

**HODA TAWAKOL**

***My Mothers***

***The Siren, the Vessel, the Womb***

**04 February – 28 March 2025**

We are thrilled to announce our third solo exhibition featuring the works of Hoda Tawakol, who was born in London, raised between Paris and Frankfurt, and of Egyptian descent.

The exhibition takes its title from "My Mothers," a three-channel video composed of stitched Super-8 film fragments from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s exploring the intertwined stories of three key maternal figures in the artist's life: her mother Honey, her grandmother Toutou, and her childhood caretaker Hosneia.

The central channel focuses on Tawakol's mother, Honey, a complex and multidimensional figure, a woman whom Tawakol, aged five, greeted as a stranger. Honey's sociability and emphasis on maintaining appearances often masked deeper aspects of her flamboyant personality. The second channel centers on Toutou, Tawakol's grandmother, who played a pivotal role in raising Hoda and her brother while Honey lived a bohemian lifestyle in Paris. Significantly, most of the film footage was captured by Toutou herself, adding a personal and intimate dimension to the narrative. The third channel highlights Hosneia, who nurtured her until the age of six before returning to Egypt to marry. Set in the early 70s, this segment showcases Hosneia in vibrant Afro-Kitsch attire, whose warmth, touch and hold proffered a sense of home.

Together, the three channels create a rich, multilayered narrative that examines themes of memory, connection, and the lasting influence of these maternal figures on Tawakol's identity and 20-year artistic journey.

In the series *Fragments of Return* (2024-25), the artist's family archives were the source of black-and-white photographs transformed into photomontages, featuring her three mothers in studio portraits or in holiday snaps—on the beach in Alexandria or Spain, overlaid with snake, shell, or flower motifs. The vibrant spray-painted backs of the flipped paper literally act as if turning memory inside out and along the way suggesting deceptive appearances, transforming the archival material. Faces are adorned with black ink drawings, reminiscent of tattooing practices that manifest identity and resistance. These marks act as both tributes and defacements, foregrounding the complex relationships between daughters and mothers.

As these works show, the conception of the body as a weapon, as a site of attraction and danger, one of relief and estrangement, of salvation and perpetual confusion, have been the driving force in the artist's practice over her twenty-year career \*

Suspended in the space is one of Tawakol's *Lure* (2024) works— exquisitely adorned soft, sensual large-format textile forms that strangely feel distressed as they cluster abundantly. Evoking the female breast or the dates of a palm tree, they nod to fertility, the nurturing qualities of motherhood, and the regenerative power of nature.

Three *Nude* (2025) sculptures, rounded voluptuous forms of the female body, are *contained* in a tabletop presentation, resembling a diminutive version of a sex doll. It exists here to be appreciated, never to be touched. Nylon, rice, fabric, and resin craft the silhouette of this body, swelling any archetypal physique. \*

Surrounding the space are three sculptures titled *Hair* (2011-2014) and *Warrior* (2010), which use synthetic hair to trace the contours of a person, or their ghostly presence. These poignant works transform hair—often associated with femininity and societal expectations—into symbols of strength and defiance. At the same time, they capture the ache of control imposed on women and their bodies.

The artist presents motherhood and femininity as deeply ambivalent states — at once tender and oppressive, celebratory and fraught with expectation. By weaving together film, photography, and sculpture, the exhibition underscores the ways in which women’s bodies have historically been inscribed with meaning, reclaiming that process as an act of creation, resistance, and profound personal connection.

\*See Dr. Omar Kholeif essay, 2024 “*Would it be okay if we told a story? Hoda Tawakol and Me*” in Keber Verlag Publishing, Berlin, Hoda Tawakol, *Some Ties Linger*.