



**Destinee Ross-Sutton & Associates**  
Art Curation, Advisory and Management  
**ROSS-SUTTON Gallery**  
New York, USA



**Khari Turner**  
**“Solid to Gas”**  
FRIEZE Gallery - No.9 Cork Street, London W1  
June 2 - June 17, 2023



**Khari Turner presented by Destinee Ross-Sutton**  
**Ross-Sutton Gallery**

Eleven auspicious works by Khari Turner in ‘**Solid to Gas**,’ Turner’s first London solo exhibition.

“I’ve been trying to convince my shadow that I’m someone worth following. — Rudy Francisco,  
My Honest Poem

I paint because of my understanding of my identity and history, recovering the air of a story. I imagine the personifications of the magic that is water. I use water from oceans, lakes, and rivers from places that have either a historical or personal connection to Black people -- water that I collect to mix with and pour onto my paintings.

My paintings and drawings combine abstraction with realistic renderings of Black noses and lips to investigate the spiritual and physical record to my ancestor's relationships with water. The average body is made up of 60% water, the same water in these ethereal beings that inhabit the work. All the water on this earth is the same water that has always been on this earth. The knowledge water holds is in all of us, and the realization that we share this water is my focus. My work is constantly evolving, absorbing water and history as a material, painting to bring the stories of elegance and chaos that comes with this existence.

The work in 'Solid to Gas' is the result of a deep dive into all these elements and trying to evaluate the line between water as solid to gas thinking about the water taking on a similar look and ideology in the work."

'Solid to Gas' is Khari Turner's first solo exhibition since his milestone exhibitions in 2022, which included Turner's first international solo presentation, "Blue Moon" a series inspired by traditional Venetian portraiture, shown at the 59th Venice Biennale April 20 - November 27, 2022, presented by Ross-Sutton Gallery, Turner's first museum solo exhibition "Mirroring Reflection" at the Museum of Wisconsin Art (MOWA), April 30 - July 10, 2022, with 26 works primarily focusing on family and his childhood in Milwaukee, followed by his first European residency with the work shown at CFHILL in Stockholm, Sweden, Scandinavia's largest independent arts space, Turner's first European gallery exhibition, "As Below and Above", June 3 - July 8, 2022, a collaboration with Ross-Sutton Gallery. Turner then took well deserved time off to travel and reflect on his work which was followed by becoming an AIRIE 2023 Fellow and a one month long artist residency in the Everglades.

**Khari Turner** was born in April 1991 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His paints translate truth into abstract portraits of reverence. His work, saturated with a desire to connect, Turner's chosen medium incorporates ocean, lake, and river water from all over the world as a solvent. Identity and memory join us to Black history intrinsic and a part of American history. To cleanse, heal, and tether, his brushstrokes, and drippings bring us closer to those ancestors who reach back from the not-so-distant past. While viewers may think of Jackson Pollock in these instances, consider that the word 'drippings' (lardo) is used in southern American vernacular to describe unusable animal renderings. Just as specific characteristics associated with Black people - large lips, broad noses, du-rags, and long, brightly colored nails - have been deemed unprofessional or unattractive by some aspects of society. Turner's visual lexicon has used the device of obscured countenance to have these portraits speak with dexterous confidence, reflecting inherent value to a viewer of any background in all its parts. Through including ocean and lake water, Turner reminds us that we are one through time, space, and, more importantly, cellular memory. Turner focuses on the celebration of life.

**Destinee Ross-Sutton**, visionary curator known for the groundbreaking exhibitions series 'Black Voices' and 'Say it Loud', both dedicated to helping redefine the art canon the way many know it and having inspired many exhibitions expanding the art world's commitment to Black contemporary art & artists. An advocate and activist in the art world. Through her work, Ross-Sutton provides artists space to grow and support to solidify their markets. Ross-Sutton's relationship with Turner was expanded in earnest when she included him in the aptly titled, 'Say it Loud' exhibition at Christie's auction house in 2020. Ross-Sutton subsequently in 2021 curated Turner's first NY solo show at the eponymously named Ross-Sutton Gallery, New York, followed by their next project, at New York City's Frevo; a bespoke culinary experience, then 'Blue Moon' their collaboration for the 2022 Venice Biennale following Turner's MFA graduation at Columbia University in New York, and she curated Turner's first European gallery exhibition at Scandinavia's largest independent art space, CFHILL in Stockholm.

Ms. Ross-Sutton has also co-curated the landmark exhibition '4000+ Years of African Art' at the Wall House Museum, St.Barts, a deep dive into the art from Africa, with work dating from 400,000 BC to the present, March 18 - May 31, 2022.

**Full bios see below**

**LINK to high res images click [here](#)**

**Image credit to read:**

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Khari Turner Instagram @[khari.raheem](#)

Destinee Ross-Sutton & Ross-Sutton Gallery, NY Instagram @[desti.knee](#) and @[rosssuttongallery](#)

[ross-sutton.com](#)

## EXHIBITION LIST

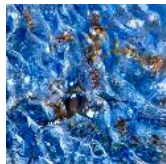


**“Lost in a Sea of Graffiti”** , 2023

Acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, African Mahogany, water from: oceans, lakes and rivers with Black historical references on canvas

60 x 48in / 152.4 x 122cm

Price: \$35,000



**“Cascade of Water”** , 2023

Acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, water from: oceans, lakes and rivers with Black historical references on canvas

60 x 60in / 152.4 x 152.4cm

Price: \$43,500



**“Untitled”** , 2023

Acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, water from: oceans, lakes and rivers with Black historical references on canvas

72 x 60in / 182.9 x 152.4cm

Price: \$52,500



**“Beauty in Fantasy”** , 2023

Acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, water from: oceans, lakes and rivers with Black historical references on canvas

24in diameter / 61cm

Price: \$7,600



**“A Moment in Thought”** , 2023

Acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, water from: oceans, lakes and rivers with Black historical references on canvas

24in diameter / 61cm

Price: \$7,600



**“Cycle of Life”** , 2023

Acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, water from: oceans, lakes and rivers with Black historical references on canvas

60 x 72in / 152.4 x 182.9cm

Price: \$52,500



**“Untitled”** , 2023

Acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, African Mahogany, water from: oceans, lakes and rivers with Black historical references on canvas

60 x 72in / 152.4 x 182.9

Price: \$52,500



**“Untitled”** , 2023

Acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, water from: oceans, lakes and rivers with Black historical references on canvas

24in diameter / 61cm

Price: \$7,600



**“Followed My Heart in Miami”** , 2023

Acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, water from: oceans, lakes and rivers with Black historical references on canvas

48 x 30in / 91.44cm

Price: \$17,500



**“Untitled”** , 2023

Acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, African Mahogany, water from: oceans, lakes and rivers with Black historical references on canvas

60 x 72in / 152.4 x 182.9

Price: \$52,500



The Artist:  
**KHARI TURNER**



Khari Turner, born 1991, Milwaukee  
Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York  
Instagram: [@khari.raheem](https://www.instagram.com/khari.raheem)

BFA Austin Peay State University, Tennessee,  
2019  
MFA Columbia University, NY 2021

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The average body is made up of 60% water, the same water in these ethereal beings that inhabit the work. All the water on this earth is the same water that has always been on this earth. The knowledge water holds is in all of us, and the realization that we share this water is my focus. My work is constantly evolving, absorbing water and history as a material, painting to bring the stories of elegance and chaos that comes with this existence.

The work in 'Solid to Gas' is the result of a deep dive into all these elements and trying to evaluate the line between water as solid to gas thinking about the water taking on a similar look and ideology in the work.”

**My Story:**

I was born April of 91' in Milwaukee, WI. I lived in Milwaukee until spring of 2015, so the influence of Milwaukee comes into the work often, especially water. Growing up in a city next to a great lake, I sat next to the water all of the time in reflection. At a young age, I took an interest in art from school peers and much from my grandfather, my grandfather was a draftsman and carpenter, often making many things around the house.

Between 2009 and 2015 was my struggle and a big part of why I work so hard to make work now. I wasn't in school, I was working a minimum wage retail job and switching between warehouse jobs, I had cheerleading and working for the NBA as entertainment some nights but life was stale and unfulfilling, except for the summer. Growing up I was in many programs, the most important being a nonprofit called Lake Valley Camp. This camp changed my life, taking trips in the summer of 2003 as a camper to working there until 2014 as Art Director. Camp is a big part of my long term goals now.

I want to start an organization that specializes in giving back efforts to young artists and creating murals in low income environments to promote community health, pride, and clean neighborhoods, while trying to fight gentrification of these areas. Being an artist is so much about giving and I feel it's so important to give back to the community.

In 2015 I left Milwaukee and enrolled at Austin Peay State University moving my whole life to Tennessee where I received my BFA in studio art. Austin Peay was a large turning point for my artistic practice and really helped me find my voice in my work the four years I was there. But, the biggest change came in summer 2019 at the Chautauqua residency that my work started to form and become what it is now. In 7 weeks I made a lot of work and had the open opportunity to really focus on what I wanted most, outside of class room and school limitations, questioning even if painting or sculpture was the right path to take. Eventually I found what I was looking for. Up to October of 2021 I was at Columbia University working as hard as I could to articulate exactly what my work looks and feels like. I have a lot of different ideas but what's most important is that I stay true to being a good person, donating what I can, and focusing on the actual work. I have come a long way and there is nothing more I love than creating. I can't stop working now and go back to my old life, I left that when I moved to TN and the dream is now, so that's what I'm doing!

I paint to create a deeper connection to my identity and history as a Black American. Metaphorically, I see Black people as personifications of the magic that is the ocean. My paintings and drawings combine abstraction with realistic renderings of Black noses and lips to rejuvenate the relationship of my history to my ancestor's history with water. I use water from oceans, lakes, and rivers from places that have either a historical or personal connection to black history -- water that I collect to mix with and pour onto my paintings. My focus is to create a direct relationship to my emotions and understanding of my past, a journey of spiritual connection. I focus on Black history to celebrate my ancestors for surviving the challenges they faced, not to display their pain. I paint to bring the stories and histories with images holding an elegance and chaos that comes with this existence.”  
- Khari Turner

A 2021 Columbia MFA graduate Turner has received over 13 scholarships including the Shops Fellowship (Columbia University) and has participated in numerous group & solo shows since 2017

#### SELECT EXHIBITIONS:

##### 2022:

- First European gallery show “As Below & Above” at CFHILL Stockholm, Sweden, June 3 - July 8, curated by Destinee Ross-Sutton
- Artist residency at Royal Academy of Arts, Stockholm, Sweden, May
- First solo museum show, “Mirroring Reflection”, Museum of Wisconsin Art (MOWA), April 30 - July 10. It will travel to Dallas in 2024
- First international Solo presentation, “Blue Moon”, 2022 Venice Biennale, April 23 - November 27, Palazzo Bembo curated by Destinee Ross-Sutton as part of “Personal Structures” organized by the European Cultural Centre

##### 2021:

- “House of Crowns” group show Dec.15 - 20 at Phillips NY
- Columbia University School of the Visual Arts MFA Thesis Exhibition Oct 30–Nov 20, curated by Amy Sadao at the Lenfest Center for the Arts. <https://www.vaexhibitions.arts.columbia.edu/class-of-2021-thesis-exhibition/khari-turner>

- “Saving Room 4 More” solo Sept.4 - Nov.30 at FREVO NYC, curated by Destinee Ross-Sutton
- “Say it Loud: Visionaries of Self” online auction & exhibition at Christie’s NY, August 5 - 19, curated by Destinee Ross Sutton
- “Khari Turner: Breathing Water to Air” first NY solo show, July 10 - Aug 7, Ross-Sutton Gallery, New York
- “Alternating Currents” Curated by Niama Safia Sandy, July 14 - August 20, Fridman Gallery, NYC
- “Beyond the Streets” Group show works on paper hosted by the Southampton Arts Center July 17 - August 28
- “Towards a More Beautiful Oblivion” Group show, June 30 - August 6, Fredericks & Freiser, New York
- “Kindred Technology” curated by Lanise Howard group show, June 19 - August 7, SoLa Contemporary, LA
- “When Two or More are Gathered” Group show curated by Amani Lewis, June 29 - August 27, Sperone Westwater, New York
- “Varsity Blues” Group Show June 5 - July 4, Allouche Gallery, New York
- “Hella Water” solo show, May 21 - June 19, Voss Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- “RESTORATION NOW or NEVER”, A Public Art Exhibition in London by 22 international artists presented on bus stops, billboards in collaboration with SaveArtSpace for the month of June in conjunction with the UN World Environment Day.
- 1-54 African Contemporary Artfair presentation, May 4 - 24, Ross-Sutton Gallery NY
- “The Sea’s Own Children” solo show, March 18 - April 25, Iris Project, LA
- Whitechapel Gallery Art Icon Gala Exhibition Online Charity Auction (March 23)
- “Merging Headwaters”, a two-person show featuring Khari Turner & Ashanté Kindle, Red Arrow Gallery, Nashville, (TN)

2020/2021: “BLACK VOICES: Friend of My Mind” Ross-Sutton Gallery, New York (the largest exhibition to date in the US with contemporary artists from the African diaspora)

2020:

- “SAY IT LOUD (I’m Black and I’m Proud)” curated by Destinee Ross-Sutton, Christie’s, New York.
- “One Way Ticket”, Steve Turner Gallery (CA)
- “For The Culture”, Miami Beach Urban Studios (FL)

2019: Chautauqua School of Art Students and Emerging Artist Exhibition, Chautauqua Art Gallery (NY)

All following Exhibits are in Clarksville, TN, unless specified...

2019: “Behind Bars, Beyond Borders”, Barbara Beach Gallery (Solo)

2018: “Cable car” juried show (Nashville, TN)

2017: “Fissure: A Rift Between Us”, Gallery 108 (Solo)

2017: “Three Tales of difference”, Tree of life Gallery (Solo)

2017: “Passing and Time Alone”, Simple Strokes art studio, (Solo)

PRESS:

- FORBES 06/02/2022 “Water Inspires And Imbues Milwaukee Native Khari Turner’s Joyful Paintings”  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/chaddscott/2022/06/02/water-inspires-and-imbues-milwaukee-native-khari-turners-joyful-paintings/>
- HYPEBEAST 05/06/2023  
Khari Turner Uses the Water Found Across the World to Create His Deeply Intimate Portraiture  
<https://hypebeast.com/2022/5/khari-turner-blue-moon-venice-biennale-mirroring-reflection-mowa>
- A video interview by [Kirsten Weiss](#) for [The Institutum](#)
- L’Officiel USA, France etc. “[9 Artists to Watch in 2022](#)”  
<https://www.lofficielusa.com/art/new-young-artists-to-watch-2022-gallery>
- The OBSERVER 09/27/2021 review of “Saving Room 4 More” at FREVO NYC  
<https://observer.com/2021/09/frevo-showcases-khari-turner-and-destinee-ross-sutton-in-art-curator-series/>
- A wonderful [video](#) produced by Christie’s NY & Destinee Ross-Sutton

Khari Turner’s first NY solo show “Breathing Water to Air” July 10 - August 7, 2021 received wonderful reviews:

- INTERVIEW Magazine: <https://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/from-the-senegalese-coast-to-the-hudson-river-the-liquid-confidence-of-khari-turner>
- The OBSERVER: [Khari Turner’s ‘Breathing Water to Air’ Is an Impressive Debut at Ross-Sutton Gallery](#) <https://observer.com/2021/07/khari-turner-ross-sutton-gallery-review/>
- [JUXTAPOZ Magazine](#): <https://www.juxtapoz.com/news/magazine/features/khari-turner-the-light-between-oceans/>
- CultureType <https://www.culturetype.com/2021/07/11/on-view-khari-turnerbreathing-water-to-air-at-ross-sutton-gallery-in-new-york/>

Khari Turner is represented by [Ross-Sutton Gallery](#) [info@ross-sutton.com](mailto:info@ross-sutton.com)



## The Curator: DESTINEE ROSS-SUTTON



**Ms. Destinee Ross-Sutton** is an International Curator, Artist Advocate, Art Advisor, and Gallerist. Ross-Sutton has curated and co-curated successful international group exhibitions at such renowned institutions as CFHILL, Stockholm, Sweden and the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA) and two years in a row the much publicized and highly successful “**Say it Loud**” selling exhibitions benefitting the artists at world renown auction house Christie’s in NY which broke major records in 2021 totaling \$940k in sales.

Ross-Sutton first made a name for herself with her groundbreaking exhibition concept appropriately titled, ‘BLACK VOICES’. A gathering of voices - both young and emerging, as well as mid-career artists from the African diaspora; this was the only physical exhibition to be held at the beginning of the global lockdown. Just as national BLM protests sparked an outcry internationally in May 2020 - Black Voices Stockholm launched in April of 2020 - which inspired many exhibitions helping to expand the conversation and commitment to Contemporary Black Art. To expand her curatorial efforts, **Ross-Sutton** opened a namesake gallery in Soho, New York in December 2020. The inaugural show, ‘BLACK VOICES: Friend of My Mind’, is the largest exhibition of emerging and contemporary artists from the African Diaspora ever staged in the United States.

Independently, she advises several private institutions and international collectors with an emphasis on responsible acquisitions of contemporary art. With a focus on African and African American art and a commitment to cohesive storytelling, Ms. Ross-Sutton has repeatedly demonstrated her ability to unify diverse subjects and styles within her curatorial projects. In her eyes, “showing a wide range of opinions, voices, and countless expressions of beauty is essential in a world where compassion and connection is needed now more than ever” (D. Ross, quoted in exh. cat., **Black Voices/Black Microcosm**, 8 April - 9 May 2020).

She is also making a name for herself as being a curator that discovers new talents and starting artist’s international careers. As artist manager, she acts as steward, guiding artists careers to fruition and to take **control of their markets**. Via her newly termed ‘Ross-Sutton Agreement’, she also seeks to empower collectors to move beyond purchase into that of cultural benefactor, which she also elaborated on in an op-ed for ARTSY “**How to Responsibly Collect the Work of Black Artists**”.

Ross-Sutton also is building the **BLACK ARTIST COLLECTIVE**, a foundation founded to help promote and support in particular young and emerging African and LGBTQ+ artists of color. She recently started her own publishing business as well, producing limited edition prints and is working on her first book based on her Black Voices exhibition series.

A major curatorial project was the collaboration with the Wall House Museum in Saint Barthélemy with the landmark exhibition “4000+ Years of African Art”, March 18-May 31, 2022. A catalogue is being produced and the exhibition is planned to travel.

She was also invited by the European Cultural Centre (ECC) to partake in their 2022 Venice Biennale Art exhibition “Personal Structures” in Venice, Italy, April 23 - November 27, 2022,

where she presented a Solo exhibition by Khari Turner at the Palazzo Bembo specifically created for the occasion.

For the past 5yrs she has been the chief curator and head of acquisitions of a major Black Arts Foundation in Detroit, Michigan, opening in October of this year.

Her work has been recognized and prominently featured by countless national and international publications such as The Art Newspaper, Artnet, **VOGUE**, **CULTURED Magazine**, **Galerie Magazine** included her in the annual Creative Minds issue, the Guardian, Financial Times, **BARRONS PENTA Magazine**, **Business Insider**, **WIDEWALLS Magazine** named her Person of the Year in 2020, The Observer included her in their 2021 #ArtsPower 50 list, ARTnews listed her in the annual DECIDERS list for 2021. *Fast Company's* named her Most Creative People in Business 2021

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Head curator Pierce & Hill Harper Art Foundation, Detroit

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