

ZEITZ MOCAA PRESENTS FIRST MUSEUM SOLO EXHIBITION IN AFRICA BY ACCLAIMED NIGERIAN-BORN ARTIST OTOBONG NKANGA

Cape Town: On Thursday 21 November 2019, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) opens an exhibition titled *Act at the Crossroads* by internationally acclaimed, Nigerian-born artist, Otobong Nkanga.

Nkanga has been the recipient of numerous awards, most recently the inaugural Lise Wilhelmsen Art Award (2019) from the Norwegian Henie Onstad Art Centre, and the Sharjah Art Foundation Prize (2019) in the United Arab Emirates.

Acts at the Crossroads is a significant survey exhibition, and the first museum exhibition on the African continent of the artist's work. It includes works from the last two decades - a multidisciplinary practice that considers humanity's connection to the environment in complex ways.

Rather than present us with an instructive method of documentation and observation, Nkanga grounds her work in a familiarity of encounter between viewer, artist, and object and asks us to consider the earth as an extension of the physical human body, to understand that it too is undeniably alive.

"Exploring environmental damage and the politics of land, her practice becomes a conduit, a voice for these raw, organic materials. Acts of labour, mining, commodification and trade have an impact on the earth that is also mirrored in the ways we treat the body," says Curatorial Assistant, Precious Mhone.

Acts at the Crossroads explores a host of potential outcomes that present themselves at points of convergence. An agreement or understanding between two parties, a merger of ideas, thoughts, belief systems, cultures, histories and narratives. Connections become created, bonds are formed and solidified or broken. Differing ideologies are confronted, things are torn apart or brought together.

The exhibition invites viewers to connect with themselves and each other at these points of awareness and reflexivity, through a range of media including drawing, painting, photography and video works, geological matter and decayed minerals.

"I thought it was interesting to be able to think about these ideas, especially in South Africa, which for me has been a kind of crossroads. Or the acts or pacts that have been very much related to land and landscape," explains Nkanga. "So, when I was really thinking about the title, I wanted to allude to entering into the realm of matter and material and its effect on different groups of people."

"I am thrilled – and honoured – to host Otobong at our museum. I have known and worked closely with her for many years and celebrated her success each step of the way, says Zeitz MOCAA Executive Director and Chief Curator Koyo Kouoh.

"Her far-reaching practice echoes a globalisation that suggests we bear a true and honest connection with each other that transcends the notion of borders and emphasises the

shared human condition. She gives voice to a need to reconnect and rethink our relationship to the earth, both personally and globally – a message that is never more pertinent than right now.”

Nkanga's most recent solo exhibitions include *From Where I Stand* at Tate St. Ives (2019), *A Lapse, a Stain, a Fall* at ar/ge kunst, Bolzano (2018), and *To Dig a Hole that Collapses Again* at MCA Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2018).

Exhibition name: *Acts at the Crossroads*
Exhibiting artist: Otobong Nkanga
Venue: Level 2, Zeitz MOCAA, Silo District, V&A Waterfront
Run dates: 21 November 2019 – 23 February 2020
Exhibition curator: Koyo Kouoh, Precious Mhone

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About Otobong Nkanga

Otobong Nkanga (b. 1974, Kano, Nigeria) began studying art at the Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria and later graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France. She attended the residency programme at the Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam, Netherlands and in 2008 obtained a Masters in the Performing Arts at Dasarts, Amsterdam, Netherlands. She currently lives and works in Antwerp, Belgium.

Nkanga explores the politics of land and its relationship to the body. Unpacking histories of land ownership and migrations, Nkanga brings to light the memories and historical impacts provoked by humans and nature. The artist's research makes connections to all of the various components that make up our environment, observing the inherent

complexities of resources like soil and earth and their potential values in order to provoke narratives and stories about the land.

Her most recent solo exhibitions include *From Where I Stand*, Tate St. Ives (2019), *A Lapse, a Stain, a Fall*, ar/ge kunst, Bolzano (2018); *To Dig a Hole that Collapses Again*, MCA Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2018); *Wetin You Go Do?*, The Tanks at Tate Modern, Blavatnik Building, London (2017); *The Encounter That Took a Part of Me*, Kunsthall Aarhus, Aarhus (2017); *The Encounter That Took a Part of Me*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2016); *Diaoptasia*, Tate Modern, London (2015); *Comot Your Eyes Make I Borrow You Mine*, Kadist Art Foundation FR, Paris (2015); *Crumbling Through Powdery Air*, Portikus, Frankfurt (2015).

Additionally, her work has been included in institutional group exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale (2019); Sharjah Biennial 14 (2019); *Documenta 14*, Athens / Kassel (2017); *Dialogues, Manifesta – The European Biennial of Contemporary Art*, Amsterdam (2017) and the 13th Biennale de Lyon, La vie moderne, Lyon (2015); Artes Mundi National Museum Cardiff, Cardiff (2018); *Cosmogonies, au gré des éléments*, Musée d'art moderne et d'art contemporain (MAMAC), Nice (2018); *General Rehearsal*, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow (2018); *I am a native foreigner*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2017); *Take Me (I'm Yours)*, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan (2017); *Life Itself*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2016); *Museum on/off*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2016); and *Still the Barbarians*, the 37th EVA International, the Ireland Biennial, *Limerick* (2016).

Nkanga's work has been the recipient of multiple awards, including the Inaugural Lise Wilhelmsen Art Award (2019); the Sharjah Art Foundation Prize (2019); the Belgian Art Prize (2017); and the 8th Yanghyun Prize, Korea, (2015).

About Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA)

Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) is a public, not-for-profit institution that exhibits, collects, preserves and researches contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora; conceives and hosts international exhibitions; develops supporting educational, discursive and enrichment programmes; encourages intercultural understanding; and strives for access for all.

The museum's galleries are dedicated to featured exhibitions with a dedicated space for the permanent collection.. The institution also includes the Centre for Art Education, the Centre for the Moving Image, and a dedicated project space for emerging artists.