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PHOTO: MARIO TODESCHINI

Deborah Poynton putting last touches to her 'altarpiece', *Beyond Belief*

Of realism and illusion

The Drents Museum in the Netherlands shows a decade of painting by Deborah Poynton

The Drents Museum in Assen – an institution with a focus on contemporary realist painting – will host Deborah Poynton's first European survey show from May to September 2020. Curated by Karlijn de Jong, the exhibition looks at just over a decade of work through approximately 50 paintings, among them the room-size installation *Arcadia* (2010/11). It also features a new commission to be installed in a former church: the eight-panel

'altarpiece' *Beyond Belief*, which lends its title to the show.

In her notes on this piece, Poynton states: 'A realist painting is an illusion which requires belief to function. Here the subjects, or specimens, are inside a collection of boxes, like a camera obscura ... Beyond the stack of *Kunstkammer* is white space, which like the back of the stage set takes us beyond the belief of the illusion. The veils of belief are insubstantial. Formal composition and technique, references to art history and religion, the illusory nature of the space: all fall away and we are left with uncertainty. The painting undermines itself: it is a

large question mark. What do we believe in?'

A catalogue with essays by De Jong and Mads Damsbo will accompany the exhibition. In her text, De Jong traces Poynton's biography, offering that she 'uses her art to reconcile with life.'

In an extract from her essay De Jong writes: *Through her paintings, Poynton seems to want to connect to viewers. She creates a new place, which she can visit in the company of the other. The nudity of her large figures emphasizes their humanity and thus adds to this sense of connection. At the same time, their intimacy is* CONT.->

Muholi's first UK survey

Tate Modern's eponymous retrospective on visual activist Zanele Muholi opens to the public on 29 April with an accompanying catalogue and a programme of events.

Spread over nine rooms on the third floor of the Natalie Bell building, the show spotlights each of Muholi's bodies of work, from early outputs *Being* and *Only half the picture* through *Faces and Phases* to their self-portrait series, *Somnyama Ngonyama*.

Among the exhibition's highlights is a room dedicated to showcasing the breadth of Muholi's practice while fostering an intimate level of engagement. Included in the room will be writings by Muholi, vitrines of archival objects, overlapping timelines tracing their journey alongside the trajectory of LGBTQIA+ rights in South Africa, and commentary on their work over time.

The exhibition runs till 18 October, then travels to Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; Gropius Bau, Berlin; and Bildmuseet at Umeå University.



PHOTO: LANESE JAFTHA

cont. → so overwhelming that it also repels viewers. Poynton invites them in and pushes them away. She hopes that this contradiction will promote authentic viewing. Particularly in a world that is full of images, viewers no longer know how to look at paintings. Poynton wants them to look with their bodies instead of their heads. Viewing should be intuitive or instinctive, without the mind looking for words to understand the work or turn it into something logical. The large format of the paintings helps viewers to do so. It creates a physical experience because it gives them the idea that they can step into the work.

They can submerge themselves in it and get absorbed by it. Because the paintings are so realistic, Poynton's world is close by. Because they are visually attractive, viewers are drawn in even more easily. And yet, despite their realism and nearness, Poynton's art is a total illusion, and this is at the heart of what she paints: images that reflect reality, but are devoid of meaning.

Concurrently with *Beyond Belief*, Poynton occupies our Amsterdam space with small works on board in a presentation titled *Fool's Gold*. Prior to this, from 18 April, Breyten

Breytenbach exhibits new paintings created in his Cape Town studio in a solo show titled *Autumn Light & the Moon*.

Helping ameliorate the Brexit blues and reduce carbon footprints, Eurostar has made it even easier to visit our newest space with the announcement of a direct service between Amsterdam and London, starting April. Passengers travelling between the two nations previously had to change trains in Brussels to complete passport checks and security screenings, but can now jump from city to city in three hours and 50 minutes.

Artists at the edge

Paulo Nazareth and Zanele Muholi feature at the 22nd Biennale of Sydney

The Sydney Biennale takes its title, *NIRIN*, from the Wiradjuri word meaning 'edge'. Drawing on artistic director Brook Andrew's ancestral relationship to the First Nations people of western New South Wales, the word reflects this edition's advocacy for indigenous languages, and a probing view of the forced and voluntary migrations forming part of the complex history of the area.

Invited to 'be inspired by, and reflect on, the world today, challenging dominant narratives and proposing exciting new futurisms and paths to healing', Muholi shows prints from their *Faces and Phases*, *Brave Beauties* and *Somnyama Ngonyama* series at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.

On Cockatoo Island, Nazareth presents a multi-part installation titled *INDIGENOUS LANDS*. Comprising materials such as stone, charcoal, wax candles and video, the piece traces the history of an 11 500-year-old fossil named Luzia, uncovered in a cave near Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Initially believed to have been part of the first wave of immigrants to migrate to South America, Luzia was later reclassified by scientists, her skull described as resembling those of 'Negroids', First Nations' Australians, Melanesians, and the Negritos of Southeast Asia. Walter Neves, an anthropologist from the University of São Paulo, suggested that Luzia's features strongly resembled those of the First Nations people of Australia, rather than the natives of the Americas.



PHOTO: SISIPHO NGODWANA

Paulo Nazareth installing *INDIGENOUS LANDS* on Cockatoo Island

Sisipho Ngodwana sheds light on Nazareth's approach in her essay for Paulo Nazareth's forthcoming catalogue. An extract follows:

At an ice-cream shop in São Paulo ... Nazareth told me and another colleague a long-standing Brazilian narrative of the ocean. He said that some of the older generations in Brazil thought of the ocean as a vessel through which worlds could connect. To them, he elaborated, 'the Atlantic Ocean was not something that separated them from Africa, but was, rather, a phenomenon that could bring them closer to their ancestral lands'. He continued, 'the ocean is as much a formidable territory as it is a sanctuary, an asylum for those who died between Africa and the Americas.

This is why Nazareth's political history is marked so vividly by the death of his forbears. To him a grave site is not a place of death but a place of remembrance. It is a space where

the living can connect with the dead, bridging the superficial gap between the past and the present. So lying in a grave is a recognition of life as much as a defiance of time and death as we know it. [Previously] we asked what Nazareth's practice means in the midst of all these organised chaotic movements. The answer, I assume, is to exist aside from the paradigms of the burden he bears in the process of finding his way – between, to and from home. These journeys, instructions, maps, memoirs, recordings, findings all seek to recall the history of being displaced, where for the first time 'that dead-weight of social degradation partially masked behind a half-named Negro problem' is lifted. Be it in Africa, America or Asia, he holds as much memory of these continents as does the stone of the earth.

The Sydney Biennale opens to the public on 14 March and continues to 8 June

Calendar Mar-May

6 March

Portia Zvavahera is included in *This Corrosion*, a group show of painting at Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London TO 9 MAY

7 March

Revisit Dada Khanyisa's *Good Feelings* at Stevenson Johannesburg for a walkabout and the launch of the artist's catalogue 11AM - 1PM; TO 14 MAR

8 March

Edson Chagas and Zanele Muholi have work in *African Cosmologies: Photography, Time, and the Other* - Houston's FotoFest Biennial 2020, curated by Mark Sealy TO 19 APR

12 March

A solo exhibition by Mawande Ka Zenzile, *Udludlilali*, featuring painting, sculpture, installation and performance, opens at Stevenson Cape Town 6-8PM; TO 25 APR

14 March

The 22nd Sydney Biennale, *NIRIN*, opens; Zanele Muholi and Paulo Nazareth are featured TO 8 JUN

14 March

Viviane Sassen's *Venus & Mercury* takes over 14 rooms and the garden of Huis Marseille in Amsterdam TO 31 MAY

14 March

Memory is the Weapon, Robin Rhode's survey exhibition, travels to Kunsthalle Krems, Austria TO 21 JUN

17 March

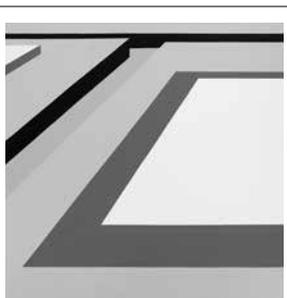
Last week to view Simon Gush's *Welcome to Frontier Country* on *Every Leaf is an Eye* at Göteborgs Konsthall, Sweden TO 20 MAR

21 March

Human Rights Day, South Africa

24 March

Wim Botha's *Still Life with Discontent*, previously on view in Durham, North Carolina, travels to the 21C Museum Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky TO MAR 2021



26 March

Gymnasium, Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi's first solo exhibition with the gallery, of new painting and video, opens at Stevenson Johannesburg 6-8PM; TO 30 APR

31 March

Jo Ractliffe and Guy Tillim are part of *A toi appartient le regard (To you belongs the gaze)* at the Musée de quai Branly, Paris TO 19 JUL

1 April

Book to visit *Contemporary Female Identities in the Global South* at the Johannesburg Contemporary Art Foundation; Nandipha Mntambo and Berni Searle are two of the five featured artists TO 30 SEP

1 April

Penny Siopis begins a two-month residency as a Lucas Fellow at the Montalvo Arts Center near San Francisco TO 31 MAY

2-5 April

Stevenson takes part in the debut edition of Paris Photo New York, presenting works by Edson Chagas, Pieter Hugo, Zanele Muholi, Paulo Nazareth, Mame-Diarra Niang, Jo Ractliffe, Viviane Sassen, Guy Tillim and Jane Alexander, at Pier 94

10-13 April

Easter weekend, Stevenson closed

14 April

Last week to view Serge Alain Nitegeka's solo exhibition *Black Migrant* at Marianne Boesky, New York TO 18 APR

16 April

A solo show of new work by Zander Blom opens at Signs and Symbols in New York TO 24 MAY

18 April

A showing of new work by Breyten Breytenbach, *Autumn Light & the Moon*, opens at Stevenson's Amsterdam space

21 April

Last week to see works by Paulo Nazareth and Kemang Wa Lehulere on *Beyond the Black Atlantic* at Kunstverein Hannover, Germany TO 26 APR

23 April

Zanele Muholi participates in Photo 2020, Melbourne's first biennial festival of photography TO 10 MAY

23 April

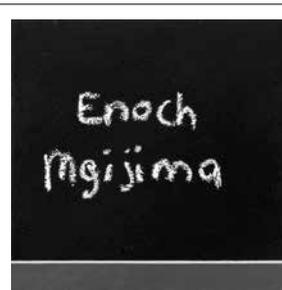
Pieter Hugo's Mexican photo series, *La Cucaracha*, opens at the Centro de la Imagen in Mexico City

23 April

An installation by Nicholas Hlobo, *Nehushtan*, opens at the Centre for Contemporary Art Tel Aviv TO JUN

24 April

Allied with Power: African and African Diaspora Art from the Jorge M Pérez Collection includes works by Nicholas Hlobo, Pieter Hugo, Zanele Muholi, Odili Donald Odita, Robin Rhode, Guy Tillim and Portia Zvavahera. The exhibition runs alongside *Solidary & Solitary: The Joyner/Giuffrida Collection*, at the Pérez Art Museum Miami TO 26 JUL



25 April

Join us for the launch of Mawande Ka Zenzile's new monograph and a conversation between the artist and writers Sinazo Chiya, Nkule Mabaso, Nomusa Makhubu and Kabelo Malatsie 11AM - 1PM

27 April

Freedom Day, South Africa

29 April

Zanele Muholi's first major UK survey exhibition opens at Tate Modern, London TO 18 OCT

1 May

Workers Day

2 May

Portia Zvavahera begins a month-long stay at the Fountainhead Residency in Miami

2 May

Zanele Muholi travels to Toronto for a residency at OCAD University

4 May

Last week to see *Portia Zvavahera: Walk of Life*, works spanning 2011-19, at the ICA Indian Ocean, Mauritius TO 7 MAY

7 May

The Mushroom at the End of the World - 'works by 12 young artists brought together as conjectures rather than a single argument' - opens at Stevenson Cape Town 6-8PM; TO 27 JUN

9 May

Neo Matloga's first solo show with the gallery opens at Stevenson Johannesburg 10AM - 1PM; TO 19 JUN

15 May

Guy Tillim gives a talk, 'Museum of the Revolution: A view from the African street', in conversation with Valeria Carullo at Photo London, Somerset House 12.45PM

16 May

Deborah Poynton's *Beyond Belief*, a solo exhibition of work spanning the last decade, opens at the Drents Museum in Assen, the Netherlands TO 27 SEP

16 May

Kemang Wa Lehulere's first institutional solo in Scandinavia, *Bring Back Lost Love*, opens at Göteborgs Konsthall, Sweden TO 30 AUG

17 May

A show of small paintings by Deborah Poynton, titled *Fool's Gold*, opens at Stevenson's viewing space in Amsterdam

25 May

Last week to see *Indian Ocean Current: Six Artistic Narratives* -

with Penny Siopis and Nicholas Hlobo - at the McMullen Museum of Art in Boston TO 31 MAY

25 & 26 May

Steven Cohen performs *put your heart under your feet ... and walk!* at Künstlerhaus Mousonturm, Frankfurt

29 & 30 May

Steven Cohen performs *put your heart under your feet ... and walk!* at Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus as part of Festival Theater der Welt, with a discussion after the performance on Saturday 7.30-8.30PM

Don't miss these ongoing shows

→ Until 2 August

Nicholas Hlobo, Mawande Ka Zenzile and Nandipha Mntambo feature in *Materality* at the Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town

→ Until 20 Nov

Portia Zvavahera has work on *Psychic Wounds: On Art & Trauma* on view at The Warehouse in Dallas, Texas

→ Until 30 May 2021

Meleko Mokgosi: Your Trip to Africa is on view at the Pérez Art Museum Miami. Another commission by Mokgosi, *Pan-African Pulp*, is at the University of Michigan Museum of Art until Fall 2021

→ Until 3 October 2021

Dada Khanyisa has work on *Heroes: Principles of African Greatness* at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC

Africa meets a country

From June to December, an array of programming takes place throughout France as Africa 2020

Spanning arts and culture, education, economics and the sciences, the season of events has the goal of inviting the country 'to observe and understand the world from an African perspective.'

There are five central themes to the programming: 'Augmented orality'; 'Economy and fabulation'; 'Archiving imaginary stories'; 'Fiction and (un)authorised movements' and 'Systems of disobedience'. Senegalese curator and cultural policies specialist N'Goné Fall sits at the helm as General Commissioner, joined by a team of 'African sectoral experts with a pan-African network and proven experience in their field.'

Africa 2020 highlights

12 June

The Power of My Hands, comprising works by women artists from Africa and its diaspora, among them Portia Zvavahera, curated by Odile Burlaraux and Suzana Sousa, opens at the Musée d'art moderne de Paris.

15 June

A collaborative project between Wim Botha and master's students of the Nantes School of Architecture, curated by Salim Currimjee, comes to fruition with the completion of 10 pavilions on the terrace of the school. Based on polystyrene scale models (see inset) by Botha, each will house a collection of

plants 'that tell us about the time to come, fragile and uncertain'. The installation will be on view at the school throughout the summer.

Q: What locations and institutions will be part of the programming?

A: The season is all over France, mainland and overseas territories. About 200 institutions are involved in developing projects with African professionals. The goal is to react to 21st century challenges via a project involving participants from different African countries and professional fields.

Q: You've said one thing you're particularly motivated to do is set up a focus on 'female artists in contemporary art ... That would give visibility and the point of view of women regarding the state of contemporary societies to what I call "the next generation"'. Can



plants 'that tell us about the time to come, fragile and uncertain'. The installation will be on view at the school throughout the summer.

29 June

Les Rencontres d'Arles includes Pieter Hugo's *La Cucaracha* and *Africa State of Mind*, with work by Guy Tillim, Edson Chagas and Zanele Muholi.

you tell us a bit more about this?

A: Education and female visibility are issues [myself and the late Bisi Silva] have been sharing since we met in the 1990s. It was obvious for me to be proactive and have projects and programmes addressing these issues.

Q: With the programming taking place in France and language being intimately tied to perspective, how do you navigate this possible hurdle?

A: The aim is to avoid a programme designed exclusively through the Franco-French prism and to protect the first founding principle of Africa 2020. Projects are designed by African professionals in partnership with French organisations. The season is certainly not limited to French-speaking African countries.

22 October

How to make a country, curated by Stevenson's Lerato Bereng, opens at Frac Poitou-Charentes, Angoulême. The exhibition 'unpacks the core criteria for constituting a nation, chiefly language, land, law and population' through works, words and ideas by artists from Morocco, South Africa, Norway and Lesotho.



Installation view, Meleko Mokgosi, *Your Trip to Africa*, Pérez Art Museum Miami

Across the Atlantic

An ocean away, the city of Miami turns its attention to the region and its diaspora through large-scale commissions and curated exhibitions

Meleko Mokgosi presents *Your Trip to Africa* at the Pérez Art Museum Miami. His project, centred around *Unsere Afrikareise* ('Our Trip to Africa'), a 1966 film by Austrian auteur Peter Kubelka, comprises new paintings created by the artist specifically for the institution's 30-foot double-height project gallery.

According to the museum's René Morales, 'This exhibition engages PAMM's long-abiding interest in the Afro-Atlantic world that interweaves Europe, Africa, the US, Latin America and the Caribbean. It draws from Miami's deep identification as the crossroads of the Americas while signalling the museum's dedication to addressing issues of racial, ethnic and national identity.'

This line of thinking is extended in April with the group exhibitions *Allied with Power: African and African Diaspora Art from the Jorge M Pérez Collection* and *Solidary & Solitary: The Joyner/Giuffrida Collection*, both opening at the museum on 24 April.

The first includes works by Nicholas Hlobo, Pieter Hugo, Zanele Muholi, Odili Donald Oditia, Robin Rhode, Guy Tillim and Portia Zvavahera, and is conceptualised as a showcase of the museum's acquisitions of work by artists from the continent and its diaspora. 'The exhibition highlights artists whose works embody the possibilities and complexities of our contemporary moment.'

The latter is the newest iteration of an exhibition that has travelled across the United States, showing at venues including the Smart Museum of Art, Chicago; the Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, North Carolina; and the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Serge Alain Nitegeka, Zander Blom, Glenn Ligon and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye are among the featured artists in this show 'highlighting the pivotal role that artists of African descent have played in developing the discourse of abstract art from the 1940s to the present.'

Mamba Negra, Odili Donald Oditia's 45-foot-tall site-specific mural continues at the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami. Featuring the artist's characteristic radiant geometrics, the work is made up of 'interlocking forms that evoke the rhythmic movement of dancing bodies or the skin of the sub-Saharan black mamba snake.'

Finally, Portia Zvavahera makes an extended stay in the city with the commencement of her Fountainhead Residency at the beginning of May.

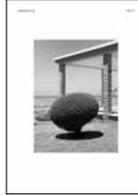
At PAMM, *Allied with Power* and *Solidary & Solitary* run until 26 July; Mokgosi's *Your Trip to Africa* is on view until 31 May 2021

Reading matter

New additions to our shelves



Dada Khanyisa *Good Feelings*.
Published by Stevenson (cat. 93),
2020. Texts by Sinazo Chiya,
Dada Khanyisa and Julie Nxadi



Gabrielle Guy *Part 4*. Fourth
instalment in an ongoing photo
book project, self-published
by our designer

From the press

→ Nkgopoleng Moloi on Barthélemy Toguo's *Bilongue* at Stevenson
Cape Town:

‘Walking through Toguo’s exhibition returns us to possible affectivity. Through a lyrical use of idioms and poetry accompanying tender renderings of various faces, we are brought into a different type of sensibility where we may find a new way of feeling, what I would like to propose we think of as *deep feeling*.’

‘Face to face with something commensurate to our capacity to feel’, Artskop,
26 February. <https://bit.ly/2TFVFF8>

→ Murray Whyte on *Indian Ocean Current* at the McMullen Museum
in Boston:

‘I’ll give the final word to [Penny] Siopis, because final is how it feels. Her little paintings, radiant and ghostly, have the feeling of an apocalyptic choose-your-own-disaster – a pair of figures swallowed in flame, a set of eyes burning inside a blue-black froth. But it was her hauntingly gorgeous video, *She Breathes Water*, made for this very show, that had the true air of finality, that whiff of the inevitable.

‘With a montage of found images – an octopus hunting, its limbs curled menacingly, in black and white; a child whacking at a pinata; a horseshoe crab convulsing, flipped over in the sand – the film, in its disorienting stream of small cruelties, asks a big question. Mother Earth is clearly displeased: “It starts with a splash, your history with me,” reads text on the screen, like the script of a silent film. “Then a catastrophe, your footprint in my sand ... When waters rise to the sky, when mud swells, you cry for help.” And then: “Can you imagine a world without you?”

‘It sounds vaguely like a threat – one that’s been building for some time. Go upstairs and listen to the scientists, and you’ll see the threat is far from idle, with time running out. That’s not something I expected from an art exhibition. But maybe it’s time to start.’

‘Science and culture collide for an existential “Indian Ocean” exhibition’,
Boston Globe, 30 January. <https://bit.ly/2TGN8C5>

WHAT WE’RE WATCHING

Steven Cohen’s highlight of the past year in performance was *Time to Time* by Russian choreographer Tatiana Chizhikova and collaborator Roman Kutnov at Impulstanz Festival in Vienna. Cohen says: ‘It was an uncompromising interrogation of everything in its path in an impossibly unique language of movement entirely neologicistic in its ingenuity. It was a timely reminder of the powerful nothing-to-lose and full on fuck-you-ness of mature young art produced without money or fear ... and with even less desire to seduce the system. Don’t bother to google it, it fails itself in representation, as it should, because it is that most precious thing - alive!’

Cohen performs *put your heart under your feet ... and walk!* at Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus as part of Festival Theater der Welt on 29 and 30 May



PHOTO: PIERRE PLANCHENAULT

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