



Photo by Alex Joachim

**Going to Ground by LaRissa Rogers Now on Display at the
Rose Kennedy Greenway**

*Rogers' new public artwork engaging with Zipporah Potter Atkins' legacy is on view in
The Greenway's North End park at Cross and Hanover Streets*

October 2, 2024 – BOSTON, MA – The [Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy](#) is excited to announce that a new public art installation from artist LaRissa Rogers, *Going to Ground*, is now on display at the intersection of Cross and Hanover Streets in the North End. The sculpture responds to and invites viewers to engage with the history of Zipporah Potter Atkins, the first-known Black woman to own a home in Boston in 1670. Her home was on land now cared for by the Conservancy at the site of the installation on The Greenway.

Fabricated with soil coating and earthen soil blocks, *Going to Ground* offers an echo of Potter Atkins' home that resonates with Boston's contemporary realities. Based on an artistic rendering created from historical records, the sculpture stands at two-thirds the size of the original house.

As part of the project, Rogers hosted an *Open Call for Soil* – an invitation to Boston's communities to contribute soil from spaces meaningful to them. Participants sent in soil from over 20 different states and countries, including Massachusetts, Virginia, Wisconsin, California, Alaska, Korea, Thailand, and Italy, among other places. The collected soil was then used to craft the earthen soil blocks for the sculpture's foundation - a gesture of collective support, communal residence, and tangible affirmation of Zipporah Potter Atkins' life and story in Boston's public space and memory.



MEDIA CONTACT: Gavin Damore
617-888-5859; gdamore@rosekennedygreenway.org

“In the sculpture, Atkins home becomes a liminal structure, where the awning of the home is adorned with a scarification pattern,” says Rogers. “The leakages in the roof—as a result of the scarification pattern—only provide partial shelter, speaking to the precarity of the housing via gentrification and infrastructure that particularly affects Black, Brown, and immigrant communities historically and presently. The structure itself acts as a sundial. As the sun moves throughout the day, the shadow of scarification is cast on the landscape. The home and foundation of the home are made of soil. Soil from The Greenway where Atkins’ home was located, and soil donated from across the world to comprise bricks to build the foundation of her home.”

“I’m excited by the ways in which LaRissa’s project both amplifies and refuses to diminish the complex and complicated relationships we have with the soil we stand on,” says Dr. Audrey Lopez, Director and Curator of Public Art at the Greenway Conservancy. “We’re grateful to have been able to work with Dr. Vivian Johnson, Professor Emerita at Boston University, to build on her research and visibilize Zipporah Potter Atkins’ story in a way that adds to the ongoing critical dialogue with and about Boston’s public memory and history.”

To celebrate the opening of the sculpture, artists LaRissa Rogers and Zalika Azim collaborated to host an intergenerational performance, *an elegy for those who have passed through us*, with participation from Rogers’ mother, Jude Rogers, and Azim’s aunt, Denise Joyce. The performance was followed by an opening picnic hosted by SIDE Presents on Saturday, August 24, 2024, that included remarks from Dr. Vivian Johnson, a live sound performance by Dzidzor, and a dance choreographed and narrated by Nailah Randall-Bellinger, and performed by Jenny Oliver.

Photos of the installation, courtesy of Alex Joachim, [are available here](#).

About [LaRissa Rogers](#)

LaRissa Rogers is an artist and educator born in Charlottesville, VA. She holds a BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University and a MFA from the University of California Los Angeles. Rogers has exhibited and performed in institutions such as Super Dakota (Brussels), Fields Projects (NY), M+B Gallery (LA), LACE (LA), the California Museum of Photography, Riverside (CA), The Wattis Institute of Contemporary Art (CA), The Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (VA), and Documenta 15 (Germany), among others. She received the Visual Arts fellowship at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (2022) and The Fine Arts Work Center Fellowship (2023-2024). She held residencies at BEMIS Center of Contemporary Art (2022), and Black Spatial Relics (2022), with upcoming residencies at Skowhegan and Mass MOCA. In 2024, Rogers was named one of Forbes 30 under 30 in Art and Style. She is an assistant professor of Art at the University of Virginia, and is currently represented by Super Dakota.

Thanks To Our Supporters



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About The Greenway and the Greenway Conservancy (rosekennedygreenway.org)

The Greenway is a contemporary public park in the heart of Boston. The Greenway welcomes millions of visitors annually to gather, play, unwind, and explore. The Greenway Conservancy is the non-profit responsible for the management and care of The Greenway. The majority of the public park's annual budget is generously provided by private sources.

The Greenway Conservancy Public Art Program brings innovative and contemporary art to Boston through free, seasonal exhibitions that engage people in meaningful experiences, interactions, and dialogue with art, each other, and the most pressing issues of our time. Past Greenway exhibitions can be viewed on the [Conservancy's website](#).

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