

For immediate release

Intertwined 2005 - 2015

Nomusa Makhubu

10 May – 30 July 2016

University Museum Stellenbosch

52 Rynevelt Street, Stellenbosch



Nomusa Makhubu, *Inquietude I II III*, colour photograph, 2009

About Nomusa Makhubu

Nomusa Makhubu, BFA, MA, PhD (Rhodes University), is an award-winning artist, academic and a full-time lecturer at Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town.

She received the ABSA *L'Atelier Gerard Sekoto Award* (2006) and the *Prix du Studio National des Arts Contemporain, Le Fresnoy* (2014). She is the chairperson of Africa South Art Initiative (ASAI), an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) fellow, an Abe Bailey fellow, and was a research fellow of the Omooba Yemisi Adedoyin Shyllon Art Foundation (OYASAF) in Nigeria, Lagos where her doctoral research was based. Makhubu was appointed to the National Arts Festival committee in 2011-2015. She co-edited a *Third Text* Special Issue: *The Art of Change* (2013). She was a recipient of the CAA-Getty travel award in 2014.

In November 2013, Makhubu participated in the *Semiha Es - Women Photographers International Symposium*, in Istanbul, Turkey. Her paper, *The Power and Terror of the Enactment of Collective Memory in Performative Photography* commented directly on her own work, particularly the *Self-Portrait Project* series. In 2014 she was one of *Mail & Guardian* newspaper's Top 200 Young Achievers (Academia). The same year, her exhibition at Dak' Art Biennale 2014 received an award.

Makhubu has contributed her writing to **Critical Arts** (*Violence and the Cultural Logics of Pain: Representations of Sexuality in the Work of Nicholas Hlobo and Zanele Muholi*), **African Arts** (*Politics of Strangeness: Re-visiting Pieter Hugo's Nollywood*), **Journal of African Cultural Studies** (*Interpreting the fantastic: video-film as intervention*), **Third Text** as well as book projects and catalogues (*Spaces of Contention and Confrontation: The Geography of Truth in Zak Benjamin's Paintings* for the Zak Benjamin Retrospective).

She has had works exhibited in Africa, Europe, the United States, and China, which are represented in the following collections:

Serenella and David Ciclitira, Private Collection, London

The Hood Museum of African Art, Permanent Collection, Dartmouth College, United States

North-West University Gallery, Permanent Collection, Potchefstroom, South Africa

Rand Merchant Bank, Corporate Collection, Johannesburg, South Africa

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Permanent Collection, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

University of South Africa Art Museum, Permanent Collection, Pretoria, South Africa

Telkom South Africa, Corporate Collection, Johannesburg, South Africa

Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Permanent Collection, Bloemfontein, South Africa

She lives and works in Cape Town.

About the exhibition

Intertwined 2005 – 2015 is a survey of Makhubu's practice as a lens-based artist. Through the medium of photography she explores issues of identity and particularly the sensitive issue of representation/self-representation. She has worked mainly with portraiture, performance and space-time politics.

The **Trading Lies** series is a response to the Observatory Museum, Grahamstown's dioramas. These depiction of the lifestyle of an 1820 Settlers family, with a kitchen, bedroom, living room, study and children's' playroom are void of any context; which is Xhosa populated Eastern Cape. The inclusion of the self in the diorama is an interruption or contamination of the seemingly quiet settler life exhibited. The museum still exists today, as it did then, albeit as an island of history and a vacuum that keeps settler histories *un-contaminated*.

Makhubu's acclaimed series, **Self-Portrait Project** alludes to the continued alienation and estrangement in an era where the focus is inclined toward self and individual identity as opposed to collective and communal life. One of the canonical meanings that Achille Mbembe (2002: 241) argues can be attributed to slavery and colonialism (as well as Apartheid) is dispossession, **a process in which juridical and economic procedures have led to material expropriation**. This series has been on exhibition yearly since its launch in 2007. It is included in the upcoming **Dak'Art 2004 – 2014 exhibition at** Manoir, Martigny in Switzerland which opens in June 2016.

Inquietude began as a portrayal of the Vaal Triangle, an industrial area that lies south of Johannesburg. This project was based on interrogating notions of being 'in/out of place' (Cresswell 1996), as well as histories of belonging and dispossession. Makhubu was born in the Vaal and spent her childhood and early adulthood years there.

It was not until I moved to Grahamstown that I became acutely aware of the Vaal's 'brown' horizon/ the polluted air. I had by then become an 'outsider' to this landscape. The window then for me became an important metaphor in that it symbolized the sense of distance that had formed in the way that I had experienced this landscape. Moreover, I no longer experienced this space as a coherent whole because I became aware of the inequalities created by those industries. The townships in the Vaal are diverse because people came from various parts of the country to work in the industries. What I had seen as diversity seemed to be fragmented narratives of dispossession. The broken windscreen therefore functions as a way of seeing.

The 2013 series, **The Flood** received deserved critical attention. It marked a departure in Makhubu's methodology, shifting from the personal to the public, from the performative to documenting.

In 2015 she returned to an earlier practice of weaving two photographs into a unique work. Makhubu won her first award in 2006 with an entry of woven photographs. In the current series, **In Living Colour** she brings two

geographical locations in one pictorial space to question the assumed universality and objectivity of time and place.

It is this sense of ownership, or the loss thereof, that I would still like to explore.....

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For interviews or further details on the exhibition, detailed artist biography and/or images please contact the gallery on 021 422 2762 or email us on photogallery@mweb.co.za

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