

"History Makers: Rose B. Simpson"

By Kelly Koepke

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Award-winning Tewa artist Rose B. Simpson uses her latest installation, "Strata," to challenge stereotypes and bring healing and consciousness to her community and beyond.



Award-winning Tewa artist Rose B. Simpson.

AWARD-WINNING TEWA SCULPTOR and mixed-media artist Rose B. Simpson's latest project, *Strata*, is a 26-foot-tall steel, clay, and pumice concrete installation at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Simpson, who grew up in a renowned family of sculptors, painters, and other artists, sees her art as an agent for good.

FROM THE ART. While Simpson carries on a long tradition, her work also reacts to generations of stereotyping and objectification of her family and community by galleries and collectors. "I'm still trying to figure out how to use my art to change perspectives, be courageous, and encouraging—finding ways to express my values in the creative process—instead of causing damage and harm to the world and its people," she says. "I hope I can use art to bring healing and consciousness to places gone blind."

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PERSONAL PATH. "I couldn't do my work without my mother, aunts, and grandmothers," she says. "It's apparent how they laid the path for me to evolve the strength and volume of my voice to use without fear of negative repercussions."

CULTURE CLUB. Used to working alone, Simpson required help to combine her signature clay with metal and cast bronze into the two monumental standing figures for *Strata*. "It was a steep learning curve for me, to see how the work and vision can be supported by others," she says.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE. Simpson sees the world facing significant environmental, political, and psychological challenges. "The more we sit in discomfort, the more we are innovative and creative, the better able we will be to navigate the storm," she says.

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