many of the artworks in this exhibition have been displayed alongside works of other media, but never in a dedicated celebration of sculpture. Included are masterpieces by French sculptors Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux and Charles-Henri-Joseph Cordier, along with works by highly important African American masters Melvin Edwards, Richard Hunt, Willie Cole, and a host of others.

The gallery still retains its strength of collection in the flat or two-dimensional works, yet the collection of three-dimensional has grown over the years and we feel the time is now to showcase a special exhibition of works that are so often put on the back burner, sculpture. As

¹ Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, *Pour Quoinaitre Esclave*, 1868, Bronze, 13 ¾ x 8 ¾ x 7 in.

Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, *Pour Quoi Naitre Esclave*, 1868, Terracotta, 14 ¾ x 8 ¾ x 7 ½ in.

Charles-Henri-Joseph Cordier, *La Capresse des Colonies*, 1860s, Bronze, Brown Patina and Silver Gilt, 16 ½ x 10 ¾ x 5 ¼ in.

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sculptural work can sometimes produce a greater statement than painting, and can more readily represent or challenge the public's understanding of human, social, and natural phenomena, this exhibition is devoted to that challenge.

Two French masters, Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux and Charles Cordier are represented in this exhibition with their enduringly famous sculptures, 1868's *Pourquoi Naître Esclave!* and *La Capresse des Colonies* modeled in the 1860s. Some works of other materials and versions of these two are now on display in the groundbreaking exhibition [Fictions of Emancipation: Carpeaux Recast](#) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The juxtaposition of works by Carpeaux and Cordier in *Masters of Sculpture* is in the point of fact a re-examination of the depiction of Black figures that were portrayed by European artists in the post-emancipation period.



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The exhibition continues and contrasts these 19th-century works with a generous selection of sculptures by American contemporary masters. One of our most acclaimed pioneering abstract sculptors, Melvin Edwards works with found industrial objects like chains, nails and other such utilitarian tools into conglomerate hung sculptures, referencing the racial violence experienced by Black people around the world. In *Culture*, Edwards vertically stacks circles, rectangles, and a triangle into one form. Such abstract vocabulary allows for direct references to the subject matter – a personal story or history can be felt rather than just told, as is quite often the case of figurative works which directly communicate a narrative. Edwards uses abstraction to viscerally engage audiences in histories and discourses important to Black Americans.

On yet another note, Richard Hunt is included in this show with both museum-scale large works and smaller sculptures. *Model for Flight Forms*, from 2003, combines Hunt's interest in ancient styles with European and American modernism and African metalwork in a wing-like form and symbolizes the theme of flight. A model for the commissioned work at Midway International

² Melvin Edwards, *Culture*, 1988, Welded Stainless Steel, 61 x 37 x 18 in.

³ Richard Hunt, *Model for Flight Forms*, 2003, Cast Bronze, 17 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.

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Airport in Chicago, this maquette unites a variety of forms in an upward-sweeping composition that suggests the defiance of gravity, dynamism, and the wonder of flight. Its tendrils seem to depict the natural course of air itself, capturing nature's ineffable beauty in cast bronze; and it can be appreciated as an independent work of art.

Masters of Sculpture is above all a celebration of the human capacity to acknowledge incongruity and use it to powerfully ennobling effect. This exhibition also features works by Agustín Cárdenas, Richmond Barthé, Elizabeth Catlett, among others.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a forthcoming fully illustrated catalogue. To learn more about the exhibition and the catalogue, please contact: (212)333-2640 or info@billhodgesgallery.com.

Bill Hodges Gallery is located at 529 W. 20th Street, suite #10E, between 10th Avenue and 11th Avenue. Our closest subway stations are the A, C, or E, on 14th or 23rd St. & 8th Ave. stops. The gallery is open Monday to Friday from 11 AM – 6 PM. Saturday from 12:30 PM – 5:30 PM. Although we for the most part have dropped our mask mandate, we do ask you the viewer, proceed accordingly social distancing measures. Masks and hand sanitizer provided.

Fountain of the Observatory, featuring The Four Parts of the World Supporting the Celestial Sphere, 1867-74, Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux and Emanuel Frémlet. Bronze