

# At the U.S. Open, Serena Williams and Stellar Artworks

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ART

**Thanks to a new partnership between the USTA and the Armory Show, a group of evocative artworks are transforming the stadium complex into an outdoor sculpture park.**

*BY RYAN WADDOUPS August 30, 2022*



Thousands of tennis fans are descending on the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Queens, New York, over the next two weeks to attend the U.S. Open. Last night, it seemed like all eyes were on Serena Williams, who sailed past her first-round match in what's likely to be her final tournament. Widely considered one of the greatest athletes of all time, the 23-time Grand Slam women's singles champion announced her "evolution away from tennis" in a [candid interview](#) and photoshoot that graced the cover of *Vogue's* September issue. Given how she and her sister, seven-time Grand Slam winner and [design entrepreneur](#) Venus, changed the face of women's tennis and ushered in a new era of power and athleticism, it's sure to be a watershed moment—even if it doesn't culminate in a [Serena Slam](#).

The tournament's final stretch coincides with this year's edition of The Armory Show, the annual contemporary art fair taking place at Manhattan's Javits Center (Sept. 9–11). Drumming up excitement for this year's edition is Armory Off-Site, a program that sees public artworks from select exhibitors installed across the city. Thanks to a new partnership between the fair and the USTA's Be Open campaign, which first presented paintings by 18 Black and Indigenous artists at Arthur Ashe Stadium last year, five new sculptures by artists from underrepresented backgrounds are transforming the bustling sports complex into an outdoor sculpture park. Check out the artworks on view below.



***Ogadiligmma* by Gerald Chukwuma (Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery)**

Drawing inspiration from the Uli art traditions of the Igbo people from his home country of Nigeria, the sculpture (“Town Cryer” in English) recasts found objects as a conduit of the pain of voluntary and forced migration, paying tribute to an 1803 mass suicide committed by captive Igbo people off the coast of Georgia who refused to submit to enslavement in the United States.

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***Untitled by Jose Dávila (Sean Kelly Gallery)***

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The Mexican artist continues his eternal pursuit of equilibrium—investigating balance and estrangement, structural order and generative chaos—with a concrete sculpture that sandwiches a cerulean stone between two concrete slabs.

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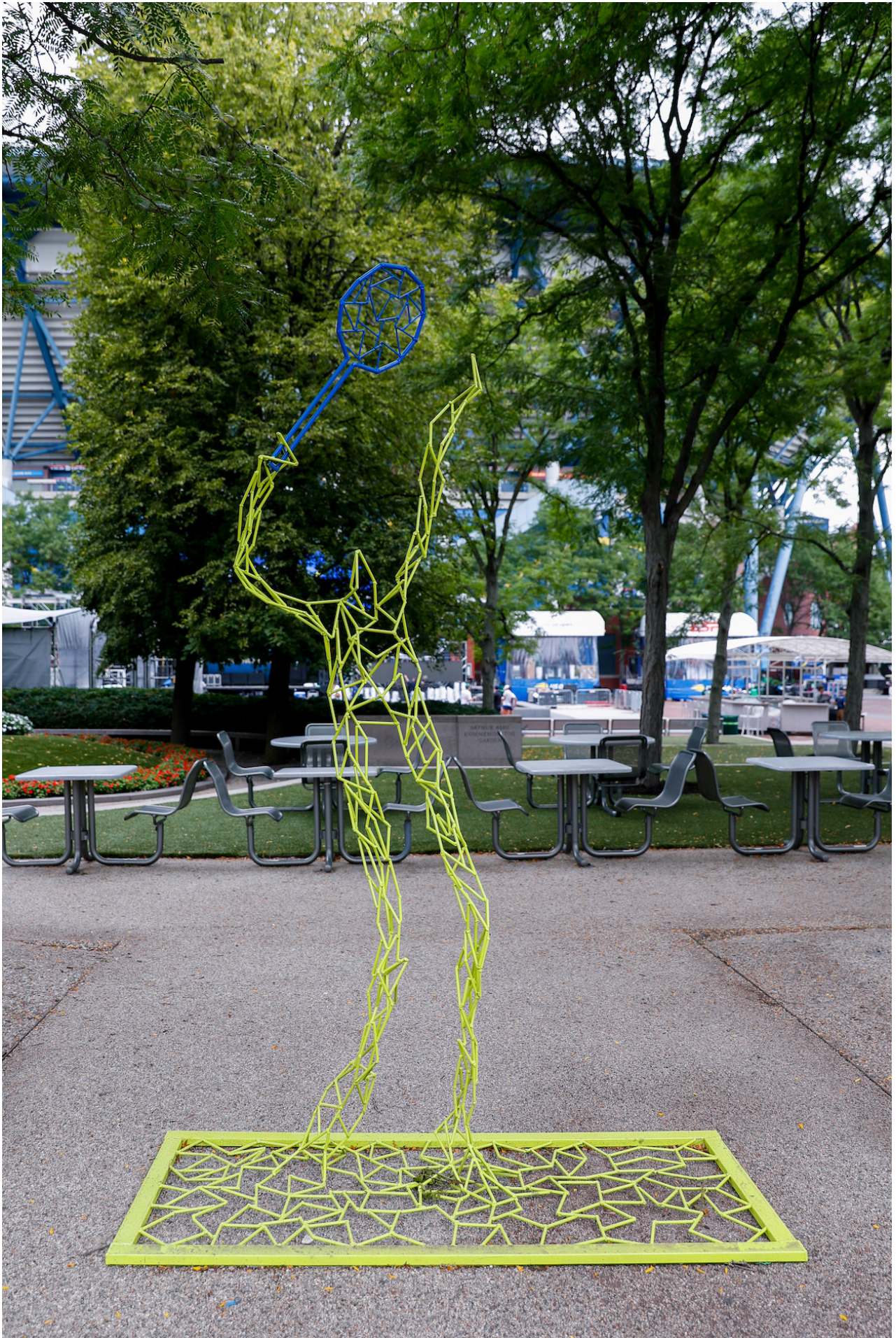


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### ***To Rise and Begin Again* by Luzene Hill (K Art)**

A new site-specific work by the Indigenous artist arrays 30–40 models of metal letterpress type in the Cherokee language onto undulating plinths, evoking both the rise and fall of Indigenous vernacular and the Manhattan skyline, built in part by early-1900s Mohawk ironworkers.

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***Now I Won* by Myles Nurse (Half Gallery)**

With metal rods as his material of choice, the Brooklyn sculptor lends his pragmatic approach to a dynamic, tennis ball-colored steel figure modeled after Billie Jean King preparing to serve—or reaching for the stars.

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***Tippy Toes* by Carolyn Salas (Mrs.)**



Presenting femininity as a balancing act akin to walking on a tightrope, the Brooklyn artist nods to the fraught tennis match King played against Bobby Riggs in the 2017 film *Battle of the Sexes*.

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