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Erika Verzutti

Over the past decade, Erika Verzutti has drawn from different sources to create a vast yet very particular taxonomy of forms, which she constantly expands on and recombines in her sculptures. Whether through the appropriation of natural readymades, such as tropical fruits, vegetables, and minerals, or through explicit reference to historical art by well-known artists, from Tarsila do Amaral to Jasper Johns and Pablo Picasso, Verzutti creates an enchainment of meanings that takes shape in visually appealing compositions. Eminently profane, the works testify to the artist's equal estimation of all the objects she selects as raw material for her structures, whether a makeup case spotted in an in-flight magazine or an iconic sculpture by a modernist master. *Star*, 2010, is a column made of stacked star fruits and pomegranates cast in bronze that alludes to Brancusi's *Infinite Column*. In a later iteration of the star fruit-column motif, a trickle of white paint runs across the humorously titled *Porn Star*, 2011. Many of Verzutti's works are titled to insinuate—and sometimes to spell out in a characteristically deadpan manner—associations that go beyond the meaning usually ascribed to their constituent parts. *Missionary*, 2011, is a bronze formed by an upturned half of a papaya perched atop an off-kilter butternut squash, while *Battle*, 2010, is a collection of olive-green watermelons cast in concrete and laid out on the floor like the helmets of a defeated battalion. Over the past few years, Verzutti has produced a series of floor works she has nicknamed “cemeteries,” in which sculptures she sees as failures are organized like findings from an archaeological excavation. Sex and death, recurring themes in Verzutti's practice, are brought together in the cemeteries, monuments to ruin and sites of rebirth.