

Watkinsville artist's 'Warrior Women' exhibit is pure feminist fury. See it before it's gone.



Andrew Shearer

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Watkinsville artist Alice Woodruff and her "Warrior Women" exhibit at the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation in Watkinsville Ga. on Nov. 8, 2022. *Andrew Shearer/Athens Banner-Herald*

If you haven't had a chance to catch Alice Woodruff's "Warrior Women" exhibit at the [Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation](#), you've got until Friday to do so. But consider yourself warned: the Watkinsville artist's immersive 100-piece collection is a walk through unfiltered depictions of the struggles of women throughout history.

The exhibition began as something completely different, but no less immediate. Woodruff had been working on pieces inspired by a deeply personal family tragedy in 2018, when she heard about the New York Times' report on convicted felon Harvey Weinstein.

"I always have the news on while I'm in my studio," Woodruff told the Banner-Herald. "I found myself stacking two clay pots on top of one another, which created a kind of female form. I built it out from there, and that ended up being the first piece in a completely new project."

Named "Jodi" after Jodi Kantor, one of the reporters who broke the Weinstein story, the clay sculpture starts off Chapter 1 of "Warrior Women," Woodruff's companion book to the exhibit that features photos and descriptions for every piece she made for the gallery.



Watkinsville artist Alice Woodruff's "Warrior Women" exhibit at the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation in Watkinsville, Ga. on Nov. 8, 2022. *Andrew Shearer/Athens Banner-Herald*

Woodruff wrote stories to accompany every piece, all named for women whose names she heard on the news or read in news articles. There is one for Isabella Baumfree, one for Malala Yousafzai, one for dancehall performer Jada Kingdom and one for Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Woodruff's most difficult sculpture, X González, depicts a woman whose arms are grasped by several small children.

"X is named after a survivor of the Marjory Stoneman high school mass shooting," said Woodruff. "For me, she holds the memory of all the little kids killed at Sandy Hook Elementary, and all the other children killed in school shootings."



Pieces from Watkinsville artist Alice Woodruff's "Warrior Women" exhibit at the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation in Watkinsville, Ga. on Nov. 8, 2022. *Andrew Shearer/Athens Banner-Herald*

Woodruff said that the response that she has received from "Warrior Women" has been overwhelmingly positive, but that a few men who walked through it became defensive, which Woodruff saw as a possible need for confession.

"I thought about asking them if they'd done something that required defending," Woodruff said.

After the exhibit's Nov. 11 closing, Woodruff said that all of the sculptures in "Warrior Women" will be safely packed away unless other museums or galleries contact her about displaying one or more of the pieces. Woodruff can be reached via her official Facebook page at [facebook.com/AliceWoodruffPottery](https://www.facebook.com/AliceWoodruffPottery).

The Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation is located at 34 School St. in Watkinsville. For schedule and museum hours, visit [ocaf.com](https://www.ocaf.com) or call (706) 769-4565.