

Zander Blom, Wim Botha, Ian Grose, Moshekwa Langa, Zanele Muholi, Serge Alain Nitegeka, Odili Donald Odita, Deborah Poynton, Robin Rhode, Viviane Sassen, and Portia Zvavahera: *EXCHANGE*

Opening: 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2016, up from 6 pm

Duration: November 2016

Galerie Hans Mayer is pleased to present "EXCHANGE", a group show featuring works by eleven contemporary artists that are all in some way connected to the African continent, and who have chosen distinct ways to pursue their artistic message. "EXCHANGE" stands not only for an exchange of ideas, knowledge or methods, but also for the concrete exchange between South African gallery Stevenson and Galerie Hans Mayer. The exhibition will show a combination of oil paintings (Zander Blom, Ian Grose and Deborah Poynton), mixed media works on paper/canvas/wood (Moshekwa Langa, Serge Alain Nitegeka, Odili Donald Odita and Portia Zvavahera), photographic works (Zanele Muholi, Robin Rhode and Viviane Sassen) and sculpture (Wim Botha).

One can say that the show is the outcome of an encounter with gallery Stevenson at Art Basel 2012, where our gallery was introduced to the work of Odili Donald Odita, Ernest Mancoba and Zander Blom. At that time, we were especially thrilled by Blom's work and hence our first solo-exhibition showing his work was conducted in April 2015. The show was very well received by our audience, which made us think about other possibilities of promoting exchange between contemporary artists with roots in the African continent and our local art scene.

Since 2012, we have seen the Stevenson booths at many art fairs and were able to visit their Cape Town and Johannesburg gallery, so we have become familiar with their program. When we visited the gallery's website early this year during their summer ("*Schema*") show, we were convinced that such a combination of works and artists would be an important exhibition to do in Düsseldorf, an art-driven city with its long art history, its famous art academy, museums, Kunsthalle/Kunstverein and private collections. There is no interest in conveying a political message by doing this show, since this was never the intention of our gallery's program. Nevertheless, there is a strong wish to create a platform for at least some of the artists we were lucky enough to get to know through our relationship with Stevenson and about whom we feel strong.

Besides our first solo show with Zander Blom 2015, our gallery has no connection to the South African - nor any other African contemporary art scene. However, by conveying this group-exhibition we want to build that bridge and make it clear that there is a strong feeling and interest towards intercontinental artistic exchange.

Exhibiting artist include Zander Blom, Wim Botha, Ian Grose, Moshekwa Langa, Zanele Muholi, Serge Alain Nitegeka, Odili Donald Odita, Deborah Poynton, Robin Rhode, Viviane Sassen, and Portia Zvavahera.

**Zander Blom** was born in 1982 in Pretoria and lives in Cape Town. He is the recipient of the third Jean-François Prat Prize for contemporary art and recently showed work at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris as part of the fifth edition of the art prize. In addition to numerous shows at Stevenson, Blom has exhibited at the ninth Ostrale International Exhibition of Contemporary Art at the Ostrale Centre in Dresden, Galerie van der Mieden in Antwerp, 5x6x9 Berlin and Galerie Hans Mayer, Duesseldorf. Blom's work will be featured in *Vitamin P3* published by *Phiadon*, which spotlights 'more than 100 outstanding artists who are engaging with - and pushing the boundaries of - the medium of paint.' His new catalogue raisonné, titled *Paintings Volume II* will be released later this year.

**Wim Botha** was born in Pretoria in 1974 and lives in Cape Town. Botha is the recipient of several awards, including the Helgaard Steyn Prize for sculpture, the Standard Bank Young Artist Award and the inaugural Tollman Award for Visual Arts. In addition to his current solo exhibition at Stevenson Cape Town, Botha recently installed a solo presentation titled *Still Life with Water* at the Fondation Blachère in Apt, France. Using materials ranging from maize meal to marble, Botha creates immersive environments that explore concepts varying from religious iconography to electrochemistry.

**Ian Grose** was born in Johannesburg in 1985 and lives in Cape Town. He completed his post-graduate diploma in painting at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town. He is a recipient of the Tollman Award for Visual Arts and the Absa l'Atelier prize. Ian Grose has developed a practice that explores the philosophy of painting. By using printed fabric as subject matter he grapples with the tension between surface and depth to work through the theoretical constraints of painting. His work is included in *Home Truths: Domestic Interiors in South Africa* at the Iziko South African National Gallery.

**Moshekwa Langa** was born in 1975 in Bakenberg, Limpopo, and lives in Amsterdam. He studied at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. Rising to international prominence in the late 1990s, he has exhibited at biennales in Johannesburg (1997), Istanbul (1997), Havana (1997), São Paulo (1998 and 2010), Gwangju (2000), Venice (2003 and 2009) and Lyon (2011). Installations that read as imaginative landscapes are a prominent feature in Langa's work, this is a reflection of his continued interrogation of land and public and personal politics through the mapping of territory and cultural environments. His work is currently showing in *An Age of Our Own Making* at Kunsthall Charlottenborg in Copenhagen. His two-person exhibition with Nora Schultz will open the Kadist Art Foundation in Paris on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October.

**Zanele Muholi** is a visual activist. She was born in 1972 in Umlazi, Durban, and lives in Johannesburg. Muholi completed an MFA: Documentary Media at Ryerson University, Toronto. She is an Honorary Professor at the University of the Arts/Hochschule für Künste Bremen. Muholi has won numerous awards, most recently the 2016 ICP Infinity Award for Documentary and Photojournalism. Among her most significant bodies of work is the acclaimed portrait series *Faces and Phases*, an insider's perspective that both commemorates and celebrates black queer life. The related monograph was published by Steidl and The Walther Collection. Her new self-portraits *Somnyama Ngonyama* (meaning 'Hail, the Dark Lioness') confront the politics of race and pigment in the photographic archive while tackling socio-political. Her work is currently showing on the exhibition *Systematically Open? New forms of production of the contemporary image* at the LUMA Foundation in Arles, France.

**Serge Alain Nitegeka** was born in Burundi in 1983 and lives in Johannesburg. In addition to Stevenson Johannesburg and Cape Town, Nitegeka has held solo exhibitions at Marianne Boesky Gallery and Boesky East in New York, in 2016 and 2014; SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia (2015); and Le Manège gallery, French Institute, Dakar in 2012. Recent group exhibitions include *I Love You Sugar Kane* at the Institute of Contemporary Art Indian Ocean in Port Louis, Mauritius (2016); *A story within a story...*, at the 8th Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art (2015); *What remains is tomorrow* at the South African Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015); *Venturing Out of the Heart of Darkness* at The Harvey B Gantt Center for African-American Arts and Culture in Charlotte, North Carolina (2015); *This House*, part of *Nouvelles vagues* at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013); *My Joburg* at La Maison Rouge, Paris and the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (2013) and *The Space Between Us* at ifa Galleries in Berlin in 2013.

**Odili Donald Odita** was born in 1966 in Enugu, Nigeria, and lives in Philadelphia and New York, where he is a Professor of Painting and Drawing at Tyler School of Art, Temple University. Solo shows have been held at Savannah College of Art & Design Museum of Art, Savannah (2012); Contemporary Art Museum, Houston (2010); the Project Series at the Ulrich Museum at Wichita State University (2009); and Miami Art Museum (2002); in addition to Stevenson in Cape Town and the Jack Shainman Gallery in New York.

He inaugurated the Project Space at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, with the site-specific mural *Equalizer* (2007), with further commissions *Third Space* for the Ramp Project at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2008); *Flow* (2007-2008) at the Contemporary Art Center Cincinnati; and *Give Me Shelter* at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007). Odita recently participated in *Open Source: Engaging Audiences in Public Space* for the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, and produced two further murals for *Nasher10*, at the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, in 2015. Group exhibitions include *Represent: 200 Years of African American Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (2015); *ARS 11* at Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki (2011); *The Global Africa Project* at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York (2010); *Ordering and Seduction* at Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (2006); *Parallel Economies* at Wertz Contemporary, Atlanta, Georgia (2006); the 2004 Dakar Biennale; *A Fiction of Authenticity: Contemporary Africa Abroad* at the Contemporary Art Museum, St Louis (2003); and *Black President: The Art and Legacy of Fela Anikulapo Kuti* at the New Museum, New York (2003). He was awarded a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Grant for 2007.

**Deborah Poynton** was born in 1970 in Durban, and lives in Cape Town. She studied at the Rhode Island School of Design. A survey of 25 years of her painting, titled *Model for a World*, showed at The New Church Museum, Cape Town in 2014. Group exhibitions include *Der Feine Riss: Zeitgenössische Malerei auf dem Historischen Feld (The Subtle Rift: Contemporary Painting in the Historical Frame)* at Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin (2016); *Home Truths: Domestic Interiors from South African Collections* at the Iziko South African National Gallery (2016); *I Love You Sugar Kane*, Institute of Contemporary Art Indian Ocean, Port Louis, Mauritius (2016); *Eros and Thanatos*, SOR Rusche Collection, Oelde/Berlin (2012); *Von Liebeslust und Lebenslast - der inszenierte Alltag*, Corvey Castle, near Höxter, Germany (2009); and *What lies beneath*, Galerie Mikael Andersen, Copenhagen (2006). Oscillating between hyperrealism, abstraction and underpainting, Poynton's work interrogates the medium of painting and the possibilities and limitations inherent in images.

**Robin Rhode** was born in 1976 in Cape Town, and lives in Berlin. His awards include the Roy R Neuberger Exhibition Prize in New York, the Illy Prize at Art Brussels and the Ars viva Identität/Identity in Berlin. Significant recent exhibitions include the 56th Venice Biennale (2015), the 12th Havana Biennale (2015), *Performa 15*, Performance Art Biennale in New York (2015) and *The Film Will Always Be You: South African Artists On Screen* at the Tate Modern in London (2015). Rhode creates narratives that are brought to life through stop-motion animation, using everyday materials such as soap, charcoal, chalk and paint. In addition to the street art and performance aspects of his work, there is always a formalist foundation inspired by his interest in abstraction in general, and Russian constructivism in particular. His work will be showing in *Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design* at Kunsthal Rotterdam, Netherlands, curated by Amelie Klein and Okwui Enwezor. He is also featured in the *FotoFocus Biennial 2016* at the Freedom Centre in Ohio.

**Viviane Sassen** was born in 1972 in Amsterdam, and lives there. She studied fashion design, followed by photography at the Utrecht School of the Arts (HKU) and Ateliers Arnhem. Sassen has been awarded the Dutch art prize, the Prix de Rome, the ICP Infinity Award for Applied/Fashion/Advertising Photography, the David Octavius Hill Medal from the German Photography Academy and the 2016 German Photo Book Prize. She was nominated for the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize for her exhibition *Umbra*. Work by Viviane Sassen was recently included in the Museum für Neue Kunst Freiburg's *Freundschaftsspiel Istanbul-Freiburg*, which engages the museum collection in dialogue with outside collections. Using light, shadow and colour, Sassen's visual language embraces the ambiguity between realism and abstraction to explore the sculptural

qualities of the ordinary. Sassen has exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and will be included in first edition of the Photo Vogue Festival Italy: *The Female Gaze*.

**Portia Zvavahera** was born in Juru, Zimbabwe, and lives in Harare. She studied at the BAT Visual Arts Studio under the auspices of the National Gallery of Zimbabwe. She is a recipient of the 10th Tollman Award for the Visual Arts and the FNB Art Prize. A large-scale painting by Portia Zvavahera is currently included in *Body Luggage: Migration of Gestures* at Kunsthaus Graz in Austria, curated by Zasha Colah. Zvavahera's work often incorporates both printmaking and painterly techniques. This vividness of texture combined with her generosity of scale allow for her work to function as a platform for meditations on emotion, dreams, spirituality and reality.