

Marlborough

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Magdalena Abakanowicz / Walking Figures **Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza**

The New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and the Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce that sculptures by the renowned Polish artist Magdalena Abakanowicz will be on view through September 2012 at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, at Second Avenue and 47th Street in Manhattan.

Abakanowicz is recognized as one of the most potent and unique voices in contemporary art with a distinct sculptural vocabulary that expresses a philosophical quest. The sculptures exhibited at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza are titled *Walking Figures*, 2009. This group of ten headless, armless bronze figures, each approximately 8 ½ feet tall, stands facing in one direction, with one foot forward, giving the impression of an advancing and forbidding army. The figures are all unique, as the intricately rippled surfaces differ on each, imparting individuality. Viewed from behind, the skin-like texture gives way to a smooth, concave surface, reminiscent of an empty husk. Dag Hammarskjöld's notable quote, "Never look down to test the ground before taking your next step; only he who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find the right road" seems a perfect conceptual foundation for the *Walking Figures* which are at once beautiful and unsettling, a reminder of the fragile nature of the human condition.

The power of Abakanowicz's art comes from its timeless presence, its ability to invoke deep feeling and the artist's unique use of figurative forms as the embodiment of a visionary philosophy. Robert Hughes in *Time* magazine referred to its "dark vision of primal myth." Both Barbara Rose (*Magdalena Abakanowicz*, Harry N. Abrams, 1994) and Michael Brenson have written at length on the interpretation of her work. Brenson has said she has one of the most original minds he has encountered in an artist and Rose has written that "She is a shaman who receives and transmits messages in a visual language that is more universal than words."

Abakanowicz has had over 150 solo exhibitions in Europe, North and South America, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. She has exhibited at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Jardins du Palais Royal in Paris and the Muzeum Narodowe in Poznan. Among numerous prizes and distinctions, Abakanowicz has received seven honorary doctorates from universities in Europe and the United States as well as the Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from France. She was also awarded the prestigious International Sculpture Center's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005.

In the past twenty years Abakanowicz has developed a number of site-specific sculpture installations that incorporate multiple figures or elements of increased scale. Among these are *Negev* at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 1987; *Space of Dragon*, Olympic Park, Seoul, South Korea, 1985; *Becalmed Beings*, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan, 1993; *Space of Unknown Growth*, Europos Parkas, Lithuania, 1997-98; *Unrecognized*, Citadel Park, Poznan, Poland, 2002; *Space of Stone*, Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, New Jersey, 2003 and, most recently, *Agora*, a sculptural group comprised of 106 unique cast-iron figures measuring over nine feet tall that was permanently installed in Chicago's Grant Park in 2006.

Abakanowicz's work can be found in numerous public collections including the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Ludwig Museum, Cologne; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Museum of Modern Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; National Gallery of Art, Washington and the Sezon Museum, Tokyo, among others.

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