



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Nick Nobel

Landmarks External Affairs Coordinator

nobel@utexas.edu

512.232.5904 (o) | 512.809.0562 (m)

Landmarks to Celebrate Newest Public Art Work at The University of Texas: Michael Ray Charles' *(Forever Free) Ideas, Languages and Conversations*

Artist Q&A and reception to take place 15 October

Austin, Texas – 3 September 2015 – On 15 October 2015, Landmarks, the award-winning public art program of The University of Texas at Austin, will celebrate its latest installation: *(Forever Free) Ideas, Languages and Conversations* by artist Michael Ray Charles. Suspended in the atrium of the Gordon-White Building at 24th Street and Whitis Avenue, the sculpture features hundreds of crutches assembled into interconnected forms. A Q&A with the artist will be followed by a reception with music, food and drinks. The event is free to the public with [advance registration](#).

(Forever Free) Ideas, Languages and Conversations is a site-specific sculpture in the newly expanded Gordon-White Building—home to disciplines dedicated to studying the history and experience of minority cultures. Charles modified the design of the interior features of the atrium to emphasize the transition of the historical Geography building to the new addition, and created *Forever Free* as a focal element to celebrate the joining of many parts. By forming wheel-like shapes from bundled crutches, he renders them useless as supports while suggesting healing and mobility.

"With this remarkable installation of repurposed crutches," says Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, Associate Professor of American Art and Undergraduate Chair in the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania, "Michael Ray Charles has found a dynamic way to visualize the power of communal solidarity and social collectivity to overcome barriers to intellectual progress." Dr. Shaw will participate in the Q&A with the artist on 15 October.

The work of Michael Ray Charles explores the legacy of racial stereotypes through objects and the evolving nature of language. He is best known for his paintings, which appropriate derogatory images in order to highlight, mock and derail those stereotypes. He also makes use of found objects and materials as symbols of the challenges that minority communities face. Charles taught at The University of Texas at Austin for 21 years, and is currently professor of art at the University of Houston.

The Michael Ray Charles opening Q&A and reception is sponsored by Landmarks in collaboration with the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE), the Office of the Vice President for University Operations, the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies, and the Department of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies.

Additional information about Landmarks and Michael Ray Charles' *(Forever Free) Ideas, Languages and Conversations* can be found at the Landmarks website, <http://landmarks.utexas.edu>.

LANDMARKS

Michael Ray Charles' (*Forever Free*) Ideas, Languages and Conversations Q&A and Reception

Where: The University of Texas at Austin

Q&A:

T.S. Painter Hall Auditorium 3.02
24th Street and University Avenue
Austin, TX 78712

Reception:

Gordon-White Building
210 W 24th Street
Austin, TX 78712

When: Thursday, 15 October 2015

5:30 p.m. – Public Q&A with artist Michael Ray Charles and Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw at Painter Hall

6:30 p.m. – Reception at the Gordon-White Building

RSVP: www.landmarksrsvp.org

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ABOUT LANDMARKS

Landmarks is the award-winning public art program of The University of Texas at Austin. Its collection of thirty-seven modern and contemporary works of art includes commissions from some of the most admired and promising artists of our time. By bringing great art to the main campus, Landmarks enriches the lives of students and visitors, engaging thousands of people every day. For more information about Landmarks and its free tours and events, please visit the [Landmarks website](http://www.landmarks.utexas.edu).

HIGH-RESOLUTION PHOTOGRAPHY AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

LINKS & RESOURCES

<http://landmarks.utexas.edu>

www.landmarksrsvp.org