Mutable MONTAGE

One of the most dramatic artists to emerge from Africa in the past decade, Wangechi Mutu discusses the arts of immersion, identity, politics and collage. By Louisa Buck

T he Kenyan-born, New York-based artist Wangechi Mutu, 41, is best known for her collaborative and interdisciplinary works on paper and mixed-media pieces, which explore the formal and conceptual possibilities of collage and a range of techniques that embody both the tradition of assemblage and the aesthetic of appropriation. Over the last ten years, her work has come to be seen as a hallmark of the current generation, in which the production of identity is understood as a constant negotiation of the self and the environment, in which elements of the impermanent and the immaterial are brought together in the act of making. Her work has been shown at major museums, including the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. She has also been included in numerous group exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale, the documenta, and the Whitney Biennial.

Her art practice is characterized by a blend of both the representational and the abstract. In her work, she often uses a variety of media, including collage, painting, drawing, and sculpture, to create images that explore the intersection of identity, culture, and politics. Her work is also characterized by a strong sense of playfulness and an unwillingness to be confined by traditional boundaries.

Her recent works, which she calls “Extended Collages,” are composed of various materials, including paper, fabric, and found objects. These works explore the idea of “ex-panculation,” which refers to the blending of different cultures and ideas, and the ways in which these blends can be re-contextualized and re-imagined.

In these works, Mutu explores the idea of “the other,” and how this concept is shaped by the intersection of identity, culture, and politics. Her work is a reflection of her own experiences, as well as a commentary on the political and social issues that affect the world today.

Mutu is also known for her use of text, which is often incorporated into her works. She uses text to create a narrative that explores the complex relationships between the self and the environment, and the ways in which these relationships are shaped by cultural and political forces.

Her work has been exhibited in numerous venues, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tate Modern in London, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. She has also been included in several international group exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale and the documenta. Her work has been widely acclaimed, and she has been honored with numerous awards, including the MacArthur Fellowship and the都能够艺术奖.