

"Harvard Business School announces new pieces of public art supported by the C. Ludens Ringnes Sculpture Collection"

By Harvard Business School

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Harvard Business School (HBS) has added sculptures by Woody De Othello and Erika Verzutti to the C. Ludens Ringnes Sculpture Collection for a two-year exhibition on its Boston campus. The installation is part of the School's ongoing contemporary sculpture program, which began in April 2016, and joins pieces in its permanent collection by Mary Frank, Jaume Plensa, John Safer, Joel Shapiro, and Yinka Shonibare.

"It's a real gift to have work of this caliber on our campus, where students, faculty, alumni, and staff will encounter it every day," said Kenneth Peterson, executive director of Baker Library.

"Woody De Othello's work asks us to think about connection and communication beyond ordinary speech, and Erika Verzutti's transforms ordinary fruit into something ancient and monumental. Having sculptures this thoughtful on the HBS campus is exactly the kind of experience we want for our community."

These installations are made possible by the generosity of the artists and galleries: Verzutti and the Andrew Kreps Gallery (New York); and Othello and the Karma (New York) and Jessica Silverman (San Francisco) galleries, and by the C. Ludens Ringnes Sculpture Collection, which supports Harvard Business School's contemporary outdoor sculpture exhibition.

"What I love about these pieces is that they're rich with history and intention, yet you don't need to know any of that to enjoy them—and there are many layers to discover the longer you look. That's the magic and depth running through a lot of the artwork at Harvard Business School," said Gabe Handel, assistant dean for administrative and educational affairs. "Othello's and Verzutti's pieces add to a collection that grabs you or sparks a sense of wonder in the moment, while slowly helping you appreciate how deeply visual art and other forms of creative expression can shape your experience of the campus."

More information about the collection is available in the Contemporary Art on Campus section of the School's website, which includes a map of the sculptures currently on display.

This year's installation features the following works:

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Woody De Othello, *Capacity*, 2025 — Schwartz Common

*Capacity* belongs to a body of work Othello first presented in his 2025 exhibition *Tuning the Dial*, which explored emotion as an invisible frequency— “energy in motion,” in the artist's words; felt rather than seen. In the sculpture, speaker cones branch off like limbs from a central trunk, blurring the line between the human body and sonic technology.

Othello has described the piece as something like a communication tower, drawing on his fascination with satellite dishes and sound receivers; as a viewer circles the work, the cones and receivers begin to resemble faces. The form also nods to the African drum as an instrument of communication. Together, these references collapse the distinction between seeing, hearing, and feeling, inviting viewers to consider forms of communication that extend beyond ordinary speech and to become more attentive to emotional resonance.

Othello (b. 1991, Miami, Florida) is an American artist working primarily in ceramic and bronze, alongside painting and works on paper. Of Haitian descent, he earned a BFA from Florida Atlantic University and an MFA from California College of the Arts in 2017. He lives and works in Oakland, California.

Othello is best known for transforming ordinary domestic objects—telephones, clocks, fans, lamps, chairs—into warped, anthropomorphic forms that seem to slump, stretch, breathe, and

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hold emotion. His work draws on the West and Central African concept of *nkisi*, a belief system in which spirits inhabit everyday objects, infusing familiar things with psychological weight and human presence. The result is sculpture that is at once humorous and deeply reflective, treating the mundane as a vessel for memory, feeling, and spirit.

His work is held in collections including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the San José Museum of Art, and he was featured in the 2022 Whitney Biennial. A major solo exhibition, *Woody De Othello: coming forth by day*, was on view at the Pérez Art Museum in Miami, and his works have appeared in public exhibitions including the Public Art Fund's presentation in Brooklyn Bridge Park.



Erika Verzutti, *Venus Yogini*, 2019 — Schwartz Common

*Venus Yogini* stacks exaggerated forms of graviola and pumpkin into a monumental, upside-down profile that recalls the earliest known sculpture, the Venus of Willendorf—a Paleolithic figurine representing fertility that was created roughly 30,000 years ago. The work grew out of a series of smaller sculptures in which Verzutti explores organic forms to depict the goddess of love, sex, beauty, and fertility, scaled into a freestanding public monument.

Verzutti's Venus figures are partly built from forms borrowed from fruit, such as pumpkins and sugar-apples, and partly from the fertility icon they distort. Cast in bronze, the surface is worked

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over with pigmented wax and oil paint so that expressive texture and painterly patches of color rework a classical motif into new territory, complicating inherited ideas of femininity and fertility. By inflating the scale of ordinary fruit and organic forms, Verzutti also gestures toward the scale of ecological pressures facing Brazil as global demand for natural resources accelerates. Standing more than 10 feet tall, the piece turns a still-life vocabulary into something totemic—a monument built from the language of the orchard rather than the quarry.

Verzutti (b. 1971, São Paulo, Brazil) is a sculptor known for blending modernist, contemporary, and Paleolithic forms with everyday materials, particularly organic elements such as fruits, plants, and found objects. She has described her practice as “a sculpture of a painting,” with works taking shape intuitively as she responds to material in the studio.

Verzutti holds an ongoing interest in the origins of sculptural form and its role in public space, frequently returning to archetypes like the Venus of Willendorf, the swan, and domestic still-life objects, then re-scaling or re-materializing them until they take on bodily, anthropomorphic presence. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Life of Sculptures*, LUMA Arles, France (2024); *Notizia*, ICA Milano, Milan, Italy (2024), *New Moons* at CCS Bard Galleries (2023), *Tantra* at Museo Experimental El Eco, Mexico City (2023), and presentations at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the Aspen Art Museum (both 2019). Her work has also been shown at Sculpture Center, New York; the Tang Museum at Skidmore College; and at the Carnegie International at the Carnegie Museum of Art.

Her sculptures are held in the collections of Tate Modern, London; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, among others.

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