

## .info



Steve, the gallery bicycle, on a visit to De Ateliers. Follow its journeys on Instagram @stevenson\_zs

## Home on the Prinsengracht

# Stevenson begins a regular programme of exhibitions in Amsterdam

Just over a year since we opened our office in Amsterdam, the city increasingly feels like home. More than anything, this is because it is home for three of our artists: Moshekwa Langa, Viviane Sassen and Neo Matloga. Langa typically moves between studios in Paris, Johannesburg and Amsterdam, but has stayed put in the Netherlands

since March, working from his studio at the Surinameplein. Sassen's solo exhibition *Venus & Mercury* has just closed at Huis Marseille, the photography museum on the Keizersgracht, a 10-minute walk from Stevenson's space on the Prinsengracht. Matloga spent the first half of 2020 in Limpopo, preparing for his solo show at Stevenson Johannesburg, but has since moved back to Amsterdam, where he has moved into a big new studio in Noord, the area across the

water from the Central Station.

But there are other reasons, too. The Rijksakademie has not one but two South African students this year. Wits graduate Simnikiwe Buhlungu started the programme at the beginning of 2020, and Lungiswa Gqunta returned to Amsterdam in July for her final year at the institution. It has also been wonderful to reconnect with Bart Luirink of ZAM magazine, a very early supporter of Zanele Muholi. Other members of **CONT.** →

CONT.→ our extended Amsterdam family include Pauline Burman of the Thami Mnyele Foundation, and Fariba Derakshani of the Prince Claus Fund.

From Amsterdam, it is possible to reach much of Europe by train. After a studio visit with Robin Rhode in August, we planned a pop-up exhibition of new paintings in his studio on the Provinzstrasse in Berlin, to coincide with Berlin Gallery Weekend/Berlin Art Week. Paris, where Mame-Diarra Niang lives, and London, where Portia Zvavahera, Meleko Mokgosi and Muholi all have solo shows this fall, are closer still, though remain out of reach at the moment because of travel restrictions.

This summer, while our programming was on hiatus, we offered our space to some local

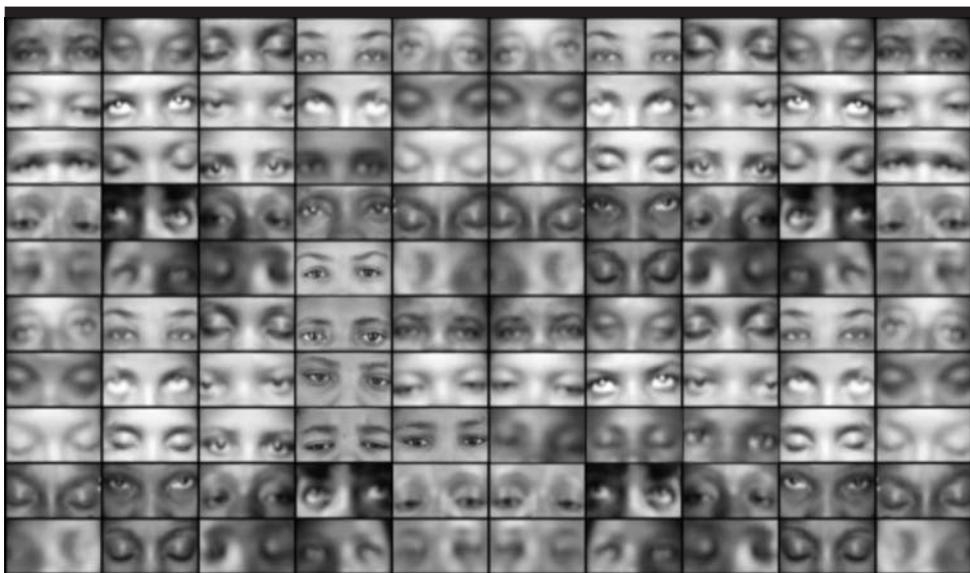
friends to organise pop-ups: Avant Arte, an Instagram gallery with two million followers, did a show of their affordable editions, including a newly launched print by Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi; this was followed by *Yallah*, an exhibition by Dutch photographer Mounir Raji.

From the end of September we begin a regular exhibition programme, and introduce regular opening hours. First up is a presentation of works on paper by Simphiwe Ndzube. The works were documented by our new Amsterdam photographer, and were at our framer Jacco at the time this newsletter went to print. It is the first time Ndzube has a solo show in the Netherlands, and it coincides with *A Fair Share of Utopia*, a group show that includes his work, at Nest in The Hague and CBK Zuid-Oost

in Amsterdam, two alternative non-profit spaces.

A solo show by Penny Siopis is next, opening in October, followed by Breyten Breytenbach and, in the new year, Neo Matloga. Siopis will also be the focus of Stevenson's debut presentation at the LOOP video art fair, based in Barcelona but taking place online, in November. Outside of Amsterdam, the exhibition space 38CC in Delft is hosting a three-person show on flux in the urban environment, *MovinGrounds*, that includes Mame-Diarra Niang's photographic trilogy, *The Citadel*. And the Drents Museum has announced that its survey of Deborah Poynton's work, *Beyond Belief*, will now open in April.

To visit our Amsterdam gallery, email [ams@stevenson.info](mailto:ams@stevenson.info)



Now on view at the Norval Foundation in Cape Town, *And Then You See Yourself* is an overview of Zanele Muholi's work, weaving a 'loosely chronological narrative about racial identity through self-portraiture' over two decades. The show includes the 2012 video *EyeMe* (above). Postponed due to the coronavirus, Muholi's

retrospective at Tate Modern in London opens on 5 November and will be accompanied by a catalogue with texts by Pamela Dlungwana, Candice Jansen, Elvira Dyangani Ose, Sindiwe Magona, Renée Mussai as well as the curators Sarah Allen and Yasufumi Nakamori. A signed, special edition of the publication will be available for purchase.

## Journey to End of Time

# Jo Ractliffe's first US survey show coincides with the publication of a major monograph. In an extract from a 'long conversation', Ractliffe and Artur Walther discuss the road trip that gave rise to the image on its cover

AW Looking at *N1: every hundred kilometres* and *End of Time*, I would say it's a similar journey, a road trip through the Karoo. I don't think I really understood the images before but looking at them now, it's a highly conceptual work. It represents a journey through the desert: there is this landscape – or rather roadscape, a major thoroughfare, which is as extensive as it is minimal. Am I reading this right?

JR Yes, you're right; it was an exercise. I was interested in that road as a subject in itself. It's passage; it has no place because you are always travelling on it.

AW That's the road you and I took nearly 10 years ago, right?

JR It's the N1, the national road that runs from Cape Town, through Johannesburg and Pretoria, all the way to the Zimbabwe border. There's an idea that the Karoo is an endless flat space of nothingness. I wanted to see what I would get if I made a record of that drive. Also, I was looking at John Baldessari; I'd looked at him earlier when I was making *Diana*, and I was interested in the way he worked with film stills and juxtaposition. I thought about his photographing every truck on the highway and decided to do something similar: to photograph the road every hundred kilometres

from Johannesburg to Cape Town and back again.

AW And there's also Ed Ruscha's *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966). Or Stephen Shore, who photographed a friend of his, every half an hour, for 24 hours. So tell me about the time, the place, what happened in your case?

JR It was January 1996. I took a drive with my boyfriend from Johannesburg to Cape Town, and back again a few weeks later. On the return journey I came across three donkeys. They had all been shot. That incident, the fact of those deaths, changed everything. It brought an abstract exercise into sharp reality. It was like the punctum; it ruptured the journey, disrupted my experiment, but effectively gave me the work. I don't know what I would have done with the N1 images had this not happened. I had a second camera with me – my Mamiya 6x6 – and one last roll of film, so I photographed the site and the donkeys – one being the portrait, *End of Time*.

AW If you were working conceptually, as you said, every hundred kilometres, what was the actual process? When did you focus on looking at the hundred-kilometre mark?

JR I was very precise about it: I checked the mileage. Also, signs



Jo Ractliffe Photographs 1980s - now

Photographs: 1980s to now by Jo Ractliffe is co-published by Steidl and The Walther Collection, with new texts by the artist, Emmanuel Iduma, Artur Walther and Matthew S Witkovsky

along the road indicating the distance to the next town reminded me of the next hundred-kilometre mark. You'll see sometimes the camera position changes from the driver to the passenger side – that's because we shared the driving, but I always had the camera. After seeing the dead donkeys, I forgot the next hundred-kilometre mark – hence that patch of gravel, a detail from one of the photographs taken of the site. I could have left an empty frame, but I wanted to mark the place and the subsequent moment of forgetting – which is also when my conceptual project collapsed.

It was inexplicable, such a violent thing. I wanted to reflect on spaces like these – off the radar, liminal spaces that fall outside the narrative. But stuff actually happens there. A few months later I made the *Vlakplaas* work – it was so different, but strangely similar.

Jo Ractliffe: *Drives* is at the Art Institute of Chicago from 17 October 2020 to 26 April 2021

# Calendar Sep-Nov

**Dates are subject to change; please check gallery and museum websites before visiting.**

## 1 September

Robin Rhode's *Drawings 2000-2001* and Ian Grose's *Autumn Journal* are on view at Stevenson Cape Town TO 17 OCT

## 2 September

*And Then You See Yourself*, a solo exhibition spanning early to recent work by Zanele Muholi, opens at the Norval Foundation in Cape Town TO 18 JAN 2021

## 4 September

Work by Simphiwe Ndzube is included in *A Fair Share of Utopia* at Nest in Den Haag, the Netherlands TO 22 NOV

## 6 September

Pieter Hugo exhibits *La Cucaracha* in four-person show *not unseen* at Cokkie Snoei, Rotterdam TO 3 OCT

## 9 September

Stevenson presents new paintings by Robin Rhode at his studio in Berlin TO 15 SEP

## 12 September

Mame-Diarra Niang is part of a three-person show, *MovinGrounds*, at 38CC in Delft, the Netherlands TO 1 NOV

## 12 September

Meschac Gaba is included in *The House of Opportunity*, works from the collection, at SMAK, Ghent TO 1 NOV

## 15 September

Portia Zvavahera's first European solo show takes place in the Upper Room at David Zwirner's London gallery TO 31 OCT

## 23 September

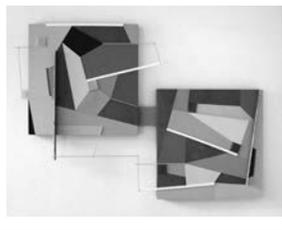
Zanele Muholi has work in *Crossing Views* at Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris, a selection from the collection chosen with Cindy Sherman TO 3 JAN

## 24 September

Heritage Day, South Africa

## 24 September

Stevenson presents *A Play in Space*, a solo show by Salim Currimjee, at La Place, on the Place d'Armes, in Port Louis, Mauritius TO 8 OCT



## 25 September

An exhibition of new works on paper by Simphiwe Ndzube opens at our space in Amsterdam TO 16 OCT

## 29 September

Meleko Mokgosi's *Democratic Intuition* opens at Gagosian's Britannia Street gallery, London TO 12 DEC

## October

Sculpture by Odili Donald Oditia is included in *Color Field* at the University of Houston TO MAY 2021

## 6 October

Last week to see work by Robin Rhode in *Come Out!*, a selection

from the Christen Sveaas Art Foundation, at Kistefos museum in Jevnaker, Norway TO 11 OCT

## 9-16 October

Frieze Viewing Room replaces Frieze London, with preview days on 7 and 8 October. Frida Orupabo features in the artist talks programme. Visit [www.frieze.com/fairs/frieze-london](http://www.frieze.com/fairs/frieze-london)



## 17 October

Frida Orupabo's debut solo exhibition with Stevenson opens in Johannesburg. Join us for a virtual toast online TO 14 NOV

## 17 October

*Jo Ractliffe: Drives*, the first US survey of the photographer's work, opens at the Art Institute of Chicago TO 26 APR 2021

## 22 October

*In the Air*, a solo show of paintings and film by Penny Siopis, opens at Stevenson Amsterdam TO 22 NOV

## 27 October

Last week to see works by Jo Ractliffe and Guy Tillim in *A toi appartient le regard ...*, at Musée du quai Branly, Paris TO 1 NOV

## 29 October

Solo exhibitions by Portia Zvavahera, her seventh with Stevenson, and Mame-Diarra Niang – a body of work made during lockdown, titled *Call me when you get there* – open in Cape Town TO 28 NOV

## 31 October

Last days to see *Memory is the Weapon*, Robin Rhode's survey exhibition spanning nearly 20 years of artistic output, at Kunsthalle Krems, Austria TO 1 NOV



## 5 November

Zanele Muholi's first major UK survey opens at Tate Modern, spanning the breadth of their career as a visual activist documenting the lives of South Africa's Black LGBTQIA+ community TO 7 MAR

## 6-18 November

Art Joburg's 13th edition takes place online; visit <https://artjoburg.com>

## 10-14 November

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

## 17-19 November

Stevenson presents Penny Siopis at LOOP film and video art fair

## 19 November

Penny Siopis takes part in a virtual Q&A as part of *Indian Ocean Current*, on view at the McMullen Museum of Art in Boston. Register at <https://events.bc.edu> TO 24 NOV

## 21 November

Simphiwe Ndzube's first solo show at Stevenson's Johannesburg gallery opens TO 22 JAN 2021

## 25 November

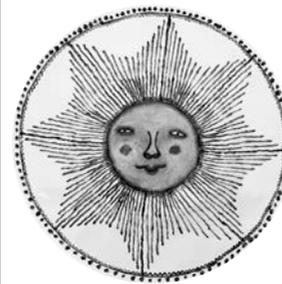
Steven Cohen performs *put your heart under your feet ... and walk!* – dedicated to Elu – at the Centre Chorégraphique National de La Rochelle, where he and Elu worked together on first moving to France

## 26 November

Stevenson opens a solo exhibition by Breyten Breytenbach as part of Amsterdam Art Gallery Weekend

## 3 December

Solo shows of new paintings by Zander Blom and new ceramics by Hylton Nel open at Stevenson Cape Town TO 16 JAN



## Don't miss these ongoing shows

### → Until 20 December

Odili Donald Oditia's *From Periphery to Center* is a solo installation of flag works at Laumeier and Jeske Sculpture Parks in St Louis and Ferguson, Missouri

### → Until 3 January 2021

Zanele Muholi exhibits on *Being Seen*, recent photographic acquisitions at the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida

### → Until 4 January 2021

*Global(e) Resistance*, at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, looks at contemporary strategies of resistance in the work of artists including Penny Siopis, Kemang Wa Lehulere, Meschac Gaba, Barthélémy Toguo and Paulo Nazareth

### → Until February 2021

Mawande Ka Zenzile is included in *Matereality* at the Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town

### → Until February 2021

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

### → Until March 2021

Wim Botha's *Still Life with Discontent* shows at 21C Museum Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky

### → Until 30 May 2021

*Meleko Mokgosi: Your Trip to Africa* is on view at the Pérez Art Museum Miami. And Mokgosi's *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

**To make an appointment to visit Stevenson, please email [cpt@stevenson.info](mailto:cpt@stevenson.info) in Cape Town; [jhb@stevenson.info](mailto:jhb@stevenson.info) in Johannesburg; or [ams@stevenson.info](mailto:ams@stevenson.info) in Amsterdam.**

# The eyes of the archive

# In-between organising the practicalities of Frida Orupabo's first solo show with Stevenson, Kefiloe Siwisa spoke to the Oslo-based artist about her practice

Frida Orupabo is a sociologist by training who began making collages as part of her explorations of concepts such as race, family relations, gender, birth and death. She works across digital and physical media, drawing on personal and historical archival material, and posting images on her Instagram account, @nemlepeba. She made her art world debut in Arthur Jafa's *A Series of Utterly Improbable, Yet Extraordinary Renditions* at the Serpentine Gallery in 2017. Since then, she has gone from making work as an avocation to being included in the 58th Venice Biennale, *May You Live in Interesting Times*, and shortlisted for the 2020 Future Generation Art Prize.

KS Let's start with the fundamentals: how would you describe the key ideas that you are exploring?

FO I seldom make work linked to men, you know. It's often concerned with the portrayal of women and women's bodies and how those bodies are understood. I am interested in white fantasies about Blackness and how these fantasies affect us and our lives.

KS You often source your images



PHOTO: MARTIN HVEEM FJELD

Frida Orupabo: Follow her on Instagram @nemlepeba

from colonial archives. Are these archives digital, or are they actual physical places that you visit?

FO It's mostly digital archives; I collect images from everywhere really – primarily colonial archives, but also from Google, Tumblr, Pinterest, Ebay, Etsy ... The problem is the image resolution. Often the quality is bad or it has a watermark on it. But you find ways to work around that. In many ways this is also a part of the process, to see what works and what doesn't work, what you need to replace or manipulate. I almost never use physical material. This is also linked to time, as this is something I used to do in the evening after work or after studies. I had to work quickly.

KS I followed you on Instagram long before I knew you were a

practising artist. I'm interested in the intersection of your online presence and your wider practice – is that what led to the work?

FO I don't know - for me everything is so interconnected. I think the thing that comes first is often linked to what type of equipment I have around. So drawing and painting came first because I didn't have access to a computer – I got it very late. When I moved to Oslo to study I borrowed my sister's computer, but we didn't have access to the internet. I started to use my own personal archive, like family photos. I used Paint, you know, this terrible program from the 1980s.

When I got my own computer and access to the internet, I started with the [digital] archive, and then I jumped from Facebook to

# Invitation to a virtual encounter

# Lockdown portfolio reviews resulted in a show titled *The Nonrepresentational*

During lockdown Stevenson offered portfolio reviews to unrepresented artists, in collaboration with VANSÁ. These reviews took the form of virtual studio visits, offering a moment of encounter and exchange during a time of withdrawal and isolation. We looked at the work the artists were doing, and at the way they presented themselves to the world, offering feedback on both aspects of their professional practice.

The sheer excitement that this project generated, for the artists

as well as our gallery team, made us wonder what else we could do to make our experience and perspective available to artists outside our immediate orbit. This resulted in *The Nonrepresentational*, an exhibition of 12 of the artists we met during the process, curated by gallery assistants Dineo Diphofa and Lemeeze Davids. In art criticism 'nonrepresentational' is a synonym for 'abstract'. Used here, it draws attention to the fact that we do not represent the artists in the show, and it echoes the term 'invitational', an Americanism that describes a sports tournament open by invitation only.

Sales from the exhibition are handled by Stevenson, offering the artists experience in working with a gallery, and ensuring a professional process for collectors. The full proceeds from each sale, after VAT, go to the artist.

Diphofa writes, 'It's difficult to

Instagram. So it's really very much interconnected, and it's all just different ways of doing collage work, you know. I think the biggest break was with the Serpentine where I was forced to actually produce something physically. Until then all of my collages had just stayed on my computer. I never printed them out.

KS What stands out for me in your work is the idea of the oppositional gaze. All your figures seem to be directly looking at us.

FO They don't let you walk past them. They should make you stop. I don't want them to evoke comfort. Sometimes I also feel a bit uncomfortable when I pin them up, so I talk to them so they will not be mad. They have their own lives, minds. The archival images

I use are powerful in so many ways. Even though most of them are positioned and placed and dressed or undressed, there is something with their eyes. How they see.

KS There is an energy that you have to acknowledge in order to be able to work with them.

FO Yes. I also find it important to create a new context or home (by removing, adding and manipulating) and new narratives from the colonial archives. Enabling the subjects and myself to speak in a different way. And to turn the gaze towards the spectator.

KS Motherhood and the act of giving birth are recurring subjects. You have a daughter – does she engage with your work?



Nonkululeko Dube, *Unsafe*, Johannesburg, 2020, digital print, 38 x 42cm

say where this initiative may go, however I believe it's important to consider the potential a project like this carries for galleries. Foregrounding new models of engaging the networks beyond us is significant for sustaining the ecosystem.'

The exhibiting artists are Valerie A Amani, Nico Athene, Nonkululeko Dube, Callan Grecia, Tshepiso MabuLa, Lebogang Mogul Mabusela, Io Makandal, Celimpilo Mazibuko, Heinrich Minnie, Boitumelo Motau, Londiwe Mtshali and Motlhoki Nono.

FO She's still so young – not two yet – but she is of course interested in my work, wanting to play with it and touch it. Sometimes I let her get closer when it's in the early stage. But I never let her play too much, because for me they are people. Most of the time they are lying on my table or the bed – I have a bed in my working room. Yeah, so they are lying there, resting ...

KS They're just lying on the bed?

FO It's a bit surreal but they are. Like I said, there's something about working with images of people who have been alive or are still alive. 'Holy' is maybe a bit of a strong word, but it's something like that.

Frida Orupabo's *Hours After* opens at Stevenson Johannesburg on 17 October

# Reading matter

# Coming soon to our shelves

Ashraf Jamal on Neo Matloga - an extract from 'Everything Genetic', a text to be published in Matloga's forthcoming gallery catalogue and in Jamal's next books of essays on art, *Strange Cargo*

While [Matloga] claims 'painting' as his metier, it is how he uses photographic fragments - torn, sutured, placed together in ill-aligned consorts - which is most striking. The technique is not uniquely his own, but its application surely is. Despite appearances, Matloga's faces are not aggregations of discrete and relatively autonomous elements, bits and pieces from here and there - an eye, a mouth, the slope of a chin or ear - but a testimony to life as a congregation of differences which allow us to reconceive a

person's univocity.

Matloga's world vision is not fragmented; it is the sum of fragments. It is not the join that matters (everything is broken, everything must be joined) but the union that splicing affords. What makes us whole are the many parts that make us up. We are also one because of others. We are not defined because of the distance that separates one from another, we are defined because we embrace. All gestures, whether inclusive or distanced, suppose



Neo Matloga *Back of the Moon*. Published by Stevenson (cat. 95), 2020

connection. We are never removed, one from another. The stitching of fragments may seem violent, rough, deliberately unconcerned with any smooth mesh, but in Matloga's case, its affect refuses incongruity. If his faces and bodies are paramount it is not because he refuses Black life as a pathological aggregate, or because he wills its enabling unity, but, in spite of negation and affirmation, because he chooses to show us its enduring self-love and the importance of community in maintaining and engendering this love.

## From the press

Tymon Smith on Guy Tillim's *Hotel Universo* at Stevenson Cape Town:

With their still contemplation of the decay and forgotten dreams of post-colonial rule, the images bring to mind easy negative judgments on Africa's failures. But these are not what Tillim hopes viewers will take away from them. Rather, he says he was concerned that his depiction of decay was a simple visual metaphor for an African political condition of a certain era. 'I wanted to avoid that because my attraction to the buildings was different: human hope and expectation in the colonial experiment and its overthrow, and the paths of failed or inappropriate expectations. And, more personally, an imagined future, being young in a place that was becoming something new.'

In these uncertain moments of the pandemic, Tillim's work and its presentation here create a space that allows for 'the happy consummation of viewer and a picture in a book, or on a wall, as contemplation and meditation. The reasons it was made in the first place.' They're also a thoughtful re-imagining of work from the archive of a photographer who's long been attempting to 'find a suspended place, where the burden of the past is light and unimposing for a moment. Those moments grow longer as I get older, so it must be getting easier,' says Tillim.

'Meditations in black and white', *Sunday Times*, 6 September 2020

### STEVENSON

Buchanan Building  
160 Sir Lowry Road  
7925 Cape Town  
+27 21 462 1500

46 7th Avenue  
Parktown North  
2193 Johannesburg  
+27 11 403 1055

Prinsengracht 371B  
1016HK Amsterdam  
+31 62 532 1380

info@stevenson.info  
www.stevenson.info  
@stevenson\_zs