

STORM KING ART CENTER

STORM KING ART CENTER OPENS EXHIBITIONS BY WANGECHI MUTU AND BRANDON NDIFE

Eight of Mutu's large-scale bronze sculptures populate Storm King's landscape, including a 15-foot-long fountain entitled *In Two Canoe*, plus earthworks and films on view indoors

Created for Storm King's outdoor Maple Rooms, Ndife presents his largest sculptural project to date for the ninth iteration of the *Outlooks* program

WANGECHI MUTU
&
OUTLOOKS: BRANDON NDIFE
On view from May 21 – November 7, 2022



New Windsor, NY, May 24, 2022—Storm King Art Center, New York's premier museum for modern and contemporary outdoor sculpture, inaugurates its 2022 season with a special exhibition of outdoor and indoor sculptures by **Wangechi Mutu** (b. Nairobi, Kenya, 1972) and a new site-specific commission by **Brandon Ndife** (b. Hammond, Indiana, 1991).

Mutu's exhibition foregrounds the artist's current practice in earth and bronze sculptures, which populate Storm King's expansive landscape. Mutu's work reverently engages with the natural world to address ideas of historical violence and its impact on women, mythology, and ritual, and their inextricable relationships with our ecosystems. The artist molds her ideas and materials to assert the existence and cultural relevance of ancient original myths, fables, and histories.

Sited outside on Museum Hill—on land that is the ancestral home of the Lenape—are eight of Mutu's large-scale cast bronze works, including *In Two Canoe*, a sculptural fountain in which two figures become one with their vessel and the landscape around them. Installed in the context of Storm King's fields, meadows, woods, and ponds, these sculptures take on new resonance, while adding layers of meaning to the site's existing ecologies and histories, including the consideration of the site and region as colonized land. Mutu envisions landscape as a fertile backdrop for reflecting, mythmaking, and setting the scene in which women become powerful and autonomous protagonists and global indigeneity is centered. This juxtaposition asserts the

STORM KING ART CENTER

importance of experiences, perspectives, and knowledge systems excluded from dominant narratives, and the capacity to imagine not only new worlds but more equitable versions of our own.

For the indoor portion of the exhibition, Mutu brings the natural world inside through both raw materials and visual representations. **New sculptures and two films**, *My Cave Call* (2021) and *Eat Cake* (2013) offer portals into imagined and mythological landscapes and span both floors of Storm King's Museum Building galleries.

Nora Lawrence, Storm King Artistic Director and Chief Curator, said: "With Wangechi Mutu and Brandon Ndife's work at its core, this season at Storm King provides visitors with very different approaches to art in nature, site-responsiveness, and the ways that sculpture participates in and comments upon events in the world. Working closely with Wangechi Mutu—a visionary artist with an inspiring determination to use her work to create a more positive and nourishing world—has been a true privilege. We are thrilled to present new works from her that connect so beautifully to Storm King's landscape and foreground the important connection to nature within her practice and worldview."

To accompany this exhibition, Storm King is planning in-person public programming with Mutu in the fall, including an **outdoor screening of her film works September 3 and an artist talk scheduled for October 1**. An exhibition catalogue—featuring a statement by the artist, an essay by the artist and writer Aisha Bell, and an essay by Lawrence—will also be produced.



Further south in Storm King's fields, New York-based Brandon Ndife concurrently presents his largest and first outdoor sculptural project. Working primarily with domestic items, including furniture the artist makes by hand, Ndife manipulates objects' appearance by casting them in polyurethane foam and resin, often embedding the household items into the surfaces of the cast sculptures. The effect is one that is organic and sinister, suggesting a process of rot that subsumes the quotidian objects and embalms them in a perpetual state of decay.

***Shade Tree*, Ndife's site-specific project for Storm King, is sited in the Art Center's outdoor "Maple Rooms," an area where large stands of maple trees divide the woods into intimate rectangular quadrants.** In the shade of the canopy and encircling the trunk of a maple tree, Ndife's sculpture is embedded with whole cast tables, chairs, headboards, and bedposts—household forms fused together in imposing accumulations. For Ndife, the suggestion of decomposition equally implies rebirth, regeneration, and opportunities for new growth.

The siting of the work in the Maple Rooms likewise allows for the play of dichotomies: interiority and exteriority, protection and exposure. Said Ndife: "A lot of my work is about the interior, about these spaces that we deem safe because they're in our homes—they're our cabinets, our dressers, our personal space. Working outside, I wanted

STORM KING ART CENTER

to extend that conversation and think about exclusion—planned exclusion—and nature's course, which is a canopy above all of us, something that we affect but can't control.”

The exhibition interrogates, according to Ndife, the legacy of redlining, or the systematically sanctioned segregation of real estate, which recent studies have shown often left poorer communities and communities of color in urban areas with fewer greenspaces and less tree cover. Rising temperatures and worsening impacts of climate change in formerly redlined areas contribute to the increased susceptibility of these communities to deadly heat waves. By inviting us to view *Shade Tree* beneath the tree canopies, Ndife encourages consideration of shade as both a natural phenomenon and a scarce commodity, saying: “*Shade Tree* is grounded by the universal truth that no place is exempt from economic and residential difference.”

Lawrence, who established the annual *Outlooks* program in 2013, said of Ndife's project: “It has been a true pleasure to work with and learn from Brandon Ndife on a project that brings his practice to a grand scale. *Shade Tree* has a composed elegance in Storm King's Maple Room location; it reads almost like a monochromatic drawing within the high grass and lush trees around it. The work resonates—in its aesthetic and in its significance—through the use of disparate, meaningful parts. The cast objects remind of us of the familiarity and safety of home and evoke the reality of past and future lives of our everyday objects in an important consideration of space and equity.”

Shade Tree marks the ninth iteration of Storm King's ongoing *Outlooks* program, which invites an emerging to mid-career artist to present a large-scale, temporary outdoor project in the Art Center's landscape. Founded in part to bridge twentieth- and twenty-first-century art production at Storm King, as well as give artists the opportunity to create outdoor sculpture on a grand scale, *Outlooks* presents innovative ways in which contemporary artists engage with natural spaces. Prior *Outlooks* projects include works by Martha Tuttle (2020–2021), Jean Shin (2019), Elaine Cameron-Weir (2018), Heather Hart (2017), Josephine Halvorson (2016), Luke Stettner (2015), Virginia Overton (2014), and David Brooks (2013).

To accompany Ndife's exhibition, Storm King is planning in-person public programming with the artist in collaboration with local community organizations and programs in the city of Newburgh.

Wangechi Mutu and *Outlooks: Brandon Ndife* are featured in Storm King's newly launched digital guide on the free Bloomberg Connects app, including photos, audio stops, and additional interpretive text for both exhibitions, as well as an exhibition video featuring Ndife.

Wangechi Mutu and *Outlooks: Brandon Ndife* are organized by Nora Lawrence, Storm King Artistic Director and Chief Curator, with Adela Goldsmith, Curatorial Assistant.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Wangechi Mutu

Wangechi Mutu's (b. Nairobi, Kenya, 1972) work deals with the very idea of human representation; how we perceive and reproduce images of what we think we are, how we view others and create images of what we think of them. In her ongoing conversations with figuration, Mutu's work looks at value systems that either obscure or elevate our image and reflections. In her collage-paintings, sculptures, films, and performance rituals, Mutu uses ink, soil, ash, bronze, driftwood, horn, pigments, wine, hair; ultimately keeping the figure as the focus, always seeking to find out more about who we are, what we mean to each other, and why we recreate ourselves in Art.

Mutu has participated in several major solo exhibitions in institutions worldwide, most recently at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York — *The Façade Commission: Wangechi Mutu, The NewOnes, will free Us* — and at Legion of Honor, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco — *Wangechi Mutu: I Am Speaking, Are You listening?*

About Brandon Ndife

Brandon Ndife (b. 1991 Hammond, IN; lives and works in New York) received a BFA from The Cooper Union and an MFA from the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College. Solo and two-person exhibitions include: *Down to the Spoons and Forks*, Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery, Wesleyan University, Middletown, 2022;

STORM KING ART CENTER

MY ZONE, Bureau, New York, 2020; *Minor twin worlds* with Diane Severin Nguyen, Bureau, New York, 2019; *Ties That Bind*, Shoot the Lobster, New York, 2018; *Just Passin' Thru*, Interstate Projects, Brooklyn, 2016; *Meanderthal*, Species, Atlanta, 2016. Group exhibitions include New Museum Triennial: *Soft Water Hard Stone*, New Museum, New York, 2021; *Cascadence*, Altman Siegel, San Francisco, 2021; *Winterfest*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, 2021; *Material Conditions*, Matthew Brown Gallery, Los Angeles, 2020; *Fixing the "not... but"*, LC Queisser, Tbilisi, 2019; *Dinner that night*, Bureau, New York, 2018.

Project Support

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About Storm King Art Center

Storm King Art Center is a 500-acre outdoor museum located in New York's Hudson Valley, where visitors experience large-scale sculpture and site-specific commissions under open sky. Since 1960, Storm King has been dedicated to stewarding the hills, meadows, and forests of its site and surrounding landscape. Building on the visionary thinking of its founders, Storm King supports artists and some of their most ambitious works. Changing exhibitions, programming, and seasons offer discoveries with every visit.

stormking.org

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Visitor Information

2022 Season Hours

April 6 – December 11, 2022

Wednesday – Monday (closed Tuesdays)

10AM – 5:30PM

Extended Weekend Hours

Memorial Day – Labor Day

Friday & Saturday, 10AM– 7:30PM

Tickets

Advance tickets are required. All ticket reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis and entry will not be permitted without an advance reservation. For the most up-to-date information on ticket availability, amenities, and hours, please see stormking.org/visit.

Discounted Admission

Storm King is pleased to offer discounted admission for the 2022 season to the following visitors. Tickets using these discounts must be requested via the Free Admission Request Form at stormking.org/tickets.

- SNAP participants/EBT cardholders via Museums for All
- Active military and their family via the Blue Star Program (May 15 – September 6 only)
- Storm King Partner School students, families, and educators
- Modern and Contemporary Reciprocal Membership Program (Mod/Co)
- American Association of Museum (AAM) Members
- International Committee of Museums (ICOM)

STORM KING ART CENTER

- Staff of other museums

Bloomberg Connects Digital Guide

Storm King has recently launched a digital guide available for free on the Bloomberg Connects cultural app. Make the most of your visit with interactive activities, audio and video commentary by artists and Storm King staff, suggested routes, and more—anywhere, anytime from on your mobile device. [Download the Bloomberg Connects app >](#)

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Press Visits

Advance reservations are required for all visitors to Storm King, including members of the media. Accredited members of the media may contact FITZ & CO to request a reservation.

Photo Credits

Wangechi Mutu, *In Two Canoe*, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Gladstone Gallery. Photography by David Regen

Wangechi Mutu, *Nyoka*, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Gladstone Gallery. Photography by David Regen.

Brandon Ndife, *Shade Tree*, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Bureau, New York. Photography by Jeffrey Jenkins.