

Kudzanai Chiurai (b. 1981, Harare, Zimbabwe)

***Revelations X*, 2011**

***Revelations VIII*, 2011**

***Revelations IX*, 2011**

***Revelations XI*, 2011**

All UltraChrome ink on Innova photo fibre paper

Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery,
Johannesburg and Cape Town

Representing both a prophecy and a nightmare, the photographic series *Revelations* articulates the history of a fictive decolonized African state. Reflecting on stereotypes of revolution—political coups, dictators, Cold War ideology, military and economic interventions—Chiurai appropriates visual strategies from across the black diasporas. Consciously refusing such traditional African fashion photographers as Malick Sidibé and Seidou Keïta, he employs fashion stylists and lighting designers, incorporating imagery reminiscent of David LaChapelle’s Surrealist-style camp and Kehinde Wiley’s hip-hop inflected remixes of traditional Western painting.

Revelations X references the poses Chairman Mao Zedong assumed during his speeches; in the background of this revolutionary meeting, a draped Khanga cloth honors Barack Obama’s election as the first black president of the United States. Wax prints are visible in *Revelations IX* where the umbrella carrier evokes the affluence and pomp of colonial rule being transferred to a new bureaucratic elite. This ceremonious handover of a colony to self-rule contrasts markedly with the tension of *Revelations XI*, an image illustrating the radio announcement of a coup. Summoning the artist’s experiences in his native Zimbabwe, *Revelations VIII* depicts the state between artificiality and decay. Both individually and as a whole, *Revelations* engages fashion via references to textiles, by citing elements of hip-hop, and through imagery depicting the self-fashioning of a nation state by its ruling elite.

About the Artist

Kudzani Chiurai (b. 1981, Harare, Zimbabwe) was the first black student to receive a BA in Fine Art from the University of Pretoria, South Africa. His work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions including: *Figures & Fictions: Contemporary South African Photography*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK (2011); *Impressions from South Africa, 1965 to Now*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2011); *The Divine Comedy: Heaven, Hell, Purgatory Revisited by Contemporary African Artists*, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (2014); *documenta 13*, Kassel, Germany (2012); *Cairo Biennale*, Cairo, Egypt (2010); and the Sundance Film Festival, Park City, Utah (2013). He is represented by Goodman Gallery and is in the collection of MoMA, NY.

Julia Rosa Clark (b. 1975, Cape Town, South Africa)

***JRC African Woman (The Claim)*, 2012**

***JRC African Woman (Die Werwelking)*, 2012**

Collage, found images, paper and paint

Courtesy of the artist and WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

Julia Clark's collage series *JRC African Woman* incorporates Dadaist montage techniques to explore how conflicts between whiteness and Africanness inform her identity. *The Claim* features zebra print wrapping paper, an animal hide pattern that appears in the Yves Saint Laurent safari collection. In *JRC African Woman*, Clark positions fashion within debates of self-representation, colonial appropriation and national identity. In each of these collages, Clark examines the paradoxes of exchange, consumption appropriation and colonial trade, thereby engaging the construction of settler identity in both South Africa and North America.

About the Artist

Julia Rosa Clark has been featured in a variety of group exhibitions and collaborative projects. Solo exhibitions include: *A Million Trillion Gazillion*, Joao Ferreira Gallery, Cape Town (2004-05); *Hypocrite's Lament*, Joao Ferreira Gallery, Cape Town (2008); *Paradise Apparatus* (2010); and the site-specific installation *Two Works*, both at WHATIFTHEWORLD Gallery, Cape Town (2015).

Hasan & Husain Essop

(b. 1985, Cape Town, South Africa)

***Untitled (Portrait) I*, 2009**

***Untitled (Portrait) II*, 2009**

Pigment print on cotton rag paper

Courtesy of the artists and Goodman Gallery,
Johannesburg and Cape Town

Identical twins raised in Cape Town's Muslim community, Hasan and Husain Essop digitally manipulate photographs in which the pair assumes responsibility for rendering the human form—known as *haram* or a forbidden act in Islam. Part of a larger series of works that reflect on cosmopolitan Islamic dress codes, in *Untitled (Portrait I)* and *Untitled (Portrait II)* the Essops illustrate an “east versus west conflict” between the smart and trendy dress they sported at university and the traditional garments they wear within the Cape Muslim community. Fashion, part of the twins' interest in unsettling Western stereotypes of Islam, presents attire as a significant aspect of one's self-commitment to faith.

About the Artists

Hasan and Husain Essop received their postgraduate degrees from the University of Cape Town in 2012. Recent solo shows include *Unrest for the Standard Bank Art Prize*, South Africa (2015). The Essops have appeared in several group shows, including: the *9th African Photography Biennale*, Bamako, Mali (2009); *Dak'Art*, Dakar, Senegal (2010); *Figures & Fictions: Contemporary South African Photography*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK (2011); and *Power Play*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town (2008).

Pierre Fouché (b. 1977, Pretoria, South Africa)

***The last time you let me do this to you*, 2016**

Ropework incorporating macrame, passemanterie, nautical and decorative knots

Courtesy of the artist and WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

A bondage harness modeled on the posture of Michelangelo's marble sculpture, *The Rebellious Slave* of 1513, as well as the artist's own torso, *The last time you let me do this to you* employs knot work derived from lacework, *passamentier* or rope work military uniforms, sailing knots, and sado-masochistic bondage. Alluding to the binaries of pleasure and pain, Fouché's harness references classical norms of beauty, imperialism and maritime trade, slavery, and the presumed femininity of lace materials imported to South Africa from Europe. By exposing such historical constellations, *The last time you let me do this to you* investigates South Africa's place within global histories of trade and exploration, the nation's cultural and sexual identities and norms, as well as binary structures of power.

About the Artist

Pierre Fouché received his MA in Fine Arts (Cum Laude) from the University of Stellenbosch in 2006. His work has been featured in six solo exhibitions, including *The Fallen and the Drowned* at WHATIFTHEWORLD (2015). Numerous group exhibitions include: *Objects in Flux—Exploring the Boundaries of Craft*, Museum of Fine Art, Boston (2015); *Queer Threads*, Leslie+Lohman Museum, New York (2014); and *Brave New World* (Iziko SA National Gallery, Cape Town (2014). His awards and residencies include the ABSA L'atelier residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris (2006) and a Prohelvetia residency at IAAB, Basel (2014).

Pierre Fouché (b. 1977, Pretoria, South Africa)

***The Lacemakers Notebook II*, 2016**

Portfolio of unframed drawings, patterns, lace samplers, notes, magazine cuttings, postcards, and other found objects or images

Courtesy of the artist and WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

The Lacemaker's Notebook II comprises various inspirations, ideas and lace-pattern samplers from Fouché's studio, a collection he describes as "threads" that connect seemingly random artifacts in novel ways. As a group, this ephemera emphasizes personal and public divides of desire and identity in reference to Afrikaner nationalism, eroticism, and histories of knot work including sailing or lacemaking. The new connections Fouché creates in *The Lacemakers Notebook II* continually destabilize tradition, continuing, in the artist's words, his "pursuit of queering history, gender, identity."

Gabrielle Goliath (b. 1983 Kimberley, South Africa)

***Berenice 10-28*, 2010**

Pigment ink on cotton Baryta

Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery,
Johannesburg and Cape Town

In *Berenice 10-28*, a modest white top unites nineteen women in collective solidarity staring solemnly toward the viewer. Goliath created this haunting series in 2010 by inviting family, friends, and strangers to pose for a portrait, each of which now represents one year lost in the life of a nine-year old girl, Berenice. Goliath's best friend and classmate, Berenice was shot and killed in her Kimberley home as the result of a domestic accident on Christmas Eve in 1991. Framing these anonymous, serialized and numbered portraits with a clinical red border, Goliath examines the dichotomies between statistical representations of violence and the physical, subjective, social or personal impact of violence and loss, which often remains unseen.

About the Artist

Gabrielle Goliath received an MAFA from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa (2011). Recent solo shows include, *Elegy*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town (2015) and *Faces of War*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (2014). Goliath has appeared in several solo shows including: *Dak'Art*, Dakar, Senegal (2012); *Photoville*, Tierney Fellowship Exhibit, New York (2012); and *SPace: Currencies in Contemporary African Art*, Museum Africa, Johannesburg (2010). She is a recipient of the Tierney Fellowship Award, the Brait Everard Read Award 2007, and the Wits Martienssen Prize.

Gabrielle Goliath (b. 1983 Kimberley, South Africa)

***Ek is 'n Kimberley Coloured*, 2007**

Pigment ink on cotton Baryta

Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery,
Johannesburg and Cape Town

Ek is 'n Kimberley Coloured confronts both the personal and political dimensions of mixed race. Frequently asked “Who are you?”, Goliath offers her response in the Afrikaans title to the work, which translates to “I am a Coloured person from Kimberley,” a diamond mining town in central South Africa. In three self-portraits, Goliath repeats the response in Portuguese, French and Spanish. Through dress and cinematic references, she represents her coloured identity, a contentious term that describes people of mixed ethnic origins including Khoisan, Malay, white, and other Asian groups. By owning her reply, the artist reclaims the term “coloured” from the objectifying systems of racial classification under apartheid, indicating instead a sense of pride in this description.

Haroon Gunn-Salie

(b. 1989, Cape Town, South Africa)

***Sunday Best*, 2014**

Bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery,
Johannesburg and Cape Town

Produced in collaboration with Susan Lewis, a former resident of Cape Town's mixed race community called District Six, *Sunday Best* creates a metaphor for more than 60,000 residents who were forcibly relocated under the apartheid government's Group Areas Act to the outlying Cape Flats township in 1966. Narrating her memories to Gunn-Salie, Lewis recalled the dress pictured here, which she wore on Sundays to promenade through the Company's Gardens in Cape Town's central park, before District Six was declared whites only. Emphasizing the absence of the human body while also reclaiming the sartorial self-pride this dress once represented to Lewis, Gunn-Salie realized *Sunday Best* by photographing the garment in one of District Six's many abandoned structures and casting it in bronze.

About the Artist

Haroon Gunn-Salie received his BA (honors) at Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town in 2012. Recent solo shows include *History After Apartheid*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (2015). Gunn-Salie has participated in many group shows including: *Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design*, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain (2015), and Vitra Museum and Weil am Rhein, Germany (both in 2014); *Videobrasil*, Sao Paulo, Brazil, (2015); and *What Remains is Tomorrow*, South African Pavilion, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2015). He was awarded the first ever SP-Arte/Videobrasil prize, designed to encourage and publicize the work of young artists whose lines of research focus on the debate surrounding the global south.

Dan Halter (b. 1977, Harare, Zimbabwe)

***The Swimmer*, 2012**

Woven archival inkjet prints on ivory Enigma paper

Courtesy of the artist and WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

In *The Swimmer*, Halter reproduces American writer John Cheever's 1968 short story of the same title in small white lettering on a chlorinated-green background. In Cheever's story, the protagonist attempted to swim across every pool in his New England county, an exhausting, troubling, and sometimes otherworldly journey that resonated deeply with Halter's Rhodesian and Zimbabwean upbringing. As Halter has described, "The story is a blend of realism and surrealism and explores themes of loss, the inevitable passage of time and self-deception, all in a drunken haze."

About the Artist

Dan Halter received a BFA from Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town in 2001. Recent solo shows include: *The Original is Unfaithful to the Translation* (2015); *The Truth Lies Here* (2012); and *Double Entry* (2010), all at WHATIFTHEWORLD Gallery, Cape Town South Africa. Group exhibitions include: *Migrations*, National College of Art and Design, Dublin, Ireland (2015); *Earth Matters: Land as Material and Metaphor in Arts of Africa*, Smithsonian, National Museum of African Art, Washington DC (2014); *VideoBrasil*, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2011); *Dak'art*, Dakar, Senegal (2010); the *10th Havana Biennial*, Havana, Cuba (2009); and the *Guangzhou Triennial*, Guangzhou, China (2008).

Dan Halter (b. 1977, Harare, Zimbabwe)

***The Great Grey-Green Greasy
Limpopo River, 2013***

Woven archival inkjet prints on ivory Enigma paper

Courtesy of the artist and WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

In *The Great Grey-Green, Greasy Limpopo River*, Halter weaves another body of water—the Limpopo River which separates South Africa from Zimbabwe. Using weaving, a traditional Zimbabwean craft, the artist inverts the metaphor of homeland. Allegorically referencing Zimbabwe's decline, aquatic metaphors in *The Swimmer* allude to the Limpopo River, a boundary immigrants must cross when traveling to South Africa while searching for employment and an escape from violent crackdowns on free speech.

Dan Halter (b. 1977, Harare, Zimbabwe)

Kure Kwegva Ndokusina Mukubvu
(loosely translated from Shona: It is far from
the jackal where there is not mukubvu fruit
tree), 2014

Found plastic-weave bag, custom-made tartan fabric

Courtesy of the artist and WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

The proverb *Kure Kwegva Ndokusina Mukubvu* translates from Shona (Zimbabwe's largest cultural group) as, "It is far from the jackal where there is not mukubvu fruit tree."

Sewing the phrase into plaid, plastic-weave bags referred to as "Ghana Must Go Bags" or "Zimbabwe Bags" throughout Africa, Halter uses the tartan pattern as a metonym for immigrant status. The plaid pattern, repeated in the wool fabric on the lettering, unravels the traditional meanings of tartan plaid which in Scotland represents familial heritage and heartland. Halter commissioned the production of this wool tartan, using the plastic weave pattern, at a luxury Scottish tartan loom; more recently the pattern has also appeared in runway shows in designs by Marc Jacobs and Céline.

Dan Halter (b. 1977, Harare, Zimbabwe)

***New Identity*, 2013**

Woven archival inkjet prints on ivory Enigma paper

Courtesy of the artist and WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

New Identity considers the complexities of citizenship and belonging in southern Africa. Born to Swiss parents during the final years of Rhodesian rule in present-day Zimbabwe, Halter currently lives and works in South Africa, not as a citizen, but rather under the auspices of an identity card that allows him to remain in the country. Halter views his identity booklet, presented here as an enlarged, woven paper reproduction, as symbolic of the hopeful aspirations of migrants arriving in South Africa since 2000, many of whom encounter tremendous hostility and violence. Weaving an identity card, frail in its meshwork, and yet signifying stability for the refugee, *New Identity* captures the paradoxical conditions of immigration and citizenship, which in this instance might allow one to remain in his or her country, but in a precarious condition.

Nicholas Hlobo (b. 1975, Cape Town, South Africa)

***Ngumgudu Nemizano*, 2008**

Rubber inner tube, rubber boots, ribbon, vinyl

Collection of M. Yamamura and L. Francia, courtesy of Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg and Cape Town

Ngumgudu Nemizano features an amorphous stitched leather figure wearing worker's boots, bound by leather umbilici attached to a visceral inner tube formation. These rough industrial materials suggest traditional masculine work—mining or patching tires—while also referencing fetish wardrobes found in gay clubs. Like the stitchwork in Hlobo's painting, here the suturing of seams also engages Xhosa initiation rituals, commonly known as *umtshotsho*. Materials such as these resonate not only with traditional coming of age parties, but also Hlobo's early experiences attending The Skyline, a Johannesburg gay club.

About the Artist

Nicholas Hlobo received a fine arts degree from Technikon Witwatersrand in 2002. Solo shows include: *Nicholas Hlobo: Sculpture, Installation, Performance, Drawing*, National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, Norway (2011); *Umtshotsho* for the Standard Bank Art Prize (2010); and *Uhambo*, Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom (2008). Group shows include: *Public Intimacy: Art and Social Life in South Africa*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2014); *The Divine Comedy: Heaven, Hell, Purgatory Revisited by Contemporary African Artists*, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (2014); *Biennale of Sydney*, Sydney, Australia (2012); *La Triennale*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2012); *Venice Biennale*, Venice, Italy (2014); and *Touched*, Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, United Kingdom (2010). His awards include the Tollman Award (2006), the Standard Bank Young Artist for Visual Art (2009), and the Rolex Visual Arts Protégé (2010/11), working with Anish Kapoor as his mentor.

Nicholas Hlobo (b. 1975, Cape Town, South Africa)

***Li-isobar nemimoya ngeyeKhala*, 2010**

Wood and ribbon on canvas

Courtesy of a private collection and the Stevenson Gallery,
Johannesburg and Cape Town

By binding leather, organza, rubber, knit jersey and canvas together with ribbon, Hlobo's sculptures and paintings reinterpret Xhosa (South Africa's second largest cultural group) traditions of masculinity. Stitching together cut seams, Hlobo examines such erotic customs as Xhosa *umtshostsho* rituals, which train boys to channel their libidos in the years before they are culturally initiated and circumcised. Considering the ways in which these rituals unexpectedly accommodate homosexual contact, Hlobo has commented that, "what you can do with girls, you can do with boys."

In *Li-isobar nemimoya ngeyeKhala*, ribbon stitching metaphorically joins disparate parts of one's cultural identity: urban/rural, gay/straight, tradition/modernity, past/present, and so on. Referring to the seams in his work as inexplicable pathways or wounds, Hlobo draws out metaphors of the body: erotic contact, rubber as a contraceptive material, the AIDS crisis, or curvaceous forms suggestive of the womb or male genitalia, as well as the wound or scar as a divide between past and present.

Gerald Machona (b. 1986, Zvishane, Zimbabwe)

***People From Far Away*, 2012**

HD video

Running time: 9:19 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery,
Johannesburg and Cape Town

Born in Zimbabwe and living in South Africa, Machona examines the growth of brutal hostility towards immigrants in South Africa since 2000. Evoking science fiction tropes of the alien as an outsider, the Afronaut protagonists in *People From Far Away* wear space suits made of decommissioned and demonetized Zimbabwean dollars. Given the money's decline in value, the Afronaut's space suit offers little protection as he voyages from the desert to Grahamstown, South Africa. As the film progresses, the Afronaut cares for a protea, South Africa's national flower, while also navigating everyday life amid the shocked faces of Grahamstown's inhabitants. The Afronauts remain faceless, marked as alien within Grahamstown's public spaces, finding recognition only when in contact with other Afronauts—a metaphor for the immigrant's experience in South Africa.

About the Artist

Gerald Machona received an MFA in sculpture from Rhodes University in 2013. His first solo exhibition was *Vabvakure (People From Far Away)*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (2014). Group exhibitions include: the *Sydney Biennial*, Sydney, Australia (2016); *What Remains is Tomorrow*, South African Pavilion, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2015); *The Beautiful Ones*, Nolan Judin Gallery, Berlin (2013), and *Making Way*, Grahamstown National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa (2012). Machona is also a recipient of a Mellon scholarship and is a member of the Visual and Performing Arts of Africa research group at Rhodes University.

Gerald Machona (b. 1986, Zvishane, Zimbabwe)

A Luta Contradicta I, 2014

A Luta Contradicta III, 2014

Decommissioned currency, fabric, nylon thread

Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery,
Johannesburg and Cape Town

Referring to the rallying cry of the Mozambican War of Independence, “A Luta Continua” means “the struggle continues.” The sculptures *A Luta Contradicta I* and *III* address the contradictions between the revolutionary claims of anti-colonial leaders and the reality of a decolonized nation. Fashioning hats from decommissioned currency, a common medium in Machona’s work, *A Luta Contradicta* explores the ideological projections such garments evoke. Crafting Zairian dictator Mobutu Sese Seku’s leopard print cap from currency, for example, indicts his regime as a kleptocracy, providing incisive commentary on the dictator’s use of the leopard hat to create a unified, pre-colonial Zairian identity across the Congo.



Mohau Modisakeng

(b. 1986, Soweto, South Africa)

***Ditaola XV*, 2014**

Inkjet print on Epson Ultra Smooth

Courtesy of the artist and WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

In *Ditaola*, the Setswana word for divination, Modisakeng wears a pleated leather skirt or *isidwaba* indicative of a Zulu woman's married status. Adorned with a fuzzy cap and cowbell, Modisakeng attempts to erase distinctions between masculine/feminine and human/animal, while also suggesting the importance of cattle in Zulu culture through traditions like *isidwaba*, a bride's wealth or *ukulobola*, and the *kraal* or cattle pen. He holds a flintlock gun pointed upward, suggesting the brutal ways in which colonial violence imposed on such traditions. In a bold and defiant pose, Modisakeng releases the dove as divination, a tradition that turns towards the past to understand the present.

About the Artist

Mohau Modisakeng received his MFA from Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town in 2014. Solo exhibitions include: *ENDABENI*, Gallerie Ron Mandos, Amsterdam (2016); *Ditaola*, BRUNDYN+, Cape Town, South Africa (2014); and *Inzilo*, FNB Joburg Art Fair, Johannesburg, South Africa (2013). Group shows include: *Lyon Biennale*, Lyon, France (2015); *DIS/PLACE*, MOCADA, New York, United States (2015); *What Remains is Tomorrow*, South African Pavilion, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2015); and *Dak'Art*, Dakar, Senegal (2012). Modisakeng received the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Visual Art in 2016.

Mohau Modisakeng

(b. 1986, Soweto, South Africa)

***Ga Bose Gangwe*, 2014**

HD video

Running time 2:15 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

Modisakeng's short film *Ga Bose Gangwe*, which can be translated from Setswana as "there's always light at the end of the tunnel," exposes the dialectic of light and dark that defines race. Although in 1878, explorer Henry Morton Stanley proclaimed Africa as a "dark continent," the artist's reference to hope in the title emphasizes the solidarity amongst the men in this film. The white skirts further uniting the performers are similar to *hakama* or loose Japanese trousers, a reference to the popularity of martial arts films in South Africa's urban, segregated, black working class townships such as Soweto, where Modisakeng came of age.

Mohau Modisakeng

(b. 1986, Soweto, South Africa)

Inzilo, 2013

HD video

Running time: 4:57 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

In *Inzilo*, Zulu for mourning, Modisakeng sits in a mourning position traditionally reserved for women known as *ukuzila*. Dressed in a simple black wrap skirt, the artist peels layers of wax from his skin. Collecting remnants of the wax and ash—during *ukuzila* the body is often covered in charcoal—Modisakeng casts these upwards, then draws them back to his body. The white background remains smeared with ash as Modisakeng presses the wax fragments onto his feet, suggesting that South Africa's past continues to haunt its present. As a performance, *Inzilo* stages mourning rituals in remembrance of colonial and apartheid violence, yet the artist insists that this film is also about new beginnings.

Athi-Patra Ruga (b. 1984, Umtata, South Africa)

***Escape to the End of History*, 2015**

Wool and thread on tapestry canvas

Courtesy of the artist and the Spier Collection, Cape Town

Recalling his childhood in the Republic of Transkei, a *bantustan* or semi-autonomous state created by the apartheid government to relocate and isolate black cultural groups, Ruga focuses on the narrative of exile in *Escape to the End of History*. As part of his *Future White Women of Azania* series, here the exiled Azanians have kidnapped Ruga, the elder narrator of their history. The map's caption, detailing an "end to history," references Pliny the Elder's mention of Azania in 40 CE as exemplary of pre-colonial African history. The caption equally alludes to Azania as the utopian dream of freedom and black rule, the realization of which has remained riven with struggles after apartheid's end in 1994. Evoking antiquated maps tracing Pliny's geography, while also eliciting the artist's memories of the cosmopolitan atmosphere in the Republic of Transkei, the circuitous routes of exile in *Escape to the End of History* trace both diaspora and conflict, while also affirming Ruga's belief in the inherent falsity of utopia.

About the Artist

Athi-Patra Ruga's recent solo exhibitions include *Athi-Patra Ruga*, Bass Museum of Art, Miami (2016) and *Ilulwane*, Performa 11, New York, New York (2011). Recent group exhibitions include: *AFRICA: Architecture, Culture and Identity*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Louisiana, Denmark (2015); *The Elder of Azania*, solo performance at the Johannesburg Pavilion, Venice Biennale, Venice (2015); *Imaginary Fact*, South African Pavilion, Venice Biennale, Venice (2013); *African Odysseys*, The Brass Artscape, Brussels, Belgium (2014); *Public Intimacy: Art and Social Life in South Africa*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA (2014); *The Film Will Always Be You: South African Artists on Screen*, Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom (2015); *Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design*, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain (2015) and Vitra Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany (2014). Athi-Patra Ruga was also included in Phaidon's *Younger Than Jesus*, a directory of over 500 of the world's best artists under the age of 33.

Athi-Patra Ruga (b. 1984, Umtata, South Africa)

***Touched by an Angel*, 2014**

Wool on tapestry

Courtesy of Brian Shargey Collection

Touched by an Angel is one of several tapestries Ruga produced for *The Future White Women of Azania* (2010–2016), a performance saga focused on a non-dynastic line of queens ruling an imaginary kingdom called Azania.

Repurposed during apartheid to signify the history and dream of black rule on the African continent, the term Azania first appeared in Greco-Roman culture in reference to the lands of eastern Africa.

Ruga's influences from drag performance and conceptual fashion manifest in *Touched by an Angel's* playful references to pop-culture, including Marvel's *Black Panther* comic books, a Rihanna-esque female clad in a bikini, and the television show *Touched by an Angel* starring Della Reese, who acted as an angel guiding people through life's crossroads. In this tapestry, Ruga reinterprets Reese's character as a *sangoma* or traditional healer who summons ancestral spirits to treat illness and narrate cultural histories or myths. *Sangoma*, such as the woman in Ruga's work, often apply white powder to their faces to hide themselves from the corrupt spirits, leading them to be called the "white person." Through figures like the *sangoma*, Ruga suggests that drag is both an African and a queer tradition, using it to mark the omission of women from narratives of history, and emphasizing drag's capacity to refashion the self.

Athi-Patra Ruga (b. 1984, Umtata, South Africa)

***Night of the Long Knives I*, 2013**

Archival inkjet print on Photorag Baryta

Courtesy of the artist and WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

In *Night of the Long Knives*, the artist appears wearing fluorescent tights and riding a zebra—the preferred mode of transport for the fictional Versatile Queen Ivy, ruler of the imaginary lands of Azania. Symbolizing the complex and multi-faceted burdens of identity, Ruga describes the use and meaning of balloons in his work as follows:

“... You’re not white enough, you’re not black enough, you’re not gay enough. So when I wear the balloons, it brings me to tears because not only is it physically painful, but I’m weighed down by identity. As the balloons pop, I’m deflating all of these constructed ideas and revealing the true person.”

The title *Night of the Long Knives* also refers to the wave of assassinations that allowed the Nazi party to consolidate power in Weimar Germany and a paranoid fear amongst sections of white South Africans that violent retribution for apartheid would follow Nelson Mandela’s death. Situating his balloon figure in a grotto filled with plastic plants, Ruga satirizes such fears, employing beauty to unsettle continued racism and South Africa’s “rainbow nation” ideology of inclusion and acceptance.

Mary Sibande (b. 1982, Barberton, South Africa)

Her Majesty Queen Sophie, 2010

Digital print

I Put a Spell on Me, 2009

Digital print on cotton rag

Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Momo, Johannesburg

In *Her Majesty Queen Sophie*, Sibande enacts Sophie's role as both a queen and a Madonna. Adorned with an enormous beaded neck piece that includes symbolic rays of red light emerging from behind her head, Sophie's gown quotes from both Victorian dresses and maid's uniforms, thus confronting the dynamics of power, gender, labor, and race that these garments signify. As Sophie resembles Sibande's own appearance, she becomes an avatar for the artist, here shown dreaming of an image the transcends the social dynamics that this dress signifies.

In *I Put a Spell on Me* Sibande costumes Sophie, her signature protagonist in an aquamarine dress commonly worn by members of the Zion Christian Church, an African initiated church influenced by missionaries from the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church founded in Zion, Illinois. The Zion Christian Church emphasizes the appeasement of ancestors and prophecies of the future through such tools as the staff. Sophie, eyes closed and clutching her staff, reaches out in an act of blessing and divination. By wrapping the staff in brown leather stamped with the Louis Vuitton logo that commonly appears on handbags and sneakers worn by American and South African middle-class youth alike, Sibande remarks on status symbols and on fashion's power to transform the self.

About the Artist

Mary Sibande received her Diploma in Fine Arts at the Witwatersrand Technikon (2004) and B-Tech degree from the University of Johannesburg (2007). Solo exhibitions include *Long Live the Dead Queen* for the Standard Bank Art Prize (2010), and group shows include: *Venice Biennale*, Venice, Italy (2011); *l'Exposition du Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres*, Dakar, Senegal (2010); *ARS 11*, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland (2011); *(Re)construction: Contemporary art from South Africa*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2011); and *SPace: Currencies in Contemporary African Art*, Museum Africa, Johannesburg (2010).