



NOVEMBER 2017

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY'S DEPARTMENT OF ART AND ART HISTORY, THE O'NEILL INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL AND GLOBAL HEALTH LAW, THE SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE, THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY PRESENT:

## DIALOGUES ON BEING HUMAN: THE INTERSECTIONS OF ART, HEALTH AND DIGNITY WITH WANGECHI MUTU

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH

MARIA AND ALBERTO DE LA CRUZ GALLERY, ACCESS THROUGH THE WALSH BUILDING | 1221 36TH STREET NW

5:15 – 5:45 PM | SCREENINGS OF *THE END OF CARRYING ALL*

6:00 – 7:00 PM | DIALOGUES ON BEING HUMAN: THE INTERSECTIONS OF ART, HEALTH AND DIGNITY

7:00 – 7:30 PM | RECEPTION

RSVP AT [ARTDIALOGUES.EVENTBRITE.COM](http://ARTDIALOGUES.EVENTBRITE.COM)

### THE O'NEILL INSTITUTE

The O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University was established in 2007 to respond to the need for innovative solutions to the most pressing national and international health concerns. This year is the O'Neill Institute's tenth anniversary, and throughout 2017, will be hosting a variety of celebratory events, highlighting recent progresses and the work yet to be done.

### HEALTH & HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE

The Health and Human Rights Initiative at the O'Neill Institute responds to national and global health issues by using human rights to foster positive social transformation in health. The initiative frames its work around three primary goals; establishing new normative standards in human rights law that foster systemic changes in health; applying human rights frameworks in the development, implementation and evaluation of interventions aimed at advancing health; and, linking human rights relating to health with other domains and communities of action.

### DEPARTMENT OF ART & ART HISTORY

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2017, the department's undergraduate programs in Studio Art and Art History, MA program in Art and Museum Studies, and two art galleries, the Maria and Alberto de la Cruz Gallery and the Lucille M. and Richard F.X. Spagnuolo Gallery, make it the home of the visual arts at Georgetown.



The Health and Human Rights Initiative is exploring creative approaches to making health and human rights issues more visible and comprehensible. As a part of this effort, the Initiative has invited artist Wangechi Mutu to speak on the themes she explores in her artwork, including ideas of desire, gender, race, cultural trauma and environmental destruction. Wangechi will be joined by Alicia Ely Yamin, Visiting Professor at Georgetown University Law Center and Director of the Health and Human Rights Initiative for a dialogue discussion, bringing a multidimensional perspective to the topics.

The Art Dialogues series seek to harness the power of art to convey the linkages between being human, living with dignity as a subject of rights, and well-being, and to provide space to explore inter-disciplinary forms of knowing and sharing the human experience. Too often siloed scholarship in and beyond law is limited to forms of knowledge appealing to self-defined, specialized audiences, which can preclude the intuitive reactions that reveal much about the experience of both enjoyment and violation of rights. In this series, selected artists share evocative artwork that was often created in response to experiences of exclusion or deprivation, or with the aim of expressing what complex human identity means to them. Bringing together these works of art and the artists who create them in one evening of intimate conversation with a leading human rights scholar, invites further reflection and inter-disciplinary dialogues, with the aim of opening people to different dimensions of questions about the meaning of being human and using rights to create social transformation that advances human dignity and well-being.



WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO THE HANS VON KANTZOW FOUNDATION



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*Art Dialogues Curator, Anita Alvin Nilert – Creator of the Art Dialogue series, is a graduate of the Georgetown School of Foreign Service, with an MBA from Columbia University and speaks 7 languages. With a long career in the Contemporary art world, Anita is dedicated to bringing art for human rights to a wider audience to contribute to meaningful change.*



*Wangechi Mutu, stills from 'The End of carrying All, 2015 -3 Screen Animated Video (color; sound) 9 minutes 27 seconds loop, Edition of 3, Courtesy of the Artist, Gladstone Gallery New York and Brussels, Susanne Vietmeyer Los Angeles Projects, and Victoria Miro London.*

## WANGECHI MUTU, ARTIST

Wangechi Mutu is a Kenyan born contemporary artist. Through her collage-paintings, sculpture, installation, film work and performance she recasts female stereotypes, and questions cultural identity and perceptions. Her work touches on the complications of being, and how the physical body plays a significant role in determining experiences, survival, and the ability to understand what that is. Mutu believes, “Art allows you to imbue the truth with a sort of magic...so it infiltrates the psyches of more people, including those who don’t believe the same things as you.”

Mutu’s works are centered on imagery of the female body underscoring how it can act as a measuring device of any society’s well being. She observes, “Females carry the marks, language and nuances of their culture more than the male. Anything that is desired or despised is always placed on the female body”. She plays the main character in her animated film, *The End of carrying All* which follows a woman’s journey across a landscape, carrying a large basket on her head filled to the brim, as many African women still do on a daily basis to feed their families. Mutu says, “My films provide a way for me to enact, represent, what I empathize and value about women. In performing, I’m present, I’m there, alive and captured in time and movement.” With every step, the woman’s basket is increasingly filling up with more goods and manufactured objects, including buildings, a bicycle wheel, a satellite dish, a tower, and an oil rig. Eventually, it feels as though the woman is carrying the burdens of all of humanity, our desires and insatiable materialism. She buckles under the weight, eventually disappearing, as this bulge too becomes re-absorbed into the earth. An eruption follows, rumbling under the earth, erasing any trace of the woman and her toil. All is quiet, and as if nothing had ever happened, the whole journey begins again.

Mutu was born in Nairobi, Kenya, and lives and works in New York and Nairobi. Her own diverse history - she has studied both anthropology and sculpture and has lived in Nairobi, Wales, and in the US - has given her a unique cross-cultural perspective that informs her work. She holds an MFA from Yale, and her work has been exhibited in a host of major institutions and museums worldwide.

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