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9 June - 15 July 2016

KEMANG WA LEHULERE

THE KNIFE EATS AT HOME

STEVENSON JOHANNESBURG is pleased to present *The knife eats at home*, Kemang Wa Lehulere's third solo exhibition with the gallery.

In this new exhibition, Wa Lehulere explores the capacity of objects to unravel their prescribed meanings and literal forms. In paintings, drawings and sculptures, forms reconfigure themselves poetically: school desks turn into aeroplanes, tyres and crutches become free-wheeling playthings, musical scores offer evidence of bodily life.

Wa Lehulere's works draw on communal social experiences of the past - specifically, the student uprising of 1976 - which find an urgent echo in this contemporary moment of change. The artist creates a tender vocabulary to speak to a notion of history that is never abstract or disembodied, but always experienced both personally and metaphorically. Continuing the collaboration with his aunt Sophia Lehulere which began in his Standard Bank Young Artist exhibition, Wa Lehulere engages with tangible and intangible expressions of the experience of history, and allows us to recognise narrative structure as entirely poetic and indeterminate.

Expressions of this indeterminacy underpin several of the new works: aurally, as rigorous elocution lessons play on loop to an already deceased student, while free-flow jazz brings cosmic pattern and colour to works on paper; formally, as gold leaf becomes the gilded motif of the failure of literal memory. Chalkboards offer exploratory trajectories caught between gold lines, and the soles of school shoes are caked in a golden-hued mud - this is gold with a tinge of melancholic blue.

In the animation of objects, and the converse inanimation of creatures, there is a movement between longing and realisation. Wa Lehulere comments that his exhibition is 'a celebration and a critique, a love song and a lamentation - a sad love song'.

Wa Lehulere is the 2017 Deutsche Bank Artist of the Year, with an exhibition opening at the Deutsche Bank KunstHalle, Berlin, in March next year. His Standard Bank Young Artist exhibition is on view at the Standard Bank Gallery in Johannesburg until 18 June.

Artist biography

Kemang Wa Lehulere was born in 1984 in Cape Town, where he lives and works. Solo exhibitions have taken place at the Gasworks, London (2015); Lombard Freid Projects, New York (2013); the Goethe-Institut, Johannesburg (2011) and the Association of Visual Arts in Cape Town (2009), in addition to Stevenson. Notable group exhibitions include *African Odysseys* at Le Brass Cultural Centre of Forest, Belgium (2015); the 8th Berlin Biennale (2014); *Public Intimacy: Art and Social Life in South Africa* at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San

Francisco (2014); *The Ungovernables*, the second triennial exhibition of the New Museum in New York (2012); and *A Terrible Beauty is Born*, the 11th Biennale de Lyon at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France (2011). Wa Lehulere was a co-founder of the Gugulective (2006), an artist-led collective based in Cape Town, and a founding member of the Center for Historical Reenactments in Johannesburg. He was one of two young artists awarded the 15th Baloise Art Prize at Art Basel in 2013, and won the first International Tiberius Art Award Dresden in 2014. He is the Standard Bank Young Artist for Visual Art 2015 and the Deutsche Bank Artist of the Year 2017.

The exhibition opens on Thursday 9 June 2016, 6-8pm, and runs until Friday 15 July 2016.

Gallery hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, and Saturday 10am to 1pm.

For more information and hi-res images please contact sinazo@stevenson.info