

Adrienne Elise Tarver: She who sits**Adrienne Elise Tarver***With expectation, 2024*

Oil on canvas

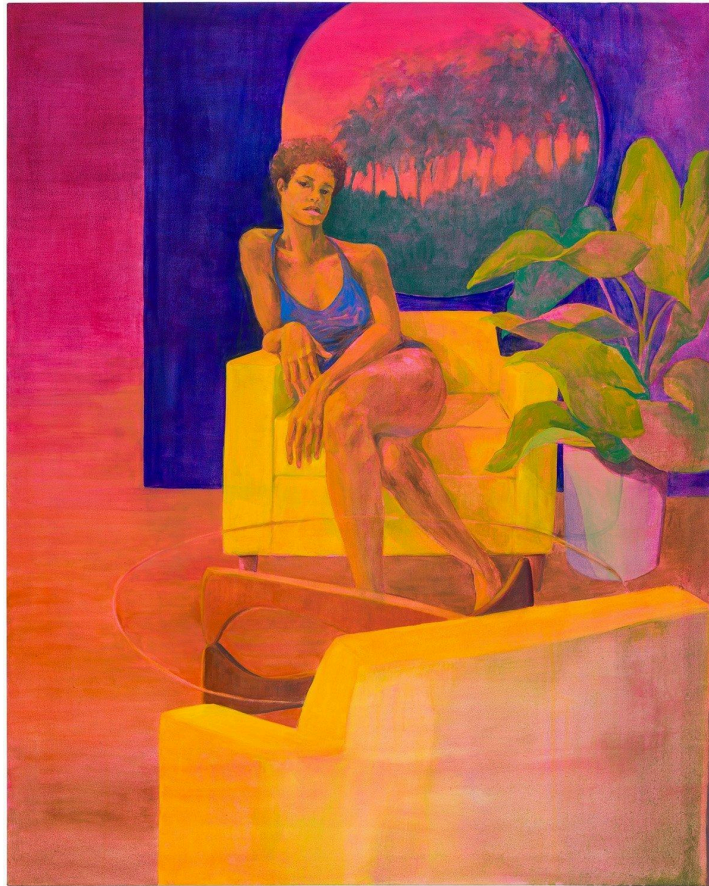
49.5 x 37.5 in

125.7 x 95.3 cm

TARAD_0107

Many works feature Vera Otis, a fictional subject I developed over the past 10 years. Originally inspired by an anonymous woman from an old photograph in a thrift store, each new portrayal of Vera Otis expands her story. Through her story, I investigate family history, definitions of belonging, and how personal experiences are intertwined with historical accounts. In my Public Art Fund exhibition, “She who sits,” Vera Otis is the muse through whom I contextualize rest and sitting as power. Though inspired by iconic Black actresses of the early to mid-20th century, such as Dorothy Dandridge, Eartha Kitt, Hattie McDaniel, and Lena Horne, Otis does not seek to entertain in her private space. She is composed and self-contained, yet at ease and does not rush or wait on anyone.

— *Written by the artist*

**Adrienne Elise Tarver***Between here and there, 2023*

Oil on canvas

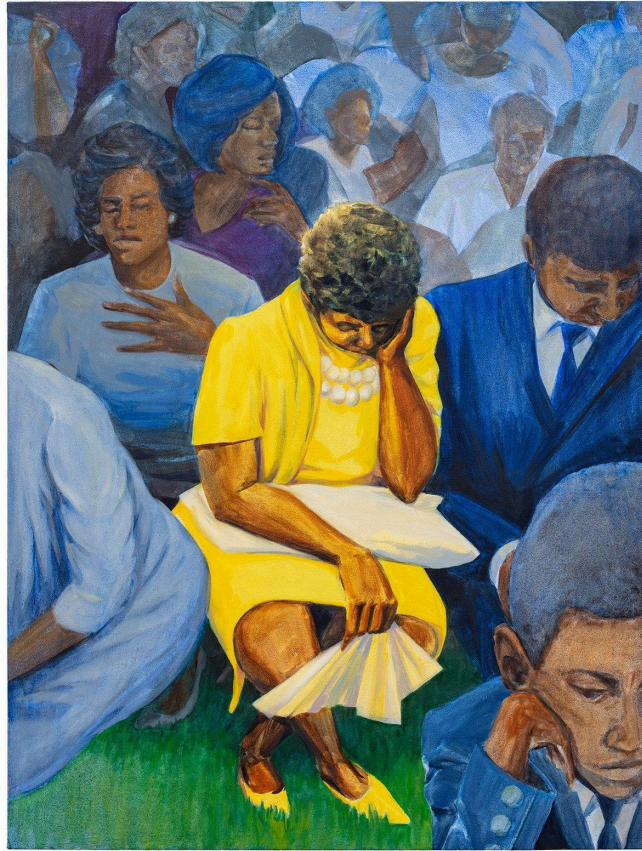
61.5 x 49.5 in

156.21 x 125.73 cm

TARAD_0108

Many works feature Vera Otis, a fictional subject I developed over the past 10 years. Originally inspired by an anonymous woman from an old photograph in a thrift store, each new portrayal of Vera Otis expands her story. Through her story, I investigate family history, definitions of belonging, and how personal experiences are intertwined with historical accounts. In my Public Art Fund exhibition, "She who sits," Vera Otis is the muse through whom I contextualize rest and sitting as power. Though inspired by iconic Black actresses of the early to mid-20th century, such as Dorothy Dandridge, Eartha Kitt, Hattie McDaniel, and Lena Horne, Otis does not seek to entertain in her private space. She is composed and self-contained, yet at ease and does not rush or wait on anyone.

— *Written by the artist*



Adrienne Elise Tarver

A Long Way, 2024

Oil on canvas

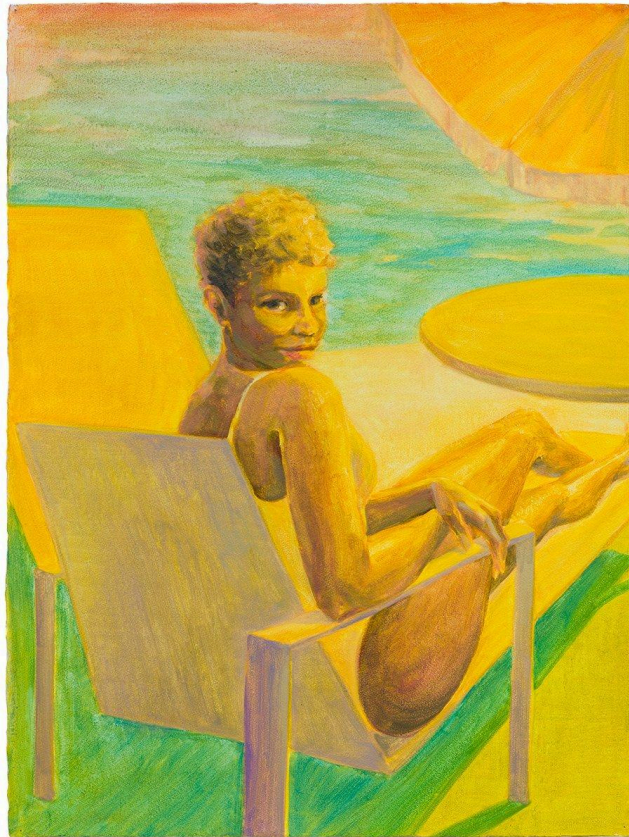
49.5 x 37.5 in

125.73 x 95.25 cm

TARAD_0109

A Long Way depicts a woman kneeling in prayer during a civil rights protest in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963. The painting draws from a photograph originally focused on an anguished preacher facing the camera. To highlight the role of women in this narrative, I illuminated the woman with yellow light, contrasting with the blue undertones of the surrounding crowd. This work is part of my Public Art Fund exhibition, “She who sits,” which emphasizes the importance of occupying public space to inspire social change, referencing the histories of Freedom Rides, sit-ins, and school integration. This painting is one of only two in the exhibition that directly quotes historical images. By incorporating imagery that spans time and place, I aim to create a connection between the past and the present.

— *Written by the artist*



Adrienne Elise Tarver

In the face of the sun, 2024

Oil on paper

30 x 22 in

76.20 x 55.88 cm

TARAD_0112

In the face of the sun places its subject poolside, turned back toward the viewer from a gray lounge chair, bare shoulders and a drawn-up knee bathed in a saturated wash of yellow. A striped umbrella glows overhead; teal water ripples behind her. Her expression is unguarded, caught mid-turn, meeting the viewer's gaze without performance. The high-key palette flattens the scene into pure warmth and light, letting the sun stand in for the ease of the moment.