

Nasher Sculpture Center Announces Next Nasher Public Exhibition Artist, Linda Ridgway

Five works by the esteemed Dallas artist meditate on time, memory, and touch

DALLAS, Texas (August 16, 2021)—The Nasher Sculpture Center announces the next exhibition for Nasher Public in the Nasher Store gallery, Linda Ridgway's *Herself*, on view August 19 – September 12.

Linda Ridgway's attentiveness to the rhythms of nature and its echoes in poetry has sustained more than three decades of involvement in sculpture, drawing, and printmaking. For her Nasher Public installation, she has brought together five works to form a meditation on time, memory, and touch, drawn from her experiences over the months of the pandemic and its aftermath.

The central piece *Herself* offers as a centerpiece a dress that Ridgway inked to run through a press at Flatbed Press in Austin: meant only to produce prints, the dress itself becomes a kind of artifact of Ridgway's creative process. She has surrounded the dress with objects related to her life, her family and friends, and her ongoing interests. The image of a clock, for example, resembles one owned by her parents, while the inclusion of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a beloved text of Ridgway's, points to the source of the work's title. Ridgway acknowledges that the dress's presentation, surrounded by objects significant to her, suggests an element of the funerary; this theme is echoed in the burnt roses of *The Uses of Sorrow*, which concerns her father's death some years before.

The artist's work emerges not only from specific sentiments but also from a rich appreciation of poetry. Ridgway uses Frost in her work frequently, both referencing and physically including his words in the sculpture *The leaves whisper on their branches* (2010-21), which combines the title of Frost's, "Sound of Leaves," with Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass." Ridgway's love of Frost, amongst other writers such as Harper Lee and Mary Oliver (whose poem "The Uses of Sorrow" inspired the title of Ridgway's 2005-18 assemblage sculpture), is rooted in childhood memories of her mother's passion for literature. Ridgway both references and physically includes literature in her sculptures by interweaving text in nests and using books as the stuffing of her pillows. In this way, she investigates how instrumental these works are to her identity as an artist, mother, daughter, and friend.

For Ridgway, aspects of the Nasher Public installation *Herself* also speak to the end of certain aspects of her life, which coincided with the pandemic: namely, the 2017 death of her partner, the artist and founder of Green Mountain Foundry, Harry Geffert, who worked with Ridgway on her meticulously cast sculptures. The past year has seen Ridgway complete the process of closing the foundry, selling the property, moving, and developing a new way of living and working. Elements of her work and life with Geffert abound in *Herself*, as does the sense, as Ridgway describes it, of "tumbling down into a difficult place," like Alice, as suggested in the large drawing *Fallen upon a corner of the Moon*, featuring an image of the dress, inverted.

In addition to these elements of personal significance, Ridgway's Nasher Public installation also addresses situations familiar to many of us from the isolation of the pandemic:

I was recently reading an article by John Yau. It was a review of the artist Franklin Evans concerning his latest paintings. The opening statement caught my attention: 'I believe it was John Cage who once told me, "When you start working, everybody is in your studio — the past, your friends, enemies, the art world, and above all your own ideas — all are there. But if you continue painting, they start leaving, one by one, and you are left completely alone. Then if you're lucky even you leave."

This sculpture Herself is an assemblage of friends, family, poets, faith, and authors of first lines. I have brought all of these actors into my studio to find comfort from the self-isolation of this past pandemic year. When I photographed the piece, I realized I had brought a library of thoughts and the artist Robert Rauschenberg into my studio as well. Being a sculptor/printmaker, the arrival of Rauschenberg was not necessarily a surprise. As I was working on Herself, I felt lucky, for I had finally left.

About Linda Ridgway | Linda Ridgway (born 1947 in Jeffersonville, Indiana) creates poetic bronze sculptures that convey both autobiographical and cultural imagery. Although educated as a printmaker, Ridgway continues to experiment with the limits of various media to create work that remains intimate regardless of scale. Ridgway's bronzes emerge from a two-dimensional template to become new spatial objects that elucidate the artist's personal experiences. These works span the themes of femininity, tradition, and heritage while establishing their own permanence through the medium of bronze. Ridgway juxtaposes the delicacy of the textures of lace and crochet work with the monochromatic and industrial fortitude of metalwork. While some of her works emphasize a reverence for domesticity, Ridgway also uses the translation of knit pieces into bronze sculptures to underscore a disintegration of memory. Ridgway extracts the artisanship of crochet work to develop a history of herself as an artist in the enduring medium of bronze.

Ridgway received an MFA from Tulane University, and a BFA from the Louisville School of Art. She has participated in various solo and group exhibitions including *Linda Ridgway: A Survey, Poetics of Form* at the Glassell School of Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas and the Dallas Museum of Art, Texas in 1997-98; and *One Hundred Years: The Permanent Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth* at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas in 2002.

About Nasher Public | Nasher Public is an ongoing, two-pronged public art initiative which aims to generate access to public art by North Texas artists at the Nasher and throughout the greater Dallas community. The project will launch first at the Nasher in a newly formed gallery, presenting monthly exhibitions over the next year, followed by an ongoing series of off-site exhibitions in partnership with area businesses. The new gallery, formerly occupied by the Nasher Store, fronts Flora Street and is directly accessible from the Nasher's entrance foyer. For the duration of the project, the space will be open to the public free of charge during the museum's public hours, and viewable through the windows during off hours.

About Nasher Sculpture Center | Located in the heart of the Dallas Arts District, the Nasher Sculpture Center is home to the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, one of the finest collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in the world, featuring more than 300 masterpieces by Calder, de Kooning, di Suvero, Giacometti, Gormley, Hepworth, Kelly, Matisse, Miró, Moore, Picasso, Rodin, Serra, and Shapiro, among others. The Nasher Sculpture Center is open Thursday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for students, and free for children 12 and under and members, and includes access to special exhibitions. Visitors must book a timed ticket in advance. For more information, visit www.NasherSculptureCenter.org.

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PRESS RELEASE

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