

**The Film Will Always Be You:  
South African Artists On Screen**

**The Film  
Will  
Always  
Be You**

## **Yours > MINE > ours:**

*curatorial notes on the origins of The Film Will Always Be You*

*“The films opened an enormous door because they gave me a sense that it was possible to work without a program in advance, without first having written a script – a sense that if you work conscientiously and hard, and there is something inside you that is of interest, you yourself will be the film and the film will always be you.” – William Kentridge<sup>1</sup>*

It's something of a cliché to open a curatorial essay with an obscure and/or erudite quote. A well-chosen excerpt not only sets the tone but often casts the essayist(s) in a learned and cultured light with minimal effort. We, the authors are both fans and, most evidently, adopters of this technique. This unique collection of South African artists' films does indeed open with a quote, not only literally deriving the series title from artist William Kentridge's reflection on his own evolving technique but also serving

as over-arching inspiration: it is a declaration of the film series' artist-centred approach and keen interest in the expression of artists' subjectivity through moving image.

Within the South African context of maverick filmmakers, the Johannesburg Free Filmmakers' Co-Operative (FFM) provides tantalising insight down what Kentridge's studio confirms is a “slightly erased and fragmented trail.”<sup>2</sup> Comprising a loose association of like-minded

individuals mainly making political documentaries in Johannesburg in the 1980s, FFM included Kentridge and other central members Angus Gibson, Jonathan Miller and Harriet Gavshon, each of whom remain active in film and television in South Africa and internationally. Kentridge recalls, “Some of my early animations were made under the rubric of Free Filmmakers, but Free Filmmakers really was not involved in the production of them, which was essentially done by me. I made a couple of experimental films under the FFM name, pieces made really to test out equipment.”<sup>3</sup> Alongside experimentations with animation, Kentridge also collaborated with Angus Gibson on the beautiful and elegiac film *Freedom Square & Back of the Moon* 1987, commissioned by Channel 4 in 1986. Fusing as it does documentary, theatre, performance,

drawing, and animation, this vanguard work is a vital springboard for considering the varied recent directions taken by South African artists working with moving image which span all these areas as well as taking in the digital aesthetics afforded by the internet.

It also bears noting that the seed of this project lay within Abrie Fourie’s previously curated film series *MINE* (2011-2013, touring internationally) Playing on multiple meanings of excavation, abundant sources and personal attachments, *MINE* explored South Africa’s fraught history of capitalist exploitation of land, resources and people under the colonialist and Apartheid systems, reflected through the lenses of many of the leading contemporary artists born or based in South Africa. *The Film Will Always Be You* took root

from one key facet of this previous one – namely, consideration of the subjective urgency of those compelling voices and viewpoints; the nuances that made “mine,” theirs. American artist Fred Wilson’s seminal Maryland Historical Society intervention *Mining the Museum* 1992 plumbed the depths of a collection in order to reveal its contradictions, ultimately transforming not only the public’s understanding but an institution’s understanding of itself. As in that instance, in *The Film Will Always Be You*, it’s the artist’s agency and how they marshal their medium that matters.

What perspectives do the assembled artists bring to bear? Sharing little more than geography (so arbitrary yet equally specific, alternately unifying or divisive), these films have much to say to one another. Through their respective practices, the artists create space for discourse, juxtaposition, harmony, discord and even those art historical ideals of Truth and Beauty. Ultimately, it is via their subjectivities that we are allowed not only to see aspects of themselves, but of ourselves as well.

Zoé Whitley, June 2015

1. <http://www.art21.org/anythingispossible/slideshow/on-animated-films/> Accessed: 15 January 2015  
2. Correspondence between Zoé Whitley, Anne McIlerron and William Kentridge, 6 February 2015  
3. Ibid.

## Lazara Rosell Albear & Doris Bloom *The MacGuffin*

*Rolling around in elephant dung and visceral simulations, the two artists dressed in protective forensic suits, stage a meeting between a primordial ritualistic past and a cold, already aggressively present, industrial future. As emphasised by their child-like pictogram masks, the two white clad figures apparently desire to become one with the 'hazardous' matter from which their suits protect them, so as to indulge in the hectically framed images they are creating through the traces they leave on the white floor. Is this our situation as eidolonauts in a hyper-real culture, whose images we bathe in without really touching their referents? The MacGuffin of the title suggests that, after all, action supersedes the goal of desire, which may be as unreachable as the fire of truth outside Plato's cave or Lacan's ever-elusive "objet petit a". The two characters are increasingly absorbed in networks of micro-processes. This absorptive effect strengthens as the dynamic patterns double onto the screen through hand gestures yet simulated traces of paint: the dung of the elephant is echoed in the digestion of the image machine.*

*Jacob Wamberg, Professor, History of Art, Aarhus University*



*The MacGuffin* • 2013 • 4 minutes 15 seconds • courtesy of the artists, Lazara Rosell Albear(Brussels) & Doris Bloom(Copenhagen)

## Lazara Rosell Albear & Doris Bloom

Lazara Rosell Albear is a Cuban-Belgian artist. With a Masters in Audiovisual Art (medium film) from the K.A.S.K (The Royal Academy of Fine Arts) in Ghent, Belgium, she is dedicated to the research, performance and production of cross-media projects, events and films. As a filmmaker, drummer, dancer/performer, extended voice performer and visual artist she aims to explore, enhance and expand experiential awareness beyond the usual stereotypes by exploring cross-mediality, interactivity and collaborations. She uses new media, such as video and 3D, in conjunction with traditional means as dance, music, theater to create exponential possibilities and totally immersive performances.

Doris Bloom was born and raised in South Africa. She relocated to Denmark after completing her studies at JCA, Johannesburg College of Art. In 1982, received a Masters from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen with her focus on painting, graphics, and interactive art in public space. Residencies in Rome brought her in contact with a young generation of Italian artists and collaborations with critic/curator Achille Bonito Oliva in several exhibitions. In 1995 she collaborated with William Kentridge for the Johannesburg Biennale. Investigating frontiers of identity and place Bloom staged and curated *Sted/Place* with fellow South African and Danish artists, at Kastrupgårdsamlingen in 2003, Johannesburg Art Gallery and



Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein in 2004. Since the early 1990s she has continued to pursue collaborative directions in performances and video-based works that incorporate the body. Rooted in both individual and collective identities, her work has been performed and documented cross-

culturally in Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Germany, South Africa, Egypt, Israel and Belgium, where since 2012, she has collaborated with Lazara Rosell Albear. Among the many grants of honour and prizes she is a recipient of the Danish Lifetime Achievement Award.

## Bridget Baker *The Pilot*

*The Pilot* closely references 1920s film techniques and the dramatic rescue scenes synonymous with Swiss Alpine Sports Films directed by auteur Arnold Fanck. Baker's characteristic female heroine is a 1920s pilot lying unconscious in the snow. With a broken leg she silently waits for her rescuer or death. Before her dramatic rescue the camera slowly scrutinizes her body for clues of her identity. The details of her life are discovered with precise anthropological detail: her swiss alpine family emblem, the "wooden tasseln" around her waist, and the sporting "Only you can" inscribed crampons. Vignetting her face with a soft focus reveals a timeless beauty. Yet, she remains elusive, leaving behind an invisible trace of the imagined past she briefly occupied.

Bridget Baker lives and works in London (b.1971, East London, South Africa). Her work intersects documentary and memory-construction, forming a series of complex visual fragments realised through filmmaking, installation and performed re-stagings. Her practise

and visual language, whilst based on in-depth research into questions about her own past as well as collective memory within colonial and postcolonial narratives, remains characteristically speculative, nomadic and estranging. Occupying the realm of the imaginary, the characters and



*The Pilot* • 2007 - 2008 • 16mm b&w film • 12 minutes • no audio • scenario, production design and direction Bridget Baker • cinematography Michael Cleary • *The Pilot* Philana van Schalkwyk • editing Ronet van der Walt (Fathommm) • post-production Jeremy Collins (Juju) producer Wendy Faull (The Big Picture Film Company) • executive production Official BB Projects and João Ferreira • locations in South Africa Tiffendel Ski Resort, McDhui, Eastern Cape and The Colosseum, Cape Town • courtesy of the artist and Tyburn Gallery, London

## Bridget Baker

objects in her films, installations and photographs are spliced into roles as interstices, enacting alterity in historical memory.

Baker has produced work for various solo presentations including; The National Arts Festival (Grahamstown, South Africa), Centro des Artes Contemporanea (Burgos, Spain), The Wapping Project (London), MAMbo (Bologna, Italy), Diet Gallery (Miami, United States of America), and Casa Cavazzini (Udine, Italy). Her works have been curated onto numerous South African and international group exhibitions including; 12<sup>th</sup> Havana Biennale 2015 (Cuba), Dak'Art 10<sup>th</sup> Dakar Biennale 2012 (Senegal), *US* (South African National Gallery and Johannesburg Art Gallery), *.ZA Giovane arte dal Sudafrica* (Palazzo del

*Papesse*, Sienna, Italy), *Contemporary Art Photography from South Africa* (Neue Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin, Germany and South African National Gallery), and *Liberated Voices: Contemporary Art from South Africa* (Museum for African Art, New York, United States of America). Baker's films have also been included on *Recontres Internationales*, (Gaîté Lyrique, Paris, France), the 57<sup>th</sup> International Short Film Competition (Oberhausen, Germany), the Glasgow Short Film Festival (Glasgow, United Kingdom), the Found Footage Film Festival (Bologna, Italy), *U/Tropia* at Wiener Festwochen, Plastikerraal, Künstlerhaus (Vienna, Austria), and the Derby Film Festival, (Derby, United Kingdom).





## Dineo Seshee Bopape

### *is I am sky*

*is I am sky...*

*I began with the filming of the video in San Francisco whilst in residence at the Headlands Center for the Arts residency, I went for a walk, with my camera Noticed how similar the landscape/vegetation was to the cape terrain...*

*I began to think about whether there are songs about 'the land'*

*At the time when I went for the walk on the news back in SA , 1 man who was on trial for singing an apartheid resistance song "kill the boer, kill the farmer"- there was a contestation about whether the song can be still sung now or not, (he was the youth president of the ANC party)*

*Anyways, I went on the hill, elated to kiss the wind, and be closer to the sky I sang some songs,*

*closer to the sky I sang some songs,*

*(I wondered if/how one can marry the sky)*

*On my mind for a number of years has been the 1985 poem by SunRa called 'the endless realm'..... there might be a line in the poem that says- is I am sky....*

*Which is where the title of the video has come from...*

*I really like the way the words are arranged in the title... is I am sky... am I the sky?*

*Is the sky i? Am I the sky? Do I exist as the sky?*

*(beginning with existence )*

*'All that and this are mine, and all together they are nothing.... How treasured rich*



*is I am sky* • 2013 • single-channel digital video • 17 minutes 48 seconds  
courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town/ Johannesburg

*I am...'*

*I have been thinking a lot about interiority and exteriority... mirrors...*

*Internal mirrors/external mirrors....*

*One's sense of self ... possession/loss*

*The loss of self, the capturing/possession of one's self*

*Where is the self located?how is it located? (How to find it once it is lost)*

## Dineo Seshee Bopape

*Whose sky? whose green grass- all that is nothing, together they are mine,  
mountains of nothing, eternal nothing  
Which self, whose self, how self?  
What is the sky?  
Can the sky see me? Can I see me? (within the belly of a whale)  
Like in the Abott book- Flatland: a romance of many dimensions....  
And like 'the way a pepperoni on a pizza pie cannot see the whole pie....'  
During the making of it, I have visited the work of Tlokwe Sehume, George Lewis,  
SunRa and others unconsciously too! They are on a cosmic groove that I get  
dazzled by from the inside.... Kerry James Marshall's works also sprung to me  
whilst editing the work too!! Cyprian Shilakoe.... Ralph Ellison...  
There is something about the night too...  
the sky too...  
this nothing too,  
how treasured rich I am....  
I have the beauty of nothing  
Looking into space- empty space- nothing space- space filled with nothing- (stars  
planets inbetween all the nothing)  
The self recedes into nothing  
Shinny shimmering nothing  
eye the mirror of nothing  
the eve of nothing , (a beautiful death)*

Dineo Seshee Bopape was born in 1981 on a Sunday. If she were Ghanaian, her name would be Akosua/ Akos for short. In the year of her birth, the Brixton riots took place; two people were injured when a bomb exploded in a Durban shopping centre. Bobby Sands dies, MTV is launched, the Boeing 767 makes its first air flight, Umkhonto we Sizwe performs numerous underground assault operations against the apartheid state. There was an earthquake in China that killed maybe 50 people. Hosni Mubarak was elected president of Egypt, there was a coup d'etat in Ghana. Princess Diana of Britain married Charles. Bob Marley dies. Apartheid SA invaded Angola. AIDS is identified/created/named. Salman Rushdie releases Midnight's Children. In the region of her birth: Her paternal grandmother died. Julius Malema

is born. Millions of people cried. Millions of people laughed! The world's population was apparently at around 4,529-billion. Bopape spent her youth in Limpopo in varying social situations. At 12 years of age she began to follow a hunger for an elsewhere, beginning with Durban where she spent some years and studied painting and sculpture. She is a 2007 graduate of De Ateliers in Amsterdam and in 2010 completed an MFA at Columbia University, New York. She was the winner of the 2008 MTN New Contemporaries Award, and the recipient of a 2010 Columbia University Toby Fund Award. She has shown her work in major and minor national and international exhibitions ... Other events of the year of her birth and of her lifetime are perhaps too many to fully know.

## Jacques Coetzer

### *Playing guitar for goats*

*The Swahili have a saying: “Sawa sawa na kumpigia mbuzi gitaa” (it’s like playing guitar for goats). It describes a situation in which one vigorously but unsuccessfully tries to convince another of a point of view. Whilst literally acting out the proverb, I felt a bit sheepish – a strange condition in front of goats - and realised that missionary zeal can border on stupidity. - Jacques Coetzer*

Jacques Coetzer (b. 1968, Kimberley, South Africa) lives in Riebeek Kasteel near Cape Town, South Africa. Social engagement is a key part of his practice and his site-specific projects often invite public participation. He loosely defines his situational practice, which has evolved from traditional object making to a more action-based approach, as “alt pop”. His projects frequently play out in public space, employing artistic gesture, musical performance and

geographical expedition. Thematically, Coetzer often explores personal and collective identity. His approach is holistic and takes into account a wide and ever-developing spectrum of human qualities as well as our shared relationship with nature and the environment. Coetzer has exhibited in various cities globally, including Aberdeen, Berlin, Cape Town, Dubai, Johannesburg, London, Paris and Rotterdam.



*Playing guitar for goats* • 2010 • documentation of public performance, Moshi, Tanzania  
2 minutes 9 seconds • courtesy of the artist, Riebeek-Kasteel

## Angela de Jesus *Control Room*

*Control Room* is reminiscent of a behind-the-scenes security surveillance area. The grid-like arrangement of video frames show from several viewpoints the interactions within a typical South African Portuguese-run convenience shop. The footage of customer movements and economic transactions reveal a social microcosm of a cross-cultural contact. These exchanges are products of preconceptions as well as misconceptions; subject to social and individual belief systems rooted in racial and cultural learned behaviour. Such shop space is informed by a long tradition of inter-cultural trade beginning with 15th century Portuguese explorers who bartered with the indigenous people of the Cape. From this history has emerged the archetype - and stereotype - of the 'Portuguese shopkeeper'. Ultimately, we are presented with questions about who and what signifies 'Africa' as well as 'Europe'. Inherent in these complexities are also reverberations of social tension, suspicion, xenophobia, and anxiety which can spill over into violence; social phenomena characteristic of a yet divided society.

*In Control Room* videos appear, disappear and re-appear to portray image sequences juxtaposed in various constellations at different time sequences. They generate loaded meanings and make it possible to view videos in various contexts and combinations. The viewer is comparable to the surveyor who watches and



*Control Room* • 2010 • single-channel digital video • 6 minutes 19 seconds  
courtesy of the artist, Bloemfontein

## Angela de Jesus

*selects certain moments for 'inspection'. However, the temporality of the videos and the irregularity of the video frames disrupt the grid-like arrangement and transforms this systematic mechanism into an uncontrollable one. The experience is unsettling, provoking feelings of suspicion, fear and paranoia, and limiting viewers from indulging in the scene.*

Angela de Jesus is currently based in Bloemfontein (South Africa) as the art curator at the University of the Free State (UFS). She is the Director of the Johannes Stegmann and Centenary art galleries and is responsible for the UFS permanent art collection. From 2009 to 2012 she established the Lotto Sculpture-on-Campus Project at the UFS. This project has enabled the University to acquire a collection of sixteen public artworks on the main campus in Bloemfontein. De Jesus obtained a masters degree in Fine Art

from the UFS in 2009 and specializes in printmaking and video-installation. She has participated in several national exhibitions and received a merit award at the Xposure Awards in 2003, was a merit winner at the Sasol New Signatures Awards in 2009 and was awarded the Thamgidi Residency Award at Spier Contemporary 2010. In 2012 she attended the Thamgidi Residency in Arnhem in the Netherlands and participated in the IFAA international artist residency and festival in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

## Barend de Wet *Projected Identities*

*In a world of looking and being looked at, Barend de Wet examines the role of costuming in constructing versions of oneself. In *Projected Identities*, de Wet plays the 'dresser's dummy' and invites his friends and acquaintances to clothe him. The artist allows the dresser free-reign to present different versions of the artist. These depictions study the relationship between dress and the perception of the self and how others perceives the self – the complex relationship between the self and the other; the way that dress frames the body and serves to both distinguish and connect. De Wet has consistently explored the materiality of clothing and textiles as both restriction and an expression, a means of expressing a 'true self' and a persona. This work documents the ongoing project. Participants include: Diana Cilliers, Simpiwe Madolo, Ronel Wagener, Ruy Filipe, David West, Arno Kruger. Photographer: Juan Voges.*



*Projected Identities* • 2013 • single-channel digital video • 3 minutes 37 seconds  
courtesy of the artist and SMAC Art Gallery, Cape Town/ Stellenbosch

## Barend de Wet

Barend de Wet was born in Boksburg, Gauteng in 1956 and completed his education at the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town in 1990. Currently based in Cape Town, De Wet's oeuvre encompasses traditional media, craft skills and fanatical hobbyism creating sculptures, 'knitted paintings', performances and productive collaborations.

With two successful solo exhibitions at SMAC Art Gallery – *GREEN* (2010) and *Maximalism* (2012), De Wet's most important group exhibitions include *Dada South?* at the Iziko South African National Gallery in 2009; *Twenty: South African Sculpture of the Last Two Decades* at the Nirox Sculpture Park, Johannesburg, in 2010; *The Rainbow Nation: Hedendaagse Beeldhouwkunst uit Zuid-Afrika* at the Museum Beelden

aan Zee, Den Haag, Netherlands, in 2012 and *After The Rainbow Nation* at the NIROX Sculpture Park, Johannesburg, in 2013. Recent projects include a video montage titled *Projected Identities*, which featured in *MINE*, a traveling exhibition of South African video and performance art which was shown in Bordeaux, France as part of the 2012/2013 South Africa/French season. De Wet was also the invited artist for the inaugural Cape Town Art Fair in 2013, and presented a solo exhibition *A Tangled Skin*. Most recently, De Wet was included as a featured artist of SMAC Gallery at the New York edition of 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair.



## Teboho Edkins

### *Gangster Backstage*

*Gangster Backstage is a documentary film shot in Cape Town, South Africa. As the narrative progresses from casting interview through scenes in an empty theatre, a palpable sense of confinement builds: trapped in a fear- and cigarette-filled purgatory, one is left with swirling thoughts about the nature of freedom, imprisonment and what awaits the soul in the after-life.*

Teboho Edkins was born in the United States in 1980, growing up in Lesotho, South Africa and Germany. He studied Fine Art at the University of Cape Town, followed by a post-graduate residency at le Fresnoy, Studio National des Arts Contemporains (France), followed by studies in film directing at the dffb film academy (Germany). After a number of video art projects, he shot his first film *Ask me, I'm Positive* 2004 as part of his father Don Edkins's

*Steps for the Future* film series. With *Looking Good, True Love* and *Thato*, he created further documentaries on HIV/AIDS. In 2007, he created a series of mixed-genre gangster films which explore deep-rooted division in the South African society. He was awarded with the Open Doors Prize (Locarno Film festival, 2014) for his film *Coming of Age* which premiered at the Berlinale Film Festival (2015) and recently won the Best Film Award at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Trento



*Gangster Backstage* • 2013 • HD colour/sound • 37 minutes 38 seconds  
courtesy of the artist, Berlin and Bathysphere, Paris

Film Festival. He also received the Principal Prize for *Gangster Backstage* at the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (2014).



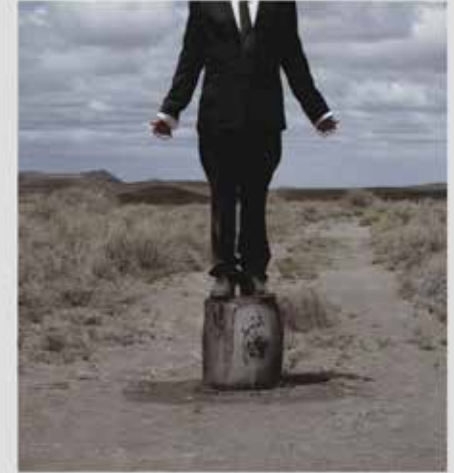
## Neville Gabie

### *Experiments in Black & White XIII*

*Experiments in Black and White is an ongoing body of work developed by Neville Gabie which considers a relationship to place and material. In a series of filmed performances, the focus is on the use of four materials: crude oil, chalk, ice and air. Initially developed from a year long residency working with Climate Research scientists at the Cabot Institute, Bristol University (2012/13) these short films present the tactile experience of volatile material influx. Filmed in Richmond, Northern Cape Province, South Africa, Experiments in Black and White XIII documents a day long performance in which the artist Neville Gabie stood on a block of ice while it melted into the arid Karoo.*

Using sculpture, film, photography and performance Neville Gabie has established an international reputation for his practice. Born in Johannesburg, South Africa (1959), with an MA in sculpture from the Royal College of Art, his work can be found in many collections including the Art Council and Tate Gallery. With a background in sculpture, Neville Gabie's practice

has always been driven by working in response to specific locations or situations caught in a moment of change. Highly urbanized or distantly remote, his work is a response to the vulnerability of place. Gabie's interest is in establishing a working relationship within a particular community as a means of considering its physical, cultural or emotional geography.



*Experiments in Black & White XIII* • 2014 • video • 5 minutes 22 seconds  
courtesy of the artist, Strout and Danielle Arnaud Gallery, London

## Angus Gibson & William Kentridge *Freedom Square and Back of the Moon*

*Sophiatown was the closest place to the city centre of Johannesburg, occupied by black South Africans. It was home to writers, journalists, artists, politicians – the black intellectual heart of the city. It is not surprising then that it was the first area to be targeted by the Nationalist Government for removals.*

*In this documentary, Angus Gibson, together with the artist William Kentridge, uses interviews, archive, drawings and extracts from the protest play Sophiatown, to explore the life and destruction of Sophiatown.*

*The interviews conducted in South Africa were filmed on the Market Theatre stage where the play had been performed. The backdrops were scenes of Sophiatown, painted by Kentridge for the set of the play.*

*Gibson and Kentridge also travelled to London and Lusaka to do interviews with activists, writers and musicians living in exile. They travelled with the painted backdrops – and used them to create the illusion that everybody was reunited on the stage of the Market Theatre. For the interviews, the film-makers borrowed the lighting style of the noir films that the residents of Sophiatown had loved to watch – blurring the lines between the fiction of the play and the memory of the interviews. The maps that were drawn and animated by Kentridge for the documentary pre-empted his series of animated films.*

*The montage of black and white images of Triomf, the white suburb that was built on the ruins of Sophiatown, that ends the documentary, were taken by the photographer, Gideon Mendel.*



*Freedom Square and Back of the Moon • 1987 • 52 minutes 56 seconds • produced by the Free Filmmakers Co-operative • courtesy of the artists, Johannesburg*

## Angus Gibson & William Kentridge

Angus Gibson, one of South Africa's premier documentary filmmakers, is a founding member of Free Filmmakers, a film co-operative established in 1985 to create a relevant South African cinema. Since 1983, when he created his first television drama, he has produced, directed, and co-written numerous highly-acclaimed and internationally award-winning documentary series and TV dramas for British and South African television, including the *Heartlines* series, *Yizo Yizo*, and *Soweto, a History*. He also has a rich documentary feature film experience. He co-directed the Oscar-nominated authorized biography, *Mandela*, for Jonathan Demme's production company. His diverse media projects, which include audio-visual

contributions to the Apartheid Museum and the Hector Pieterse Museum, have been influential in the anti-apartheid movement.

William Kentridge is one of South Africa's pre-eminent artists, internationally acclaimed for his drawings, films, theatre and opera productions. His work draws on varied sources, including philosophy, literature, early cinema, theatre and opera to create a complex universe where good and evil are complementary and inseparable forces.

Kentridge's work has been seen in museums and galleries around the world since the 1990s, including Documenta in Kassel, Germany, the Museum of Modern Art in New York,

the Albertina Museum in Vienna, Jeu de Paume and the Musée du Louvre in Paris. Kentridge's opera productions have been presented at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, La Scala in Milan, Theatre de la Monnaie in Brussels, Festival d'Aix, amongst other opera houses and his performance and theatrical productions have been seen in many theatres across the world.

In 2010, Kentridge received the prestigious Kyoto Prize in recognition of his contributions in the field of arts and philosophy. In 2011, he was elected as an Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and received the degree of Doctor of Literature *honoris causa* from the University of London. In

2012, Kentridge presented the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University and was elected member of the American Philosophical Society and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Also in that year, he was awarded the Dan David Prize by Tel Aviv University, and was named as *Commandeur des Arts et Lettres* by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. Kentridge has received honorary doctorates from several universities, including University of London, Yale University, Wits University and the University of Cape Town. In 2015 he was appointed as an Honorary Academician of the Royal Academy in London.

## Simon Gush *Iseeyou*

*The title of the film, Iseeyou, comes from the slogan of the first multi-racial trade union in South Africa, ICU (Industrial and Commercial Workers Union). Exploring monuments to work and workers in Johannesburg, the piece is a meditation on the relationship of visibility to work by looking at how labour has been represented in apartheid and post-apartheid public art in Johannesburg. Iseeyou suggests that these often celebratory depictions are a means by which the conditions of work, including the treatment of workers, is justified through promotion of the idea of a work ethic.*

Simon Gush (born 1981) lives and works in Johannesburg. He was a 2011 Fellow at the Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts, University of Cape Town, and completed postgraduate studies at the Hoger Instituut van Schone Kunsten in Ghent, Belgium, in 2008. Solo shows include *After Work* at Galerie Jette Rudolph, Berlin (2015); *Red* at the Goethe-Institut,

Johannesburg (2014); *1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>* at Galerie West, The Hague, and *4 for Four* at SMAK, Ghent (both 2010), in addition to five previous exhibitions at Stevenson, Cape Town and Johannesburg. Group shows include *Artists Engaged? Maybe* at Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (2014); the 2<sup>nd</sup> Montevideo Biennial, Uruguay (2014); *My Joburg* at La Maison Rouge, Paris, and the Staatliche



*Iseeyou* • 2013 • HD digital video, stereo sound, DVD (endless copies) • 13 minutes 52 seconds  
courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town/ Johannesburg

Kunstsammlungen, Dresden (2013); *Halakasha* at the Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg (2010); *1910-2010: From Pierneef to Gugulective*, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town (2010) and the 2009 Luleå Summer Biennial, Sweden.

Upcoming solo exhibitions include *9 o'clock*, at the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown (curated by Lerato Bereng), and *Red Assembly*, at the African Critical Inquiry Programme Workshop 2015, East London.

## Donna Kukama

### *The Swing (after after Fragonard)*

The *Swing (after after Fragonard)* was developed out of a performance piece that took place at the Mai-Mai Market in the east end of the inner city of Johannesburg. The market mainly trades in traditional medicine, and includes a cooking and eating area where fresh meat is prepared for a clientele of taxi-drivers and people that work in the 'second economy' of the east end of the inner city. The work forms part of a series of interventions staged by Kukama that revolve around a particular gesture drawn from archival research conducted by the artist, which then accumulates new and often troubling reference through strategic reconfiguration and redeployment. In this case, the painting *The Swing (1766)* by Jean-Honore Fragonard - an emblem of Ancien Regime frivolity in the shadow of the impending French Revolution - served as a point of departure for a public performance/ intervention. This video piece combines a presentation of the performance layered with fragments of conversation and reflection in an incomprehensible combination of French and Setswana proverbs.

*Text: Donna Kukama & Joseph Gaylard*

*Image: Matthew Burbidge*



*The Swing (after after Fragonard)* • 2009 • video • 4 minutes 54 seconds  
courtesy of the artist, Johannesburg and Blank Projects, Cape Town

## Donna Kukama

Donna Kukama's video, sound, and performance work often presents moments within reality that question the way in which histories are narrated, as well as how value systems are constructed. Her performances manifest through the presence and participation of others, and often resist established ways of doing. She completed her postgraduate studies at the Ecole Cantonale d'Art du Valais in Sierre (Switzerland) in 2008, under MAPS (Master of Arts in the Public Sphere), and is currently a faculty member at the WITS School of Arts (University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg). Kukama has presented work in various curated exhibitions, including *My Joburg* at La Maison Rouge, Paris, and the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden (2013)

and *Don't You Know Who I am: Art After Identity Politics* at the Museum of Modern Art in Antwerp (2014). Her performance-based work has been presented at various international art museums. Other international participations include the 2013 Lyon Biennale, the 2014 Biennale of Moving Images, Geneva, and the 2015 New Museum Triennial, New York. She was one of the selected artists to represent South Africa at the Venice Biennale in 2013, and is the 2014 recipient of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Performance Art. Previous award nominations include the MTN New Contemporaries Award (2010), the Ernst Schering Award (2011), and the Visible Award (as *NON NON Collective*), 2011.

## Michael MacGarry *LHR-JNB*

*Like most, this project has several basic starting points – namely, a television advert for beer and a developed sense of self-loathing. For most of 2001 and 2002 I lived in Europe, one year in Dublin, the other in London. I worked as a designer and participated in the ongoing brain-drain adversely affecting South Africa's development. In London I saw a television advert that showed several Britons adrift at sea in a small inflatable dingy who were obviously the survivors of some wreck or accident. The narrative of the advert concerned not the horrors of survival but rather their thirst for the particular brand of beer being promoted. The dialogue was not the desperate, stereotypical lifeboat statement of 'Water! Water!', but rather 'Brand of beer! Brand of beer!' It was a lame advert, as most are, but it looked really good, as most do. The polished formalism initiated my thinking on a possible fictional narrative for a video that could articulate, as well as mimic, the voluntary South African alienation and London - induced drowning of identity I was experiencing at the time. - Michael MacGarry*



*LHR-JNB* • 2002 - 2010 • video • 12 minutes 34 seconds • colour • stereo • edition 5 (+2 AP)  
written, produced & directed by Michael MacGarry • director of photography Robert Wilson  
editor Jaco van Schalkwyk • musical score Richard Brokensha • narrator Jaco van Schalkwyk  
cast Jan-Henri Booyens, Michael MacGarry, Jaco van Schalkwyk, Marcel Waldeck • courtesy  
of the artist, Johannesburg

## Michael MacGarry

Michael MacGarry is a visual artist and filmmaker based in Johannesburg, South Africa. He holds a Masters Degree in Fine Art from the University of the Witwatersrand. MacGarry is a fellow of the Gordon Institute of Performing and Creative Arts (GIPCA) at the University of Cape Town and recipient of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award 2010 (Visual Art). MacGarry has exhibited at an international level

for more than five years including Tate Modern, Iziko South African National Gallery and Kiasma Museum. His practice is focused on the ongoing ramifications of imperialism on the African continent, and he has published four monographs on his work. As a filmmaker he has written and directed five narrative short films, and five feature-length video artworks.



## Nandipha Mntambo *Ukungenisa*

*Nandipha Mntambo's video, Ukungenisa is the artist's first foray into performance and marks the start of a long-term project surrounding the art of bullfighting. In the work, Mntambo envisages being trained as a bullfighter and staging her own fight in the abandoned Praça de Touros in Maputo, the arena where black Mozambicans once fought for the entertainment of the colonial Portuguese. Fascinated by the ritualised action, public spectacle and charged emotion of the bullfight, Mntambo describes the project as 'the practice of my future', a tentative 'feeling out' of the territory. The title, Ukungenisa indicates the mental and physical preparation for a fight, and the opening of a path to allow something to happen. The video captures the artist literally rehearsing the steps of a bullfighter whom she filmed in Lisbon, juxtaposed with footage of the fight and the crowd of spectators. This attempt to take on the persona of the bullfighter represents a shift for Mntambo, whose previous work effectively invited the viewer to take her place, to step into the outline of her body as defined by the moulded cowhide. To this end she has made herself a bullfighter's jacket from her signature cowhide, a means to 'interpret and take ownership of the tradition'. The title of this work, Inftombi mfana, means 'tomboy', or a girl taking on a male persona. The cows' ears that form the rear of the jacket introduce the idea of an imaginary crowd bearing witness to her performance.*



*Ukungenisa* • 2008 • single-channel video • stereo sound • 2 minutes 30 seconds  
courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town/ Johannesburg

## Nandipha Mntambo

Born in 1982, Mntambo graduated with a Masters in Fine Art (with distinction) from the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town, in 2007. She won the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Visual Art in 2011, for which she produced the national travelling exhibition *Faena*. She has had five solo shows at Stevenson in Cape Town (2007, 2009, 2012) and Johannesburg (2009 and 2014); and held her first European solo exhibition at Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, in 2013. Important group exhibitions include *My Joburg* at La Maison Rouge, Paris, and the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (2013); the 3<sup>rd</sup> Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, Moscow (2012); ARS 11, Kiasma Museum of

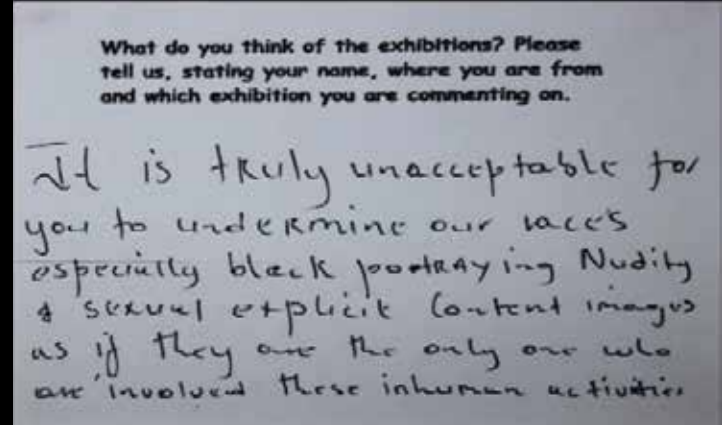
Contemporary Art, Helsinki (2011); the 17<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Sydney (2010); the 9<sup>th</sup> Dakar Biennale (2010); *Peekaboo: Current South Africa*, Tennis Palace Art Museum, Helsinki (2010); *Life Less Ordinary: Performance and Display in South African Art*, Djanogly Gallery, Nottingham, United Kingdom (2009); Les Rencontres de Bamako biennial of African photography, Bamako, Mali (2009); *Beauty and Pleasure in South African Contemporary Art*, Stenersen Museum, Oslo (2009); *.ZA: Young Art from South Africa*, Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena (2008); and *Apartheid: The South African Mirror*, Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona (2008). Mntambo was a Civitella Ranieri Fellow for 2013.

## Zanele Muholi

### *Enraged by a Picture*

Visual activist and photographer, Muholi is celebrating her exhibition in Johannesburg. Efficiently confrontational, the exhibition causes a stir and provokes an outcry on a subject that is particularly taboo: being black and, in this case, being lesbian. Forthright and beautifully shot, each monochrome photo captures the present reality of the photographer's subjects - the daily discomfort, double lives, abuse and hatred.

The photographs present a window into their world. This absorbing documentary explores that world's reality.

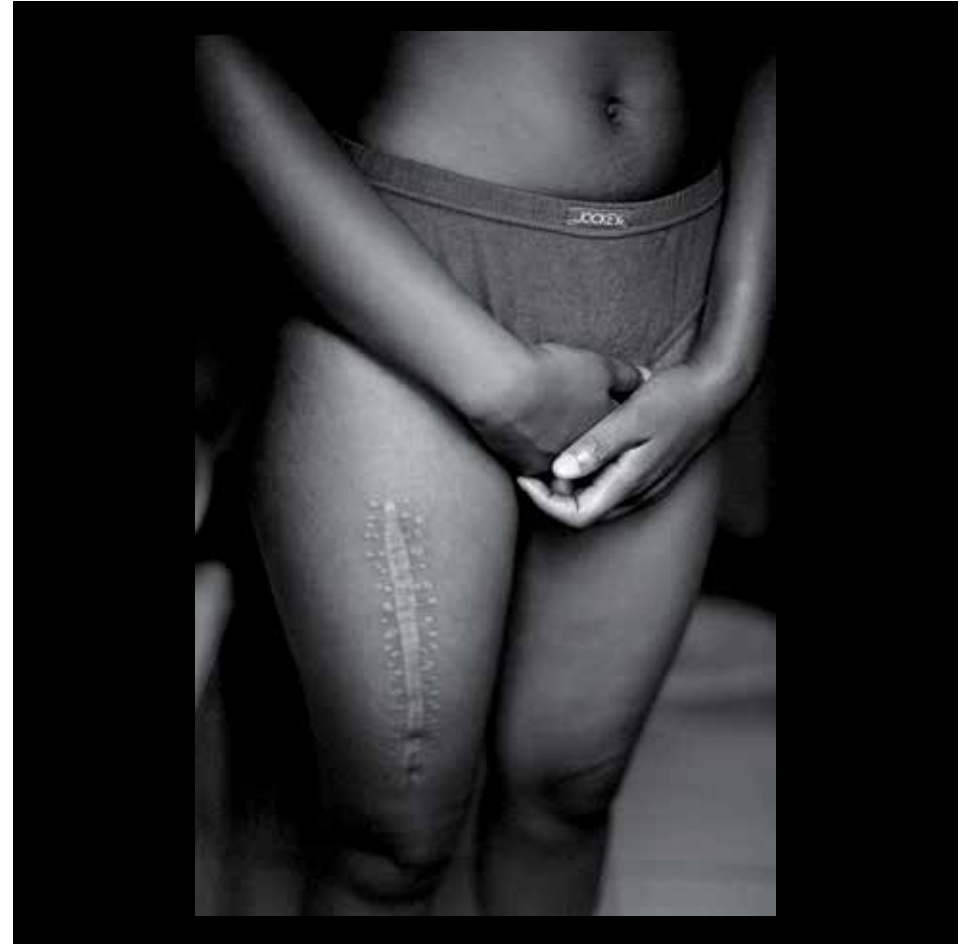


*Enraged by a Picture* • 2005 • Video • 14 minutes 36 seconds • direction Zanele Muholi  
courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town/ Johannesburg

## Zanele Muholi

Zanele Muholi was born in Umlazi, Durban, in 1972, and lives in Johannesburg. She co-founded the Forum for Empowerment of Women (FEW) in 2002, and in 2009 founded Inkanyiso ([www.inkanyiso.org](http://www.inkanyiso.org)), a forum for queer and visual (activist) media. Muholi's self-proclaimed mission is 'to re-write a black queer and trans visual history of South Africa for the world to know of our resistance and existence at the height of hate crimes in SA and beyond'. Muholi studied Advanced Photography at the Market Photo Workshop in Newtown, Johannesburg, and in 2009 completed an MFA: Documentary Media at Ryerson University, Toronto. She has won numerous awards including the Ryerson Alumni Achievement Award (2015);

the Fine Prize for an emerging artist at the 2013 Carnegie International; a Prince Claus Award (2013); the Index on Censorship - Freedom of Expression art award (2013); and the Casa Africa award for best female photographer and a Fondation Blachère award at Les Rencontres de Bamako biennial of African photography (2009). Her *Faces and Phases* series has shown at, among others, Documenta 13; the South African Pavilion at the 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale; and the 29<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennale. She is shortlisted for the 2015 Deutsche Börse Photography Prize for her publication *Faces and Phases: 2006-14* (Steidl/The Walther Collection). Muholi is an Honorary Professor of the University of the Arts, Bremen.



## Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi *Border Farm*

*Border Farm is a docu-drama about a group of Zimbabwean “border jumpers” who make their way across the Limpopo River from Zimbabwe to seek work on the farms in South Africa. It portrays the many-layered drama of forced migration and is written, acted and crewed by the people who made the journey themselves. The film, Border Farm, was born out of the Border Farm Project. The project took place over a year (2009 - 2010) on a farm on the South Africa/ Zimbabwe border. It brought together a group of artists from Johannesburg with artists and other interested participants on the farm, most of whom were Zimbabwean migrant workers. The aim of the project was to create a theatre group which would serve a variety of purposes in the farming community along the border.*



*Border Farm* • 2011 • 32 minutes 10 seconds • DV/HDV NTSC • Images: 'Procession' by Mildred Banda, 'Loophole' (p.59) by Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi • Courtesy of the artist, Johannesburg and The Dulibadzimu Theatre Group, Musina

## Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi

Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi was born in New York and has lived in Harare and Johannesburg on and off since the early 1990s. She divides her time between studio work and navigating the field of art as social practice. Her work investigates power and its structures – political, social, architectural. Implicit in her examination of these structures is an interrogation of the invisible forces that create them, and an imagining of alternatives.

The Dulibadzimu Theatre Group was formed during the *Border Farm* project in 2009. It uses theatre as a vehicle to communicate, educate and empower in the farming region of Musina, Limpopo province. The director of the group, Meza Weza was born in Maydi, Zimbabwe. He left Zimbabwe in 2001 to come to South Africa and is a writer, a chef, and a peer educator. He currently works as a melon quality controller on a farm in Musina, South Africa where he is also the farm workers' representative.



## Tabita Rezaire *TRU DAT LCD SCREEN*

*TRU DAT LCD SCREEN* is a response to a problematic brief asking for a romanticized history of South Africa. The delusion of the linear narrative of fear, hope and freedom, hiding behind this 'good story to tell' and the rainbow nation denies the complexities of emancipation. *TRU DAT LCD SCREEN* is an online visual exploration of South Africa conceived as a touristic journey sponsored by Google through a kwerekwere (foreigner) gaze.

Tabita Rezaire is a French-Guyanese-Danish video and new media artist based in Johannesburg. She holds a Masters in Artist Moving Image from Central Saint Martins College in London. Her work focuses on decolonial knowledge and the political aesthetics of resistance through screen-based practices. She engages in cinematic urban intervention and digital healing activism, producing videos, urls, screenings and leading

camera and *booty politix* workshops. Exploring the performativity of encounters, online and offline, her works address the pervasive coloniality of power, technology, sexual identity, race politics, gender conformity, the mechanisms of otherness and the hierarchy of knowledge. Confronting media stigmatisation and occidental hegemony, she provides alternative narratives through image production and alienation challenging our



*TRU DAT LCD SCREEN* • 2014 • 8 minutes 41 seconds • commissioned by TEDx Johannesburg 2014 as part of a multidisciplinary ensemble curated by Chi Diaries courtesy of the artist, Johannesburg

supremacist-patriarchal-hetero-normative-globalized world. Understanding the screen as a site for social and political engagement, the

screens she creates become platforms for radical and empowering images. Rezaire's current works strive for the decolonization of cyberspace.

## Robin Rhode *Recycled Matter*

*Recycled Matter* is Rhode's new experimental film, shot in his Berlin studio in collaboration with French performer Jean-Baptiste André, who first worked with Rhode at the FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, France. The film also features Rhode's long-time musical collaborators Arenor Anuku and drum soloist Marcel van Cleef.

In *Recycled Matter* André mimes his journey through a range of wall-drawn and theatrical environments, interacting with props and sculptural elements that are remnants of previous artworks taken from Rhode's studio. Scenes of the street, rooftops and residential facades are suggested by Rhode's language of simplified and generic forms, functioning as stands-ins or representations of the real thing. Utilitarian objects such as suitcases, coins, ropes, bicycle frames and window frames inhabit these scenes, tempering André's humorous navigation through time and space by developing a life of their own - staying true to Rhode's ability to give existence to objects through the structure of animation. The performer, or character creates a condition where he has the cognitive inability to distinguish the external world from his internal world.

*The film's spatial configuration and sense of timing, delivered through André's performance and the drum-focused musical score, alongside the objects and*



*Recycled Matter* • 2015 • Digital video, sound • 16 minutes 05 seconds • courtesy of Lehmann Maupin, New York/ Hong Kong and Stevenson, Cape Town/ Johannesburg



## Robin Rhode

*elements we encounter, locate the viewer as a part of the film, and within its ideas about cycles and movement, journeys and navigation. Rhode explores the nature of animism by injecting an almost spiritual essence into inanimate objects and urban phenomena. Here, our character finds himself in an environment wherein he assumes that all events are the product of intention and consciousness.*

Robin Rhode was born 1976 in Cape Town, South Africa. Coming of age in a newly post-apartheid South Africa, Rhode was exposed to new forms of creative expression motivated by the spirit of the individual rather than dictated by a political or social agenda. The Berlin-based multidisciplinary artist engages in a variety of visual languages such as photography, performance, drawing and sculpture to create

arrestingly beautiful narratives that are brought to life using quotidian materials such as soap, charcoal, chalk and paint. He has had major solo and group exhibitions at a number of important museums around the world such as Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, Museum of Modern Art, New York, United States, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.



## Athi-patra Ruga

### *The Purge*

*“This video isn't just about peace in itself, it is more about the process of getting there. I wanted to create, rather solicit, a slow time-inspired unraveling of the identities -- something that fascinates me -- that weigh heavily on us and perhaps our daily performances as people. That is what the most recent avatar in my latest body of work does... in a loop. “The Future White Woman of Azania” is a character made up of liquid paint filled balloons and resembles a science diagram. I wanted the action to revolve around two acts: that of engaging in the catharsis of walking and that of “weeping” -- a purging that here is represented by the popping. Enter “The Flower of Azania”, who in stark contrast has the appearance of a gestating flower, accumulating scale and animation. Both these scenes are brought together by the gong that encourages an engagement with these two different movements that are both a good Purge.” - Athi-Patra Ruga*



*The Purge* • 2013 • Single Chanel Video installation • originally commissioned by PUMA for FILMS4PEACE • 2 minutes 11 seconds • courtesy of the artist and whatiftheworld, Cape Town

## Athi-patra Ruga

Exploring the border-zones between fashion, performance and contemporary art, Athi-Patra Ruga makes work that exposes and subverts the body in relation to structure, ideology and politics. Bursting with eclectic multicultural references, carnal sensuality and a dislocated undercurrent of humor, his performances, videos, costumes and photographic images create a world where cultural identity is no longer determined by geographical origins, ancestry or biological disposition, but is increasingly becoming a hybrid construct. Ruga's utopian counter-proposal to the sad dogma of the division between mind and body, blends sensuality and intelligence, pop culture, craft and fine art. Athi-Patra Ruga was born in Umtata, South Africa

in 1984 and lives and works in both Johannesburg and Cape Town. Recent group exhibitions include: *African Odysseys* BRASS Art Center Brussels, *Public Intimacy*, YBCA in collaboration with SFMOMA San Francisco, *Imaginary Fact*, South African Pavilion Venice Biennale 2013, *Next Futures* Gulbekian Foundation Lisbon, *Under a Tinsel* 3<sup>rd</sup> Moscow International Biennale For Young Art, Moscow.

His works form part of private public and museum collections, namely: Museion - Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Bolzano Italy; CAAC - Pigozzi Collection; The Wedge Collection, Iziko South African National Gallery and Zeitz MOCCA Cape Town South Africa.



## Berni Searle

### *Seeking Refuge*

*The Seeking Refuge series, consisting of video and photographic works, focuses on ideas around migration and strategies of survival. Shot on the volcanic island of Lanzarote, the video situates the artist within a stark, beautiful landscape that is manifestly inhospitable, yet within which people have innovatively and resiliently found ways to survive. Searle wanders barefoot, finding shelter in shallow craters of soil, among the vines, on a salt plain and in a stranded boat. The work incorporates the elements specific to Lanzarote's landscape – the sea, black volcanic soil and the red cochineal dye which stains her feet and hands. These stains symbolically signal the protection that shoes and gloves may provide, but prove ineffective against the harsh elements. In walking and pausing she embraces them, bearing the physical and emotional traces impressed on her along the way, finally finding an unsheltered place to settle as darkness approaches and the day draws to an end.*

Berni Searle is a world-renowned South African artist working with photography, video, and film to produce lens-based installations that stage narratives connected to history, memory, and place. Often, but not exclusively, using

herself in her work, she has produced performative works that explore issues of self-representation, the relationship between personal and collective identity and narratives connected to history, memory and place. Her use



*Seeking Refuge* • 2008 • Single-channel video projection, Shot on SD video, transferred to DVD Colour, sound, format 16:9 • 5 minutes 56 seconds • commissioned by the Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno in Las Palmas, Canary Islands • courtesy of the artist, Cape Town

## Berni Searle

of metaphor and poetic ambiguity transcend the specificity of context, drawing on universal human emotions associated with displacement, vulnerability and loss.

She has won a number of awards and nominations including the Minister of Culture Prize at DAK'ART 2000, Senegal; the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Visual Art (South Africa, 2003) and she was an Artes Mundi short-listed artist (Cardiff, Wales, 2004). She was the recipient of the Rockefeller Bellagio Creative Arts Fellow Award for 2014.

Previous international exhibitions include a.o. the 49<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale (2001) and the 51<sup>st</sup> Venice Biennale (2005); *Personal Affects, Power and Poetics in Contemporary South African Art*, at the Cathedral of St. John the

Divine (New York, 2004) and *New Photography* at the Museum of Modern Art (New York, 2007). More recently she participated in *Figures and Fictions* at the Victoria and Albert Museum (London, 2011); *Pictures by Women: A History of Modern Photography* at the Museum of Modern Art (New York, 2011); *Earth Matters* at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution (Washington DC, United States of America, 2014) and *Distance and Desire: Encounters with the African Archive* at the Walther Collection, Ulm, (Germany, 2014-2015).

Searle is currently Associate Professor at the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town.



## Bogosi Sekhukhuni

### *Consciousness engine 2: absentblackfatherbot*

*Bogosi Sekhukhuni's dual channel video work Consciousness engine 2: absentblackfatherbot was produced as part of the 89plus residency at the Google cultural institute in Paris. The work is made up of two avatars or computer-generated images. The avatars are based on images of artist and his father, and are programmed to perform a series of conversations that happened between Sekhukhuni and his father on facebook. Having never met his father, the artist sought him out over facebook at the age of 18 that resulted in a series of short conversations that spanned a 6-year period. In this way the video acts as simulation of this virtual relationship. Sekhukhuni is interested in the way the Internet provides a virtual experience and exists as a way of stimulating a self-awareness that is brought about by an external presence.*



*Consciousness engine 2: absentblackfatherbot* • 2014 • Dual Channel Video Installation  
4 minutes 20 seconds • courtesy of the artist and whatiftheworld, Cape Town

## Bogosi Sekhukhuni

Johannesburg based artist Bogosi Sekhukhuni works with drawing, installation and video, and is engaged in works that explore the role online forums and technology play in re-imagining our identity. A product of the fabled rainbow nation, in 2013 Sekhukhuni was selected by the Mail & Guardian as one of the Top 200 Young South Africans. Sekhukhuni studied Visual Arts at the University of Johannesburg and is a member of the South African artist group

CUSSGROUP; a pioneering artist group working primarily in digital art. In 2014, Sekhukhuni exhibited his first solo presentation at the Whatiftheworld Gallery, Cape Town. He has exhibited in group exhibitions in South Africa and abroad. He has presented at and participated in numerous panel discussions; including the 89PLUS panel discussion *89plus Presents: Nouvelles Expériences en Art et Technologie* at Foundation Cartier, Paris.



## Lerato Shadi Matsogo

*The video Matsogo shows a pair of hands crumbling a piece of cake and reshaping it into the same triangle shape that references the beginning slice. Through the process of moving from deconstruction to reconstruction, the essence and consumability of the piece of cake is undermined and lost, as it is recreated into an object, that resembles and has the same elements, as the cake, but has lost its function. The sound track combines two songs from two different popular Setswana folktales. The songs are mixed together, thereby confusing and convoluting the narratives of the folktales in such a way, that there are three to five characters in an ongoing polylogue, that revolves around belief and disbelief, trust and betrayal.*



*Matsogo* • 2013 • video • 5 minutes • courtesy of the artist, Berlin



## Lerato Shadi

Lerato Shadi lives and works in Berlin. She completed a BFA in Fine Art from the University of Johannesburg. In 2009 she was included in the *The Generational: Younger Than Jesus* artists-directory published by the New Museum, New York. In 2010 she was awarded a Pro Helvetia residency in Bern. In the same year she had her solo exhibition *Mosako Wa Seipone* at GoetheonMain in Johannesburg. From 2010 to 2012 she was a member of the Bag Factory artist studios in Johannesburg. In 2012 her work was featured at the Dak'Art Biennale in Dakar, Senegal and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Moscow International Biennale. She is a fellow

of Sommerakademie 2013 (Zentrum Paul Klee) and completed in the same year a residency program by invitation of INIVA at Hospitalfield (supported by ROSL). In 2014 she was awarded with the mart stam studio grant. Currently she is completing her MFA at the Kunsthochschule Berlin Weissensee. Lerato Shadi explores assumptions about the Black female body and how performance, video and installation creates a space to make the body both visible and invisible. Using time, repetitive actions as well as stillness, she questions 'How does one create oneself?'



## Penny Siopis

### *The Master is Drowning*

*In The Master is Drowning Siopis combines sequences of 8mm and 16mm home movies, fragments of documentary footage, text (resembling subtitles) and music to create a story that is both fictive and 'real'. The narrative unfolds chronologically, culminating in the attempted assassination of the South African Prime Minister HF Verwoerd by David Beresford Pratt, a white liberal businessman and farmer. The attempt occurred in 1960 on the eve of the inauguration of the apartheid South African Republic, and is depicted through the inclusion of actual news footage from that time. Pratt went to the annual Agricultural Show in Johannesburg and shot Verwoerd twice in the face at point blank range following his opening address. Miraculously, Verwoerd survived, and in the ensuing court process Pratt, who suffered from epilepsy, was declared unsound of mind. The words in the film are mostly Pratt's, drawn from different sources including transcripts of his trial and newspapers of the time, and the home movies are anonymous, reels that the artist found in charity shops and flea markets. Reflecting on her films more generally Siopis writes "For me, found 'home movie' footage operates like a kind of readymade. It is already inscribed with meaning, and this readymade meaning is part of my interest in the material. From this footage I create new films that bear little or no empirical relationship to their original context or content. Old home movies are resonant with emotion and a degree of pathos. I am often entranced by scenes of people and places about which I know nothing.*



*The Master is Drowning* • 2010 • 8mm film transferred to DVD • stereo sound • 10 minutes  
26 seconds courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town/ Johannesburg

## Penny Siopis

*Invariably, I imagine and project my 'subjectivity' onto these celluloid actors and spaces. What allows me to hook contingency to fact is my selective use of text in combination with film sequences snatched from my ever-expanding archive. The stories I choose speak beyond their historical circumstances and I use the first person whenever I can."*

Penny Siopis was born in 1953 in Vryburg, South Africa. She has an MFA from Rhodes University, Grahamstown (1976), and is an Honorary Professor at Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town. She works in painting, photography, film/video and installation. Her work since the 1970s has covered different foci but her interest in what she calls the 'poetics of vulnerability' characterises all her explorations, from her earlier engagements with history, memory and migration to her later concerns with shame, violence and sexuality. She has exhibited widely, both in

South Africa and internationally. Solo exhibitions include *Time and Again: A Retrospective Exhibition*, South African National Gallery, Cape Town (2014) and Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg (2015); *Red: The iconography of colour in the work of Penny Siopis* at the KZNSA Gallery, Durban (2009), and *Three Essays on Shame* at the Freud Museum, London (2005). She has taken part in the biennales of Venice (South African Pavilion, 2013), Sydney (2010), Johannesburg (1995 and 1997), Gwangju (1995), Havana (1994 and 1997) and Venice (1993).



## Gregg Smith

### *Should we never meet again*

*A young man crosses Paris, calling on his mobile and talking to himself. He has problems and is looking for shelter for the night. In his mind, he runs through his whole circle of friends, but he doesn't dare approach any of them. He would like to blame everyone and everything for this uncomfortable and narrow life where all good opportunities seem to have been squandered. From time to time, he stops and is then pulled into another dimension - a dimension where no boundaries and formalities exist and where, very briefly, he makes contact with total strangers. The very simple and functional design of this 'fourth dimension' makes its existence plausible. Everyone could flee to it from time to time.*



*Should we never meet again* • 2005 • DVD from HD • 26 minutes • with Mireille Abadi, Manon Querelle, Feyçal Bagriche, Gerard Abela and Gregg Smith • The film is shot in the busy neighbourhoods of Barbès, Château Rouge and Gouttes d'Or, in Paris and against the blue screen in Le Fresnoy • courtesy of the artist, Paris

## Gregg Smith

Gregg Smith is an artist of South African origin who lives and works in Paris, France. He completed his initial studies at the Michaelis School of Art in Cape Town and later made further studies at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam (2001-2002), and Le Fresnoy studio national des arts contemporains in Tourcoing, France (2002-2004). With origins in painting, performance, cinema and public interventions, his work focuses on the body and fictional narrative as means to explore personal engagement in contemporary reality. His work is equally accepted in contemporary art and film festival circuits; recent projects have been

shown at the Rotterdam International Film Festival, Le Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris, France), La Biennale de Dakar (Senegal), Galerie Krinzinger (Vienna, Austria) and Videobrazil (Sao Paulo, Brazil), and include solo exhibitions at École régionale des beaux-arts de Valence, Fundació Joan Miró (Barcelona, Spain), Le Plateau, Espace Experimentale (Paris, France), and Gasworks Gallery (London). He has published several artists' books, the most recent being *Let the Space Wrap Around You*, edited by Monospace Press, Amsterdam in 2013. He is a professor at the Ecole National Supérieure d'Architecture de Versailles.

## Johan Thom

### *Terms of endearment*

*In Terms of endearment the artist, made up in skull-face proceeds to gargle with OMO washing powder and champagne. The work is darkly humorous and seems to suggest a mixture of domesticity, insanity and consumer driven schizophrenia.*

Letter to OMO:

*Dear Sir/Madam,*

*I have had a 'great experience' with OMO Multi Active Washing Powder. Please find enclosed a short DVD (4min39sec) detailing this wonderful encounter.*

*For ever so long I have felt dirty and dejected. My thoughts have constantly veered to the dark side – swearing like a trooper, having outrageous sexual fantasies, desiring the overthrow of the establishment and generally thinking about death. But no longer. I have thoroughly cleansed myself with your product. I must say though that it tastes awful though (fortunately I had some Champagne on hand to wash away the aftertaste and to celebrate my newfound lease on life). Now my life seems worthwhile, and I have an added spring in my step. Wherever I go people notice the difference.*



*Terms of endearment* • 2007 • single channel Video on DVD with signed letter to OMO  
4 minutes 44 seconds • courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg

## Johan Thom

*However, should say that the OMO Toll-free Helpline wasn't helpful at all. But I guess that is the wonder of our brave new world. We can help ourselves. Thus after carefully following your instructions for use in a front loading machine, I decided that, for such severe filth as pervades my being, one scoop simply wouldn't do. I am happy to report that a whole 1kg box seems to have done the trick (for now anyway).*

*Rest assured that I am not an idiot or a madman: I know that this product is meant for use in a machine! But after having read so much contemporary philosophy and socio-political theory I cannot help but experience my body as a mechanical gadget simply in service of the state, capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism and god knows what or who else.*

*So as long as I keep on having dirty thoughts I am going to keep loading my machine with your product! I am really committed to being a well-adapted, fully functional citizen.*

*If you ever need anyone to testify to the power of OMO washing powder, know that I am your man.*

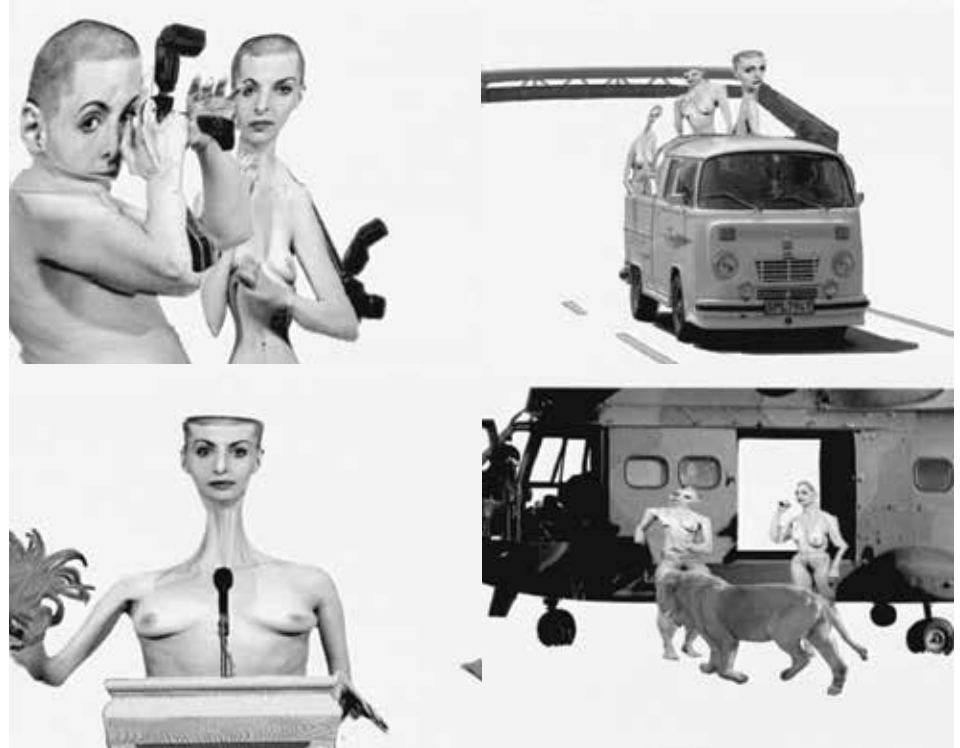
*Yours truly  
Johan Thom*

Johan Thom was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1976. He is currently living and working in Pretoria as a visual artist and a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at the Department of Visual Arts, University of Pretoria. Thom works across a variety of media including sculpture, video, performance, drawing, printmaking and photography. Solo exhibitions include The Goodman Gallery (2015), Nirox Project space (2014), Iwalewahaus (2010), the Johannesburg Art Gallery (2008) and the Bag Factory (2008), amongst others. His works have also been included in group exhibitions at the Venice Biennale (2003), the Canary Islands Biennale (2006), and at the

Palazzo delle Papesse (2008). He is an active presence in the art research community and has participated in conferences and workshops at the University of Pretoria (2013/14 & 15), Documenta 13 (2012), the University of Cambridge (2009), GradCam in Dublin (2010), the Finnish Academy of Fine Art (2010), the Slade School of Fine Art (2010, 2011, 2012), *Real Presence* at the Venice Biennale (2005), the University of Bayreuth (2010) and elsewhere. In 2014 Thom completed a PhD in Fine Art at the Slade School of Fine Art (University College London) on a Commonwealth scholarship.

## Minnette Vári *Alien*

*How can one not be tempted to divine one's own destiny from the televisual tarot of global media? There were times when, told in the language of international news, the histories of my country would unfold in unrecognisable ways, and my place within these stories would become disjointed and unbearable. I wanted to speak of the discomfort of a thousand ill-fitting interpretations. Using television images relating to the transformative events between 1994 and 1998, I attempted to locate my own implicit presence in the narrative of these critical times. My project was about reclaiming these moments, re-inscribing them with the movements of my own body, the sound of my own heartbeat - a memory recounted in flesh and bones. Although my body is not a-political nor neutral and my access to it is not uncomplicated, I wanted to bring the extremes of fear, euphoria, desire, rage and loss into a language beyond democratic rhetoric. - Minnette Vári*



*Alien* • 1998 • video animation • video: 52 seconds • sound: 2 minutes 14 seconds  
looped indefinitely • courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg



## Minnette Vári

Minnette Vári has been awarded a fellowship at the Civitella Ranieri Foundation in Umbria, Italy, in 2009, and a residency at the kunst:raum Sylt Quelle foundation in Germany for 2010. She has lectured extensively and given workshops at various institutions, including the University of Johannesburg (UJ); University of South Africa (UNISA); University of Cape Town (UCT); Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Providence; Smith College, Massachusetts; University of Massachusetts, Amherst and the Denver University, Colorado, United States of America.

Public collections include the Johannesburg Art Gallery, MUHKA (Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst,

Antwerp); The Museum of Art, Luzern; Johannesburg Art Gallery; Sindika Dokolo Collection of Contemporary African Art, Luanda, Angola; The South African National Gallery (Cape Town); Standard Bank South Africa; UNISA (University of South Africa) and Zürich Versicherung, Switzerland.

Vári's work has included installation, performance, sculpture, photography and digital video, and has been thematically linked to exhibitions and conferences exploring themes of identity, transition, politics, mythology, media, trauma and history. She lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa.

## Twenty-seven times I

*"It is easy to think about a journey, but to travel it is very difficult"*

*Meza Weza, Border Farm*

Twenty-seven artists, each speaking in the first person. The portfolio consists of twenty-five videos, representations of these artists as they see themselves, as they imagine themselves through the eyes of others, as they used to be and as they are becoming. At first glance the only coincidence between these accumulated subjectivities is the fact that they speak from, about or to South Africa - they speak in many languages.

Meza Weza's words, quoted as an epigraph to this text, imply that there is a before and after and a frightening moment when the past capsizes into the present. Meza Weza has crossed

the border that separates Zimbabwe from South Africa. In this case, crossing a border entails that he has left the space where his presence is taken for granted and entered a territory where he has to negotiate his "being there". "Being a foreigner" can be accounted for in terms of time, place, appearance, agency or language. Video, then, is concerned with what makes these conditions visible.

### **Before**

*Ukungenisa* "indicates the mental and physical preparation for a fight, and the opening of a path to allow something

to happen.” Nandipha Mntambo speaks of this video as a “‘practice of my future’ - a tentative of ‘feeling out’ the territory” as she rehearses the steps of a bullfight. Before the making of *Ukugenisa*, Mntambo had assembled and moulded cowhides, as it is her habit when making a sculpture. Here, she wears “Inftombi mfana” as part of her disguise. By staging her bullfight in the arenas of Mozambique she inscribes them into the narrative of Portuguese colonial history in Africa. This past has left its traces on all aspects of everyday life: appearance, dress, signs being adopted voluntarily as indicators of identity and roles being played out. Costume and character are part of the basic concerns of the international film industry. Apart from Nandipha Mntambo, who thinks about her play in terms of a way of being spiritually prepared, others like Barend de Wet, Athi-patra Ruga, Minnette Vári

and Dineo Seshee Bopape experiment with the multiple variants of dress rehearsals and role-play with great virtuosity.

The territory we evolve in is film, which a priori means moving image, and movement in film appears thanks to a technical discovery: independent images follow on each other according to a set rhythm. Robin Rhode's modus operandi is born from this principle. Photographed cartoon strips are followed by flipbooks and finally film. In all these cases the essential action, the appearance of the new object or its animation, happens while the eye of the camera is not watching, before the images or between the images, so to say. While stop motion drawing or stop-frame animation conjures up the objects in Robin Rhode's films, his characters are built on mime, the art of being eloquent through their gestures.

### **Mime**

While he claims that Jean-Baptiste André's performance is but a “humorous navigation through time and space”, as he mimes his progress over rooftops and through cityscapes, Robin Rhode's video, in this context might have been a refugee's journey, had it not been for the music - a clandestine crossing performed as a circus trick? The character appears accompanied by a drum roll, first not knowing his own mind (head or tails? which way?) he then turns fugitive, pursued by police-like marionettes in the form of stripped bicycle frames. The bicycle as object features as part of Rhode's initial artistic vocabulary, when he himself used to be the performer. From the outset, the spectator is conscious of the fact that he is partaking in a fable. The personas created by Rhode are nourished by the not-so-distant-memory of a time and

a political system where everyone was imprisoned in a sort of caricature of himself.

On the contrary, during the casting interviews filmed by Teboho Edkins, as in the work with a theatre group of Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi we witness the participants remembering and miming events they have experienced themselves. Edkin's actors adopt the basic conventions of theatre, the stage, to represent the place of their action: the masking tape demarks the prison cell, wherein they will represent themselves as the prisoners they used to be, a passage they have experienced in their life as a gangster. This intense and courageous remembering is the script for their scenes, their bodies remember and mime in consequence.

Donna Kukama swinging between past and present re-enacts a new rendering of Fragonard's *Les Hasards*

*heureux de l'escarpolette, 1767*  
(*The Swing*). Kukama's swing is one more acutely relevant in the turmoil of overlapping layers of cultural significations in contemporary South Africa - the girl in a white dress swings from a highway bridge several meters above the crowd frequenting the market of "second economy" at the heart of Johannesburg. The artist and her terrific fall, as did Fragonard's pre-revolutionary painting, become an image of an ailing society at the end of a tyrannical regime.

### Image

To create a background for her video, Angela de Jesus makes reference to African historical context in the widest sense "beginning with the Portuguese explorers of the fifteen-century who bartered with the indigenous people of the Cape". The Portuguese take-away shop becomes a social microcosm,

where cross-cultural transactions are negotiated. But, by highlighting the socio-historical aspect is she not distracting our attention away from the action? - Dealing with artistic performance work we accept that what we see has been acted out for the camera. In this video the opposite is true. Surveillance cameras are hidden, installed in places where actions not meant to be seen are likely to take place. While we observe hands going about their daily chores of drawing money from a bank teller, inserting payment into a cash register, hands closing security gates - someone, in the corner of our eye steals off through a window - we're not quite sure... Image and action in reciprocity create a narrative, which is not necessarily what catches the eye.

Simon Gush's thoughts on image converge around the representation of labour. While the wealth of the

economy is built on his labour, the worker himself remains invisible, although he is represented in monuments. "*Iseeyou* suggests that these often celebratory depictions are a means by which the conditions of work, including the treatment of workers, is justified through the promotion or the idea of a work ethic." Before our eyes the monumental capsizes into the everyday, when Gush passes a worker on the side of the road. The man is digging a hole, and he has reached the depth where he is no longer to be seen. The indicators of his existence are his shovel, the dirt he flings up over the side of the hole, the people looking down at him, exchanging a conversation... this is a fragment of "found" action in the process of being lived. Gush just happened to be a passer-by, a passer by with an eye for the importance of the scene unfolding in front of him.

One particularly striking image of labour in the South African context is Neville Gabie's strange displaced ice-block astray in the Karoo near Richmond. We see the heavy lump manhandled, an act of intense labour on behalf of the artist. Neville Gabie, who seems to be the only living creature in this semi-desert, pushes and lunges the ice forward to position it in front of his camera lens. Once this laborious task completed he stands on the block in a daylong performance "while it melts into the arid Karoo". In a double image of split past and present Gabie's montage shows the two scenes simultaneously - intense labour, absurd, strange, out of place and on the other hand passing time, literally melting away in an incongruous and highly poetic gesture.

Being adrift, astray, or the ultimate stage, being stranded, is a recurrent allegory in these films, Berni Searle,

Gregg Smith, Michael MacGarry and Bridget Baker each present us with their own very personal version of this suspended state.

### Solipsism

Being adrift, in search of "I", Bogosi Sekhukhuni admits to being in some way a "part of a generation that carries the residual energy expressed in Madiba black magic, in other ways it is his prerogative to dispel and deconstruct that myth" - astray between two eras, friendly conversations of non-commitment through virtual reality with an absent father of another generation.

Loneliness, of the most intense kind, is expressed by the ex-convicts in Teboho Edkins casting interviews in an empty theatre - the absent audience rendering the alone-ness even more tangible. The actors transmit certain aspects of their state of mind

through speech, as though they were thinking aloud or play-acting: "Die tyd loop stadig" time is suspended here (Lincom Cubido). "Everyone is just doing their own thing, everyone with his own mind" (Ghaironesa Wessels) - her resigned gestures are past revolt against her fate: "time I go home everybody is going to be dead". - The actors allow us to witness their gestures, breathing, singing to themselves, sometimes a moan: gestures and sounds that escape us when we know ourselves to be utterly alone to the point of forgetting ourselves.

Within the name of a political system, Apartheid, we decipher that intensifying isolation was part of the plan. The system adopted shrewdly chosen techniques to implement this plan, "separate development" or "forced removal" which consequently turned people into strangers in their

own country. Tom Sebina remembers the evictions from Sophiatown as follows: "In a way you had to divorce yourself from an environment with which you identified, which for you signified a whole concept of life..."

Solipsism is a condition we inherited from a political system - it is up to us to invent a way of living with it, with the cruel baggage of being intransigently led back to ourselves. Can the same intimacy become the crucible where inchoate seminal ideas can originate? Can things become wholesome once more? *Matsogo*, by Lerato Shadi, seemingly child's play with a piece of cake, takes us through the exercise of crumbling up, kneading together and reshaping the spoilt nourishment into a triangular form. As a working-surface Shadi chose that day's foreign index; the cake leaves its greasy stains. Shadi thinks of the colonial powers during the Berlin Conference dividing up Africa

according to their own desires. She accompanies her thinking by singing to herself, songs from two Setswana folktales, which become interwoven, creating a new narrative. Lerato Shadi deliberately withholds understanding of this Setswana polylogue from her western viewer by not offering a translation into a language he might be familiar with. Several of Shadi's performances have pushed to its limits a state of wordless translation, refusing to offer one-to-one equivalents and obliging the spectator to follow her to the brink of the abyss, the feeling of vertigo that sets in just before translation can take place.

South Africa has a word to refer to foreigners. Strangeness in this case is linked to language: "kwerekwere" - the word originated in the townships, when foreigners came, they didn't speak the local languages, their talk sounded like "kwerekwere". Sadly, in

the international media, this word is today linked to images of xenophobic violence. But the intolerance, the same mortal danger does not only apply to people seeming different because of their foreign nationality, as Zanele Muholi aptly points out. The void to be crossed between one subjective private viewpoint and another, between a word in one language and an expression that will conjure up the same idea in another language, this void is a frightening divide. But might it be possible to think of this interstice as a dynamic space, a gap where creativity originates? Theory of translation has it that there is no one to one equivalence between words in different languages, that in order to translate a text, the translator is re-writing it. What has happened in the process? Jacques Coetzer's playful rendering of a Sawhili proverb: "Sawa sawa na kumpigia mbuzi gitaa" (it's like

playing guitar for the goats) describes a situation in which one vigorously but unsuccessfully tries to convince another of a point of view". Jacques Coetzer, taking the proverb at its word, plays his guitar. His action, although the goats, as is to be expected, show no reaction, does not seem absurd or hopeless it just seems to be beyond words.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has given much thought to a way forward out of the personal accounts of suffering, intolerance and growing isolation that were voiced during the hearings. The commission takes heed of an expression that exists in most languages of Africa: "motho ke motho ka batho" or "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" (people are people through other people). The expression describes the intersubjective process of becoming more and more oneself through mutual

exchange with the environment and with others. In the context of French philosophy a systematic description of a kindred process has been undertaken in the work of Gilbert Simondon. The latter describes genesis in general as a process of individuation. Individualisation is a process influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of one unified mode of existence.

A precarious narrative seems to appear for a short moment, only to be followed up by more voices, more images as "I" negotiates its

way through possible imaginings, inventions, representations, appearances, mimes, performances or actions, whether adrift, stranded or facing a frightening divide. On its way "I" encounters loneliness, intimacy, individuation, translation, being a stranger - "I" means that we are each of us a foreigner in our own way, but that one plus one plus one plus one plus one is everybody... "It is easy to think about a journey, but to travel it is very difficult."

"...there is something inside you that is of interest, you yourself will be the film and the film will always be you." — William Kentridge

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