Rebecca Warren
_Aurelius_, 2017–2019

Frieze Sculpture, Regent’s Park
5–18 October 2020
Rebecca Warren

*Aurelius*, 2017–2019

hand-painted bronze

bronze: 295 x 58 x 49 cm.;
116 1/8 x 22 7/8 x 19 1/4 in.

plinth: 129.5 x 67 x 67 cm.;
51 x 26 3/8 x 26 3/8 in.

1 of 2 casts, each painted uniquely (2/2)

**Exhibited**

London, Regent’s Park, *Frieze Sculpture*,
5 – 18 October 2020.

Dijon, Le Consortium, *Rebecca Warren: Tout Ce Que Le Ciel Permet*, February – May 2018

(edition 1 exhibited).

St. Ives, Tate, *Rebecca Warren: All That Heaven Allows – New and Recent Works*, October 2017 – January 2018

(edition 1 exhibited).

**Literature**

Rebecca Warren makes sculptures, assemblages and constructions in a variety of materials including clay, bronze, steel and neon. The artist also creates collages and wall mounted vitrines using assemblages of objects she has collected. Warren says about her work that “it comes from a strange nowhere, then gradually something comes out into the light. There are impulses, half-seen shapes, things that might have stuck with you from decades ago, as well as more recently. It’s all stuff in the world going through you as a filter…”

_Aurelius_ is a 3-metre-tall bronze sculpture, cast from hand-modelling clay, its surface animated by protean, corporeal bulges, protuberances and marks. First shown in 2017 as part of Warren’s solo show _All That Heaven Allows_, the inaugural exhibition at the newly reopened Tate St. Ives, _Aurelius_ belongs to a larger body of work comprising large-scale, upright anthropomorphic sculptures, such as _Rainer (in the garden)_, 2017, shown at Musée National Eugène Delacroix in 2018 and _The Three_, 2017 currently on view in the gardens of The Hepworth, Wakefield. With these large works, Warren explores the possibilities of blending the tender, the slight, the awkward, the elegant and the overblown into a delicately bathetic monumentality. Clay, the material from which this sculpture is cast, was first introduced into her work with her seminal sculpture _Helmut Crumb_ in 1998 (fig. 1). As Warren says, this was a bringing together of what had originally been intended as two separate works—each a three-dimensional rendition of an image from, respectively, underground cartoonist Robert Crumb, and fashion photographer Helmut Newton—both of whose work she found herself drawn to for their different kinds of insistent, almost manic, focus on the erotic aspects of female bodies. _Aurelius_’ nuanced physicality transcribes Warren’s sensual, energetic work on the initial clay model, twisting and pulling the wet, malleable material before locking its form in bronze. From 2001, Warren began adding paint to the surfaces of her bronze sculptures, with the first example being _Head_ (fig. 2). In _Aurelius_, hand-painted in mostly pale hues, the scumbled, delicate touches and broader, darker patches suggest flesh or clothing, or, at the far end of the scale, surface shimmer.

Rooted in the history of sculpture, _Aurelius_ recalls the work of influential figures from the art historical canon, from Rodin’s continuously unexpected subtle twists of anatomy, to Giacometti’s feeling for the essential core of a figure, to de Kooning’s pummelled and furrowed bodies. As such, _Aurelius_ is a potent example of Warren’s practice of continuously absorbing and assimilating a broad array of information—including materials and iconography—so to reflect on them and make something new: “I like to mix things up, turn things on their heads” [...] “I’m not a stickler for thinking there is, or isn’t, a categorial difference between high and low, so I mess around in there too.” Bursting with a playful vitality, _Aurelius_ is a beautiful embodiment of Warren’s sensitive approach to the exploration and understanding of our reality.
pictured here: Aurelius, 2017 (edition 1)
Rebecca Warren: All That Heaven Allows – New and Recent Works,
Tate, St. Ives, 14 October 2017 – 7 January 2018
“[Warren’s] bronze sculptures with their animated and in places protuberant surfaces, resemble ancient steles. Walking around these slender, compact sculptures, our perception is particularly challenged by their metamorphoses of form. Our changing angle of vision brings subtly pulsating shifts in our recognition and fixing of the images. A constantly mutating narrative, with pictures succeeding one another as if in a kaleidoscope [...] Behind exteriors of folded skin, projecting body parts, sensual bulges and the cavities of a burst fruit, these sculptures have an inner life. Many are twisted, turned like a screw, full of internal movement and yet entirely at rest within themselves. In these works, Warren taps new areas of potential for sculpture. Through her additional deployment of colour, the artist explores astonishing effects and possibilities. That white makes bronze look as insubstantial as foam, that dark green can call to mind a classical patina while remaining simply paint, and that pastel shade and chequered hatching in the venerable context of bronze sculpture can bring a provocative facet into play—all of these once again render Warren’s undertaking adventurous and complex.”

Bice Curiger
“Everything is always made at its finished size, never scaled up from maquettes. Always hand/eye, hand/eye.”
Rebecca Warren

pictured here: Rainer (in the garden), 2017
Musée National Eugène Delacroix, Paris, 2018
pictured here: *The Three*, 2017
(installation ongoing)
Click here for more information on Frieze Sculpture.
“The haptic surfaces of [Warren’s] clay and bronze works trace the lines of her touch, her fingerprint and her palm. They wear the marks of her making—massaged, squeezed and pushed ... These works are generous in their materiality, establishing themselves within history, popular culture, tradition and a pleasure in what can be made with inert materials.”

Laura Smith

Rebecca Warren (born 1965) was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2006 and the Vincent Award in 2008. The artist has had one-person exhibitions at numerous museums, most recently the Musée National Eugène Delacroix in Paris (2018), Tate St. Ives in England (2017), Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles in France (2017), and the Dallas Museum of Art (2016). Her work was included in the 54th Venice Biennale (2011) and is in the permanent collection of museums across Europe and the United States. Warren first showed with Galerie Max Hetzler in 2007. She lives and works in London.

_Aurelius_ (detail), 2017–2019
Photo: Courtesy of Maureen Paley, London and Hove
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Photographic credits

Rebecca Warren, Aurelius, 2017–2019
Photo: Andy Keate

Frieze Sculpture, Regent’s Park, London, October 2020
Photo: Peter Mallet

Rainer (in the garden), 2017, Musée National Eugène Delacroix, Paris, 2018
Photo: Charles Duprat

Rebecca Warren: All That Heaven Allows – New and Recent Works, Tate, St. Ives, 14 October 2017 – 7 January 2018
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Photo: Nick Singleton

Rebecca Warren, ILLUMInations, Arsenale at the 54th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2011
Photo: Courtesy of Maureen Paley, London and Hove

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