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PHOTO: EDSON CHAGAS

Road movie: Jo Ractliffe's film *Something this way comes*, a collaboration with composer Philip Miller and filmmaker Catherine Meyburgh, is viewed during the opening of the Hamburg Triennial of Photography in the exhibition *Currency: Photography Beyond Capture*, which runs to 18 September

Around the world in 30 days

Stevenson's Sisipho Ngodwana, Noëlle de Haan and Lanese Jaftha take us on their travels to Venice, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Dakar

Sisipho Ngodwana writes: When the Venice Biennale opened on 19 April, it was to a handful of the artists' guests. As Simnikiwe Buhlungu's invitee, my point of departure was her presentation, *And the Other Thing I Was Saying Was: A Conver-something*, in Cecilia Alemani's *The Milk of Dreams*. At

the end of the Arsenale, Buhlungu's interactive sound installation was both futuristic and nostalgic. Her theremins and electromagnetic music synthesisers played audio from a range of sources – pink noise, Mam' Miriam Makeba, Binyavanga Wainaina and hadedas mixed in with percussive rhythms. She mentioned that the work departs from the act of dreaming 'as a thought, a confession, as communication from biological systems'. Here, art was not visual but a continuous, collective experience.

We decided to first visit the artists we knew before the day was stolen by

fatigue. After being greeted by *Brick House*, Simone Leigh's larger-than-life sculpture in the Arsenale, we were taken in by Portia's Zvavahera's monumental paintings. Her owls and hybrids were a hypnotic precursor to Precious Okoyomon's installation, *To See the Earth before the End of the World*, which begins with the notice that 'there are butterflies in the exhibition', as if to signal the fluttering we would do from one show to another. Then came the pavilions which opted for a combination of poetry and politics, the choices focusing on

each country's socio-politics or on broader conversations such as climate change, the post-human and the Anthropocene.

Amid gelato tours and getting lost, the collateral exhibitions offered a different kind of engagement, placing emphasis on cross-nation practices and disruptions of ideas of borders and difference. The African Art Forum in Venice launched with a talk on 'intraAfrican co-operation' and Aziz Hazara's new film *Takbir* was shown in *Penumbra*, a show focusing on crossing boundaries. Then came a visit to Otobong Nkanga and Anna Boghiguian's show at Kunsthau Bregenz's outpost in San Pasquale, where one was greeted by the sounds of Nkanga's humorous tapestry. On the floor above, the painted figures in Boghiguian's life-size chess game seemed to mock the visitor who had walked the city from one show to another.

ICF's Diaspora Pavilion 2 took this further, almost literally, with an hour and half walk to Teatro Groggia. Shiraz Bayjoo – alongside Nicolas Faubert and Siyabonga Mthembu – presented *Zot Komm – Yeman*, a collaborative show on the cross-pollination of languages. On the last day, a long rainy walk led to a cathartic engagement with Dineo Bopape's *The Soul Expanding Ocean #3* at Ocean Space – a buoyant moment in this sinking city. Then, lastly, was Chance the Rapper's Black Venice Alliance Party, which resulted in a frenzied rush to the airport a few hours later!

From the waterways of Venice to the canals of Amsterdam, **Noëlle Haan writes:** Amsterdam Art Week kicked off its 10th edition with events across museums, residency spaces and open studios – closing on a high note with the Eye Film Museum's



And the Other Thing I Was Saying Was:
A Conver-something with Simnikiwe
Buhlungu PHOTO: SISIPHO NGODWANA

party hosted by Julia Stoschek. Our space on the Prinsengracht shared in the festivities with the opening of Paulo Nazareth's mini survey *BIRDMAN* – only the second public opening in the gallery's two-year history.

Other highlights proved to be specifically transcontinental. At De Ateliers, Ghita Skali's film *The Invaders* (2021) was on view – it's this film which was the sophomore feature of AMS at Stevenson Cape Town. Another artist to feature in AMS, Simnikiwe Buhlungu, focused on connection with her open studio at the Rijksakademie. Like bees, people flocked around her hive installation, attending lectures and listening to music from the region.

Following Art Week, we made our way to the architectural wonder of Van Nellefabriek for our first participation in Art Rotterdam. Showing new works by local artists Viviane Sassen and Cian-Yu Bai, we spent another week bonding with our Dutch audience and colleagues.

In between these events, and after the opening of his solo, *Déjà Vu*, in Cape Town, Neo Matloga made his way to Amsterdam for the opening

of *along came your eyes*, his long-awaited show at the Hermitage Museum. Now Cian-Yu Bai is about to spend a season in South Africa, doing a residency at our gallery in Cape Town to create new works for a show as part of AMS.

Closer to the equator, Lanese Jaftha writes: Mame-Diarra Niang embarked on a month-long residency in Ouakam, as prep for her participation in the 14th Dakar biennale. Her invitation to join Dak'Art OFF came from The Matter Art Project, a Senegalese collective. As one of nine artists showing in the collective's (*Un*) *Chartered Grounds* exhibition, Niang decided to create a new instalment of *Since Time is Distance in Space* – 'Chapter: I Rise'.

During her residency she visited megalithic sites in order to get new footage and inspiration for the music she composes as part of the work. In this showing, the work came full circle. She noted that the very first sequences were taken from the rooftop of her father's unfinished house in 2016, close to where the installation is now on view, inside the cité asecna.

By the time of my arrival in Dakar, the screens, projectors and holographic devices had been installed and the room had become again the 'mystic's enclave', as described at the time of its first showing at our late 5th Floor space in Braamfontein. In this version, viewers removed their shoes before entering the space. Once inside we were held by darkness, the only light emanating from the screens. Niang's installation was a stark contrast from the opening celebrations that continued in the rest of the building and the city. Visitors looking for an island of calm waited in line for their turn at this experience.

The smell of home

Mawande Ka Zenzile spoke to writer Themba Tsotsi and Stevenson's Sinazo Chiya at the opening of his exhibition *Nqanda nanga 'manzi engene'ndlini* in Johannesburg. An extract follows

TT: Can you talk about your organic approach to work? How much does western thinking influence it?

MKZ: Growing up in the Eastern Cape, I was exposed to different sensibilities, and as a practising artist that became the centre of how I express myself. But those sensibilities are universal, they are not only central to Xhosa culture. I just wanted to share them with the world. We live in a materialistic world that is also monolithic. It cuts out everything that doesn't belong in the dominant culture. So I was interested in bringing out these nuances so that they don't disappear. There's a tension between science and the mystical reality, but I think those realities can coexist. Being exposed to European culture didn't mean that I should assimilate. For me, the point was to understand what things are and find a way to get disenchanted. To be able to uphold contrasting views is how I define intelligence. Not assimilation.

TT: Do you feel pressured to balance these two worlds, to balance these paradigms?

MKZ: I don't feel pressure to belong anywhere, and art gives me the freedom to just play around. It gives me a space to connect with myself,



Larissa Andrea Johnson plays *umrhube* seated in Mawande Ka Zenzile's installation *Inggami* as part of the exhibition's opening

it helps me separate myself from the collective consciousness, and I feel that's something that the broader society needs. Art puts me in that space beyond affectation. It's such a holy space.

SC: Are the materials you use an extension of the epistemic courage you've spoken about?

MKZ: My name, Mawande, talks about abundance. And I think there's an abundance of everything in this universe, including aesthetics. I don't think art can be limited. From early in my career I was interested in combining different aesthetics. I grew up seeing cow

dung, so I was interested in reviving this aesthetic and pushing it further, into high culture. We often mistake high culture with acceptance into the dominant culture, but for me, the material was my way of celebrating my modality; it makes me think about home. If I see a painting that I haven't seen in a long time, I go and smell it, and it takes me back to the moment when I was making it. I become like a baby; I go back to my innocence. It keeps that reality alive for me – inside me – so that every time I'm delusional, I can smell my work and come back to wholeness. I wanted to share that with everybody. I wanted to share that with the world.

Calendar Jun-Sep

3-5 June

Steven Cohen presents *From Outside In*, a collaboration with three young dancers, at Hangar Théâtre, Montpellier

3 June

Stevenson's second *Collectors' Selection* goes live featuring outstanding secondary market works TO 24 JUN

7 June

Last week to view the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize exhibition at The Photographers Gallery, London. Jo Ractliffe is shortlisted TO 12 JUN



14-19 June

Stevenson presents work by gallery and associated artists at Art Basel (see Viviane Sassen above). Find us at stand J2o Hall 2.1

16 June

Youth Day, South Africa

16 June

Last days to see Paulo Nazareth's solo exhibition *BIRDMAN* at Stevenson Amsterdam TO 18 JUN

17 June

Last week to view Mame-Diarra Niang's video installation *Since Time Is Distance in Space*, at The Matter Art Project as part of DakArt OFF TO 21 JUN

18 June

Zanele Muholi's first survey exhibition in Denmark opens at Kunstforeningen Gl Strand TO 4 SEP

20 June

Last days of Mawande Ka Zenzile's *Nqanda nanga'manzi engene'ndlini* at Stevenson Johannesburg TO 25 JUN

20 June

Neo Matloga's solo *Déjà Vu*, Mack Magagane's *Ellipse* and Ghita Skali's video as part of the AMS series draw to a close at Stevenson Cape Town TO 25 JUN

23-30 June

Stevenson presents a Hylton Nel pop-up at Zebregs & Röell Fine Art & Antiques in Maastricht to coincide with TEFAF art fair

23 June

Deborah Poynton's first solo show in Germany, *Folly*, opens at Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin. Poynton gives a talk on 25 June at 4pm TO 4 SEP

24 June

Moshekwa Langa's *Drag Paintings* feature in *The Show is Over* curated by Gabi Ngcobo at the South London Gallery TO 4 SEP

29 June

Viviane Sassen's *Venus & Mercury* opens at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, Croatia TO 28 AUG

30 June

The Deutsche Börse Photography Prize exhibition travels to The Cube in Eschborn TO 25 SEP



2 July

Serge Alain Nitegeka (above) presents *FINDING BLACK* at Stevenson Cape Town, with Simmikiwe Buhlungu showing as part of the AMS series TO 6 AUG

2 July

Frida Orupabo shows in *Afterimage* at the newly opened MAXXI L'Aquila, housed in the 18th century Palazzo Ardinghelli TO 19 FEB

4 July

Les Rencontres d'Arles photo festival opens. Viviane Sassen launches her new book, *Modern Alchemy*, a dialogue with Emanuele Coccia. Frida Orupabo has a solo show, *How Fast Shall We Sing*, at *Mécanique Générale* TO 25 SEP

8 July

Last weekend to view Penny Siopis's *Welcome Visitors! on Afropolitanism* at Nirox Sculpture Park as part of *Good Neighbours* TO 11 JUL

9 July

Ceramics by Hylton Nel are exhibited alongside prints and paper sculptures by Lebogang Mogul Mabusela at Stevenson Johannesburg TO 12 AUG

9 July

Summer programming begins at Stevenson Amsterdam. Look out for pop-ups by the likes of Zanele Muholi and Dada Khanyisa TO 3 SEP

11 July

Last week to see Zanele Muholi's *Somnyama Ngonyama* in *Afro-Atlantic Histories* at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC TO 17 JUL

11 July

Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi presents video and multimedia work in collaboration with Eastside Projects as part of the Commonwealth Games festival in Birmingham TO 8 AUG

13 July

Last week of *VUADORA*, a survey of two decades of Paulo Nazareth's work, at Pivô, São Paulo TO 17 JUL

20 July

Last days to see Barthélémy Togo's *Urban Requiem* at SCAD Museum, Savannah TO 21 JUL

22 July

The Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum opens *Put It This Way: (Re)Visions of the Hirshhorn Collection*; Zanele Muholi is included TO FALL 2023

3 August

Mame-Diarra Niang, included in The Walther Collection exhibition at K21, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, gives a public talk on her work

9 August

Women's Day, South Africa

10 August

Simphiwe Ndzube is included in *Abrasive Paradise* at Kunsthal KAdE in Amersfoort. Last chance to view TO 14 AUG

20 August

Kyla McMillan curates a group show at Stevenson Cape Town. Cian-Yu Bai shows new paintings as part of AMS TO 23 SEP

20 August

Ruth Ige's debut solo with the gallery, *Freedom's Recurring Dream*, opens at Stevenson Johannesburg TO 30 SEP

23 August

Frida Orupabo features in *Give and Take: Images upon Images* at Hamburger Kunsthalle, as part of the photography triennale. Last week to view TO 29 AUG

24 August

Last week to see Paulo Nazareth's solo exhibition *STROKE* at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery in Toronto TO 28 AUG

28 August

The final day of *Black Venus*, including Zanele Muholi, at Fotografiska, New York TO 28 AUG

30 August

Zanele Muholi's survey show at IVAM, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, draws to a close TO 4 SEP

2-4 September

Stevenson presents work by gallery artists at the 15th edition of Art Joburg, with a Solo focus inside the booth on Zanele Muholi

3 September

A solo exhibition by Moshekwa Langa opens at KM21 (Kunstmuseum Den Haag) TO 3 DEC



5 September

Last week to view Moshekwa Langa's 2001 video *Where Do I Begin* at Tate Modern, in *A Clearing in the Forest* TO 11 SEP

10 September

A solo show by Meleko Mokgosi opens at Stevenson Amsterdam TO 29 OCT

13 September

Last week to view the 8th Hamburg Triennial of Photography. Edson Chagas, Mame-Diarra Niang and Jo Ractliffe feature TO 18 SEP

17 September

Viviane Sassen's *Venus and Mercury* is included in *Orlando*, curated by Tilda Swinton, opening at C/O Berlin TO 20 JAN

17 September

Civilisation: The Way We Live Now, featuring Pieter Hugo's *Hell* series, opens at Musei San Domenico in Forlì, Italy TO 8 JAN

22 September

Last days to view *The Walther Collection: Image and self-image in photography from Africa and its global diaspora* at K21, Düsseldorf. TO 25 SEP

24 September

Heritage Day, South Africa

Ongoing shows

→ Until 2 October

Neo Matloga's solo *along came your eyes*, part of his winning the 10th ABN AMRO Art Award, is at the Hermitage Museum, Amsterdam

→ Until 27 November

Portia Zvavahera shows new paintings in *The Milk of Dreams*, the main exhibition of the 59th Venice Biennale, curated by Cecilia Alemani

'The labels are vague but the mission is clear'

LA-based Kyla McMillan, founder of Saint George Projects, is curating an exhibition by Black American women artists at Stevenson Cape Town. She spoke to Lerato Bereng

LB: Tell us about Saint George Projects. How did it come about, and why?

KM: Saint George Projects began very organically. Starting this endeavour was a reaction to a specific desire to collaborate with artists in a way that felt impossible in a traditional gallery model. I wanted to be able to organise exhibitions in the very best context for the work – sometimes that means in a gallery, but it can also mean in places and spaces that aren't traditional art hubs. Saint George is less than a year old. It didn't feel important to me to define the company upon creation, and it still doesn't now. The priority is to push the boundaries of what a gallery can be – so the labels are vague but the mission is clear.

LB: How does being independent allow you to navigate differently from when you were part of a more formal structure, or does it?

KM: It does and it doesn't. There has been a lot of unlearning in the past year. I am just now getting in the habit of questioning everything and determining what the goals are for myself and the artists that I collaborate with. Being independent has allowed me to fully imagine the kind of community I want to



PHOTO: COURTESY OF KYLA MCMILLAN

Kyla McMillan: 'Getting in the habit of questioning everything'

create. The challenges with being independent are almost entirely external. I don't crave formal structure, but I think the art world at large does. I think a lot about the fact that such a creative world can be so limited and conservative, but this is the same for any system. So there is a large educational component to the work that I do. I also think that there is compromise – I have learned the value in meeting people where they are and hopefully bringing them along for this journey.

LB: What is your perspective on physical gallery/exhibition spaces?

What is the collaborative potential of not being tethered to a permanent space? How do you see yourself expanding the programming of SGP?

KM: I love physical spaces! I will have one. A home base is important and I think it is something that artists want, so it has to be important to me. That said, I will always make space for collaboration. If an artist makes a body of work and it becomes clear that my space isn't the right context, I feel it's my responsibility to find the right context. Collaboration makes this possible. Ultimately,

I think openness is one of the keys to success.

LB: How does one foster cross-continental relationships such as these? What other models of collaboration are being explored and what do you think are the merits of working in less conventional ways? In curating a cross-continental exhibition, what ideas do you think are at the fore of your process?

KM: I don't know if I ever considered cross-continental relationships to be the priority. For me, it's more about the diaspora. Understanding Blackness in different places and spaces. I am first-generation American, so I was born with an awareness and consideration that there was life for me elsewhere. Being Black American comes with a curiosity about where your ancestors might be from. Even when I enter relationships that aren't overtly Black, by nature I do try to place myself there – I think about the history of Blackness in that space. That drives the direction of the relationship for me personally. That personal bit is important for me, even when considering professional relationships, because it is important to maintain some sincerity in the work. Ultimately, even if I'm working with an artist who I have no overlap with culturally, I am taking on the responsibility of championing their work. That requires a real understanding of what I'm participating in.

I guess the biggest benefit of working in the way that I do is that I'm not working on anyone else's behalf, or trying to fit into anyone's mold. When someone is open to collaborating with me, I can feel confident they are on board with what I am bringing to the table, and vice versa.

'What are the defining characteristics of a Black woman in the world? How do definitions of Black woman differ between the US, South Africa and beyond?'

LB: What are some of the projects you have done that inform your curatorial process?

KM: My first real job was at the David C Driskell Center at University of Maryland and I had the pleasure of reviewing and archiving Dr Driskell's correspondence with many artists. I reflect on that time a lot because Dr Driskell and his peers lived at a time in the US where you had to make a place for yourself – it's still this way, of course – but having that precedent really informed me. I do feel tethered to history, at all times. I see incredible value in considering what conversations my work is participating in. When I speak about context, what I'm really saying is that it's important to consider the history of places and spaces and how a work of art, or an exhibition, can contribute to that history. Nothing happens in isolation.

LB: What are the ideas behind your upcoming group show? What is the significance of place/boundaries in relation to your concept? How do you contextualise these ideas in Cape Town?

KM: The show is actually quite simple: it is about expressions of Black femininity. The place, Cape Town in particular, is what adds the nuance. Showing a group of Black American women artists, in Cape Town, raises questions of migration, and it expands the conversation about identity. What are the defining

characteristics of a Black woman in the world? How do definitions of Black woman differ between the US, South Africa and beyond? How do different variations of Black womanhood inform each other?

There are historical references that come into place – particularly the Hottentot Venus who was taken from SA and exploited in the western world. I think about the way in which Saartjie Baartman was taken from her home and placed in contexts where she was gawked at for being other. There is an inherent otherness that Black women in American face all the time – I am excited to see how the work of Black women shifts in a country that is majority Black. I'm excited about what discourse the show will prompt.

LB: What is your relationship with SA?

KM: I consider SA a home away from home – a chosen home. I spent some very formative years of my adulthood here. Every time I come back I feel like I'm returning to an important part of myself. It is the only place I've ever lived where I wasn't a minority. That has had positive effects on me in ways I've yet to fully understand. I want this experience for the artists in the upcoming group show. It's very powerful to exist in a place where you are not an other.

McMillan's exhibition opens at Stevenson Cape Town on 20 August and runs to 23 September

Email books@stevenson.info

Reading matter

New additions to our shelves



Mame-Diarra Niang *The Citadel: A Trilogy*.
Published by MACK, 2022.

Three volumes housed together in an embossed slipcase.
Limited edition of 1 000 signed copies.

Sahel Gris: Hardback, Swiss bound with accordion fold,
uncoated paper. *At the Wall*: Hardback, coated paper.
Metropolis: Paperback, Japanese fold, coated paper.

From the press

→ Annabelle Weinand looks at Mack Magagane's *Ellipse*, exhibited at Stevenson Cape Town as the second iteration of *STAGE*, a series that focuses on showcasing works by young, unrepresented artists:

'*Messenger* serves as an entry point into the exhibition's larger concerns. It is a photograph of a white Nike sneaker fitted with a wing of white fabric on a blue background. In its overt reference to the Greek goddess of Victory, this image inserts street culture into classical literature. It is worth noting that the goddess Nike represented victory in an array of fields including art, music, war and athletics. Magagane is not the only cultural producer to be prodding the porous boundaries between high and low and the relative value and social capital associated with the museum and the street, the 'west and the rest'. Magagane's images are not didactic but, in blurring his sources, he suggests a space where new creative languages are possible. ...

'At the heart of Magagane's series, there is a disjunct between something that is universal and something that is deeply personal – the fabric that touches, warms and dries skin. In his hands, the abstract and the unknowable are gently moulded into a new narrative. By putting the medium to test and exploring new possibilities, this show leaves me with excitement for the next chapter of South African contemporary photography.'

'Speculative fiction and speaking in signs', *ArtThrob*, 25 May 2022,
<https://bit.ly/3aoxTbL>

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Stevenson's head of production, **Zakara Raitt**, recommends *The Century of the Self*, a documentary series made by Adam Curtis in 2002. She says, 'While installing Mawande Ka Zenzile's exhibition *Nqanda nanga'manzi engene'ndlini* at the Johannesburg gallery, he and I were driving through the city, sourcing elements for his installation such as coals and a wild olive tree. Observing people as we drove past, we spoke about how fashion or style is something that should lend itself to individuality and self-expression, yet current trends inspired by celebrities counteract this idea. Mawande suggested that I watch *The Century of the Self*, specifically the first episode, "The Happiness Machine", which focuses on Edward Bernays, Sigmund Freud's lesser known nephew, referred to as "the father of public relations". His theories about how members of society are manipulated through their unconscious desires offer fascinating insights into how we live.'

The first episode can be viewed on YouTube here:
<https://bit.ly/3t92h0m>

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