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Sanford Biggers, *Oracle*, 2020 at Rockefeller Center. Photo: Daniel Greer. Courtesy of Art Production Fund.

Sanford Biggers unveils monolithic sculpture at Rockefeller Plaza

By: Gabriella Angeleti
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A monumental bronze sculpture by the Harlem-based artist Sanford Biggers was unveiled this morning at Rockefeller Center. The work *Oracle* (2020) continues the artist's recent *Chimera* series of sculptures, which combine elements of African and ancient Greco-Roman sculpture to reference historical revisionism and the "white washing" of Classical sculptures that were once polychromatic, and the ways in which European nationalism influenced the aesthetic standard of the 20th century.

According to Biggers, the imposing 29 ft-tall sculpture fuses elements from various mythologies, including the ancient Temple of Zeus, the Luba sculpture tradition and elements of the Maasai religion. "The entire installation is based on mythology, narrative and mystery," Biggers says. "Rockefeller Center itself, as an architectural entity, is very much steeped in mythology and mystery."

The campus-wide exhibition, which has been organised by the Art Production Fund and Marianne Boesky, was slated to open last September but was pushed back due to the coronavirus pandemic. It also includes an expansive mural, flagpole designs, marble sculptures and video works displayed inside Rockefeller Center and on vitrines around the area. The works will be on view until 29 June, and there are plans to tour the centrepiece sculpture in the future.

The presentation follows the artist's retrospective *Codeswitch* at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, in which Biggers presented a series of sculptural works made from vintage quilts that represented the codex of hidden maps and messages that led enslaved Black people to free states. The maps created "a transgenerational conversation chronicling aspects of America", Biggers told *The Art Newspaper* in a previous interview. One of the quilts from the exhibition, which closed last month, is also on view in a vitrine at Rockefeller Plaza.