

SASSONA NORTON

American, b. 1942 in Israel

Sassona Norton was born and raised in Israel and began painting at a very early age. She graduated from Tel Aviv University with degrees in theater and literature. She moved to New York City in 1974, where she studied at the Art Students League, and by the 1980s, she was showing at Sutton Gallery in New York. Her work was featured in both traveling exhibitions and solo shows, and she was often involved in architectural design installation projects. In 2002, she was recognized for her sculpture *The Edge of Rest*, earning the Huntington Art Medal at the National Arts Club in New York.

An Hour Before Dawn combines a strong, sinewy form with a delicate hand gesture to create what the artist describes as “a dialogue between vulnerability and strength.” This idea of tension arising from transition is also referenced by the title, describing the period in which the darkness of night gives way to the light of dawn. Norton is particularly interested in the female figure, describing it as a symbol of struggle at once timeless and modern:

The relatively new quest of women for equality with men prompted me to desert the old image of delicate femininity and replace it with powerful over-life-size muscular nakedness that still sends out a message of loss and longing to be elsewhere. To increase their exposure, the women are bald and their bronze skin is raw. These stand as painful scars of contemporary lives. But stripping of any detail, which could have anchored the figures in time and place, broadens their timelessness.¹¹

¹¹ Sassona Norton, “Statement,” *Sassona Norton Sculpture*, 2018, accessed May 7, 2019, <https://www.sassonanorton-sculpture.com/statement>.

An Hour Before Dawn, edition 1/5, bronze, 2001, 22" H x 36" W x 20" D.
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