

Otobong Nkanga: Cadence

Otobong Nkanga (Nigerian-Belgian, born 1974) has changed the way we understand the earth and our place in it. “Humans are only a small, minute part of the ecosystem,” the artist has said. “My works connect us to our shared histories, not just through land and geography, but through emotions shaped by events and encounters. These are the cadences of life.” Commissioned by MoMA to produce a site-specific work for the Marron Atrium, Nkanga presents *Cadence*, an all-encompassing environment of sculpture, sound, and text that captures the turbulent rhythms of nature and society. The installation centers on a monumental, multipaneled tapestry that evokes sprawling ecosystems and galaxies. Hanging sculptures, composed of dyed ropes and interwoven with handblown glass and ceramic forms, appear alongside ceramic tablets imprinted with poems by the artist. These diverse elements are brought together within an immersive sound work.

Nkanga made the large-scale tapestry, which features a kaleidoscopic range of natural and synthetic fibers, using innovative digital weaving techniques at the TextielLab, a workshop of the TextielMuseum in Tilburg, the Netherlands. A series of veiled images invoking water, shooting stars, bombs, and plants are scattered across the many layers of the tapestry, exploring states of censorship and visibility, as well as social and ecological turmoil. The suspended sculptures, with their lines of rope and glass and raku fired-clay vessels, suggest the rhythmic fall of a drop of water.

Intricately combining materials, images, and sounds, *Cadence* confronts both the beauty and the degradation of the natural world—and its upheaval amid industrial and technological revolutions, resource extraction, and war.

Organized by Michelle Kuo, Chief Curator at Large and Publisher, with Elizabeth Wickham, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture; Helena Klevorn, Curatorial Assistant to the Chief Curator at Large and Publisher; and Aimee Keefer, Senior Exhibition Designer.

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Live performances will take place in Spring 2025. For more information, visit moma.org/cadence.