



Woody De Othello Celebrates First Major Solo Public Exhibition in New York with Public Art Fund

Monumental works installed throughout Brooklyn Bridge Park explore everyday rituals and the elemental presence of wind and water



Woody De Othello: Guardian Spirit

May 5, 2026 – March 8, 2027

Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 1 and Manhattan Bridge View at the intersection of Washington Street and Plymouth Street

May 4, 2026, New York, NY – On May 5, 2026, Public Art Fund will present *Woody De Othello: Guardian Spirit*, the artist's first major public art exhibition in New York. Installed throughout Brooklyn Bridge Park, the exhibition debuts new monumental redwood works alongside bronze sculptures made between 2021 and 2025. The exhibition continues the artist's ongoing exploration of nkisi, ritual objects from Western and Central Africa that embody



spiritual presences and channel protective or healing forces. Along the waterfront site, Othello abstracts the figure, vessel and other commonplace objects to point towards the dissolution of our physical bodies as we move through space, time and matter.

“For me, anything in the material world has the potential to become a ritual object,” says **Othello**. “Before something exists physically, it begins as thought. Sculpture is a way of pointing back to that unseen space, to the breath, the wind, the shared consciousness we’re all part of.”

Rising between 20 and 22 feet tall, Othello’s three new redwood totems introduce a vertical presence that responds directly to the park’s open sky, shifting winds, and proximity to water. The artist carved the totems from compressed blocks of wood using chainsaws and grinders. Each totem is filled with symbolic reliefs: outstretched hands for compassion, kneeling figures for reverence, ears for listening and birds for freedom. One gesture blends into the next, evoking the shifting ways we experience emotion, memory, and consciousness. The redwood sculptures will weather over time, registering the environment and marking the passage of the exhibition itself.

Communication is a recurring theme of the exhibition. In *thought in mind*, an enlarged bronze phone and comb suggest these objects’ outsized importance: how something as fleeting as a phone call can change the course of our lives. *Capacity*, *inner knowing*, and *Involution* feature trumpet horn-shaped appendages merging with ears and hands. The works suggest the connections between sensation and emotion, mirroring nkisi, which unify the physical and spiritual realms.

“Woody De Othello creates sculptures that feel both intimate and monumental,” says **Jenée-Daria Strand, Assistant Curator at Public Art Fund**. “He invites us to consider how art can hold space: for protection, for memory, and for connection, while ensuring the work remains approachable, and playful, through his use of recognizable objects. In Brooklyn Bridge Park, these works open outward, engaging the environment and the public.”

The sequencing of the sculptures across Brooklyn Bridge Park encourages movement and pause, prompting visitors to reflect on breath, listening, and the subtle forces that shape daily life.

Woody De Othello: Guardian Spirit is curated by Public Art Fund Assistant Curator Jenée-Daria Strand.



@PublicArtFund #WoodyDeOthello

When & Where

Starting on May 5, 2026, *Woody De Othello: Guardian Spirit* will be on view at Brooklyn Bridge Park. Six sculptures are installed at Pier 1 and one at DUMBO Manhattan Bridge View at the intersection of Washington Street and Plymouth Street.

The exhibition can be explored anytime, anywhere, on the free **Bloomberg Connects** app.

Subways: A, C to High Street; F to York Street; 2, 3 to Clark Street; R to Court Street; 4, 5 to Borough Hall.

Buses: B25 to Fulton Ferry Landing; B67 to Jay Street & York Street.

Ferry: East River Ferry, New York Water Taxi, or Governors Island Ferry to Brooklyn Bridge Park.

About the Artist

Woody De Othello (b. 1991, Miami) works primarily in clay and bronze, manipulating mundane objects such as clocks, calendars, phones, and box fans to transform them into warped, uncanny repositories of psychic significance. This approach builds on the West and Central African concept of nkisi, in which objects contain and release spiritual forces; for Othello, each work is a vessel, even when it is physically sealed. His two-dimensional works also present surrealistic distortions of scale and temporality, invoking the familiar but confounding legibility. He lives in Oakland, California.

Recent institutional solo exhibitions include *coming forth by day*, currently on view at the Pérez Art Museum Miami; John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin (2021–22); and San José Museum of Art, California (2019). His work was included in the 2022 Whitney Biennial, *Quiet as It's Kept*. Othello's work is represented in the collections of the Aishti Foundation, Beirut; Baltimore Museum of Art; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California; Dallas Museum of Art; de Young Museum, San Francisco; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; MAXXI – National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Pérez Art Museum Miami; Rennie Museum, Vancouver; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; San José Museum of Art; Seattle Art Museum; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.



Related Free Programming

[Opening Celebration for Woody De Othello: Guardian Spirit](#)

Tuesday, May 5

6:00-7:00pm ET

Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 1 (The Vale)

[Public Art Fund Talks: Woody De Othello](#)

Thursday, May 7

6:30-7:30pm ET

Cooper Union

Frederick P. Rose Auditorium

41 Cooper Sq, New York, NY 10008

About Brooklyn Bridge Park

Brooklyn Bridge Park, one of the most transformative public projects in New York City in a generation, has revitalized a formerly industrial waterfront into a dynamic 85-acre civic space. Created to be environmentally and financially sustainable, Brooklyn Bridge Park is a model for resilient urban design that reconnects New Yorkers and visitors to the waterfront. Brooklyn Bridge Park (BBP) operates as a non-profit corporation of the City of New York and is responsible for the stewardship of the park—maintaining its landscapes, maritime infrastructure, and public amenities. BBP develops and delivers dynamic public programming that weaves together arts and culture, recreation, and environmental education to engage, inspire, and serve a diverse community.

About Public Art Fund

As the leader in its field, Public Art Fund brings dynamic contemporary art to a broad audience in New York City and beyond by mounting ambitious free exhibitions of international scope and impact that offer the public powerful experiences with art and the urban environment.

Supports

Leadership support for *Woody De Othello: Guardian Spirit* is provided by KARMA, the Girlfriend Fund, the Abrams Foundation, Elizabeth Fearon Pepperman & Richard C. Pepperman II, Jennifer Harris, and the KHR McNeely Family Foundation | Kevin, Rosemary, and Hannah Rose McNeely, with champion support from The Lipman Family Foundation, Elise & Andrew Brownstein, Ellen & Andrew Celli, Jennifer & Jason New, Allison & Paul Russo, Allison Wiener &



Jeffrey Schackner, and David Wine & Michael P. MacElhenny; generous support from Margot & Nathan Bram and Linda Lennon & Stuart Baskin; and major support from Jessica Silverman.

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Image Credits

Woody De Othello

Listening, Awareness, and Reverence, 2026

Redwood

Photo: Nicholas Knight, Courtesy of Public Art Fund, NY.

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