

To be a place that has no center

14.09.2024 - 19.01.2025

HFKD is proud to present the first major institutional solo exhibition of Aia Sofia Coverley Turan.

In the exhibition *To be a place that has no center*, Turan starts from a Danish-Kurdish cultural history and her own origins in it. She makes use of classic materials such as bronze, plaster and copper and combines these with textiles, plastic and paper in a series of sculptures about the small ecstasies of everyday life. Through the materials and the sculptures, she creates stories of intimacy, grief and pride - what does the loss of a culture and the attempt to maintain it across national borders and over time entail?

Turan and HFKD have published a catalog for the exhibition. In an excerpt from the exhibition text written by artist colleague Anna Stahn, it says:

"The clothes hang casually on the door after a long day, a dress stands up like a person; a child or a young woman. The living dresses that recur in several places in the exhibition are wet, dripping fabric bodies; bodies without a center, without a boundary, bodies that carry themselves. They are about the tired and devoted body. The body between places, in a state of diaspora. The body between the inner and the outer world, the private and the public body."

In *To be a place that has no center*, Turan's thoughts are made visible in tea towels, wrung-out cloths and dresses - soft textiles, stiffened and draped as on classical sculptures of heroic male figures, but here they are traces of a woman and of domestic everyday life; in a series of dioramas or TV screens from which homely scenes are portrayed - the TV makes it possible to keep in touch across national borders, and you share from a distance terrible news and new episodes of an endless soap opera; in a relief that runs through the exhibition, depicting workers in constant motion, grinding away to make ends meet.

Turan depicts everyday scenarios and identity complexes with her sculptural elements. She is concerned with the wordless narrative and alternative methods of communicating across languages; in the correspondence between both light and heavy materials, the sketched and the cast, she works on a new form of materialized storytelling - a sensitive form of communication that revolves around fragmented memories of a Danish-Kurdish origin, of transgenerational trauma and social patterns.

Aia Sofia Coverley Turan (1994, DK) graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 2019. She has exhibited at Den Frie, Simian, Galleri Tom Christoffersen, Four Boxes, Arcway Nightlands Connector and KØS Museum for art in the public space, among others.

Aia Sofia Coverley Turan's works are part of the Danish Arts Foundation's and Copenhagen Municipality's collection.

TO BE A PLACE
THAT HAS NO
CENTER

AIA SOFIA
COVERLEY
TURAN

TORS - FRE 14 - 18 / LØR - SØN 12 - 16

WWW.HFKD.DK

14.09.2024 - 19.01.2025

HUSET FOR KUNST OG DESIGN / NØRREBROGADE 1 / 7500 HOLSTEBRO

Logos for sponsors: Huset for Kunst og Design, Copenhagen Municipality, and others.



North, South, East, West, 2024, acrylic plaster and wooden door,
133 x 37 x 10 + 83 x 43 x 12 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Detail: North, South, East, West, 2024, acrylic plaster and wooden door,
133 x 37 x 10 + 83 x 43 x 12 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Fragment of: *Heart Workers*, 2024, cardboard and pigment, 150 x 1600 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



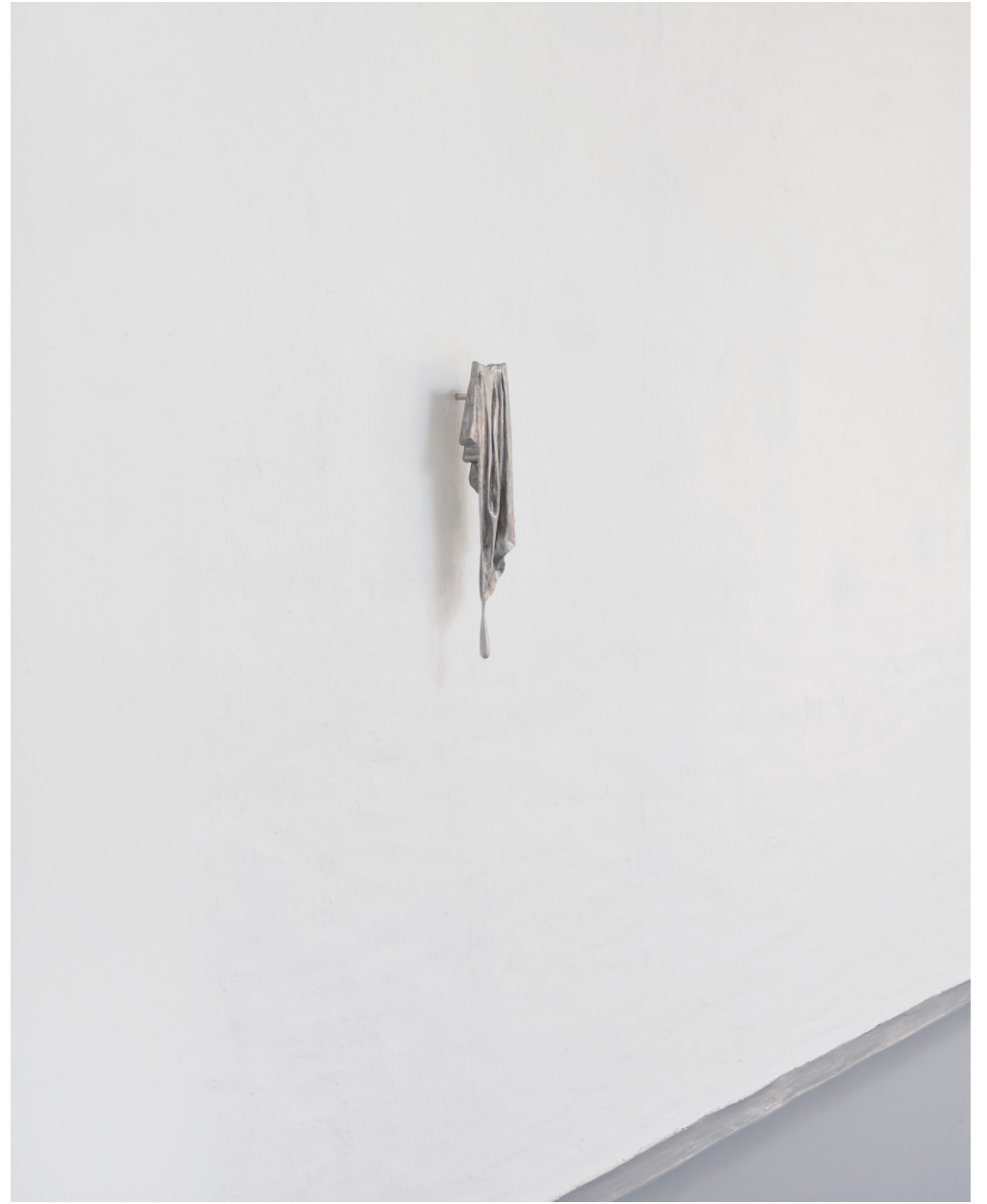
Installation views, *To be a place that has no center*, 2024.
Photo: Brian Kure.



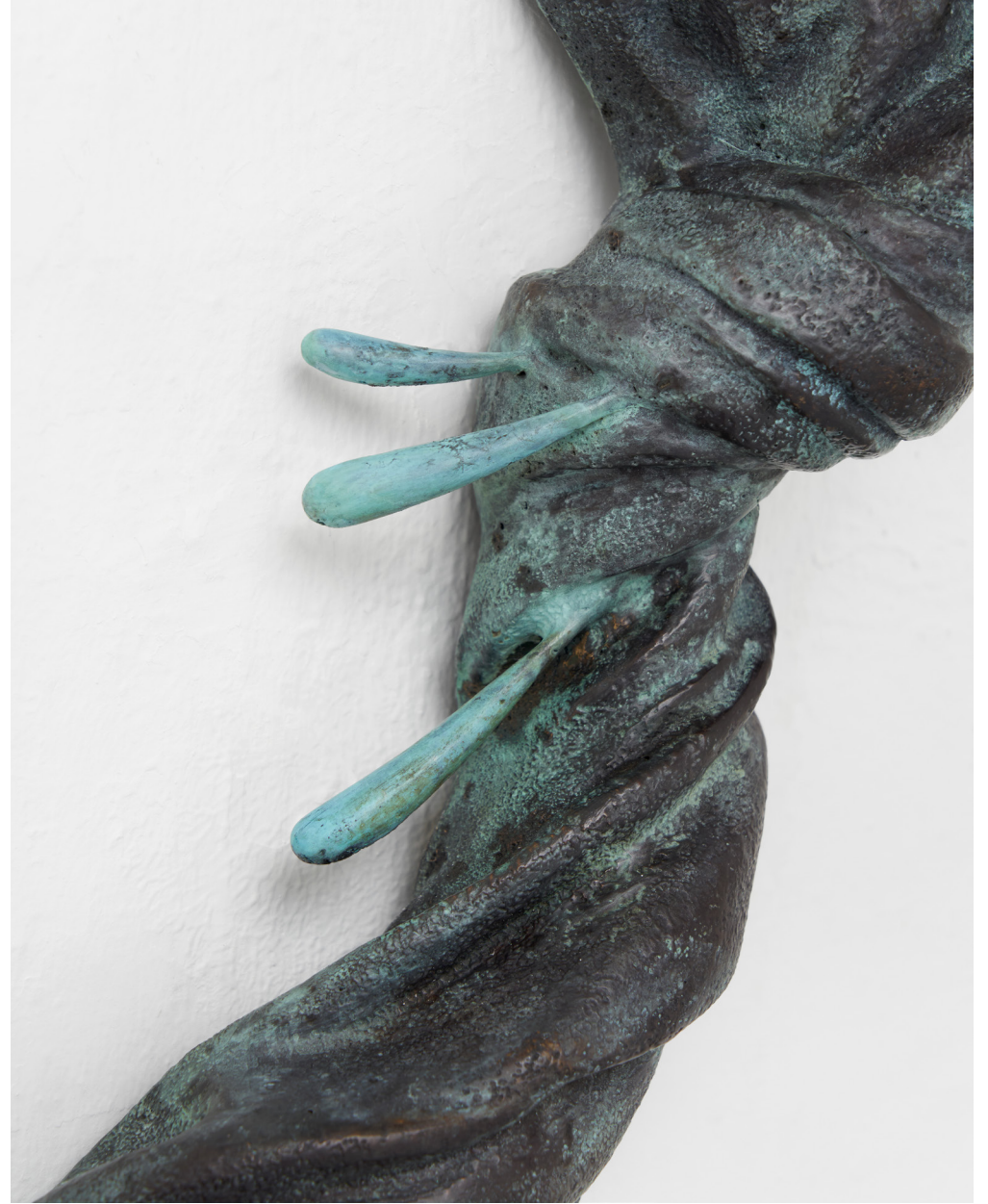
To be a place that has no center, 2024, PETG-plastic, epoxy, pigment, paper and MDF,
72,5 x 53,5 x 9,5 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Untitled, 2021, pastel, charcoal and acrylic paint on paper.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Untitled, 2024, aluminium, 49 x 11 x 14 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Strong hands, 2024, bronze, 33 x 13 x 7 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



To be a place that has no center, 2024, painted copper, print and MDF,
72,5 x 53,5 x 9,5 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Installation view, *To be a place that has no center*, 2024.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Hala, 2024, bronze, 48 x 27 x 10 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



To be a place that has no center, 2024, wood, copper, tin, epoxy, paint, silk, lace, terra-cotta, steel and sugar cubes, 72,5 x 53,5 x 9,5 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Installation views, *To be a place that has no center*, 2024.
Photo: Brian Kure.



To be a place that has no center, 2024, PETG-plastic, epoxy, pigment, copper, tin, paper and MDF, 72,5 x 53,5 x 9,5 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Untitled, 2021, pastel, charcoal and acrylic paint on paper.
Photo: Brian Kure.



On tiptoe is the tension, 2024, acrylic plaster, pigment and steel, 130 x 36 x 17 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.





Fragment of: *Heart Workers*, 2024, cardboard and pigment, 150 x 1600 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Fragment of: *Heart Workers*, 2024, cardboard and pigment, 150 x 1600 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Installation view: *Everyday*, 2024, bronze, 58 x 18 x 10 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Everyday, 2024, bronze, 58 x 18 x 10 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.



Detail: Everyday, 2024, bronze, 58 x 18 x 10 cm.
Photo: Brian Kure.

To be a place that has no center Anna Stahn

The sculptor

Let me carve it out in stone with the chisel used to carve out fine detail in rough materials in the exhibition *To be a place that has no center*; Aia Sofia Coverley Turan's praxis is first and foremost a sculptor praxis. In collages classic materials such as plaster and bronze merge with aluminum, textile, silk paper, plastic and copper; a relief of a dripping cloth, dioramas of television screens, a plaster dress rises. If you know the processes of the materials – what they require in terms of precision and technical skill – historical references emerge from the works: drapings, friezes, sculptures in heavy metals freed from their gravity. The small drop of bronze dripping from the cloth suddenly feels heavy in one's hand.

The television

In a series of dioramas, we see scenes from a home as silhouettes in a turned-off tv. In the kitchen, a sink overflowed as the tv reported some disturbing news. Children are running and playing, a family watches a soap opera together, a restless couple are unable to sleep. The tv connects the residents with their longings. The tv both feeds the longing and is a source of worry.

The television reports directly to the residents' emotional lives and outward signs show how they are feeling. It is a link to culture, to family. Turan works with Kurdish cultural history. She works with intimacy, grief and pride through sculpture. Like the residents who connect to culture through television, Turan connects through art. The tv, like sculpture making, becomes a portal.

The tv works are inspired, among other things, by the poem *The Living Room* by author Deniz Kiy. In the poem, Kiy describes parents who rest in the living room, sore after a long day of work. Language, furniture, textiles, mythology and steaming tea in glasses; scenes from everyday life portray a culture, a family, a heritage and an emotional life, as in Turan's works.

The textiles

In the work titled *On tiptoe is the tension*, a plaster dress stands on a pair of slender metal legs; the fabric rendered in the hard material recalls the robes of gods, monsters and heroes in sculpture collections. Textiles carved in stone, cast in plaster or metal; illusions of lightness and movement in the heavy. In Turan's work, the textiles cast in

plaster and metals are tea towels, cloths, dresses and sofas. Clothes are hung on the door, a dress stands up like a person; a child or a young woman.

The living dresses recur several places in the exhibition as wet, dripping fabric bodies; bodies without a center, bodies that carry themselves. They appear both tired and affectionate. The dress sculptures represent the body between places – in a state of diaspora. The body between the inner and the outer world, the private and the public body.

The artist and author Etel Adnan's book *In the Heart of the Heart, of another country* is among Turan's inspirations for the exhibition. In the text "At both ends", Adnan describes pain and love as related emotions, androgynous emotions, emotions that draw traces to the outer world, emotions that plant themselves within and become a part of one's identity, body and appearance.

The sculpture *On tiptoe is the tension*, is about being a child on the verge of becoming a teenager and the different cultural norms that come with growing up and becoming aware of your body. In the work, Turan explores the balance between Kurdish and Danish cultural norms. The long dress, the "modest fashion", dressing up represents both security, control and self-awareness.

In her text *Size 6 – the western women's harem*, from 1975 author Fatima Mernissi writes about the invisible veil she sees women being subjected to in the global north, juxtaposed with the actual physical covering in Mernissi's Muslim culture. Mernissi writes about strategies to make women invisible through clothing, age and appearance; in the global north through an ideal of

child-like youth, where older women are seen as irrelevant and embarrassing.

"The violence embodied in the Western harem is less visible than in the Eastern harem because aging is not attacked directly, but rather masked as an aesthetic choice. By putting the spotlight on the prepubescent female, the Western man veils the older, more mature woman, wrapping her in shrouds of ugliness. This idea gives me the chills because it tattoos the invisible harem directly onto a woman's skin."

Fatima Mernissi's analysis of the visible and invisible veil; a paradox. Turan stages this paradox in the dress sculptures; the clothes which protect and control, mark that no one is ever really free and yet; the dresses rise, slouch, exhale.

As a human being, you are limited physically and mentally by culture, society, gender, ethnicity – but to create is a power that lies beyond these things. Sculpture is a way to be present in the complicated physical world; to produce with temperament, anger, knowledge, body and stubbornness. The temperament and movement can be seen in the exhibition's bronzes; the cloth twisted in the middle of a thought, the tea towel kicked into the wind – sculptures as memories or little rebellions.

The runners

There are different ages at play in the exhibition; both children and adults. The runners, as seen all over the walls of the exhibition, are workers. They are chalky white and blend into the wall,

tying the exhibition together in a scenography or a *frieze*.

The circular shape of the frieze represents being in constant motion and yet in stillness. The work embodies how – when your consciousness is in several places at once (in several countries for example), it feels like running away from something, running towards something; both physically and mentally.

The work is about working in silence, being happy with what you have, being proud and grateful, being stubborn and not asking for anything; providing care and financial security for your family. The runners' mindset and work ethic are inherited; their children inherit both the endurance and the pain of hard work when their bodies give up. As described in Etel Adnan's poem;

"People state their pain, cry, shout, howl, whimper . . . or whisper their acute discomfort, but pain itself remains silent, ominously so. Silent (like water in its most dangerous state, before it forms a river), it gets absorbed, turns us into sponges, porous bodies, a porous body within the old body."

The aluminum drop in Turan's work falls from the cloth – produced with great care as when a worker secures a hangar in a shipyard. A part for a hangar is produced with great care, like a precious sculpture made by a sculptor in a bronze foundry.



Selected pages from art publication, made in relation to the exhibition
To be a place that has no center.

Made in collaboration with graphic designer Mark Emil Poulsen and artist/ printmaker Benjamin Savi.

Texts by: Deniz Kiy, Etel Adnan and Anna Stahn.

