



Born and raised in Detroit, Smith says growing up there had a profound influence on his future life in the arts. “The Detroit Institute of Arts was one of the biggest contributing factors to my becoming an artist,” he says. “Detroit had nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings that were adorned with architectural ornament that drew my eyes to always look up. Sculpture seemed to be all around, even in the local shopping malls of the early 1960s. I learned sculpture was diverse in its form and placement,” he says. “Then the riots of the late 1960s showed me how quickly life can change the fortunes of a place. There were forces afoot that I wasn’t aware of and I had to listen and look for them.”

Smith always intended to be a sculptor. He studied for his future career at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, from 1978 to 1980 and 1982 to 1984. “During the first stint,” Smith says, “the faculty were mainly first and second generation abstract expressionists. When I returned after a two year absence, they had hired noted figure sculptor Louis Marinaro (b. 1951). Lou taught us how to see the figure in an objective

**On this page, left:** Sankofa Kore (2011), cast in GFRC (glass fiber reinforced concrete), 57 inches high; **bottom:** Coleridge (2017), cast in GFRC, 36 inches high. **Opposite page:** Diana Bags a Stag (2015), cast in GFRC, 33 inches high.



Left photos: Courtesy of the artist; right photo: Rick Wright