

MOHAU MODISAKENG

BIOGRAPHY, CV AND STATEMENT

BIOGRAPHY

Mohau Modisakeng uses his body to explore the influence of South Africa's violent history on how we understand our cultural, political and social roles as human beings. Represented through film, largescale photographic prints, installations and performance, Modisakeng's work responds to the history of the black body within the (South) African context, which is inseparably intertwined with the violence of the Apartheid era and the early 1990's. His images are not direct representations of violence, but powerful yet poetic invocations where the body is transformed into a poignant marker of collective memory.

Mohau Modisakeng was born in Soweto in 1986 and lives and works between Johannesburg and Cape Town. He completed his undergraduate degree at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, Cape Town in 2009 and worked towards his Masters degree at the same institution. His work has been exhibited at the Sydney Biennale (2016), the 55th Venice Biennale (2015), the MOCADA, Brooklyn New York (2015), Kunstraum Innsbruck, Austria (2015), the Museum of Fine Art, Boston (2014); 21C Museum, Kentucky, Massachusetts (2014); IZIKO South African National Gallery, Cape Town (2014); Saatchi Gallery, London (2012); and the Dak'Art Biennale, Dakar (2012). Public Collections include the Johannesburg Art Gallery, IZIKO South African National Gallery, Saatchi Gallery and Zeitz MOCAA.

Modisakeng was awarded the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Visual Art in 2016.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2019 Land of Zanj, Leaving the Echo Chamber, Sharjah Biennial 14, UAE;
Passage, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Oregon, USA (May 11, 2019 to August 04, 2019); Gabose gangwe, Video Brasil, Sao Paolo

2018 Zion, The Armory Show, Galerie Ron Mandos, New York City, USA
Passage, Art Capital, Szentendre, Hungary ; Passage, Spencer Museum, Kansas, USA

2017 Lefa le Ntate, Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery, University of the Free State
Tatham Art Gallery Pietermaritzburg, Standard Bank Gallery Johannesburg South Africa

2016 ENDABENI, Galerie Ron Mandos, Amsterdam Bophirima, Tyburn Gallery, London
Mohau Modisakeng Laumeier Sculpture park Saint Louis, Missouri Lefa le Ntate, Monument Gallery, Grahamstown, South Africa Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum Port Elizabeth South Africa IZIKO South African National Gallery, South Africa

2015 Ke Kgomo Ya Moshate, Kunstrum, Innsbruck Austria Mohau Modisakeng, Big Pond Artworks, Munich, Germany

2014 Loop Barcelona, Hotel Catalonia Ramblas, Barcelona VOLTA NY, BRUNDYN+, New York Ditaola, BRUNDYN+, Cape Town Mohau Modisakeng, Chavonnes Battery Museum, Cape Town (in partnership with Zeitz MOCAA)

2013 Inzilo, Video Art Powered by Samsung Special Project, FNB Joburg Art Fair, Johannesburg

2012 Sera, Master of Fine Art Exhibition, Michaelis School of Fine Art, Cape Town VOLTA NY, BRUNDYN +, New York Untitled, A solo exhibition in recognition of his Sasol New Signatures Award for 2011, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria

2010 Ibutho, Side Gallery, Stevenson, Gallery, Cape Town

2009 Ugufa Unezindaba, Graduate Exhibition, Michaelis School of Fine Art, Cape Town

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018 Waterworld, curated by Holly + Zachary Cahill, Glass Curtain Gallery, Chicago, USA; In Their Own Form, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago

2016 After The Thrill has Gone, Richmond Center for Visual Arts, USA Re (as) ssisting Narratives, Framer Framed, Amsterdam International Short Film Festival, Oberhausen

2015 When Tomorrow Comes, Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg / Michaelis Galleries, Cape Town DIS/PLACE, MoCADA, Brooklyn, USA AFIRIperFOMA, Lagos, Nigeria. What Remains is Tomorrow, South African Pavilion, Venice Biennial La Fabrique De L'Homme Moderne, in association with the Lyon Biennale, La Fabric, Solomon Foundation for Contemporary Art, Annecy Foreign Bodies, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town Broken English, Tyburn Gallery, London

2014 Brave New World...20 Years of Democracy, IZIKO South African National Gallery, Cape Town ! Kauru 2014: Rerouting Dialogue 1994- 2014, UNISA Gallery, Pretoria Art Against the Wall: An Artist Response to Civil Wars, Gallery 72, Atlanta, Georgia GIPCA Live Art Festival, City Hall, Cape Town Fearless Renewal, MC Theatre, Amsterdam Performing Portraiture, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

2013 FNB Joburg Art Fair, BRUNDYN +, Johannesburg Am I not a Man and a Brother? Am I not a Woman and a Sister, James Harris Gallery, Seattle Personal and Political, 21c Museum, Louisville, Kentucky Biennale Internationa d'Art Contemporain (BIAC), Fort de France, Martinique Ceci n'est pas une Summer Show, BRUNDYN+, Cape Town

2012 Out of Focus: Photography, Saatchi Gallery, London Exuberance Project Exhibition, Mandela Rhodes Gallery, Cape Town Unevenness Exhibition, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare NEWSFEED: Anonymity & Social Media in African Revolutions and Beyond, MoCADA, New York Dak'Art Biennale, Dakar Material

Representation, BRUNDYN +, Cape Town FNB Joburg Art Fair, BRUNDYN +, Johannesburg

2011 Focus 11, Basel Implemented Environments, BRUNDYN+, Cape Town Business Day, FNB Joburg Art Fair, Johannesburg

2010 A RE FANON, with Lerato Bereng, Blank Projects, Cape Town

PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA)

Johannesburg Art Gallery

IZIKO South African National Gallery

Saatchi Gallery

21C Museum Hotel

University of South Africa (UNISA)

New Church Museum

Piet Viljoen Collection

Wendy Fisher

Emile Stipp Collection

Manuel de Santaren

Salsali Private Museum

The Ekard Collection

STATEMENT

In Modisakeng's work the personal is political. Informed by his experience as a young boy in Soweto at the cross roads of a violent political transition, Modisakeng uses memory as a portal between past and present to explore themes of history, body and place within the post-apartheid context. His photography, films, performance and installation grapple with the conflicting politics of leadership and nationhood, whilst also attempting to unpack the legacy of inequality, capital, labour and extraction of mineral wealth in contemporary South Africa.

Modisakeng's Oeuvre represents a poignant moment of grieving, catharsis and critical response to the historical legacy of exploitation and current lived experience of many black South Africans. Through his work Modisakeng critically engages with the complex mechanisms of violence, power and subjugation as propagated and to some extent internalized through the course of the successive colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid regimes.

Modisakeng uses a personal lexicon of ritual and symbolism in which his physical form becomes both a vessel and a signifier. His use of his own body is a significant shift away from the problematic depiction of the other and is a gesture of self-actualization and acknowledgment of subjective experience.