

VADIS TURNER

VADIS TURNER'S (b. 1977, Nashville, TN) textile-driven sculptures and mixed media works challenge narratives traditionally imposed upon female archetypes. Growing up in the conservative landscape of the American South, the artist was raised among generations of women navigating a culture wrought with behavioral expectations. In her practice, Turner considers those experiences in the broader context of women's history, employing domestic materials liberated from their intended functions, formal natures, and gender associations to rewrite the tale. Ribbons, bedsheets, and curtains coupled with concrete, steel, and ash take shape in misbehaving grids, unruly vessels, and mercurial braided structures, often titled after maligned female figures from classical folklore and mythology.

Distinctly unbound, each of Turner's earthy constructions appears alive and in motion - like roots twisting through the soil or branches blowing in the wind. However, her works do not present as victims of the forces compelling their movement – rather they seem to gather momentum from any such external powers, which would attempt to define their forms. A testament to the artist's expert handling of material, it is the apparent elasticity and mutability of her fibrous sculptures that most acutely strike the viewer. In the spirit of an archer pulling back on a bow string, Turner double-dog-dares us to underestimate the tensile strength and structural integrity of her works, and thus all that is witchy and wonderful about women.

Turner has held solo exhibitions at the Frist Art Museum (Nashville, TN), The Huntsville Museum of Art, (Huntsville, AL), the Abroms-Engel Institute for the Visual Arts (Birmingham, AL) and The University of Colorado (Colorado, Springs, CO). Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Arts and Design (New York, NY), the Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn, NY), the Tennessee State Museum (Nashville, TN), the Kentucky Museum of Arts and Crafts (Louisville, KY), the Huntsville Museum of Art (Huntsville, AL), the Hunter Museum of American Art (Chattanooga, TN), and the University of Alabama (Birmingham, AL).

Turner has also exhibited at the Museum of Arts and Design (New York, NY), LongHouse Reserve (East Hampton, NY), the Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn, NY), the Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburg, PA), Bunker Artspace (West Palm Beach, FL), ICA Portland (Portland, OR), Minnesota Museum of American Art (St. Paul, MN), the Cheekwood Museum (Nashville, TN), the Knoxville Museum (Knoxville, TN), among others.

She has been an Artist in Residence at Yaddo (2018 & 2024, Saratoga Springs, NY), Museum of Arts & Design (New York, NY), Materials for the Arts (New York, NY), and the Hambidge Center (Rabun Gap, GA) and received a Fellowship to the Vermont Studio Center (Johnson, VT). Her work has been reviewed and featured in Vogue, Artforum, Art Papers, the New York Times, Hyperallergic, Widewalls, Two Coats of Paint, Burnaway, Wallpaper*, the Observer, Artnet, and Whitehot Magazine.

Turner was the recipient of the Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Grant in 2016. Her projects have been funded by the Joanne Leonhardt Cassullo and the Dorothea Leonhardt Fund at The Communities Foundation of Texas, Inc., The Jenni Crain Foundation, the Barbara Demming Memorial Fund, South Arts, Tennessee Arts Commission and The Current Art Fund, a regranteeing program through the Andy Warhol Foundation. Turner received a BFA and MFA from Boston University. She teaches at Vanderbilt University.