

Nadine Robinson

Born in 1968 in London, England

Lives and works in New York City

Nadine Robinson's story is a quintessentially American one. Born in London to African parents, Robinson spent her childhood in Kingston, Jamaica; she later immigrated to Brooklyn, eventually settling in the Bronx. A conceptual artist working predominantly in light and sound, Robinson's work is both a reflection of her cultural hybridity, and the result of her critical engagement with notions of blackness, urbanism, spirituality, and the legacy of the male-dominated, white modernist canon.

Robinson has become well-known for her large-scale sculptures and "sonic paintings" that appropriate the abstraction, purity, and rigid geometry of minimalist artists Robert Ryman and Ad Reinhardt, yet contain narratives culled from a variety of sources ranging from biblical verses and German fables, to samples of hip hop music and spiritual chants drawn from Jamaican mysticism.

*Tower Hollers (Version I)*, which was conceived during her residency at the World Trade Center Studios in 2001, is emblematic of the visual and aural contrasts that underscore Robinson's artistic practice. For the installation, Robinson installed 100 12-inch by 12-inch panels in a grid on a wall. Consisting of 455 speakers - each embedded in one-foot square canvases of varying depths - the piece played abstract elevator

"muzak" and remixed Negro work songs, creating a choral wall made of improvised, impassioned protest songs melded with vacuous, synthetically produced sounds.

Robinson fuses materials ranging from DJ equipment and hair extensions to found recordings of Pentecostal readings together. She blends high art and street culture, the formal purity of abstraction with narrative expressions, and the fervent extremism of religious spirituality with the vernacular of hip hop culture. Her art physically embodies the tensions that exist between races, cultures, classes, and religious ideologies that are not only characteristic of America's cultural past, but remain endemic to its present.