

# NICODIM

## **Simphiwe Ndzube**

*Like the Snake that Fed the Chameleon*

Los Angeles  
February 13, 2021 – March 20, 2021



Simphiwe Ndzube, *Goddess of the Night, Glory of the Stars*, 2021

*My skin is tightening  
soon I shall shed it  
like a monitor lizard  
like remembered comfort  
at the new moon rising  
I will eat the last signs of my weakness  
remove the scars of old childhood wars  
and dare to enter the forest whistling  
like a snake that had fed the chameleon  
for changes  
I shall be forever.*  
— excerpted from Audre Lorde, “Solstice,” 1978

With *Like the Snake that Fed the Chameleon*, Simphiwe Ndzube continues to develop and expand his cosmology, reimagining Black bodies as mythical and fantastic beings capable of inhabiting

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multiple dimensions. His figures fly, flail, fall, and dance their way from sculpture, to sound, to canvas through multiple environments, highlighting the fluidity and permeability of identity itself. Like the snake, his characters can be cold-blooded and stealthy; like the chameleon, they are capable of change.

Whereas the bodies in Ndzube's earlier works are often faceless or headless, this series includes detailed portraits of a number of the individual characters and further develops their unique personalities. In prior exhibitions, Ndzube's figures reckoned with drought and desolate environments, but the landscapes in *Like the Snake that Fed the Chameleon* have grown fertile and sensual along with the humanoids that populate them. Where once the earth was dry and barren, it has now been sown and is ready for harvest. Within the paintings, pink flowers rise to the sky and spread their fleshy petal-tongues to the sunlight, begging to be kissed. Around them, a sculptural cornfield grows throughout the exhibition. A seven-foot dandy traipses throughout the proceedings, peacocking his vibrant couture to anyone who will pay attention. A Bacon-esque figure in a Garden of Earthly Delights, perhaps he is trying to draw the eyes of the couple making love in the sunlight on a canvas nearby.

At the belly of the snake lies the artist's surrealist adaptation of a domestic shack, based on those of the townships surrounding Cape Town, South Africa, where Ndzube was born and raised. A twenty-minute sound piece Ndzube composed and recorded with Thabo K. Makgolo and Zimbini Makwethu emanates from within the large, suspended structure, filling the surrounding spaces with haunting music. It incorporates acoustic elements that evoke sorcery, witch-hunting, and creatures that fly by night. In Ndzube's world, a darkness is always lurking, but on-notice that it will eventually be evicted by the light.

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Simphiwe Ndzube (b. 1990, Cape Town, South Africa) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA and Cape Town, South Africa. He received his BFA from the Michaelis School of Fine Arts in 2015. Ndzube's work is characterised by a fundamental interplay between objects, media and two-dimensional surfaces; stitching together a subjective account of the Black experience in post-apartheid South Africa from a mythological perspective. Recent exhibitions include *The Fantastic Ride to Gwadana*, Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa (2020, solo); *INXS: Major Never Before Seen Works by Simphiwe Ndzube, Moffat Takadiwa, and Zhou Yilun*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (2020); *Hollywood Babylon: A Re-Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, Nicodim, Jeffrey Deitch, and AUTRE Magazine, Los Angeles, USA (2020); *Where Water Comes Together With Other Water*, The 15th Lyon Biennale, Lyon, France (2019); *People*, Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles, USA (2019); *In the Order of Elephants After the Rain*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest, Romania (2019, solo); *New Acquisitions*, The Rubell Museum, Miami, USA (2018); *NOISE!*, The Frans Hals Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2018); *Waiting for Mulungu*, The CC Foundation, Shanghai, China (2018, solo); *Bharbarosi*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (2017, solo); and *Becoming*, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town, South Africa (2016, solo). His work can be found in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, France, and the Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa, among others. *Oracles of the Pink Universe*, his first solo institutional exhibition in the States, opens at the Denver Art Museum this June. *Like the Snake that Fed the Chameleon* is the artist's third solo exhibition with Nicodim.

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## Simphiwe Ndzube

*Like the Snake that Fed the Chameleon*

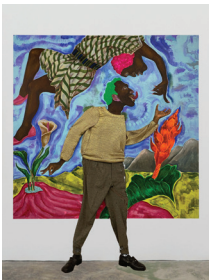
Los Angeles  
December 12, 2020 – January 30, 2021



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Individuation, Manifest*, 2021  
acrylic, collage, spray paint,  
fabric, artificial grapes, wire  
and wood on canvas  
72 x 72 in  
182.9 x 182.9 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*The Return from Heaven*, 2021  
acrylic, collage, spray paint,  
resin and found clothing on  
canvas  
90.5 x 96 in  
229.9 x 243.8 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*The Kiss*, 2021  
acrylic, collage, found clothing,  
resin on canvas  
90.5 x 72 in  
230 x 183 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*I am a Bird Now*, 2021  
fabric, found clothing, res-  
in, synthetic hair, synthetic  
snakeskin, and wire  
dimensions variable



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Beast of No Nation*, 2021  
fabric, fog machine, resin,  
wood, metal, rope, motorbike  
lights, found clothing and tires  
dimensions variable



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Portrait of Daluxolo*, 2021  
acrylic, collage, and spray  
paint on canvas  
51 x 39.5 in.  
129.5 x 100.3 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Nomalanga*, 2021  
acrylic on canvas  
30 x 24 in  
76.2 x 61 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Secrets of the Fields*, 2021  
metal, clay, gazing ball, and  
mulch  
dimensions variable



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Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Rehearsal for Rebellion*, 2021  
acrylic, collage, found clothing,  
resin, and spray paint on  
canvas  
90.5 x 72 in  
229.9 x 182.9 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Rainbow Nation of God, Cities on the Sky*, 2021  
sheetmetal, lumber, windows,  
plexiglass, artificial plants, dirt,  
found door, and mulch  
dimensions variable



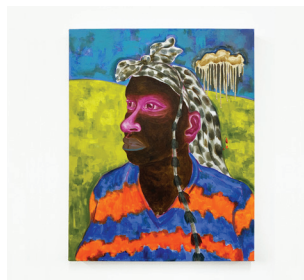
Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Notumato*, 2021  
acrylic and collage on canvas  
39.5 x 30 in  
100.33 x 76.2 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Nombewu, the Seed*, 2021  
acrylic, fabric, and synthetic  
hair on canvas  
30 x 24 in  
76 x 61 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Neon Vernacular*, 2021  
acrylic and collage on canvas  
20 x 16 in  
51 x 41 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*NoGolide the Great Mother*,  
2021  
acrylic and spray paint on  
canvas  
30 x 24 in  
76.2 x 61 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Ma Khulu*, 2021  
acrylic and collage on canvas  
20 x 16 in  
51 x 41 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*TaBhiza, The Flâneur*, 2021  
concrete, metal, resin, silicon,  
fabric, shark teeth, thread and  
found clothing  
81.5 x 26 x 48 in  
207 x 66 x 122 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Goddess of the Night, Glory of the Stars*, 2021  
acrylic, collage, duct tape, and  
spray paint on canvas  
72 x 72 in  
183 x 183 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Once Upon a Time, Mine-Moon*,  
2020  
acrylic, duct tape, and spray  
paint on linen  
72 x 96 in  
183 x 244 cm

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Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Magwaza*, 2021  
acrylic and collage on canvas  
20 x 16 in  
51 x 41 cm



Simphiwe Ndzube  
*Silumko*, 2021  
acrylic, duct tape, and spray  
paint on canvas  
72 x 72 in  
183 x 183 cm

soundscape created by the artist in collaboration with Thabo K Makgolo and Zimbini Makwethu.

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## Simphiwe Ndzube

° Born 1990, South Africa

Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA and Cape Town, South Africa

### Education

2015 BAFA, Michaelis School of Fine Arts, University of Cape Town, South Africa

2010 Peter Clarke Art Centre, Cape Town, South Africa

### Solo Exhibitions

2021 *Oracles of the Pink Universe*, Denver Art Museum, Colorado, USA (*forthcoming*)

*Like the Snake that Ate the Chameleon*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, USA

2020 *The Fantastic Ride to Gwadana*, Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

*New Works on Paper*, Stevenson Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2019 *In the Order of Elephants After the Rain*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest, Romania

*The Rain Prayers*, Museo Kaluz, Mexico City, Mexico

*Uncharted Lands and Trackless Seas*, Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2018 *Waiting for Mulungu*, CC Foundation, Shanghai, China

*Simphiwe Ndzube: Dancing into Form*, Harper's Books, New York, USA

2017 *Bhabharosi*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, USA

2016 *Becoming*, WHATIFTHEWWORLD Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2015 *Imithungo Yezivubeko*, Michaelis School of Arts, Cape Town, South Africa

### Selected Group Exhibitions

2020 *Witness: Afro-Perspectives from the Jorge M. Pérez Collection*, El Espacio 23, Miami, FL, USA

*A Fair Share of Utopia*, The Nest, The Haag, The Netherlands

*Podium*, 181 Fremont, San Francisco, CA, USA

*The Pearl*, RAMP Gallery, London, United Kingdom

*SITE: Art and Architecture in the Digital Space*, Library Street Project, Detroit, MI

*INXS: Never Before Seen Major Works by Simphiwe Ndzube*, Moffat Takadiwa, Zhou Yilun, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA

*New Beginnings*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

*Hollywood Babylon*, Nicodim Gallery, AUTRE Magazine, Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles, CA, USA

*Pineal Eye Infection*, curated by Aaron Moulton, Seasons, Los Angeles, CA, USA

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- 2019 *Where Water Comes Together With Other Water*, The 15th Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France  
*Trans World*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest, Romania  
*Trans World*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*People*, Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles, CA  
*Filling in the Gaps*, Izoko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2018 *The Adderall and the Ecstasy*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest, Romania  
*New Acquisitions*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL  
*Noise! Frans Hals, Otherwise*, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, the Netherlands  
*Hacer Noche*, Various Locations, Oaxaca, Mexico  
*9 More Weeks*, Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa  
*Defying the Narrative: Contemporary Art from West and Southern Africa*, Ever Gold [Projects], San Francisco, CA  
*Both, and*, Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*The Eye Sees Not Itself*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*Indulge*, Art Movement, Los Angeles, CA
- 2017 *Son of Mr. Green Genes*, BBQLA, Los Angeles, CA  
*Homeward Bound*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*The Hierophant*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest, Romania  
*A Flagrant Arcade in Contemporary Art*, Curated Art Africa Fair, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Colour Chart* at EBONY/CURATED, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2016 *Our Lady + Women's Work*, South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Dear Eurpoa*, Whatiftheworld Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*The Art of Disruptions*, South African National Gallery, South Africa  
*Summer Show*, Ebony Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*#TheOpening*, Greatmore Studios, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2015 *Pouring Ours Secretes*, Smac Art Gallery, Stellenbosch, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Barclays L'AtelierWestern Cape Regional Exhibition*, Rust En Vrede Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Kasi-2-kasi Public Arts Festival / Remaking Place*, Gordon Institute for Centre and Creative Arts, Cape Town, South Africa  
*"But he doesn't have anything on!"*, Commune1 Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2014 *Emergence*, Ebony Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Art of objects byartist*, The Studio Kalk Bay Gallery, Kalk Bay, South Africa  
Newcastle Arts Festival, curated by Nkule Mabaso, Durban & Malawi, South Africa  
*Re-visiting Sites*, curated by Khanyisile Mbongwa, The Hostel, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2010 *See, Create Exhibition*, Iziko South African National Gallery Annexe, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Peter Clarke and Friends*, Frank Joubert Art Centre, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2009 *The rights of a child*, Iziko National Gallery Annexe & Jewish Museum, Cape Town, South Africa

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## Awards

- 2019 Culture Creators Annual 'Innovators & Leaders' Award
- 2016 Tollman Award for the Visual Arts
- 2015 Michaelis Prize Winner, Michaelis School of Fine Art  
Simon Gerson Prize
- 2013 Cecil Skotnes Scholarship

## Residencies

- Greatmore Artist Residency Studios, Woodstock, Cape Town, South Africa
- Dalton Warehouse, South Central, Los Angeles, CA

## Selected Public and Private Collections

- A4 Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa
- CC Foundation, Shanghai, China
- Christen Sveeas Collection, Norway
- The Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado
- HOW Art Museum, Shanghai, China
- Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, United States
- Museo Kaluz, Mexico City, Mexico
- Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, France
- Pérez Art Museum, Miami Florida, United States
- Rubell Museum, Miami, Florida, United States
- Rupert Museum, Cape Town, South Africa
- University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town, South Africa