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CREDIT: FUTURE GENERATION ART PRIZE/PINCHUKARTCENTRE

Bronwyn Katz with her installation */xabi*, showing at Art Basel Unlimited: 'It's important for me to revitalise our understanding of ourselves and our responsibility to the earth'.

Both, and, over time

Stevenson celebrates its 20th anniversary by adding four names to the gallery's list of represented artists

In 2018, marking our 15th birthday, Stevenson presented a group exhibition titled *Both, and*, pointing to the gallery's status as both a place of ideas, dedicated to art history and contemporary discourse, and a place of commerce, fully engaged with the market. This year, our 20th – with 429 exhibitions, 150 books and catalogues and 116 art fairs behind us – we've added four new names to our roster: Jane

Alexander, Georgina Gratrix, Sosa Joseph and Bronwyn Katz, and, in the spirit of reflecting on who we are today, are planning an end-of-year exhibition titled *The Artist List*.

According to Phaidon's new volume, *Prime*, both Georgina Gratrix and Bronwyn Katz are among the most 'distinctive and innovative young artists working today'. Charlotte Jansen remarks that Gratrix 'thwarts tradition with raucous laughter'. Her thick layering, from perception to palette knife, has made us long-standing admirers of her painting practice. With three museum shows in South Africa – at the Norval Foundation

and KZNSA in 2021 and the Irma Stern Museum in 2022-23 – she has firmly established herself as one of the local doyens of the medium. She returns to the KZNSA gallery in August with a showing of ceramics and paintings, alongside Cameron Platter. Her first solo exhibition with Stevenson will be in early 2024.

Katz works at an antonymic tonal register. In the same volume, she is noted by Lucienne Bestall as 'abstracting diction as she abstracts form, [offering] a phonetics of sight and sound, giving to the past, to the land, a voice'. In collaboration with Andrew Kreps, we present her 2021 installation */xabi* at Art Basel →

→ Unlimited. Katz initially conceived the work for the Future Generation Art Prize exhibition at the PinchukArtCentre in Kyiv, Ukraine, shortly before the start of the war. In her words, the constellation of iron ore, rose quartz and river stone is a material and sonic ode to healing: 'We're all ill as a community on earth, so it's important for me to revitalise our understanding of ourselves and our responsibility to the earth and how that's connected to our healing as a community'. The Basel project will be followed by a solo show of new work at our Joburg gallery in 2024.

Sosa Joseph, a painter from Kerala, based in Bangalore, recently presented her first solo show at Stevenson Cape Town, focusing on the Indian Ocean slave trade. *The Hushed History of Oblivion* brought an intimate lens to an overlooked archive, drawing on scholarly research that the artist referenced in her text accompanying the show. Intended as a personal homage to victims from her own neighbourhood, Joseph's body of work was received by critics in the press (and on Instagram), as 'ravishing, humbling, bewitching, restorative' and more. Joseph embodies the

increasingly international scope of our programme alongside artists like Cian-Yu Bai (born in Taiwan), Paulo Nazareth (Brazil), Viviane Sassen (the Netherlands) and Shine Shivan (India).

Jane Alexander has been associated with the gallery for a number of years. On *Both, and*, her installation *Frontier with church* (2012-13) consisted of an arrangement of figures and objects that made reference to Dante's *Divine Comedy* (the work was originally commissioned for the travelling exhibition of the same title, and first shown at the Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt). Her most recent work, *Infirmiry* (2014, 2019), was shown on the exhibition *my whole body changed into something else* at Stevenson Cape Town in 2021. She exhibited in our Prinsengracht space, showing *Verity, Faith and Justice* (2006), commissioned for the Singapore biennale in 2006, in 2021. Alexander is a professor at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town, where she has taught since 1996. In 2020 she received the Claire and Edoardo Villa Will Trust's Extraordinary Award for Sculpture in South Africa.

In November we will open *The Artist List* in our Cape Town space with one work by each artist we represent. The idea is grounded in the long tradition of galleries formally publishing the list of artists who they work with, sometimes referred to as the roster or stable, but most commonly as the artists', artists or artist list. The exhibition will present visitors with an overview of Stevenson at 20, and also allow us to see, altogether in one space, a physical representation of our evolving programme.

Left: Sosa Joseph at her studio in Kochi



PHOTO: JOHN MATHEW



PHOTO: MIA THOM

'Thwarting tradition with laughter', according to Phaidon's *Prime*: Georgina Gratrix, seen here in her Cape Town studio, spent time working in

Durban with fellow artist Cameron Platter in June. Their paintings and ceramics will be exhibited together at the KZNSA gallery in August.



Collect Call: Tristanne Farrell

THE THIRD IN OUR SERIES
OF Q&AS WITH COLLECTORS

Why art? I love the beauty of art, its diversity and creativity. I can't imagine living without art in my home. I was once asked why I

don't buy art that makes me feel 'uncomfortable' and I responded saying I love the feeling of comfort a space has when you're surrounded by works that amaze and inspire. I admire talent so I love supporting artists where I can. I also collect comic books and have recently started buying ceramics.

What was the first work you bought from us? A Zander Blom oil on canvas titled *Game* from his *Garage-ism* show in 2020. I love it and have bought two more of his works since.

Are there any exhibitions you are looking forward to? I am looking forward to the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and this year's edition of Frieze London. Locally, I'm excited to see Portia Zvavahera's solo at Stevenson in June.

Art fairs - love them or hate them? I love them! The first fairs I attended were Frieze and 1-54 in London, and they were truly amazing. There's a lot to take in but I take photos of the artists' names and works, and weeks later I am still researching the details. I also feel very at home at the Investec Cape Town Art Fair since I know a lot of the local galleries and artists, and it's refreshing to see how affordable and accessible the South African market still is.

What art hangs in your bedroom? I have quite a few works hanging in my bedroom - I don't like white walls. I have a large seascape by Jake Aikman above my bed as well as works by Kate Gottgens, DuduBloom, Cecil Skotnes and Misheck Masamvu.

Calendar Jun-Sep

2 June

Mawande Ka Zenzile's first solo at Stevenson Amsterdam, *Ayinethi Iyadyudyuza!*, opens during Amsterdam Art Week TO 15 JUL

2 June

Pieter Hugo's *There's a Place in Hell for Me and My Friends* is included in *Civilisation*, now at the Saatchi Gallery, London TO 17 SEP

5 June

Last chance to view *The Hushed History of Oblivion*, Sosa Joseph's first exhibition with Stevenson in Cape Town. *Juxtapositions* with Unathi Mkonto and David Goldblatt runs alongside TO 10 JUN

7 June

Coming to a close: *Brave New World*, featuring Portia Zvavahera and Neo Matloga, at Museum de Fundatie, Zwolle; the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize exhibition, with Frida Orupabo shortlisted, at the Photographers' Gallery, London; and the 15th Sharjah Biennial with Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi and Mame-Diarra Niang ALL TO 11 JUN

9 June

A pair of exhibitions in Zutphen brings together Viviane Sassen's fashion and independent photo work. *Fabulous Monsters* opens first at Dat Bolwerck, then on 17 June

at Museum MORE | Ruurlo Castle TO 17/24 SEP

11 June

Collage by Neo Matloga features in CODA Museum Appeldoorn's 11th *Paper Art* exhibition TO 12 NOV

12-18 June

Stevenson presents work by gallery artists (including Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi, below) at Art Basel – hall 2.1, stand J11. Bronwyn Katz exhibits her installation */xabi* in the Unlimited sector.



15 June

Art Basel Film presents *Welcome Visitors!*, a retrospective of Penny Siopis's video works with a conversation between the artist and curator Filipa Ramos, at the Stadtkino 7PM

16 June

Youth Day, South Africa

16 June

Barthélémy Toguo has a solo show, *Habiter la Terre*, at HAB Galerie in Nantes, running alongside his intervention at the Château des Ducs de Bretagne (see Ongoing) TO 17 SEP

17 June

A solo exhibition by Portia Zvavahera, *Pane rima rakakomba (There's too much darkness)*, marking her 10th year with the gallery, opens at Stevenson Cape Town TO 5 AUG

23 June

Last days to view Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi's video *Suspension* on *Champs* at Granville Centre Art Gallery, Cumberland, Australia TO 24 JUN

26 June

At Stevenson Johannesburg, it's the last week of Guy Tillim's *The Street That You're On, The Same One You Know*, and *Phate lia Lekana*, a *Stage* exhibition by Thato Toebe TO 30 JUN

28 June

Wim Botha's installation *Solipsis I* forms part of the Joburg Contemporary Art Foundation's exhibition *Otherscapes* TO 4 NOV

30 June

Fondation Blachère presents *Chimères*, with work by Wim Botha, at La Gare de Bonnieux in France TO 30 NOV

1 July

Portia Zvavahera takes part in *My Last Will*, an exhibition and book project curated by M+M, at Kunstsammlung Chemnitz TO 1 OCT

6 July

A World in Common: Contemporary African Photography opens at Tate Modern, London. Edson Chagas is included TO 14 JAN

8 July

Stevenson Johannesburg transforms into *The Clubhouse*, with a study, lounge and dining room complete with art, design objects, books, albums and more TO 12 AUG

15 July

Serge Alain Nitegeka features in *Between Borders*, on migration, power and boundless imagination, at Museum Arnhem TO 22 OCT

15 July

Stevenson Amsterdam closes for summer

19 July

Last week to view *Trace – Formations of Likeness. Photography and Video from The Walther Collection* – with Jane Alexander, Edson Chagas, Pieter Hugo, Jo Ractliffe, Penny Siopis and Guy Tillim – at Haus der Kunst, Munich TO 23 JUL

4 August

Georgina Gratrix exhibits alongside Cameron Platter at the KZNSA, Durban TO 10 SEP

9 August

Women's Day, South Africa

12 August

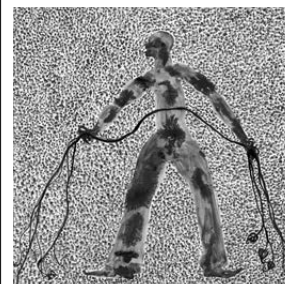
Zander Blom shows new works in his *Monochrome Paintings* series at Stevenson Cape Town TO 30 SEP

16 August

Last days to view the travelling exhibition *Black Venus*, with work by Frida Orupabo, at the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco TO 20 AUG

19 August

A solo exhibition of new work by Barthélémy Toguo opens at Stevenson Johannesburg TO 30 SEP



19 August

Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi takes part in *Resistance Training: Arts, Sports, and Civil Rights* at the Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University TO 18 FEB

21 August

Final days of *Time for Change: Art and Social Unrest in the Jorge M Pérez Collection*, at the Tampa Museum of Art, featuring Barthélémy Toguo's *Road to Exile* TO 27 AUG



27 August

Dada Khanyisa presents a solo show at Johannesburg Art Gallery as winner of the 2022 FNB Art Prize. END DATE TBC

1 September

Last days of *When We See Us* at Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town. Neo Matloga, Meleko Mokgosi and Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi Togo are included TO 3 SEP

7 September

Hylton Nel: This plate is what I have to say comes to a close at Charleston farm, East Sussex, UK TO 10 SEP

8-10 September

Stevenson shows work by gallery artists at Art Joburg, taking place at the Sandton Convention Centre

12 September

Last week to see *A Touch of Light*, with Viviane Sassen, at Museum Kranenburgh in Bergen, the Netherlands TO 17 SEP

16 September

Stevenson Amsterdam reopens with a solo exhibition of new work by Neo Matloga TO 28 OCT

21 September

A survey of Penny Siopis's videos screens at the Vilnius Documentary Film Festival, with an accompanying talk by Laura Rascaroli

24 September

Heritage Day, South Africa

Don't miss these ongoing shows

→ Until 10/11 November

Wim Botha participates in *Healing* at Foundation White-SpaceBlackBox in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, and in *Tierisch Gut – Paradise Reloaded* at MuseumArt.Plus in Donaueschingen, Germany

→ Until 12 November

Barthélémy Toguo takes over the Château des Ducs de Bretagne for *Expression(s) décoloniale(s) #3*, partnering with five artists to revise the Nantes History Museum's colonial heritage

→ Until 14 January

Down North, with work by Frida Orupabo, shows at the Bildmuseet, Umeå

'Holding a space for imagination to manifest'

Veteran art writer Melvyn Minnaar interviewed gallery founder Michael Stevenson on the occasion of our 20th anniversary

Looking back 20 years, how would you describe the arch of your interest – and the gallery management's – in Stevenson?

It is about a collective of fellow directors holding a space for imagination to manifest – sometimes it is joy, sometimes it is difficult. The creative process is not linear, so the unexpected and unknown is the norm, so managing a gallery is a constant challenge. In contemporary art, by its very nature, change is truly constant, so there is no formulaic approach to managing a gallery. We are always trying to think laterally, accepting that one often does not understand at the time what one is bringing into the world, and that uncertainty is sometime disconcerting, sometimes exhilarating.

When you started out in the business of a public art space, you already had a reputation as art historian and researcher. Can you recall the motivation into the shift of dealership?

I have always approached dealing as a creative process – presenting the well-known alongside the unknown, exploring fields that have been neglected like 19th-century beadwork or historical photography, and bringing attention to overlooked historical artists. So, I do not see the two worlds of dealing and researching as separate – they coexist and sustain each other. I have also never stopped being an art historian – I

have recently completed a biography and catalogue raisonné on Samuel Daniell, and have now returned to researching Thomas Baines.

You wrote some serious stuff those days. Was there a moment when the academic decided on a change? What motivated that?

The shift in South African contemporary art in the early 2000s suddenly presented art that I found intriguing which was not the case with much of the art that came immediately in the wake of 1994. It was less overtly political, less didactic, more imaginative, and there were very few advocates for it. In those years there was really only Linda Givon in Johannesburg who constantly exhibited contemporary art in this idiom, and there suddenly seemed to be an opportunity to immerse oneself in the creativity of one's own generation.

Publications seem to have a special place for you and the gallery and there have been many excellent catalogues under the Stevenson banner. In many ways you introduced a new professionalism. This, of course, is important in 'marketing', but also vital to the cultural archive. Was this something you had in mind?

Firstly, the process of realising a book or catalogue remains one of the great pleasures of what we do, and the threads of the many

publications in their varying stages have always been integral to the gallery's existence. They usually make no financial sense at all but they bring us and the artists and many art lovers much joy, and that is why they are a constant aspect of our work. Also, when the gallery started, there were so few publications on SA contemporary art, and the internet was in its infancy, so, in retrospect, they have been integral to disseminating to the (art) world the evolution of South African, and later African, contemporary art.

The ownership: when did the empowerment of the directorate happen; what was your reasoning/aim; and how does it function currently?

I always have reservations about galleries where the taste appears to be singular, and from the outset, the debates among the directors who advocate different artists and mediums have been part of our existence. We cannot all agree on everything but there is consensus on the artists and programming, and these constant discussions are what keep our programme and artist list invigorating. Over the years, more junior directors have been integrated into the gallery structure, and they have brought more voices and fresh perspectives. I could not imagine a contemporary gallery functioning without the dynamic mutual support and collective insights of a shared ownership.

Some highlights for you of the past 20 years?

One is the FOREX programme from 2009 to 2011 when we showed an extraordinary array of international contemporary artists – among them Thomas Hirschhorn, Glenn Ligon, Rineke Dijkstra, Walid Raad and Eija-Liisa Ahtila – partly because the SA art scene was still so insular and self-obsessed. Some of these projects nearly bankrupted the gallery, like showing a Hirschhorn installation that cost R450 000 in freight, with no prospect of recouping any of the costs. We have often wondered about the benefit of this programme but then we remind ourselves that it was a remarkable journey of discovery and very enriching for ourselves, even if SA audiences often did not engage with the work.

Another great pleasure was exploring the African diaspora and bringing the work of many of these artists to South Africa for the first time, including Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and Zineb Sedira. When we did the first such exhibition, *Distant Relatives/Relative Distance* in 2006, showing Julie Mehretu, Wangechi Mutu, Odili Donald Obita, Owusu-Ankomah and Barthélémy Togo, South Africa had almost no notion of contemporary art from the rest of Africa. From our current perspective, this may seem strange but art lovers in SA at that time knew much more about European and American contemporary art than they did about African



Mind expanding: Thomas Hirschhorn's *Black & White Hemisphere* (2008) showed at the gallery in 2010 as part of the FOREX series

PHOTO: MARIO TODESCHINI

contemporary art. It is very satisfying to see how this has shifted.

Some say connoisseurship has been sold out. Your thoughts on the wild wild world of art today?

Connoisseurship is dead, and I am very happy for that. It was a suffocating and singular paradigm that did not embrace the complexity of the creative process as well as the diverse perspectives embedded in art. Of course, it feels now that there is no hierarchy at all, and anarchy instead, which is perfect. Art functions best when it disrupts and expands our perception – so the less certain we are, the more chance we have of engaging with what we do not know, rather than the comforts of affirming what we think we know.

The role of a professional art business (for lack of another word) in SA, globally, and in the future?

In SA, the contemporary galleries have played a disproportionate role

in disseminating contemporary art because our museums have been underfunded and often morbid, and only recently have some private museums presented themselves. We have no kunsthallen and institutes of contemporary art and very few experimental spaces, so galleries take on aspects of their roles which would not be the case in Europe or the USA. The prospects of museums in SA coming up to speed is unlikely, so galleries will, by default, continue in this role. It is not ideal because galleries have many limitations as their focus needs to be on the artists they represent, so broader debates and curatorial initiatives do not evolve. But at least the work of many artists is seen publicly which does not yet happen in many African countries.

Where does an art historian fit into today's beyond-post-modern, decolonising art scene?

To question, interrogate, present different positions and perspectives.

Reading matter

New additions to our shelves



Vitamin C+: Collage in Contemporary Art. Phaidon, 2023.
Neo Matloga, Frida Orupabo and Moshakwa Langa are included.



ArtThrob: 25 Years of Art Writing in South Africa (1997-2022). Published by ArtThrob, 2023.

WHAT WE'RE LISTENING TO

Japanese percussionist and composer Midori Takada – a pioneer of ambient and minimalist music – turns her attention to the mbira musical tradition of Zimbabwe for her album *Cutting Branches for a Temporary Shelter*, selecting Portia Zvavahera's 2019 painting *Gliding on My Knees to Heaven* as the cover.

It has just two compositions, each over 20 minutes, subtitled *in the morning* and *in the night*. Both are buoyant, dappled and spare. The first makes overtures to bird-song and the latter gestures at campfires, making this an easy companion for a summer in the north and a winter in the south.

The album has a foreword by ethnomusicologist Madeleine Leclair of the Museum of Ethnography in Geneva, from which the instruments are drawn. She writes that some of these, from various places in Africa as well as Thailand, China, Japan, India and Papua New Guinea, 'had not emitted a single sound for more than a century'.



From the press

→ Portia Malatjie on Frida Orupabo

Orupabo grounds the act of waiting as an unacknowledged by-product of systematic exclusion, inequality, and displacement. She highlights the correlation between waiting and the legacies of subjugation-based structures such as colonialism and apartheid as they pertain to Black lives. While the artist may have titled a recent solo show at Stevenson Cape Town *I've been here for days*, Orupabo chooses not to wait for days (let alone decades) for historical ills to be rectified, and instead proposes fantastic alternatives to the limited and exclusionary mainstream accounts of our communal past. Through experiments that open different modes of seeing and unseeing, she offers a path to liberate the imaging of Black women and their bodies from centuries-long violence.

Orupabo's mobilization of agitation seeps into her treatment of the collage form. She splices, weaves, braids, cuts, pastes, and pins components in a manner that aspires not to a fluid coherence but to an intentional misfitting. The distortion is as uncomfortable as it is joyful. Through this bold disruption of imagery, Orupabo embraces anomaly and repurposes it for transformative self-gain. She makes unruly use of the archive, mining her imagery from publicly available sources including eBay, Pinterest, Instagram, and online image libraries like Getty and Alamy, whose holdings have been shaped by a lingering grammar of colonialism that continues to shackle the visual identity of Black and marginalized people. These archives often allow others to view their images but not to use or own them, turning Orupabo's unsanctioned consumption into a form of self-proclaimed robbery [...] a necessary reclamation of the freedom of the many figures who continue to be subjugated by the repositories that house them.

'Openings: Frida Orupabo', *Artforum*, May 2023, <https://tinyurl.com/4yh44sa>

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