

Harvard Art Museums

Fogg Museum
Busch-Reisinger Museum
Arthur M. Sackler Museum

Press Release

***Origen*, an Installation by Bosco Sodi, now on display at the Harvard Art Museums**



Detail view of *Bosco Sodi: Origen* (2023) on the outdoor Broadway terrace at the Harvard Art Museums. Photo: Courtesy of the artist and Kasmin, New York.

Cambridge, MA
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A new installation of sculptures by Mexican-born artist **Bosco Sodi**, *Origen*, places 14 of the artist's handmade clay spheres at the Harvard Art Museums and marks the first-ever presentation of art on the museums' outdoor Broadway terrace. In a first for a U.S. installation of the artist's work, Sodi has also unveiled three gold-glazed spheres as part of his site-specific arrangement. The works are all on loan from the artist and Kasmin, New York.

Bosco Sodi: Origen will remain on display through June 9, 2024. The installation has been organized by **Mary Schneider Enriquez**, the Houghton Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Harvard Art Museums.

Sodi's practice explores the earth's elements, marrying age-old traditions of sculpting clay with a contemporary vision of creating simple universal forms that prompt reflection. *Origen*, which the artist

defines from the Spanish as “source,” signifies both the center of a circle or sphere and the beginnings of the planet, including all the attendant geological, historical, and spiritual connotations of the word.

Sodi has long admired the aesthetics of Japanese *wabi sabi*, which he interprets as operating on principles that favor imperfection and impermanence; his approach celebrates the varied, irregular fissures and faults that enliven his clay forms and their site-specific installations. He creates his spheres by hand in Oaxaca, Mexico, where centuries ago (approximately 500 BCE–900 CE) the Zapotec culture flourished and was celebrated for their sophisticated terracotta sculptures. Building on this history, Sodi works with Oaxacan artisans, using local clay to sculpt each sphere, drying it outside for up to eight months, and then firing it in a makeshift kiln built upon a Pacific Ocean beach. The resulting terracotta forms reveal the effects of nature’s forces—the sun, sea air, and fire—as demonstrated by the myriad cracks, chips, and blackened and crusty patches that distinguish each sphere.

“Bosco Sodi’s work speaks to the material and to the body, to the earth and to the essential thread connecting human beliefs and existence to the world we inhabit,” said Schneider Enriquez. “His terracotta spheres, sculpted by hand and fired in outdoor kilns, convey the age-old, universal symbol as an evocatively rustic, physical presence that invites deep contemplation.”



Detail view of *Bosco Sodi: Origen* (2023) in a gallery of Asian Buddhist sculpture at the Harvard Art Museums. Photo: Courtesy of the artist and Kasmin, New York.

Twelve spheres of varying sizes have been installed on the museums’ outdoor Broadway terrace, with two additional spheres installed indoors within two consecutive galleries of Asian art (Galleries 1600 and 1610) that have a direct view onto the terrace. Moving from outside to inside the museums, three of the artist’s 17-karat gold-glazed spheres connect to and engage with the meditative atmosphere evoked by the installation of Buddhist figures in Gallery 1610. Sodi, who equates the spherical form with belief systems and the color gold with holiness, puts the spheres in dialogue with the sculptures throughout the gallery.

Said Schneider Enriquez: “I am thrilled to present *Origen*, both outside the museums and within our galleries of Asian Buddhist and Chinese funerary art, and hope that visitors will find Sodi’s installation prompts them to pause and think further about sculpture and beliefs across time and cultures.”

Locations of the spheres:

- Outdoor Broadway terrace (accessible via the stairs and ramp adjacent to the museums’ Prescott Street entrance)

- Galleries 1600 and 1610 (Level 1)

About the artist

Bosco Sodi (b. Mexico City 1970) is known for his use of raw, natural materials to create large-scale textured paintings and objects. Sodi has discovered an emotive power within the essential simplicity of his materials and the vivid pigments he sources. He has described his creative process as a “controlled chaos” that makes “something that is completely un-repeatable.” Focusing on material exploration, the creative gesture, and the spiritual connection between the artist and his work, Sodi seeks to transcend conceptual barriers. His works become memories and relics symbolic of the artist’s conversation with the raw material that brought them into creation.

In 2022, the artist founded Assembly, a nonprofit exhibition venue in Monticello, New York. In 2013, he founded Fundación Casa Wabi near Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca, Mexico, an arts center dedicated to promoting cultural exchange between international contemporary artists and local communities. Designed by the Japanese architect Tadao Ando, the foundation’s headquarters hosts artist residencies and exhibitions, among other initiatives.

Recent exhibitions and public installations include *Saptatathāgata* at the Casa de México en España in Madrid, Spain (2023); *Alabanzas* at the Galería Hilario Galguera in Mexico City, Mexico (2023); *What Goes Around Comes Around* at the Palazzo Vendramin Grimani in Venice, Italy (2022); *Básico* at the University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum in Tampa, Florida (2022); *Bosco Sodi: La fuerza del destino* at the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas (2021–22); and *Tabula Rasa* in Washington Square Park, New York, NY (2021).

Sodi’s work is in significant public and private collections worldwide including the JUMEX Collection, Mexico; the Contemporary Art Foundation, Japan; the Harvard Art Museums, Massachusetts; the Nasher Sculpture Center, Texas; the Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.; the Walker Art Center, Minnesota; the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Connecticut; the New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, among others. boscosodi.com

Website

harvardartmuseums.org/boscosodi

Credits

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About the Harvard Art Museums

The Harvard Art Museums house one of the largest and most renowned art collections in the United States, comprising three museums (the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M. Sackler Museums) and four research centers (the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, the Harvard Art Museums Archives, and the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis). The Fogg Museum includes western art from the Middle Ages to the present; the Busch-Reisinger Museum, unique among North American museums, is dedicated to the study of all modes and periods of art from central and northern Europe, with an emphasis on German-speaking countries; and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum is focused on art from Asia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean. Together, the collections include over 255,000 objects in all media. The Harvard Art

Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. Integral to Harvard University and the wider community, the museums and research centers serve as resources for students, scholars, and the public. For more than a century, they have been the nation's premier training ground for museum professionals and are renowned for their seminal role in developing the discipline of art history in the United States. The Harvard Art Museums have a rich tradition of considering the history of objects as an integral part of the teaching and study of art history, focusing on conservation and preservation concerns as well as technical studies. harvardartmuseums.org

The Harvard Art Museums receive support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Hours and Admission

Open Tuesday–Sunday, 10am–5pm; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission: \$20 adults, \$18 seniors (65+). Free to all visitors on Sundays (all day) and the last Thursday of every month (5–9pm); on other days, free to: members, all students (with valid ID), youth under 18, Cambridge residents (proof of residency required), Harvard ID holders (plus one guest), active-duty military personnel (NEA Blue Star Museums), and individuals with SNAP benefits or an EBT card. On Saturdays, 10am–noon, Massachusetts residents receive free admission (proof of residency required). For further information about visiting, including important COVID-19 policies, see harvardartmuseums.org/visit.

For more information, please contact

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