SHERRY OWENS biography

The artist works and resides in Dallas, and was born in Mt. Vernon, Texas, 1950.

SELECTED EDUCATION & AWARDS

2014  Artisan Award, AIA Dallas
2010  West Texas Triangle Artists
1999  Moss/Chumley North Texas Artist Award
1972  BFA, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

SELECTED ONE & TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2017  Sherry Owens: Fabric of Life, Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont, Texas
       Confluence of Earth & Mind; Martin Museum of Art, Baylor University, Waco, Texas
2016  Sherry Owens and Suzi Davidoff; Nature Gathered, Octavia Art Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana
2015  Natural Resources: Sherry Owens and Greg Reuter; Beairsto M.; Hagerty Art Gallery, University of Dallas, Irving, Texas
2013  Texas Tough; Origins, Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas (catalogue)
2010  Sherry Owens: A Survey - Rooted in the Earth; West Texas Triangle, San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, San Angelo, Texas (catalogue)
       Sherry Owens: Sculpture and Paint; West Texas Triangle, Ellen Noel Art Museum of the Permian Basin, Odessa, Texas
       West Texas Triangle: Owens Sculpture and Drawings; The Old Jail Art Center, Albany, Texas

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2017  Drawing Room; Cedar Valley College, Lancaster, Texas
       From a Distance: Contemporary Texas Sculpture, MonchsKirche
2016  O What a Night; Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, Louisiana (catalogue)
2015  Texas!; Lalit Kala Academi, New Delhi, India (catalogue)
       Texas! Somewhere in Denmark; Galleri Rosedahusgaardern Pandrup, Denmark
2014  Native Son; Contemporary Texas Self-Portraits, Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont, Texas (catalogue)
       A Panoramic View; Lawndale Art Center, Houston, Texas
2013  Flying Dutch; Contemporary Texas Self-Portraits, Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont, Texas (catalogue)
       The Gallery at UTA, Arlington, Texas (catalogue)
2012  Western Sequels: Art from the Lone Star State; Athens School of Fine Arts, Athens, Greece (catalogue)

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS, continued

2012  The Texas Chair Project; Ohio Craft Museum, Columbus, Ohio
2010  Earthbound; The State of Sculpture, Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, Texas (catalogue)

SELECTED PUBLIC COMMISSIONS & PROJECTS

2016  Buffalo Thunder; Ben E. Keith Company, Dallas, Texas
2013  Sands of Time, Main Street Projects, Houston, Texas
2012  Back in a Moment, Love Field Airport, Dallas, Texas

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Ben E. Keith Company, Dallas, Texas
City of Dallas Public Art Collection, Love Field Airport, Dallas, Texas
Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas
State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, Honolulu, Hawaii
Texas Sculpture Garden, Hall Office Park, Frisco, Texas

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS, continued

2016  Texas Tough: Origins; Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas (catalogue)
2013  Back in a Moment; Love Field Airport, Dallas, Texas

Sherry Owens: Fabric of Life

This exhibition is generously funded, in part, by Kim and Roy Steinhoen, the City of Beaumont, the Wesley W. Washburn, M.D. and Lulu L. Smith, MD, Endowment Fund; the Texas Commission on the Arts and the C. Homer and Edith Fuller Chambers Charitable Foundation.

Art Museum of Southeast Texas
500 Main Street
Beaumont, Texas 77701
(409) 832-3432 • www.amset.org

Waterhole, 2017, crepe myrtle, dye and wax, 24 x 36 x 36 in., loan courtesy of the artist, photography by Harrison Evans Photography, Dallas, Texas
Speaking Through the Branches
The Work of Sherry Owens

Art Museum of Southeast Texas
June 10, 2017 - September 10, 2017

The first time I walked into Sherry Owens’ studio, I was overwhelmed by the space. It was as if I had stepped into a petrified braid, a nest of wooden bones, a temple for a tree goddess. Completely surrounded by pieces of crepe myrtle – bound, piled, whittled, waxed and stained – I felt I had stepped inside of a Sherry Owens sculpture, and I had no desire to leave. Artists through the ages have looked at a piece of wood and seen something within, something that they feel needs to be brought forth by the artist’s hand. From ancient African and Asian cultures into the New World, root carving has been practiced throughout history. In the American South there is a strong tradition of vernacular art based in this animistic practice of exposing the spirit within the wood, including artists like Ralph Griffin, Thornton Dial, Bessie Harvey and Jesse James Aaron. “Trees is soul people to me,” said Bessie Harvey. “Maybe not to other people, but I have watched trees when they pray, and I have watched them shout, and sometimes, they give thanks slowly.” These artists approached the medium with reverence, and Owens shares that spiritual view with all of nature. “I can speak through the branches,” says Owens. Perhaps there is something instinctual at work in her practice, like a bird building a nest, but hers is a nest tied to the Texas landscape and environmental concerns. The recent work of Sherry Owens is a continuation of a longstanding exploration of expression through line and texture. With roots firmly planted in weaving, her practice moves through painting and drawing and into sculpture, allowing her to engage form, space and narrative in new ways, and to great effect. Her choice of material for the past twenty-six years has been primarily the crepe myrtle tree. “I keep thinking the choice of material for the past twenty-six years has entered my practice moves through painting and drawing and into sculpture, allowing her to engage form, space and narrative in new ways, and to great effect. Her choice of material for the past twenty-six years has been primarily the crepe myrtle tree. “I keep thinking the majority of my work has been crepe myrtle, and I still do,” she recently said. “I have to have a story to tell to know what to do.” After choosing the sticks based on size, shape, texture and form, she makes complex compositional decisions to bend them to her will. She may choose to leave the bark on and wax over the dirt to create a natural story, as in Coming Forth, carving into the surface to convey new growth. She may dye the wood to remove it from the natural, transforming it into something new, as the coral in An Ocean Between Us. Just as the forces of nature defined the sensual, expressive forms of the crepe myrtle trees, Owens’ process of deconstruction and transformation serves as a metaphor for the flux of creation itself, the continuous unfolding of loss and growth. With her works on paper, she is engaged in mankind’s most primal form of expression – a form of language that predates writing and offers an almost immediate transmission of thought – drawing. Her drawings are gestural, intuitive and raw. Her mark-making shows a practiced hand, unflinching and confident. That same intuitive gesture is given form in space through her crepe myrtle sculptures. The full potential of her narrative ability through sculpture is realized in her more complex installation pieces. In works such as Every Breath You Take, Manacle, and The Big Four + One, she conveys complex ideas through an economy of form. As with all great art, these pieces are the beginning of a larger dialogue. They pose more questions than provide answers. What is this natural world we live in? What are we doing to it? Where do we go from here? Perhaps, in these works she has given us a guide to protect the systems that sustain us here on earth, or perhaps the answers lie in the patinated crepe myrtle bumps of Presence of Water on the Moon. Bradley Sumrall Curator of the Collection Ogden Museum of Southern Art

I will move on to another material,” she recently told me, “but I am just not done with all the ways to use it.” Through deconstructing the trees, whitting the branches, waxing, dying and manipulating the surfaces, she arrives at a place of pure gesture with the material, essentially drawing in space with the branches. It is a process-driven practice, constructed with pegs to highlight that process. It is narrative, though, that drives the composition of each piece – a narrative that ranges from the most private emotion to the transcendent awareness of mankind’s place within the natural world. “I can speak through the branches,” says Owens. Perhaps there is something instinctual at work in her practice, like a bird building a nest, but hers is a nest tied to the Texas landscape and environmental concerns. The recent work of Sherry Owens is a continuation of a longstanding exploration of expression through line and texture. With roots firmly planted in weaving, her practice moves through painting and drawing and into sculpture, allowing her to engage form, space and narrative in new ways, and to great effect. Her choice of material for the past twenty-six years has been primarily the crepe myrtle tree. “I keep thinking the choice of material for the past twenty-six years has enteredinto sculpture, allowing her to engage form, space and narrative in new ways, and to great effect. Her choice of material for the past twenty-six years has been primarily the crepe myrtle tree. “I keep thinking the choice of material for the past twenty-six years has entered...