



Cut from the Same Cloth

Chakaia Booker grew up amid female relatives who designed and sewed clothing. As a teenager, Booker refashioned store-bought clothing to accommodate her tall frame. This process also became a vehicle for self-expression. Today, the artist continues to wear unique, layered clothing and headdresses.



Pass the Buck, 2008

Take a closer look

Chakaia Booker's (b. 1953) primary artistic medium has evolved over time from fabric to tires. Despite their apparent dissimilarity, both materials are malleable and can be twisted, woven, or layered.



Photograph by Max Hirshfeld

In her own words

"In the mornings when I get up, I sculpt myself first. I myself am a sculpture and that continues on a daily basis. At the studio the process continues."

Who knew?

Booker's inspiration for this sculpture was Madam C. J. Walker, considered by many the first African American businesswoman and philanthropist. For the artist, this sculpture evokes the pursuit of success and giving back to society.

Chakaia Booker, *Pass the Buck*, 2008; Rubber tires and stainless steel, 102 x 96 x 84 inches; © Chakaia Booker, courtesy of Marlborough Gallery, New York; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth

The New York Avenue Sculpture Project: Chakaia Booker is funded by Medda Gudelsky; the Homer and Martha Gudelsky Foundation; and the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities.



Chakaia Booker

Shape Shifter



Shape Shifter, 2012

Take It Outside

Chakaia Booker (b. 1953) intended this sculpture for an outdoor setting, as she did for all the works on view in front of the museum. The openings within the spiral structure incorporate aspects of the urban setting into our visual experience of the artwork.

Take a closer look

Our understanding of outdoor sculptures like *Shape Shifter* can vary dramatically depending on weather and time of day. Such changing conditions draw attention to the diverse textures, tones, and colors of Booker's seemingly monochromatic works.

Something to talk about

Booker created *Shape Shifter* specifically for the New York Avenue Sculpture Project and named it only after it was installed. What do you think of her choice? What would you title it?

In her own words

"My work challenges the notion that tires are uniformly black. I want to encourage people to examine assumptions about color, patterns, textures, and functions.... Also, our assumptions about most subject matter, including people, their diversity, and the diversity of ideas and perceptions."

Chakaia Booker, *Shape Shifter*, 2012; Rubber tires and stainless steel, 192 x 102 x 78 inches; © Chakaia Booker, courtesy of Marlborough Gallery, New York; Photograph by Daniel Schwartz

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Tread Lightly

Chakaia Booker uses rubber tires supported by stainless steel to craft her large-scale, weighty works. Booker must function as both artist and engineer, considering questions of balance and durability throughout the creative process.



Take Out, 2008

Take a closer look

Chakaia Booker (b. 1953) uses design software early in her process to develop her ideas before creating a small-scale model. This maquette guides the construction of the final steel armature. Finally, Booker uses a range of saws and drills to manipulate tires into loops, knots, and folds before bolting, screwing, and riveting them to the armature.

In her own words

“My titles come to me before the process of creation begins, during the process, as the shipper...is snatching it out of my hands, or when my process is finished. There are no rules.”

Something to talk about

Booker’s titles often relate to the artwork’s shape and may suggest a theme or narrative, not provide specific interpretations. Where one viewer might see *Take Out* as a bird’s-eye view of an open Chinese take-out box, another might identify an empty frame. What ideas does the title *Take Out* suggest to you?

Chakaia Booker, *Take Out*, 2008; Rubber tires and stainless steel, 130 x 88 x 36 inches; © Chakaia Booker, courtesy of Marlborough Gallery, New York; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth

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