



## Artist turns recycled rubber tires into new sculpture for ISU

**By Howard Greninger**  
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— As her creation hung from the grips of a tractor, nationally renowned artist Chakaia Booker made sure workers faced the sculpture in the correct direction before securing it to a concrete base Wednesday on the campus of Indiana State University. A dedication of the sculpture will be at 4 p.m. today at ISU's New Theater, 540 N. Seventh St. The sculpture transforms automobile tires into the form of a double eclipse, with an applied texture.

Booker said she will reveal the name of the sculpture during its dedication.

"I am very interested in texture. I am interested in movement and interested in form, so the sort of combination of the two that goes together brings out a lot of energy, similar to a painter," Booker said. "A painter has color and that color transforms into energy and my palette has the textures of the tires and I use that to help form the energy to help create the piece," Booker said.

"Each tire is different. There are some that are very, very soft, some that are very hard and everything in between," she said.

Booker designed the sculpture for the space, visiting ISU's campus last August.

"The seasons will change, which will make a huge difference" in the appearance of the sculpture, she said. "The sky quality and then the coolness of fall and colored leaves and winter will make it look different with ice crystals," she said.

While rubber tires are not an easy material to work with, Booker said she strives to push the material to new limits.

"Each year the tire companies create a different tire, so for me, it is having a new palette each time," Booker said. "Remember, tires used to be extremely small, and now they are almost waist-high because of the vehicles. It is an exciting material because it is extremely infinite. It is only to the level of your own imagination as far as where you can take it, so the limitation is only as far as how you want to push it, but it is limitless."

Booker was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1953. She has a bachelor's degree in sociology from Rutgers University (1976) and a master's of fine arts from The City College of New York (1993). Booker's work can be seen in several public collections throughout the U.S., including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bronx Museum of Art, Flint Institute of Arts in Michigan, Birmingham Museum of Art in Alabama and The Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College, Ohio.

Most recently, 10 of her works, some nearly 10 feet in height, have been featured

throughout downtown Indianapolis and at the Indianapolis Art Center's ARTSPARK in an exhibit that opened July 22, 2008 and will close April 1.

Mary Kramer, executive director of the Art Spaces, Inc.-Wabash Valley Outdoor Sculpture Collection, said Booker's sculpture is the third along Terre Haute's art corridor on Seventh Street and the first on the ISU campus. A second public art sculpture is already in the making to be placed in front of ISU's nearby new student recreation building.

A stainless steel outdoor piece called "Runner" is being made by artist Douglas Kornfeld of Cambridge, Mass, after a national search. That piece is expected to be completed by July, Kramer said.

A sculpture of Max Ehrmann, a Terre Haute poet and lawyer, is planned for Wabash Avenue and Seventh Street, expected in late 2009 or early 2010, Kramer said.

Booker's sculpture is a cooperative effort between Art Spaces and ISU's offices of Facilities Management, Permanent Art Collection, University Art Gallery and the ISU Recycle Center. The ISU Recycle Center paid the \$63,000 cost for Booker's sculpture and visit, Kramer said.

Kramer said Booker "is very well-known and I have followed her work for years, I am big fan of her. She is a very unique artist," Kramer said. "This is a great addition to both the ISU collection and the Art Spaces."

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