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Simphiwe Ndzube: Isithunywa so Moya | A Messenger of the Spirit

Nicodim Los Angeles, Upstairs

October 15 – December 3, 2022



Simphiwe Ndzube, *The Swing*, oil on canvas, 2022

In *Isithunywa so Moya*, Simphiwe Ndzube's fifth solo exhibition with Nicodim, Isithunywa are mystical beings that serve as messengers and mediators between the physical and spiritual realms. This body of work casts the artist's inspiration as Isithunywa, forces he harnesses to pull his practice to new frontiers with his hands, eyes, and heart as vessels. The characters he channels find themselves in varying states of transition: in *Gxarha River – 1856*, 2022, a faulty Xhosa prophetess has a vision that she believes will lead her people to freedom, but instead brings famine and death; in *The Swing*, 2022, an owl rocks a clownish figure from a trapeze, dangling him above a body of water either in good humor or as torturee for some crime committed; *The Great Mother*, 2022, lights a candle, chasing the night away.

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Ndzube's personal *Isithunywa* have led his practice in new directions as well. While the bodies that populate his canvases and sculpture are clearly related to those from prior series, their flesh and blood are divined from oil paints and ceramics, both firsts for the artist. The new mediums are mediums themselves, bringing a vivid ruddiness to the artist's unique methods of transposing narrative and allegory.

Says Ndzube: "For me, channeling artworks is an intuitive process, an openness to travel through unknown and often dark places to bring about new lives and stories. The lives within the work are not creations of mine—they are willed to existence by forces beyond my control. I don't question the souls I'm told to create. They come from a higher power, an inner consciousness, or a combination of the two. Artmaking, for me, is like the work of a Sangoma, or healer, who finds beauty in the macabre, clarity in chaos, answers in questions, and questions in answers."

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 *Masemola Road*, Stevenson, Cape Town (2022, solo); *Vusamazulu I Awakening the Heavens*, Nicodim, New York (2021, solo), *Oracles of the Pink Universe*, Denver Art Museum, Denver (2021, solo), *Like the Snake that Fed the Chameleon*, Nicodim, Los Angeles (2021, solo); *Lineages: Works from the Collection*, NSU Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale (2021); *The Fantastic Ride to Gwadana*, Stevenson, Johannesburg (2020, solo); *Where Water Comes Together With Other Water*, The 15th Lyon Biennale, Lyon (2019); *People*, Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles (2019); *New Acquisitions*, Rubell Museum, Miami (2018); and *Waiting for Mulungu*, CC Foundation, Shanghai, China (2018, solo). His work is collected by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Denver Art Museum; Musée d'art Contemporain de Lyon, France; Iziko South African National Gallery, South Africa; Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, South Africa; Denver Art Museum; Rubell Museum; and many others.

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Simphiwe Ndzube

° Born 1990, South Africa

Lives and works in Los Angeles and Cape Town

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

2022 *Isithunywa so Moya / A Messenger of the Spirit*, Nicodim Upstairs, Los Angeles
Masemola Road, Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town

2021 *Vusamazulu / Awakening the Heavens*, Nicodim, New York
Oracles of the Pink Universe, Denver Art Museum, Colorado
Like the Snake that Fed the Chameleon, Nicodim, Los Angeles

2020 *The Fantastic Ride to Gwadana*, Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg
New Works on Paper, Stevenson Gallery, Amsterdam

2019 *In the Order of Elephants After the Rain*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest
The Rain Prayers, Museo Kaluz, Mexico City
Uncharted Lands and Trackless Seas, Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town

2018 *Waiting for Mulungu*, CC Foundation, Shanghai
Simphiwe Ndzube: Dancing into Form, Harper's Books, New York

2017 *Bhabharosi*, Nicodim, Los Angeles

2016 *Becoming*, WHATIFTHEWORLD Gallery, Cape Town

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

Selected Group Exhibitions

2022 *California Biennial 2022: Pacific Gold*, Orange Country Museum of Art, Costa Mesa
Where do I begin, Stevenson, Cape Town

Contemporary African Art, Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs

2021 *What Do You See, You People, Gazing at Me*, Sadie Coles, London

In Some Form or Fashion, The Momentary Museum, Bentonville

021 - 2021, Stevenson Gallery, Amsterdam

Shattered Glass, Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles

Lineages: Works from the Collection, NSU Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale

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Collective Interventions, Fine Arts Center Gallery, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
my whole body changed into something else, Stevenson Gallery, Capetown

- 2020 *Witness: Afro-Perspectives from the Jorge M. Pérez Collection*, El Espacio 23, Miami
INXS: Never Before Seen Major Works by Simphiwe Ndzube, Moffat Takadiwa, Zhou Yilun, Nicodim, Los Angeles
A Fair Share of Utopia, The Nest, The Haag, The Netherlands
Hollywood Babylon, Nicodim Los Angeles, AUTRE Magazine, Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles
New Beginnings, Nicodim, Los Angeles
Podium, 181 Fremont, San Francisco
The Pearl, RAMP Gallery, London
SITE: Art and Architecture in the Digital Space, Library Street Project, Detroit
Pineal Eye Infection, curated by Aaron Moulton, Seasons, Los Angeles
- 2019 *Where Water Comes Together With Other Water*, The 15th Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art, Lyon
Trans World, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest
Trans World, Nicodim, Los Angeles
People, Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles
Filling in the Gaps, Izoko South African National Gallery, Cape Town
Simphiwe Ndzube, Navid Nuur, Sara Rahbar, Gazelli Art House, Azerbaijan
Open Borders, 14th Curitiba International Biennial, Brazil
- 2018 *Experiences of Tonality in the Véronique Susman-Savigne Collection*, Norval Foundation, Cape Town
Empathy: Beneath the Surface, California Museum of Art Thousand Oaks, Los Angeles
New Acquisitions, Rubell Family Collection, Miami
Noise! Frans Hals, Otherwise, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem
Hacer Noche, Various Locations, Oaxaca
9 More Weeks, Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg
Defying the Narrative: Contemporary Art from West and Southern Africa, Ever Gold [Projects], San Francisco
Both, and, Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town
The Adderall and the Ecstasy, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest
The Eye Sees Not Itself, Nicodim, Los Angeles
Indulge, Art Movement, Los Angeles
- 2017 *Son of Mr. Green Genes*, BBQLA, Los Angeles
Homeward Bound, Nicodim, Los Angeles
The Hierophant, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest
A Flagrant Arcade in Contemporary Art, Curated Art Africa Fair, Cape Town
Colour Chart, EBONY/CURATED, Cape Town

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- 2016 *Our Lady + Women's Work*, South African National Gallery, Cape Town
Dear Eurpoa, Whatiftheworld Gallery, Cape Town
The Art of Disruptions, South African National Gallery
Summer Show, Ebony Gallery, Cape Town
#TheOpening, Greatmore Studios, Cape Town
- 2015 *Pouring Ours Secretes*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, Cape Town
Kasi-2-kasi Public Arts Festival / Remaking Place, Gordon Institute for Centre and Creative Arts, Cape Town
Barclays L'Atelier Western Cape Regional Exhibition, Rust En Vrede Gallery, Cape Town
"But he doesn't have anything on!", Commune1 Gallery, Cape Town
- 2014 *Emergence*, Ebony Gallery, Cape Town
Art of objects by artist, The Studio Kalk Bay Gallery, Kalk Bay
Newcastle Arts Festival, curated by Nkule Mabaso, Durban & Malawi
Re-visiting Sites, curated by Khanyisile Mbongwa, The Hostel, Cape Town
- 2011 *Vuleka Art Competition selection*, Art-B Gallery, Bellville
- 2010 *See, Create Exhibition*, Iziko South African National Gallery Annexe, Cape Town
Peter Clarke and Friends, Frank Joubert Art Centre, Cape Town
- 2009 *The rights of a child*, Iziko National Gallery Annexe & Jewish Museum, Cape Town

Selected Public and Private Collections

A4 Foundation, Cape Town
Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection, Miami
CC Foundation, Shanghai
Christen Sveeas Collection, Norway
Dangxia Foundation
Denver Art Museum, Denver
Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Geneva
HOW Art Museum, Shanghai
Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles
Museo Kaluz, Mexico City
Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, Lyon
NSU Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale
Pérez Art Museum, Miami
Pond Society
Rubell Museum, Miami
Rupert Museum, Cape Town
University of Cape Town
Yuz Museum, Shanghai
Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town

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Residencies

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

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