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**Erika Verzutti: Swan with Stage**



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**Erika Verzutti: Swan with Stage**  
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# SculptureCenter

## Erika Verzutti: Swan with Stage

# Family relations: Erika Verzutti Ruba Katrib

A recurring cast of characters gathers in Erika Verzutti's exhibition *Swan with Stage*. These painted bronze and plaster sculptures, vaguely resembling creatures and ordinary objects, comprise a family unit, a group of friends, entries in a field guide, protagonists in a play. The star, the namesake of the show, is *Swan with Stage*, (2015), a 12-foot-high abstracted white form that towers over the room while also constituting a stage with a steel platform. This work is an enlarged relative of other swan forms Verzutti has produced that, like most of her sculptures, are intimately scaled and can be easily handled. Not quite monumental, at times, the large swan shares the spotlight. In a series of theatrical exchanges, the swan frequently partners with an actor, a young man that at times dons a mechanic's jumpsuit embroidered with "Erika" for the name tag. Their dance is documented in thirty-eight black-and-white photographs lining the perimeter of the room. In the images, imbued with sentimentality and humor, we understand that the performers' interactions have prompted laughter and tears, drinks and arguments. They joke, but it's serious.

In a gallery to the side of *Swan with Stage*, Verzutti shows new versions of several of her sculptures made over the last decade. Mostly referencing animals and fruit—birds, pineapples, and papaya—these remakes advance her persistent investigation of form. Subjects recur in various manifestations, each a unique expression, their individuality emphasized through their relations. The remakes are united with the older sculptures on view through the color blue, the common palette further clarifying their formal affinities and differences. Uniqueness is highlighted through sameness. Distinguishing details come into focus.

Verzutti doesn't shy away from intimacy with her objects. Though she takes a lot of care in the production of her sculptures, many of them need a little extra help. Their provisional state emphasizes their vulnerability, articulating their need for love as well as revealing their idiosyncrasies. While Verzutti works with traditional materials such as bronze and plaster, and sometimes concrete, she often incorporates found objects, including stones and eggs. Many of the sculptures have their own props, such as hammers, and cast bronze paintbrushes. Some are slightly off-kilter, seemingly ready to topple over; *Jaspera Years Later*, 2015, rests on a stack of books. In *Peacock*, 2014, the flamboyant bird's feathers are, appropriately, filled out with paintbrushes covered with paint, dripping down its iridescent violet and blue form. Verzutti's sculptures feel solid and complete in the bulk of their materiality, yet she retains space for expression and transformation in their composition.

Operating as discrete objects connected to a larger taxonomy of types, Verzutti's works enter into multiple narratives. Animals and vegetables rendered as classic forms somberly flirt with the traditional, but on closer inspection, do not pretend sophistication. Modest, arching bird necks lean on brushes for support. Not quite an ugly duckling, despite its massive scale *Swan with Stage* also remains unformed, perhaps not even striving for elegance.

Arranged together, Verzutti's sculptures evoke a family reunion. Though appearing to be organic, the forms reveal their material construction as art objects, clearly manifesting paint strokes and drips. The sculptures are connected in an imagined landscape, but they are also charged with individual personalities, each suggesting a set of relationships and roles within a larger narrative.



Installation view, Erika Verzutti: *Swan with Stage*, SculptureCenter, 2015. Courtesy the artist, Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo; Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York; and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich. Photo: Jason Mandella



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# Checklist of Works in the Exhibition

**Backstage**, 2015  
Series of 6 silver gelatin prints  
5.6 x 10 inches each  
(14.5 x 11.5 inches framed)

**Brasília Azulejo (Blue)/Brasilia Tile (Blue)**,  
2015  
Bronze and acrylic  
17.7 x 9.8 x 9.8 inches  
(42 x 25 x 25 cm)  
Collection of Evangelina Seiler

**Brasília Lápis (Blue)/Brasilia Pencil (Blue)**,  
2015  
Bronze and acrylic  
12.2 x 6.3 x 6.3 inches  
(31 x 16 x 16 cm)

**Cubo**, 2013  
Concrete, bronze and stones  
10 x 9.3 x 9.1 inches  
(25.5 x 23.5 x 23 cm)

**Day for Night**, 2015  
Series of 4 silver gelatin prints  
5.6 x 10 inches each  
(14.5 x 11.5 inches framed)

**Death of the Swan**, 2015  
Series of 2 silver gelatin prints  
5.6 x 10 inches each  
(14.5 x 11.5 inches framed)

**Dodoi**, 2003  
Unfired clay, wood, paintbrushes,  
newspaper, acrylic paint and varnish  
14.6 x 13.8 x 13.8 in  
(37 x 35 x 35 cm)

**Escala Reforma (Blue)/Renovation Scale  
(Blue)**, 2015  
Concrete, bronze, and acrylic  
7.5 x 7.5 x 4 inches (19 x 19 x 10 cm)

**Fight**, 2015  
Series of 4 silver gelatin prints  
5.6 x 10 inches each  
(14.5 x 11.5 inches framed)

**Galapagos**, 2007  
Bronze and acrylic  
11.9 x 5.5 x 5.1 inches  
(30 x 14 x 13 cm)  
Collection of Rose and Alfredo Setubal

**Henry**, 2008  
Bronze and acrylic  
12.6 x 14.6 x 15.7 inches  
(32 x 37 x 40 cm)

**Jaspera Years Later**, 2015  
Bronze, artist's sketchbooks and acrylic  
18.1 x 9.1 x 11.4 inches  
(46 x 23 x 29 cm)

**Lake**, 2015  
Series of 6 silver gelatin prints  
5.6 x 10 inches each  
(14.5 x 11.5 inches framed)

**Magritte**, 2015  
Bronze and acrylic  
16.1 x 6.3 x 9.1 inches  
(41 x 16 x 23 cm)

**Missionary Variation (Blue)**, 2015  
Bronze and acrylic  
13 x 4.7 x 4.7 inches (33 x 12 x 12 cm)

**Mug**, 2015  
Painted unfired clay  
8.7 x 4.7 x 5.5 inches  
(22 x 12 x 14 cm)

**Peacock**, 2014  
Papier mache, brushes, and  
iridescent paint  
35.8 x 35.8 x 7.9 inches  
(91 x 91 x 20 cm)

**Romana (Blue)**, 2011  
Concrete and wax  
30.3 x 7.1 x 7.1 inches  
(77 x 18 x 18 cm)

**Saramandaia**, 2006  
Polychromatic bronze  
18.9 x 14.2 x 17.7 (48 x 36 x 45 cm)  
Private Collection

**Runaway**, 2015  
Series of 8 silver gelatin prints  
5.6 x 10 inches each  
(14.5 x 11.5 inches framed)

**Sombra Azul /Blue Shadow**, 2015  
Bronze and porcelain clay  
5.8 x 5.9 x 6.7 inches  
(15 x 15 x 17 cm)

**Swan with Stage**, 2015  
Styrofoam, steel, polyurethane,  
fiberglass and acrylic  
1453 x 1378 x 1378 inches (3690 x  
3500 x 3500 cm)

**Swan with Stage, a theatrical sculpture  
starring V. Massucato, a comedy, a  
monument, a tragedy**, 2015  
Digital print  
26 x 19 inches (66 x 48.3 cm)

**Tarsila with Koons**, 2015  
Bronze and acrylic  
10.6 x 10.6 x 12.2 inches  
(27 x 27 x 31 cm)

**Theater**, 2015  
Series of 8 silver gelatin prints  
5.6 x 10 inches each  
(14.5 x 11.5 inches framed)

**Venus (Blue)**, 2015  
Concrete and pigment  
18.5 x 9.4 x 9.4 inches  
(47 x 24 x 24 cm)

**Venus Ginasta**, 2013  
Concrete, acrylic, and wax  
20.5 x 9.4 x 9.4 inches  
(52 x 24 x 24 cm)

All works courtesy the artist,  
Galeria Fortes Vilaça, Sao Paulo;  
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