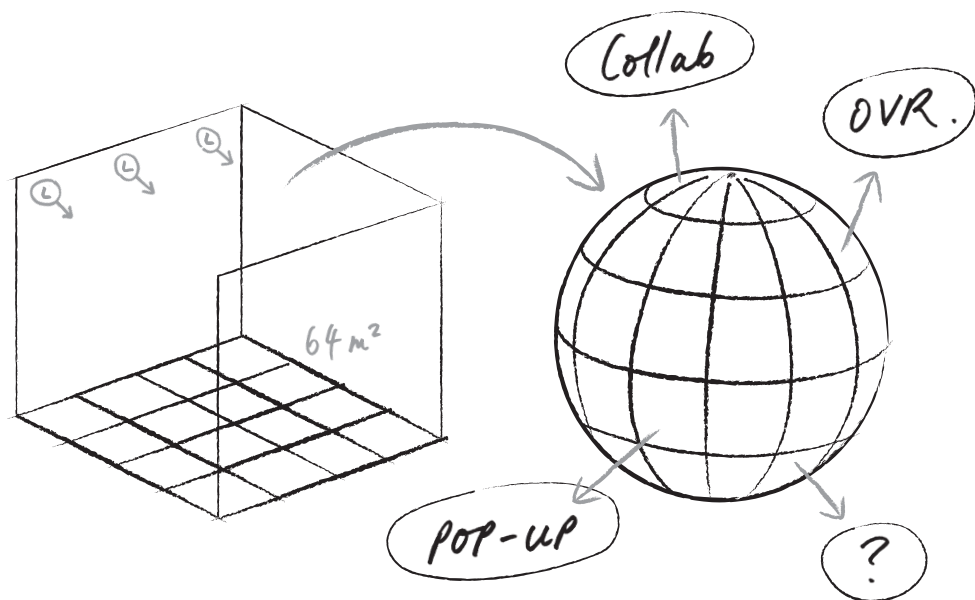


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Thinking outside the booth

As the art fair circuit begins again, director Joost Bosland explains how the gallery's approach has evolved

A remarkable boom in the number of art fairs took place over the past 20 years. They also came to play an increasingly central role for those who are part of the art world. For a gallery like ours, this was a blessing. It allowed us to present our artists in major art capitals, side by side with better known galleries from more obvious places. Towards the end of the boom, it even made Cape Town

and Joburg possible stops on the global circuit, as the fairs in those two cities matured and started to attract international visitors.

Yet, for some time, discomfort crept in about the pressures that came with the six-international-fairs-a-year-plus-two-local-ones schedule. Much has been written about the exorbitant cost of fairs, but that was only one factor. Even people who enjoy art fairs agree that they are not a kind environment for most art. The walls are too low, often skew, lighting is never ideal, and, by design, visitors are engrossed in conversations with old

friends and new acquaintances, not focused on the art. Compounding matters, the fair rhythm seldom syncs with that of the studio, leading to an unsatisfactory dance between galleries and artists about which works will be ready when.

In 2019, we actively started to experiment with different models that would achieve international visibility for our artists. To think outside the booth, if you will. In June 2019 we opened our Amsterdam office, now a fully fledged outpost of the gallery. It was artist Viviane Sassen who presented the idea to us, but we only made the plunge CONT.->

CONT. → once we realised that we could operate a space in a European city for a full year for roughly the same cost as *one week* in a tent or convention centre in London, Paris or Hong Kong. Instead of doing an art fair in New York, as we had since our debut at the Armory Show in 2007, we presented a show in collaboration with Andrew Kreps at their 55 Walker Street space in Tribeca. We also funded the production of Chinese subtitles for the *Art21* episode about Johannesburg, featuring Nicholas Hlobo, Zanele Muholi, Robin Rhode and David Goldblatt.

This subtle shift in strategy proved prescient, with much of 2020 spent by us and our many colleagues around the world imagining a fearless existence. Galleries Curate, a collective of 21 likeminded galleries, staged online and offline

exhibitions around a central theme. In April 2021 we hosted *Studios*, an exhibition in artists' studios on various continents presented on a standalone website. More recently, we joined the committee of the newly formed International Gallery Alliance, a network for the exchange of ideas among colleagues that aspires to offer an online sales platform free from third-party ownership. We will share our Amsterdam space and network with galleries from elsewhere, using their spaces in return. In April 2022, we will organise a pop-up show in the new Frieze space on Cork Street in London in collaboration with Andrew Kreps and Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel.

None of this means that we won't return to doing art fairs too. We remain committed to Art Basel in Switzerland, being extremely

proud to have exhibited in its main sector since 2016. Paris Photo and Frieze London both reach different parts of our artists' audiences in particularly efficient ways. At these fairs, however, we will take smaller booths than before, and use the lessons we've learned in 2019, 2020 and 2021 to augment our fair presentations with digital ones and works installed in our physical gallery spaces in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Amsterdam.

Whether the decade of the art fair has come to an end, only time will tell. As Geoff Dyer has wryly observed, the characteristic of a turning point is that, as often as not, one fails to turn. In the meanwhile, we will explore international exchange with renewed vigour, while remaining vigilant that the models serve our artists, rather than the other way around.



PHOTO: MARJORIE SARDANNE

'Simply present yourself': This was Pieter Hugo's invitation to street-cast models for his latest series, *Solus*, which embraces the beauty of unconventional and atypical looks. *Being Present*, a survey of more than 100 head and shoulders

portraits realised by Hugo since the early 2000s, is installed at the Palais de l'Archevêché as part of the Rencontres d'Arles festival, on view until 26 September. *Solus Vol 1* will be published in the coming months by Editorial RM.

New chapters in activism

Zanele Muholi's activism, long focused on the LGBTQIA+ community, gender and racism, now turns its attention to education

Skills-sharing and collective ways of disseminating knowledge have long formed part of Muholi's ethos. Since the early 2000s, the activist has sponsored higher education courses, offered photographic training through PhotoXP and established communications platforms such as Inkanyiso. The opportunity to tackle education on a larger yet more intimate scale only materialised recently, however, after Muholi moved from Johannesburg to Durban, and settled in the rural municipality of Umbumbulu.

BaMu Arts Foundation, established in 2020 by Muholi and their partner, Dr Bajabulile la Dhlamini Sidzumo, operates from their home and extends programming and outreach to various places nearby. The arts school formed by the foundation offers lessons in painting, woodwork, pottery and beading to learners aged 3 to 34, while working with local schools to bolster the existing infrastructure around arts education. Classes take place over weekends and school holidays, with the addition of workshops and discussions about happenings in society, ranging from gender-based violence to the recent unrest, as part of life-orientation.

Muholi has stated that practical and experiential learning is a key tenet of the school. Rather than abstract lessons, the school invites practitioners in each field to share



The current residency space at the school pictured in the process of expansion to include additional studio space and storage facilities

their experiences and provide tutorials, alongside lessons in artmaking, writing and critical thinking provided by Muholi personally. As a concrete example of this approach, the students are given a studio-to-showroom 'art world' experience, in which the works produced are exhibited in a curated, for-sale show, titled *RAW*.



Zanele Muholi speaks about the importance of education from the newly built junior classroom at BaMu Arts Foundation, used for artmaking and life-skills discussions

The inaugural exhibition took place at the KZNSA gallery, opening on the anniversary of the Soweto student uprisings of June 16th 1976, to 'reflect the significance of the youths' contribution to addressing social issues'.

The second iteration takes place at BaMu Arts Foundation's newly built gallery, also located on the activist's premises in Umbumbulu. In creating exhibition space that serves the community *within* the community Muholi has realised a long-term objective of disrupting conventional ideas of centre and periphery, while nurturing and supporting young talent.

In line with the organisation's motto of 'another approach is possible', the school's goal is to break generational cycles of disempowerment through information, access and a privileging of 'resolute expression'.

The *RAW* exhibitions are open to the public; visits can be arranged via muholiproductions@gmail.com

Calendar Aug-Nov

'Everything is written in
pencil these days'
- Simphiwe Ndzube

26 August

Last days to see *021-2021*, a happy summer show of paintings made in Cape Town, at Stevenson Amsterdam TO 28 AUG

28 August

Frida Orupabo's solo show as part of the 34th Bienal de São Paulo opens at Museo Afro Brasil TO 5 DEC

28 August

Works by Pieter Hugo feature in *Say It with Flowers*, the Ballarat International Foto Biennale TO 24 OCT

30 August

Last week to see *my whole body changed into something else* at Stevenson Cape Town TO 4 SEP

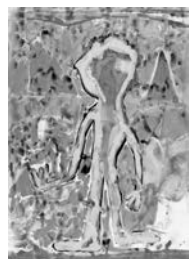


3 September

Breyten Breytenbach exhibits new works on paper at Stevenson Amsterdam, his first solo show in the city in over two decades TO 30 OCT

4 September

Sanctuary, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Moshekwa Langa, opens at Stevenson Johannesburg TO 8 OCT



4 September

Frida Orupabo and Paulo Nazareth have works in the main exhibition of the 34th Bienal de São Paulo, *Though it's dark, still I sing* TO 5 DEC

9 September

Jo Ractliffe's *Being There* – featuring new photographs and a collaborative short film and 'sound book' – opens at Stevenson Cape Town TO 23 OCT

17 September

Moshekwa Langa has a solo exhibition in the Chapel of the Cordeliers in Toulouse as part of Le Printemps de Septembre TO 17 OCT

17-19 September

Wim Botha's *The River*, previously in Johannesburg, is installed in our Cape Town gallery and presented online for Cape Town Art Fair's first digital event



20 September

Last chance to see Robin Rhode's retrospective at Museum Voorlinden; Pieter Hugo's *Being Present* at Les Rencontres d'Arles; and *31: Women* with Zanele Muholi at Daimler Contemporary, Berlin TO 26 SEP

20-26 September

Stevenson heads to Switzerland for Art Basel, the first IRL fair of the season, presenting works by gallery artists

24 September

Heritage Day, South Africa

24 September

The 7th Athens Biennale, *Eclipse*, features Meleko Mokgosi and Zanele Muholi TO 28 NOV

24-26 September

The Cape Town Art Book Fair takes place at the Norval Foundation. Highlights include Penny Siopis's *Shadow Shame Again* film and conversation with Pumla Dineo Gqola on 25 Sept

1 October

Final days of Deborah Poynton's survey *Beyond Belief* at the Drents Museum in Assen TO 3 OCT

9 October

Last chance to visit Zanele Muholi's Spectrum Prize exhibition at Sprengel Museum Hannover, and Simphiwe Ndzube's *Oracles of the Pink Universe* at Denver Art Museum TO 10 OCT

13-17 October

Stevenson presents a focus on new painting at Frieze London, with works by Zander Blom, Portia Zvavahera, Cian-Yu Bai, Simphiwe Ndzube, Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi, Dada Khanyisa, Serge Alain Nitegeka, Ruth Ige and Mawande Ka Zenzile

16 October

The Busiest Airline in Africa, a solo exhibition by Simon Gush, opens at Stevenson Johannesburg. See our website for events during the show TO 19 NOV

20 October

Final days of *This is not Africa – unlearn what you have learned*, featuring Meschac Gaba, Zanele Muholi and Barthélémy Toguo, at ARoS, Denmark TO 24 OCT

28 October

Zanele Muholi exhibits new photography, painting and sculpture at Stevenson Cape Town TO 4 DEC



4 November

Stevenson presents work by Paulo Nazareth and Neo Matloga at Art X Lagos online TO 21 NOV

6 November

Mame-Diarra Niang is our solo focus for Art Joburg online TO 18 NOV

9 November

Last chance to see *Scripto-visual*, Meleko Mokgosi's solo show at The Current in Vermont, and Barthélémy Toguo's *Kingdom of Faith* at La Malmaison Art Center, Cannes TO 13 NOV

11-14 November

For Paris Photo, Stevenson presents works by Jo Ractliffe, Mame-Diarra Niang and Zanele Muholi



23-27 November

Steven Cohen performs *put your heart under your feet... and walk!* at the Théâtre National de Bretagne in Rennes, France

26 November

Serge Alain Nitegeka is included in *Ubuntu, A Lucid Dream* at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris TO 20 FEB

27 November

Paulo Nazareth's first solo exhibition at our Johannesburg gallery opens TO 28 JAN

28 November

Last days of *Craving for Humanity: The World of Barthélémy Toguo* at the Musée du quai Branly in Paris TO 5 DEC

30 November

Stevenson presents new work by Frida Orupabo to coincide with Art Basel Miami Beach TO 4 DEC



Don't miss these ongoing shows

→ Until 12 December

Robin Rhode is included in *A Fire in My Belly* at the Julia Stoschek Collection in Berlin

→ Until 18 December

How to Make a Country, featuring Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi and Frida Orupabo, is at FRAC Poitou-Charentes, Angoulême, as part of France's Africa Season TO 18 DEC

→ Until 31 December

Witness: Afro Perspectives from the Jorge M Pérez Collection at El Espacio 23 in Miami includes works by Moshekwa Langa, Simphiwe Ndzube, Frida Orupabo, Penny Siopis, Barthélémy Toguo and Portia Zvavahera

→ Until 9 January

Lineages: Work from the Collection at NSU Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale, includes Simphiwe Ndzube

→ Until 6 February

Pieter Hugo, Zanele Muholi, Odili Donald Odita, Robin Rhode, Guy Tillim and Portia Zvavahera have work on *Allied with Power: African and African Diaspora Art from the Jorge M Pérez Collection* at the Pérez Art Museum Miami

→ Until 27 February

Friendship. Nature. Culture, celebrating 44 years of the Daimler Art Collection, includes works by Pieter Hugo, Viviane Sassen and Guy Tillim



PHOTO: TRILBY KREPELKA

Jo Ractliffe and artists' book binder Heléne van Aswegen of The Book Workshop in Stellenbosch working on the prototype of an experimental 'sound book', *Something this way comes*. The book presents photographs and sound from a short film of the same title made in collaboration with composer Philip Miller and filmmaker Catherine Meyburgh; these are integrated into the construction and binding of the book, with a camera reading a QR code as each page is turned. The book and film form part of Ractliffe's exhibition *Being There*, at Stevenson Cape Town from 9 September to 23 October.

Ractliffe's 'boundless windows'

Critical acclaim for Jo Ractliffe's survey exhibition *Drives* at the Art Institute of Chicago:

"Today, exploring such aftermath through Ractliffe's photography presents the viewer with manifold opportunities for metaphor and meaning-making. Nearly every work appears rife with symbolism, giving the looker stepping-stones for creating their own form of understanding. A contemporary viewer might look upon the dogs in Ractliffe's *Nadir* series and recall the motif of the dog in JM Coetzee's *Disgrace*, or read *Sea Birds*, *Cape Point* as an allegory for white flight in the aftermath of apartheid. Choosing to portray the aftermath rather than the event itself adds a certain dynamism to her work: each new moment after a troubled history presents us with a new opportunity to make sense of the socio-political climate within South Africa and all of its strange manifestations. Ractliffe herself has described South Africa as "a place that slips, that moves away from

your understanding every moment that you think you have found it". Combining the open-endedness of each of her images with their highly peculiar subject matter, we are reminded of this affirmation. Rather than existing as stagnant records of history, Ractliffe's images are boundless windows into our own grasp of both the past and the present."

Trevor Bishai, 'Exhibition review: Jo Ractliffe's *Drives*', *Musée Magazine*, 23 June 2021

... and for her survey book *Photographs: 1980s to now*, published by Steidl and The Walther Collection:

"Many of Ractliffe's admirers have written eloquently on the artist's conceptual engagement with themes of surveillance, documentary, and urban history in South Africa. But the monograph's matte printing also reminds us that Ractliffe is deft on a purely technical level, making even the farthest horizons vibrate with a near overload of detail. It is

an admittedly basic observation, but one that, I think, is crucial to understanding how Ractliffe transforms seemingly empty tracts of land into remarkably busy ones. For it is not the political framework alone that renders her landscapes visibly – and in this particular monograph, tangibly – heavy, weighed down with history's vestiges.

Between fiction and review, text and image, this retrospective monograph reminds me why, even nearly three decades after the official end of apartheid, Ractliffe's ability to envision the subtle traces of violence remains not only compelling, but necessary. For these photographs, while taken in the apparent aftermath of wars and conflict, gesture also to the imminence of these events: the necessary cycles of history. If the past necessarily inflects the here and now, as Ractliffe's work suggests, then future conditions must be seen in the current moment, however inarticulate they may be at present."

InHae Yap, 'Book of the Week', *photo-eye blog*, 12 July 2021

'An Account' – a record of days



PHOTOS: ANDREAS VLACHAKIS



Photopolymer gravure with chine-collé on sisal Phumani Archive M111 and Somerset paper

Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi describes a new print series made for the catalogue of *How to Make a Country*

Gymnastics judges use a system of shorthand to record manoeuvres performed by gymnasts in real time. The system was designed for speed and accuracy of notation. There should be minimal pen movements in rendering the signs – one swift gesture should capture the essence of the movement. The elements performed most frequently comprise the core symbols from which a multitude of variations are formed. This is an exercise in description. There is no judgment or evaluation applied.

Consider these images as a record of a few days. On a given day I may

attempt many different manoeuvres. Sometimes one manoeuvre is made up of two or more moves. I have intentions at the start of the day – this combined with high expectations of myself can lead to disorder. At times a lack of perspective may cause chaos.

Perhaps this kind of descriptive account can be read as a non-judgmental gaze on the events of the day. It may allow me to see my own actions and work without unnecessary self-criticism or analysis. It might just allow me to see myself and my work with a kind of detachment that allows for honest evaluation held by self-love. In that space, the difference between chaos and order, success and failure becomes indistinct. The lines between them fall away. What is left is a fresh approach to the old relationship with myself and my work.

How to Make a Country, curated by Lerato Bereng for France's Africa Season, is on view at FRAC Poitou-Charentes, Angoulême, until 18 December. The accompanying publication, 'a platform for the exploration of the lingual and orthographic history within the show centring on the Sesotho language and its roots in Morija', features contributions by artists Dineo Seshee Bopape, Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi, Frida Orupabo, Zineb Benjelloun, and the *Ba Re Dictionary* project by Ba Re Literature. The catalogue is printed by Morija Printworks, Lesotho.



Reading matter

New additions to our shelves



Paulo Nazareth *PHAMBI KWENDLOVU*. Published by Stevenson (cat. 97), 2021. Essay by Sisipho Ngodwana, with Portuguese translation



Simphiwe Ndzube *Oracles of the Pink Universe*. Published by Denver Art Museum, 2021. Essays by Laura Almeida, Rebecca Hart, Phumelele Tshabalala



Deborah Poynton *Beyond Belief*. Published by Drents Museum/W Books, 2021. Essays by Karlijn de Jong, Mads Damsbo

From the press

→ Lindsey Raymond on *my whole body changed into something else*:

‘When viewing the exhibition, I felt I saw holes in the gallery’s walls that were already there, rather than merely focusing on the new ones. I saw a history of works going up and coming down; of holes being patched up and new ones made. This is the way of seeing that *my whole body changed into something else*, co-curated by Sisipho Ngodwana and Sinazo Chiya, beckons. Existence (of being a body in a place, or a hole in a wall) is multiply. The exhibition’s title, an extract taken from future-human artist and musician Sun Ra’s account of being catapulted into outer-space, suggests that the ‘whole body’ (or its subject-positioning) must be acknowledged, but then expelled into the imaginary, into ‘something else.’ As Kamyar Bineshtarigh’s installation, *An Exhaustive Catalogue of Texts Dealing with the Orient*, suggests, being human is exhausting, and for some more than others. Broken glass covered in Arabic script shatters ‘the Orient’ as an idea projected onto a body: a simplification applied and discarded irregularly. It is, therefore, important to see the hand that holds the marker in Bineshtarigh’s assemblage, but it is equally as important to transcend it.

... In *my whole body changed into something else*, I was both painfully aware of my body, and yet, hovering above it. This is what art does. This is what the dance of art engagement is – or, what it should be. This is transcendence of self: being so lost for words by the expansiveness of history that your only reaction is, as [James] Elkin says, to cry at “nothing but colours” or, in this case, pixels.’

‘To cry at nothing but pixels’, *ArtThrob*, 24 August 2021, <https://bit.ly/38t2d0j>

WHAT WE’RE LISTENING TO

The Art City Amsterdam podcast, produced by Joost Bosland and Rubiah Balsem, has those of us at Stevenson getting to know our second home. The conversations are about art *in*, *from* and *about* Amsterdam, maintaining a style of engagement accessible to long-time residents and newbies. Each episode oscillates between art history, local geopolitics, meaningful anecdotes and collegiate gossip in the fuzzy combination reminiscent of the post-opening gallery dinner. Guests to date include curator Nina Folkersma, museum director Rein Wolfs, artist Remy Jungerman, special projects co-ordinator Fariba Derakshani and patron Robin Chadha. In one highlight, asked what she enjoys most about the city, Derakshani responded, ‘everything is so beautiful, you just have to open your eyes’. See <http://artcityamsterdam.com>

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