

Adducing women of color feminism's theories of the flesh and Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of the grotesque, this talk advances a theory of Black Grotesquerie as an aesthetic mode in the project of textualizing African American life in the catastrophic present. Rather than merely signifying excess, dread, or decay, Black Grotesquerie delineates an expressive practice of contortion, substitution, inversion, corruption. Reading together works by visual artist Wangechi Mutu and author Marci Blackman, this talk illustrates the ways in which Black Grotesquerie reconfigures the terms of contemporary black struggle by rendering the boundary between (black) living and dying porous and negotiable. Black Grotesquerie thus enables African Diaspora cultural producers to imagine new sociopolitical and racial arrangements—even as it registers the impossibility of fully representing black experience, whether in historical time or post-racial futurity.

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#### ICI Lecture Series **ERRANS**

The English verb 'to err' has largely lost its positive connotations. It no longer invokes wandering, rambling, or roaming, and is now understood negatively in relation to a prescribed path or goal. To be sure, errors are acknowledged to play an important role in the pursuit of knowledge and happiness, but usually only to the extent that their recognition allows for their elimination, correction, and avoidance. Recognizing that a critique of ideals of productivity, success, goal-orientation, and determination is necessarily paradoxical, the **ICI Lecture Series ERRANS** takes the shifting meanings of 'erring' – connoting the violation of norms as well as the activity of wandering – as a prompt to explore the critical potentials and risks of embracing error, randomness, failure, and non-teleological temporalities, and to do so across different disciplines and discourses.



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Black  
Grotesquerie