

whitewall

"Woody De Othello Transforms Pérez Art Museum Miami into a Living Temple"

By Katy Donoghue

November 17, 2025



Woody De Othello, Recent works, 2024–25. © Woody De Othello. Courtesy the artist, Jessica Silverman, and Karma. Photo by Phillip Maisel.

At Pérez Art Museum Miami, Woody De Othello's "Coming Forth by Day" (open now through June 28, 2026 and curated by Jennifer Inacio) is his first solo museum exhibition in his hometown. Through ceramic and wood sculptures, tiled wall works, and a monumental bronze, *Othello* explores the intertwined rhythms of body, earth, and spirit. Rooted in diasporic and precolonial traditions, the immersive *installation* channels transformation, renewal, and ancestral memory.

WHITEWALLER: How did returning to Miami shape the emotional or spiritual atmosphere of "coming forth by day"?

WOODY DE OTHELLO: Having the show in Miami has really got me thinking about the past, about movement and migration, and about the beliefs or myths we pick up along the way. The ones we start to believe about ourselves, about the world, and how, over time, those beliefs become truth.

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508

In preparing for this show, I've been thinking a lot about my family and community, and what I want to share with them through this work. More than just describing something, I hope the work invites people to have a moment of contemplation, to look a little closer at the beliefs we tend to hold onto so tightly. Maybe by doing that, it can open up space to be a bit more understanding, both with ourselves and with others, especially the parts that have yet to come to light.

Woody De Othello on the Crossroads of Culture and Art



Left: Woody De Othello, "Ibeji," 2022, ceramic, glaze, paint and redwood, 57 x 19 x 20 1/2 inches. Collection Pérez Art Museum Miami, museum purchase with funds provided by Simi Ahuja and Kumar Mahadeva. © Woody De Othello. Courtesy the artist, Jessica Silverman, and Karma. Photo by Eric Ruby.



Right: Woody De Othello, "May I look upon myself and my shadow," 2025, glazed ceramic, 27 x 14 x 14 inches. © Woody De Othello. Courtesy the artist, Jessica Silverman, and Karma. Photo by Phillip Maisel.

WW: The show's title references the *Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Coming Forth by Day*, evoking ideas of passage, renewal, and transcendence. How do these concepts resonate with your own process?

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508

WDO: More than just resonating with my art practice, these concepts resonate with my whole being, and that energy naturally finds its way into the studio. Looking at ancient Kemet has opened up so many new ways of seeing for me. It's deepened my understanding of my Catholic upbringing and my Haitian roots, helping me connect the dots between them. It's also helped me reframe ideas about Blackness and the contributions of Black people to civilization, and overall, it's been a real source of strength.

One of the ideas that's stuck with me most is the myth of Ausar's resurrection, this struggle between good and evil. To me, it feels like a metaphor for the rhythm of day and night. Every day, the sun rises and overcomes the darkness, and then, in time, the night reclaims the sky. For me, that cycle, that duality, feels essential to our own growth for us to realize our oneness. Learning about this myth has not only changed how I deal with conflict and resistance, but also how I approach joy and excitement. It's helped me stay grounded, to appreciate both sides without getting lost in either.

"In that slower pace, there's room for awareness and reflection to take shape,"
-Woody De Othello

WW: You often treat clay as a vessel for breath, memory, and becoming. Can you share how your engagement with material has evolved in this body of work, and how you see the connection between ancestral memory and the handmade?

WDO: There are so many myths that compare the human experience to that of a vessel. Across different cultures, we see the idea of humans being made from clay, with a divine force acting as the shaper. In ancient Egypt, the god Khnum was known as the divine potter. In the Chaldean myth, the god Bel's blood was mixed with clay to form the first man. In Greek mythology, Prometheus is shown shaping humanity out of clay, and in the Bible, Adam is created from dust.

Clay, to me, is a powerful metaphor for becoming — for our ability to be shaped by something greater than ourselves: by our surroundings, our communities, and our shared experiences. Working on this body of work has taught me to stay open, to listen more deeply with the entirety of my whole body. I've come to realize that creativity isn't something I control; it's something I open myself to, something I allow to move through me.

For me, breath is everything; we have life because we have breath. We can experience touch because we breathe. To be human is to be touched and to touch, to change and to be changed. That constant exchange plays out in the handmade; it's where the physical and the spiritual meet. That's where ancestral memory lives — as an imprint that exists both in the body, in the physical world, and beyond it.

WW: The installation integrates clay-painted walls, herbal scents, and altar-like assemblages referencing Egyptian, Afro-Caribbean, and New Age cosmologies. What drew you to merge these spiritual systems, and how do you hope visitors will experience the space as a site of contemplation or care?

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508

WDO: My interest in these ideas emerged naturally over the course of my life. I grew up in a Haitian Catholic household, and I think my curiosity about different cosmologies comes from both an appreciation for that background and a resistance to its colonial influences. With this installation, I hope visitors become more aware of their own bodies — that they slow down, take their time, and really look. My hope is that, in that slower pace, there's room for awareness and reflection to take shape.

WW: Your large bronze sculpture, *one becomes two, two becomes one*, depicts an intimate embrace—a tender counterpoint to its monumental scale. How do you navigate the tension between gravity and tenderness, between the physical weight of material and the emotional lightness of connection?

WDO: I think emotions are heavy; we wear them on our sleeves, even when we try to hide them, they come through. So much of our experience is shaped by our emotions. Our feelings become the lens through which we move through the world, shaping our perception. We're often quick to judge or make assumptions about someone else without really understanding the path they've had to walk.

I'm still learning how to navigate that space between gravity and tenderness, between the physical heaviness of materials and the emotional lightness. I keep coming back to the question: how do we make empathy larger? How do we make tenderness larger? At the end of the day, we're in this together. I don't think I can ever have too many reminders to slow down, to reach out, to check in, to be gentle with others and with myself.

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508

What to Know



Left: Woody De Othello, "pulling back around," 2025, glazed ceramic with wooden frame, 17 x 14 1/2 x 2 inches. © Woody De Othello. Courtesy the artist, Jessica Silverman, and Karma. Photo by Phillip Maisel.

Right: Woody De Othello, "Another side," 2024, glazed ceramic with wooden frame, 19 x 15 1/4 inches. © Woody De Othello. Courtesy the artist, Jessica Silverman, and Karma. Photo by Phillip Maisel.

Why It Matters

Othello's immersive installation bridges ancient Egyptian mythology, Afro-Caribbean beliefs, and personal reflection, inviting viewers into a space of contemplation and transformation.

Dates

On view through June 28, 2026.

Venue

Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM).

Curator

Jennifer Inacio.

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508