

GLADSTONE GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wangechi Mutu
blackthrones
12 Rue du Grand Cerf, Brussels
May 15 – July 7, 2012
Opening May 12, 6 – 9 pm

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Wangechi Mutu, marking the artist's first show at our Brussels location. Meditating on the interplay between poetic symbolism and dreamlike revelation, Mutu creates works that inventively critique the hegemony of Western society and the institutions of power that regulate the aesthetic and symbolic representations of gender and race. First recognized for her collages that amalgamate materials as diverse as fashion magazines, periodicals, pornography, and documentary photography, Mutu has continued to employ similar materials in her recent work, repurposing familiar objects to create unexpected and imaginative experiences that reflect on sexuality, femininity, politics, and the chaos of the everyday world.

The exhibition will feature fifteen works from Mutu's *blackthrones* series, a group of haunting assemblages sculpted into towering thrones. Inspired by the form of an ordinary wooden country chair, originating from colonial English designs and often seen in Western schoolrooms and kitchens, Mutu builds upon this familiar structure by integrating unusual materials to transform the appearance of this everyday object. The *blackthrones* recombine many of the fundamental elements that inform Mutu's creative practice, using strategies of collage and juxtaposition to construct materially conscious objects.

The works incorporate black garbage bags, electrical tape, tinfoil, tufts of tinsel, and feather boas, taking on a delicately haphazard look as each extends upward on spindly legs, transforming these once humble chairs into imposing and unsettling objects. Much like the fantastical figures that populate her two-dimensional works, Mutu's thrones appear caught between states of being: the aesthetic both crude and refined, the essence both chair and creature, their identities both shamanistic and sculptural.

Mutu was born in 1972 in Nairobi, Kenya, and received her MFA from Yale University. Her work has been the subject of solo shows at museums and institutions throughout the United States and abroad including: Le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal; WIELS, Brussels; Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; and the Miami Art Museum, Miami. Her work has also appeared in numerous group shows at institutions including: Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Gotesborgs Kunsthalle, Sweden; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Liverpool, UK; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis; and The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York. In 2010 Mutu received the Deutsche Guggenheim Artist of the Year, Berlin.

For further information please contact Abby Margulies
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Brussels Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Friday, 10am-6 pm; Saturday 12-6pm

515 West 24th Street | 530 West 21st Street
Anish Kapoor
May 5 – June 9, 2012
Opening May 4, 6 – 8 pm
New York Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10am – 6pm