

Wangari Mathenge

b.1973 Nairobi, Kenya

Wangari Mathenge lives and works in Chicago. She holds degrees from Howard University and Georgetown University Law Center and an MFA in Painting and Drawing at the School of The Art Institute of Chicago.

Figurative, patterned, and brightly-hued, Mathenge's paintings are lively and generative. After a career in international business and law, she began pursuing her painting practice professionally in 2019. Mathenge's work is a visual testimony to the black female experience of existing simultaneously within two cultures—traditional African society and the Diaspora. Her rich compositions, emboldened with gestural strokes and mark-making, often depict close friends and loved ones. Mathenge's portraits are slices of life, offering an intimate view into her subjects' interiority.

Solo exhibitions include *Wangari Mathenge: Between Wakefulness and Sleep*, Nicola Vassell Gallery, New York (2024); *A Day of Rest*, Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London (2023); *Tidal Wave of Colour*, Roberts Projects, Los Angeles (2023); and *The Expat Studies: Impressions on Paper*, The Sacristy Gallery, Chicago (2021). Group exhibitions include *When They See Us: Visibility in Contemporary Art/History*, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas (2024); *When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting*, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa and Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland (2022-24); *Black American Portraits*, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Atlanta and Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, Tennessee (2021-2023) and *Rested*, Nicola Vassell, New York (2021). - Mathenge's work is held in the collections of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Dallas Museum of Art, Nasher Museum of Art, Crocker Art Museum, Weisman Art Museum, Kistefos Museum, Rubell Family Collection, Jorge M. Pérez Collection, Elie Khouri Art Foundation and Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo.