

Strauss & Co

PRIVATE SALES





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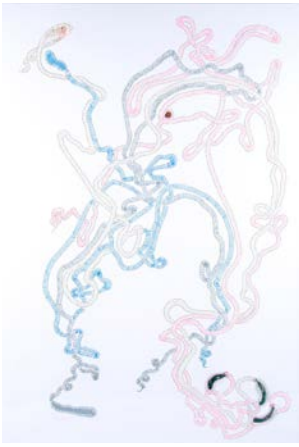
all prices on request
viewing by appointment

ENQUIRIES

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Nicholas Hlobo, *Ihlangesi*



Lisa Brice, *Figure X*



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, *Grandpères*



Pieter Hugo, *Dambe Fighter, Kano, Nigeria, 2005, 'Gadawan Kura' – The Hyena Men series*



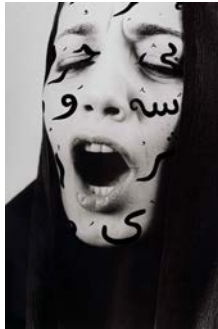
Zanele Muholi, Khanyile, *The Sails Durban, Somnyama Ngonyama Series*



Zanele Muholi, *Jamile, Queens, New York, Somnyama Ngonyama Series*



Zanele Muholi, *Hlelile, ISGM, Boston, Somnyama Ngonyama Series*



Shirin Neshat, *Untitled, Turbulent Series*



Edoardo Villa, *Thrust II*



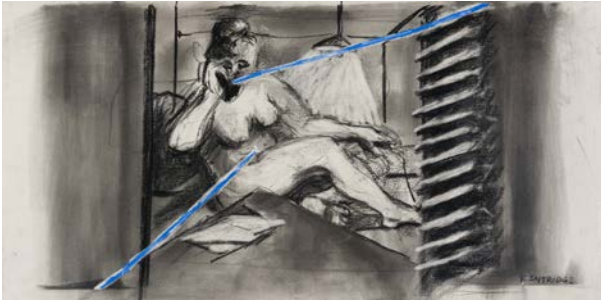
William Kentridge, *Still Life with Roses*



William Kentridge, *In Praise of Bad Clocks (from the Refusal of Time)*



William Kentridge, *Drawing for Other Faces (Landscape and Building with Arched Roof)*



William Kentridge, *Drawing For Stereoscope*



Robert Hodgins, *A Bad Day on the Dow: An Apoplectic Painting*



Alexis Preller, *The Feast*



Alexis Preller, *Basuto Allegory*



Alexis Preller, *Boy with a Crocodile*



Jacob Hendrik Pierneef, *Die Levuvu (sic) Rivier, Naby Louis Trichardt, Northern Transvaal*



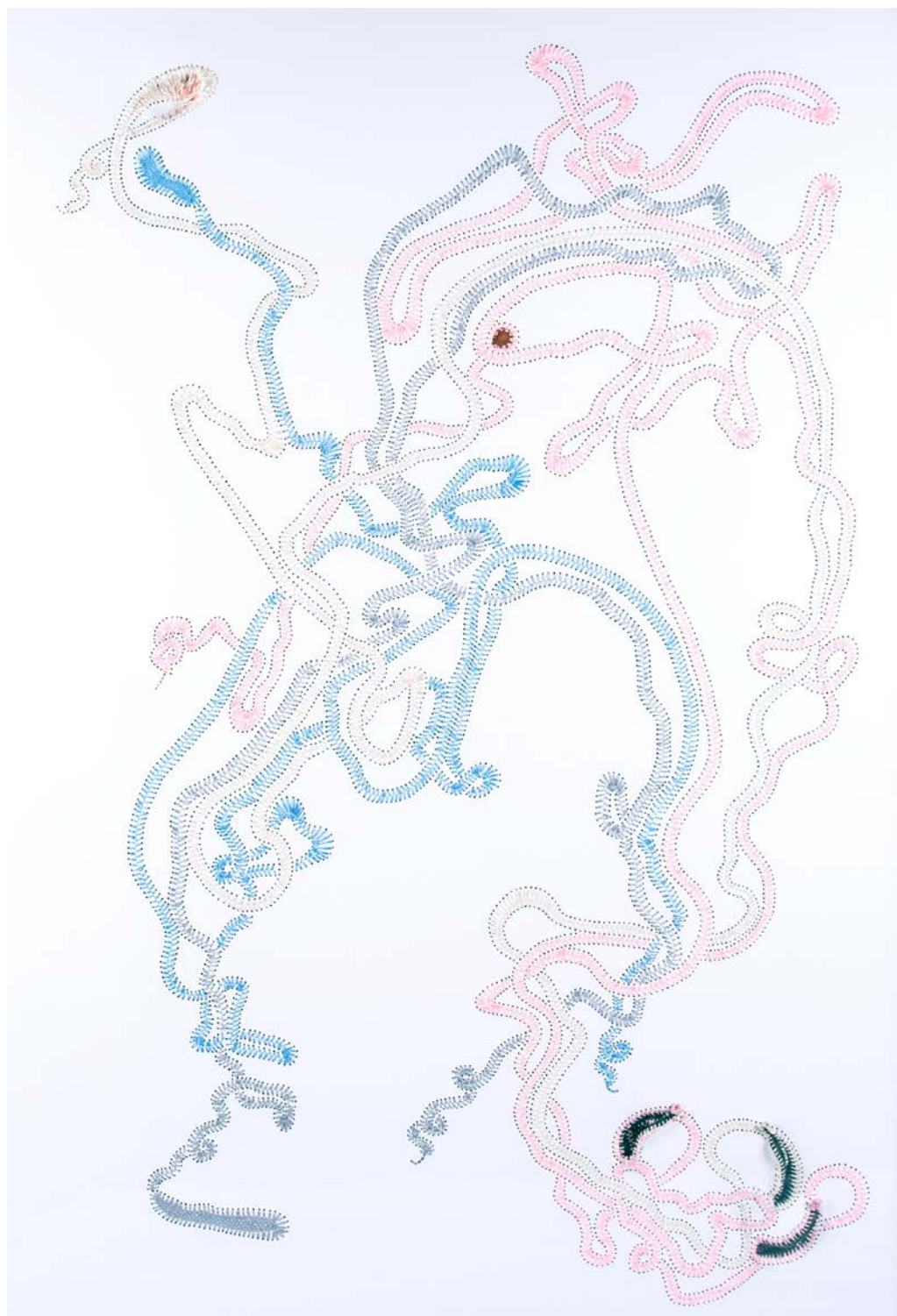
Cecil Skotnes, *Shaka the Warrior*



Maud Sumner, *Still Life with Flowers*



Dorothy Kay, *The Old Cape Fisherman*



Nicholas Hlobo

SOUTH AFRICAN 1975–

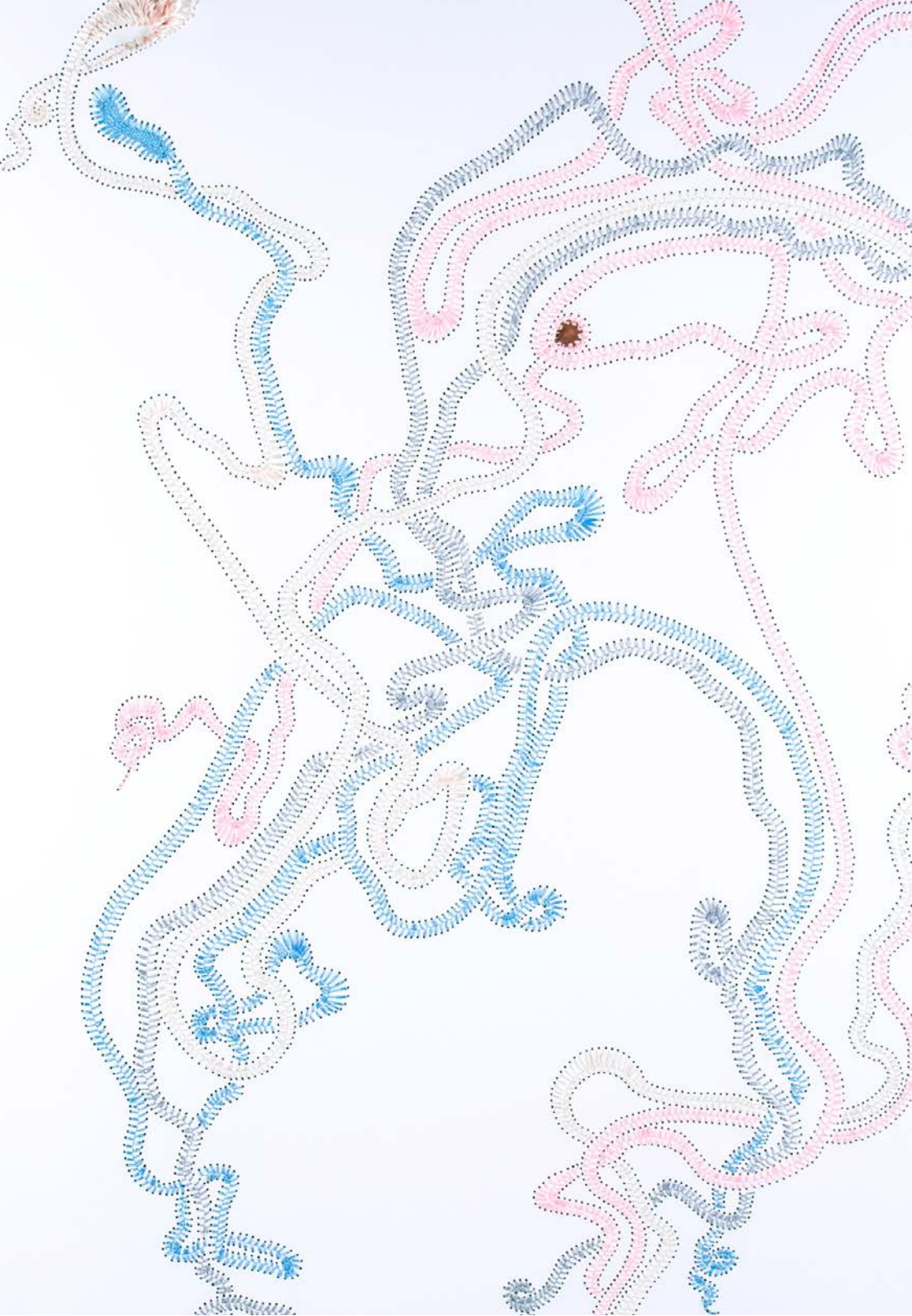
Ihlengesi

2015

ribbon and leather on canvas, in a Perspex box

147 by 101 cm excluding frame;

the Perspex box: 164 by 113,5 by 12 cm



PROVENANCE

Stevenson, 9 June 2015.
Private Collection.

NOTES

Accompanied by a digital copy of a Stevenson certificate of authenticity,
inscribed with the artist's name, the date, title and medium.



'I am fascinated with water or rather what lies beneath, particularly dolphins which is the translation of lhlengesi. Their ability to communicate to each other and to relate to other animals, specifically humans is interesting. Their communicative ability relates to telepathy and their intelligence which is apparent in how they respond in captivity.'

– Nicholas Hlobo



Lisa Brice

SOUTH AFRICAN 1968–

Figure X

signed with the artist's initials and dated 2010

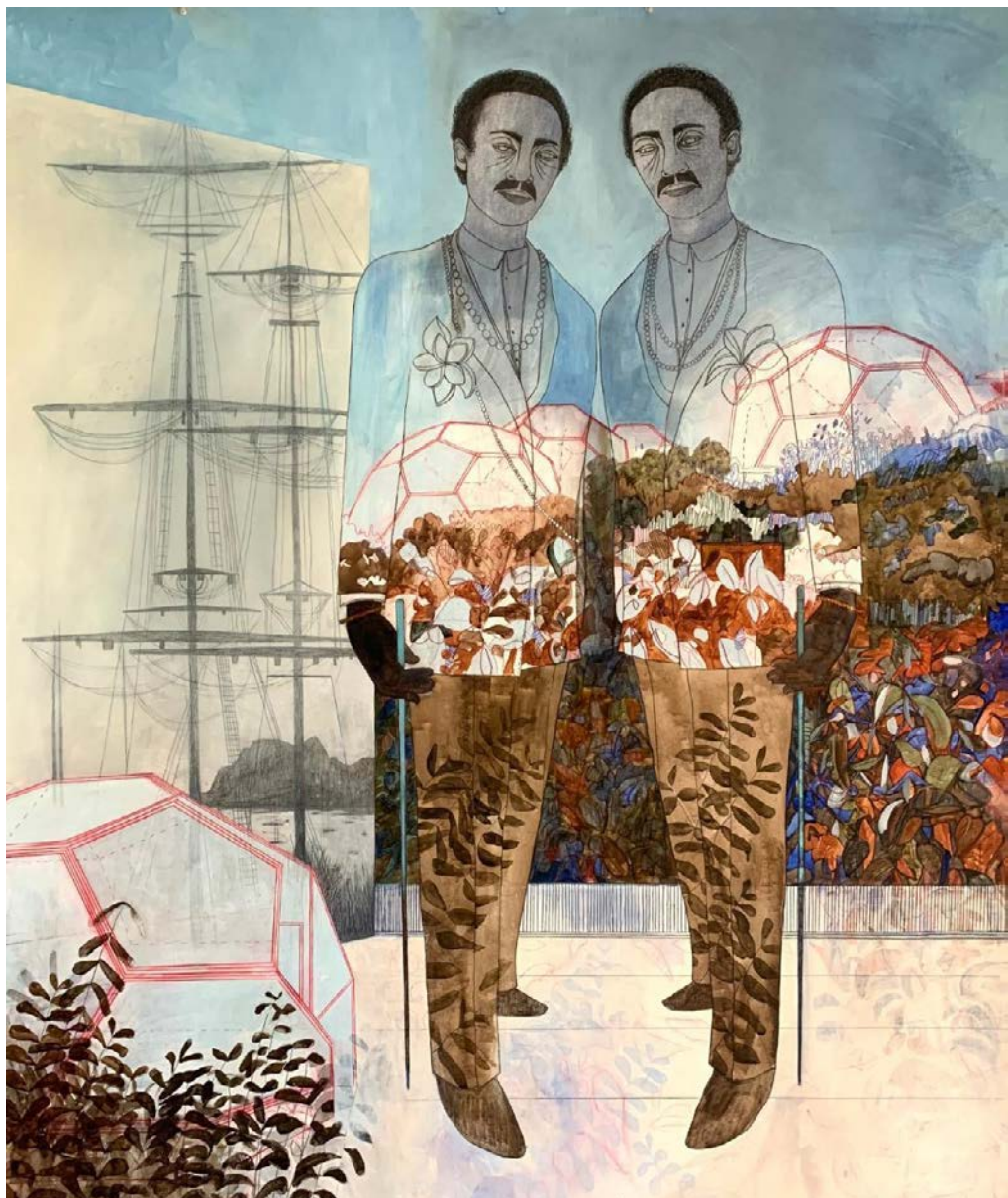
oil on paper

41,5 by 29,5 cm excluding frame;

51 by 38,5 by 3,5 cm including frame



LB 2010



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum

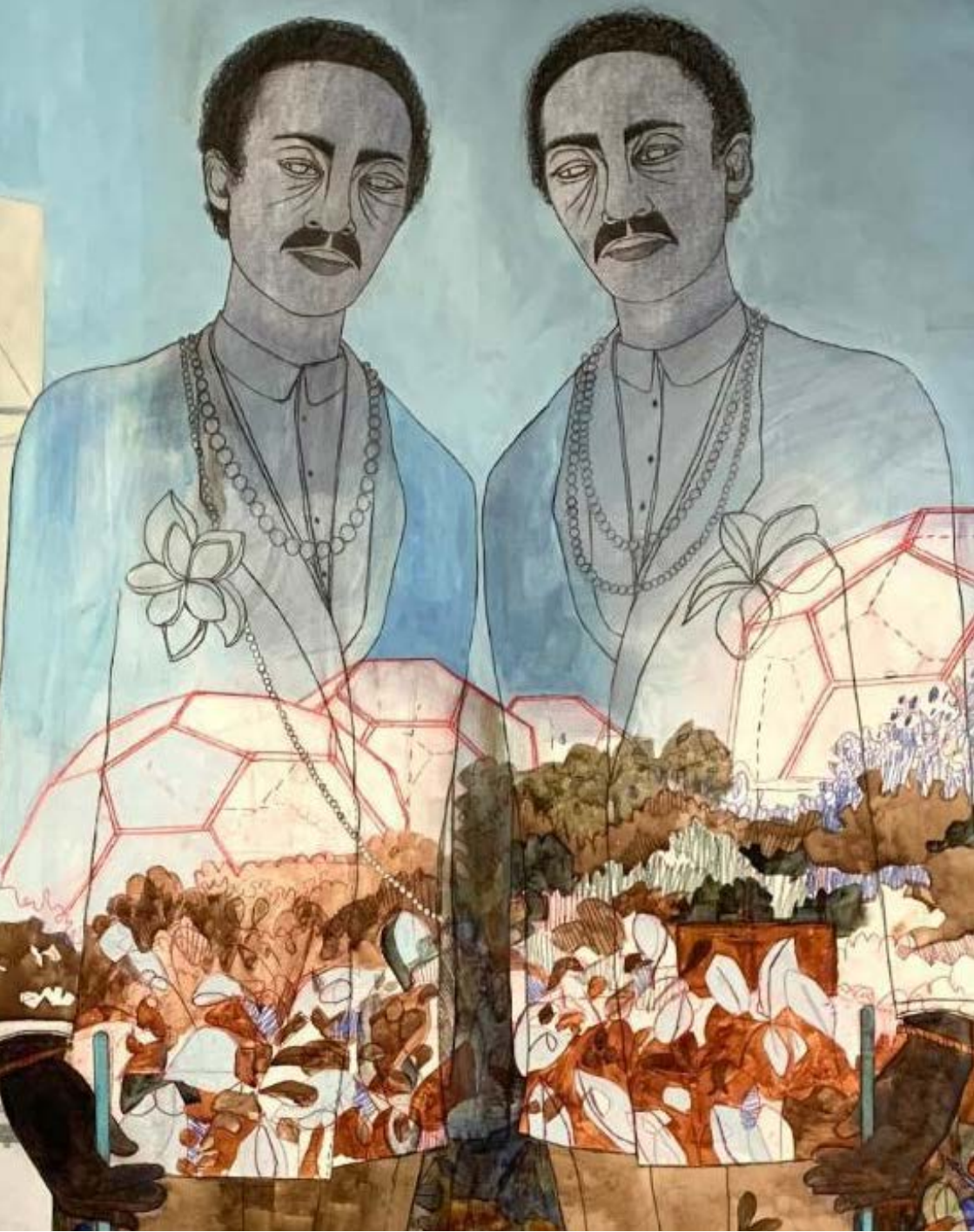
BOTSWANAN 1980–

Grandpères

2020

pencil and oil on canvas

166 by 144 cm excluding frame



EXHIBITED

Goodman Gallery, London, *Solo Exhibition: Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, Battlecry*,
3 September to 26 September 2020.

KM21, Kunstmuseum, The Hague, *Solo Museum Show: Pamela Phatsimo
Sunstrum: The Gods and The Underdogs*, 22 June to 20 October 2024.

LITERATURE

Chika Okeke-Agulu and Joseph L Underwood (ed) (2021) *African Artists from
1882–Now*, New York: Phaidon, illustrated in colour on page 305.

Galerie: Living Artfully, Winter 2020/2021, Issue No 20.



‘Pamela’s multidisciplinary work is inspired by literature, but it is infused with science as she creates alter egos and a parallel universe to reflect on aspects of modern society as well as her own life.’

– Jorge M Pérez, collector and philanthropist
Galerie: *Living Artfully*, Winter 2020/2021, Issue No 20.

‘Having grown up in a multicultural family living in various parts of Africa, Southeast Asia and North America, Sunstrum explores her transnational identity in a multidisciplinary practice spanning drawing, painting, installation and animation. Hierarchies of power and the nature of the human condition are addressed through her multilayered works, which combine cultural and art historical references with elements of fantasy to find unexpected connections between advanced scientific theories, cosmology, myth and spiritual belief systems. To make sense of her own experience of blackness, she developed an alter-ego, Asme. This recurring character is a time and space traveller, shifting between cultural, historical and geographical contexts. The two semi-transparent figures surrounded by geodesic domes in Grandpères function similarly – referencing James Abbott McNeill Whistler’s (1834–1903) 1891 portrait of the aristocratic Symbolist poet, Robert de Montesquiou and Rotherhithe (1860) his etching of two boatmen smoking pipes by London’s River Thames - echoed in the rigging of the tall ship in the background. As with Sunstrum’s other works, it straddles both the past and an imagined future, one filled with moments of transcultural and transhistorical convergence.’¹

1. Chika Okeke-Agulu and Joseph L Underwood (ed) (2021) *African Artists from 1882- Now*, New York: Phaidon.



Pieter Hugo

SOUTH AFRICAN 1976–

*Dambe Fighter, Kano, Nigeria, 2005,
'Gadawan Kura' – The Hyena Men series*

signed, dated 2005, numbered 5/5 and inscribed
with the title in pencil in the margin

Archival pigment ink on cotton rag paper
paper size: 112 by 110 cm; image size: 100 by 100 cm



LITERATURE

Pieter Hugo (2012) *This Must Be the Place*, New York: Prestel, illustrated in colour on page 145.

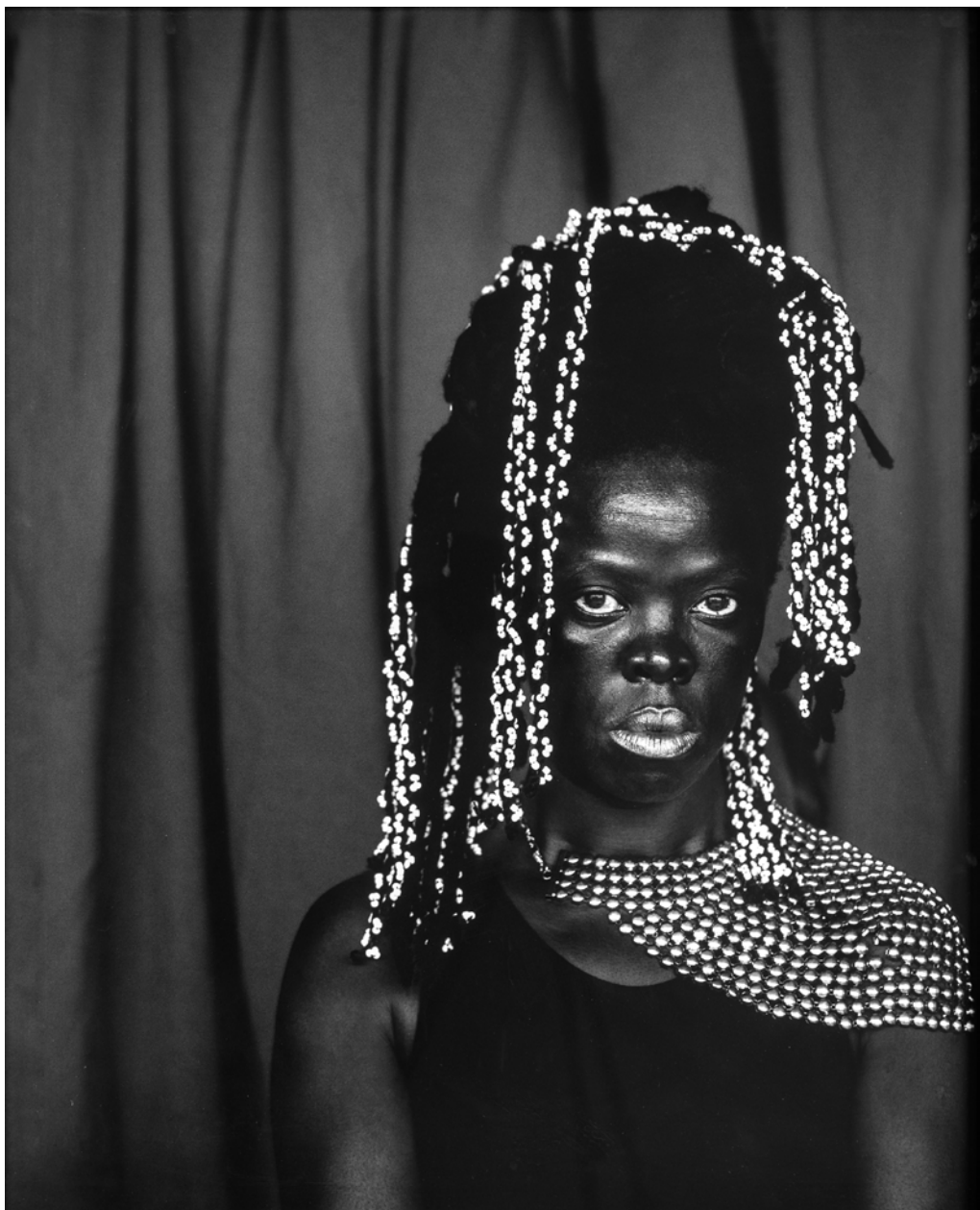
EXHIBITED

Stevenson, Cape Town, 'Gadawan Kura' – *The Hyena Men*, 22 February to 23 March 2006, another example from the edition exhibited.



*'A Dambe boxer from Kano, Nigeria, standing feet firmly planted, right hand swathed in the traditional cloth-and-cord glove of the Dambe fighter, nose showing all the signs of the pugilist's trade. The portrait is a deeply moving meditation on machismo, resignation, and vulnerability, the boxer seeming to draw together all of these qualities in the steady gaze he directs at the camera.'*¹

1. Art Africa, Pieter Hugo, <https://artafricamagazine.1.org/pieter-hugo-4/>



Zanele Muholi

SOUTH AFRICAN 1972–

*Khanyile, The Sails Durban,
Somnyama Ngonyama Series*

2019

numbered 7/8

silver gelatin print

image size: 89 by 72,5 cm;

92,5 by 76 by 4 cm including frame





Zanele Muholi

SOUTH AFRICAN 1972–

*Jamile, Queens, New York,
Somnyama Ngonyama Series*

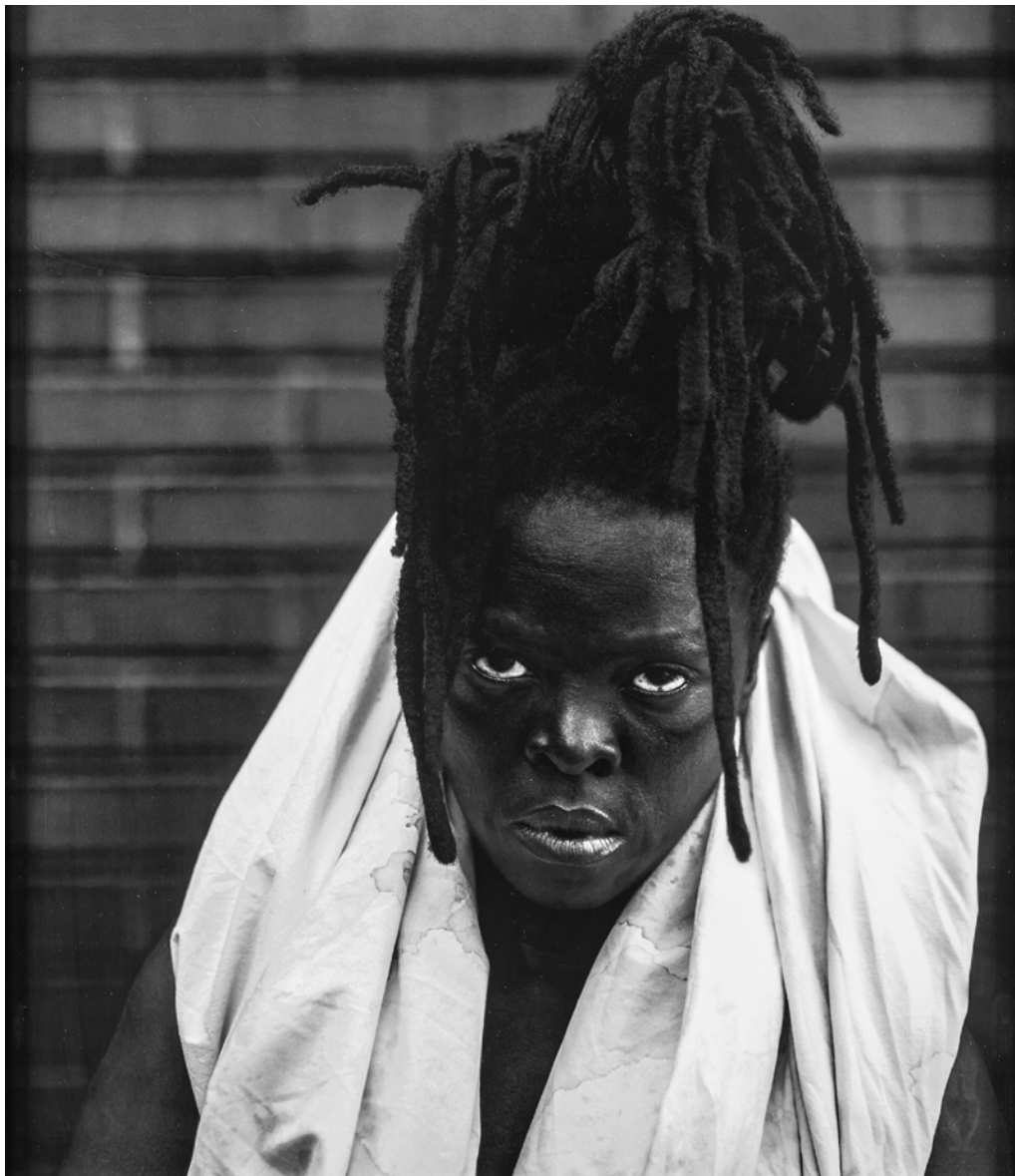
2019

numbered 5/8

silver gelatin print

image size: 49,5 by 39 cm;

53 by 43 by 4 cm including frame



Zanele Muholi

SOUTH AFRICAN 1972–

*Hlelile, ISGM, Boston,
Somnyama Ngonyama Series*

special edition

silver gelatin print

image size: 58,5 by 50 cm;

62 by 53,5 by 4 cm including frame





Shirin Neshat

IRANIAN 1957–

Untitled, Turbulent Series

signed, dated 1997, numbered 2/3 and inscribed with the series title on the reverse; inscribed with the artist's name, the series title, date and medium on a label adhered to the reverse

silver gelatin print with hand-painted ink

image size: 145,5 by 96,5cm;

sheet size: 152 by 101cm; 164 by 112 by 6cm including frame

PROVENANCE

The Linda Givon Collection.



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Edoardo Villa

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Thrust II

signed and dated 1983
painted steel

height: 250cm including base; length: 440cm

LITERATURE

Karel Nel, Elizabeth Burroughs and Amalie von Maltitz (eds) (2005).
Villa at 90, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball with Shelf Publishing,
illustrated in colour on pages 88 and 89.



In the mid-1980s, Edoardo Villa evolved the relationship between pipes and metal sheets into some of the most open, large-scale, space-related works he ever made.

In this outstanding series of works titled, *Thrust* (also sometimes referred to as *War Machines*) the human element of his earlier works,

Prisoners and Cages is replaced by expansive compositions dominated by thick pipes that mimic the aggression of tanks, cannons and rocket launchers – the tools of war. These impressive but threatening works are intended to alert the viewer to the misplaced ingenuity in the making and use of sophisticated weapons of war.





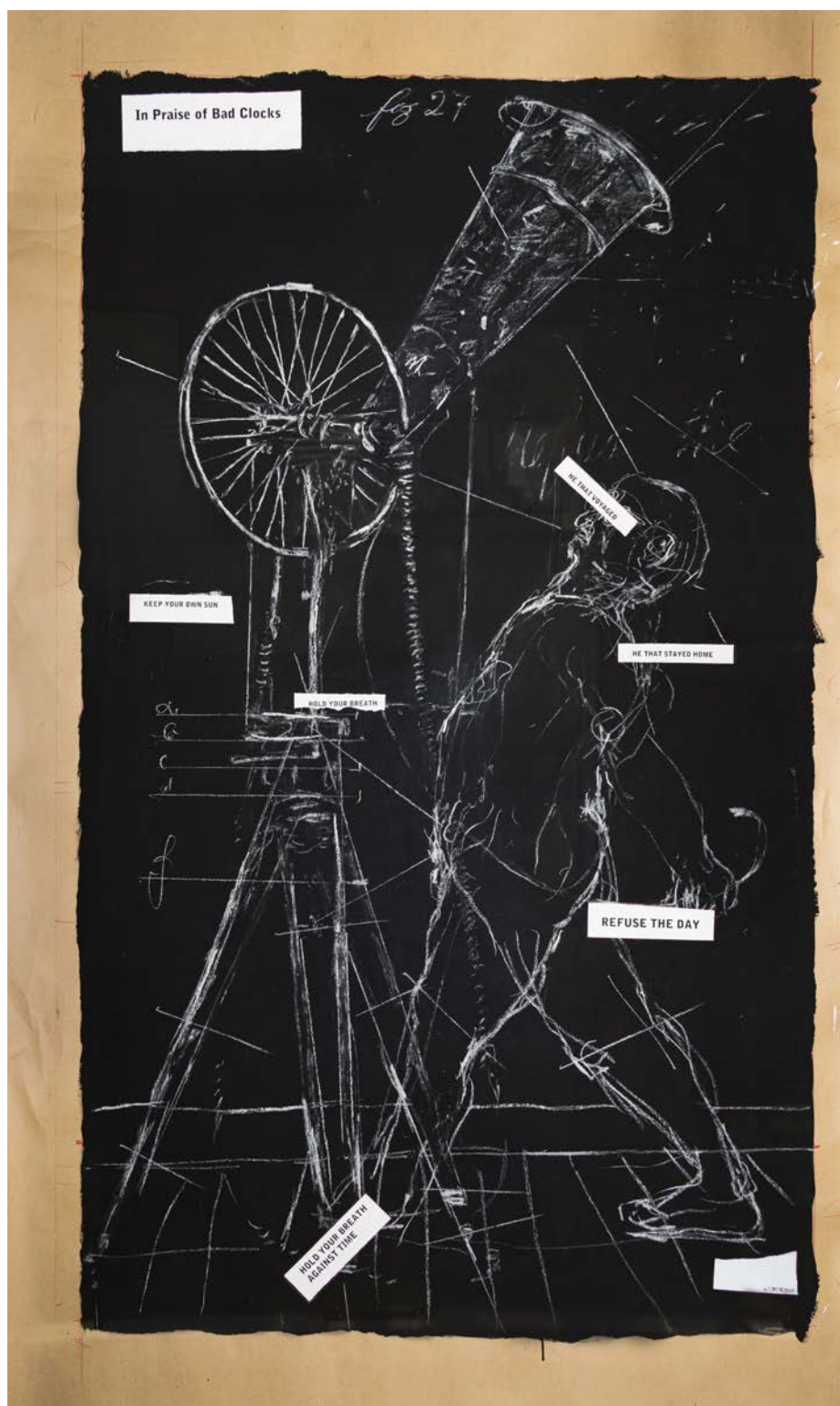
William Kentridge

SOUTH AFRICAN 1955–

Still Life with Roses

signed and dated 2010 in red conte
ink and watercolour on found sheets pinned to backing sheet
235 by 140 cm, unframed; 257 by 158,5 by 4,5 cm, framed





William Kentridge

SOUTH AFRICAN 1955–

In Praise of Bad Clocks (from the Refusal of Time)

Signed in charcoal

charcoal, coloured pencil, collage and poster paint on brown pattern-makers paper
253 by 152 cm unframed; 284,5 by 178 by 4,5 cm framed

In Praise of Bad Clocks

fg 27

KEEP YOUR OWN SON

HOLD YOUR BREATH

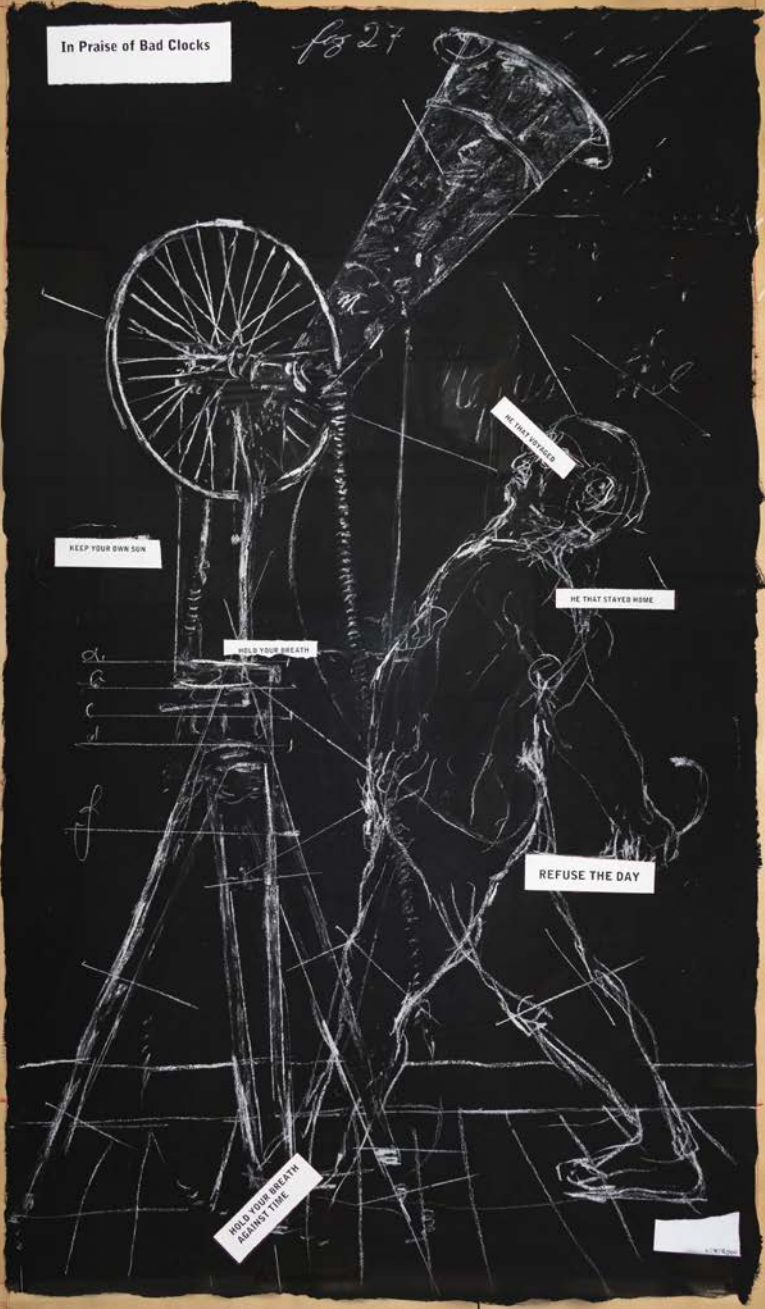
HE THAT SAVED

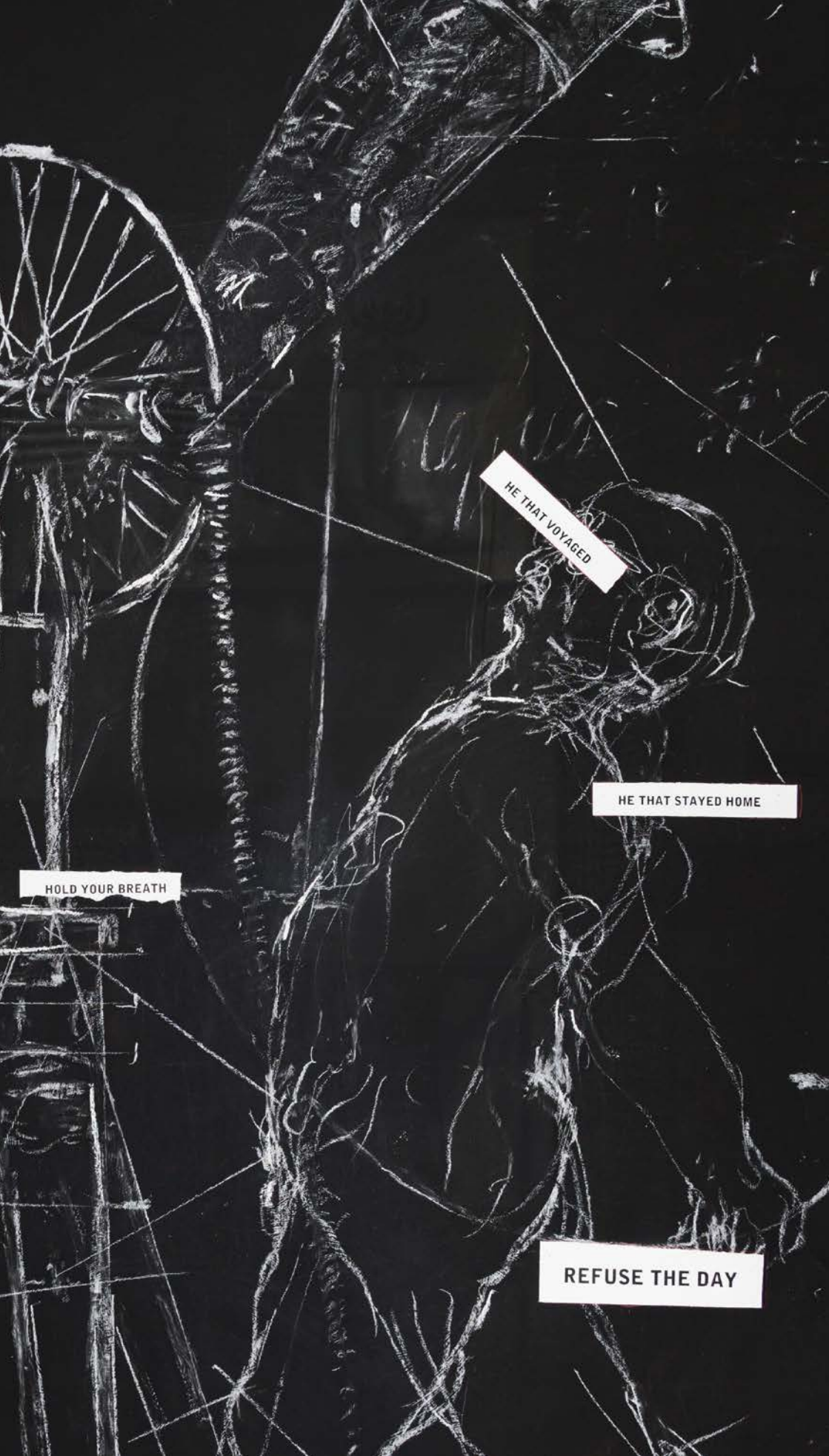
HE THAT STAYED HOME

REFUSE THE DAY

HOLD YOUR BREATH
AGAINST TIME

1968





HOLD YOUR BREATH

HE THAT VOYAGED

HE THAT STAYED HOME

REFUSE THE DAY



William Kentridge

SOUTH AFRICAN 1955–

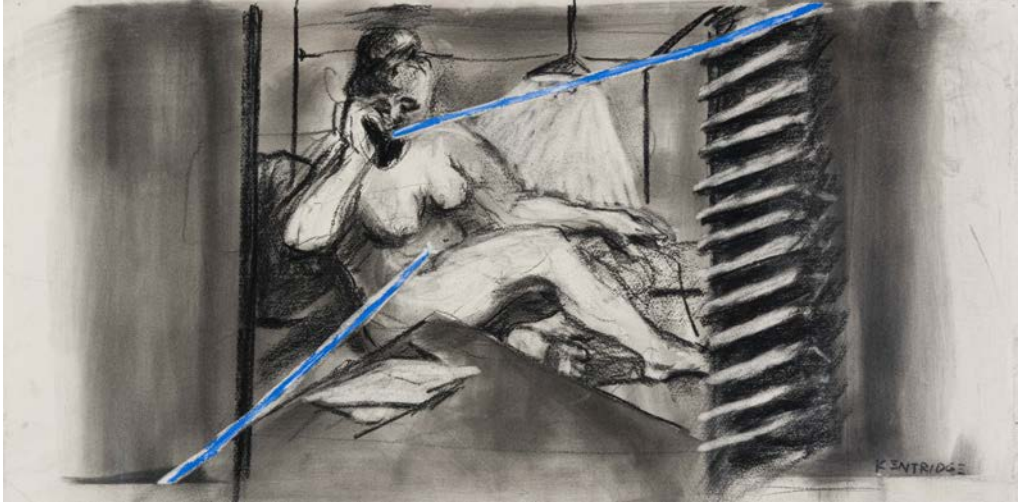
Drawing for Other Faces
(Landscape and Building with Arched Roof)

2011

charcoal and coloured pencil on paper

92 by 114 cm

Unique



William Kentridge

SOUTH AFRICAN 1955–

Drawing For Stereoscope

1998–1999

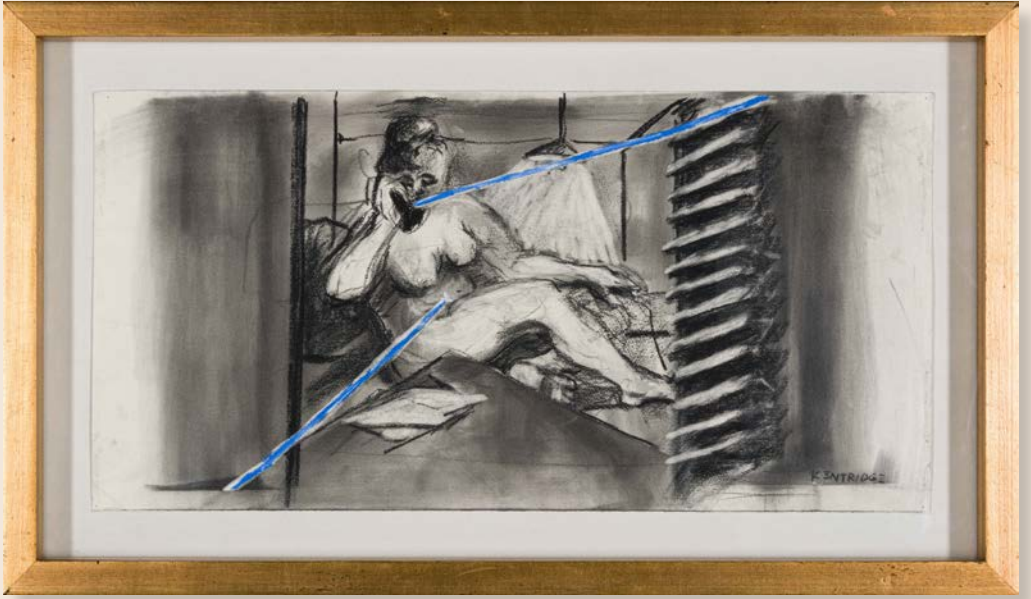
signed

charcoal and pastel on paper

40 by 79 cm excluding frame; 55,5 by 99,5 by 5 cm including frame

PROVENANCE

Linda Givon Collection.







Robert Hodgins

SOUTH AFRICAN 1920–2010

A Bad Day on the Dow: An Apoplectic Painting

signed twice, dated 1994/5 and inscribed with the title on the reverse
oil on canvas

92 by 121,5 cm excluding frame; 94 by 124 by 5 cm including frame

LITERATURE

Sean Fraser (ed) (2002) *Robert Hodgins*, Cape Town:
Tafelberg Publishers, illustrated in colour on page 127.



By the mid-1990s, after a decade and a half in the intensive, and intense programme of painting he engaged on retiring from teaching art at Wits University, Robert Hodgins was in full, triumphant, though always quirky, control of medium, content and technique as *Bad Day on the Dow: An Apoplectic Painting (1994/5)* serves, in masterclass mode, to illustrate.

Hodgins achieves a colouristic intensity by juxtaposing, mixing up and modulating hot reds, oranges and yellows. This generates a negative space seething with visual discomfort and menace; a visual equivalent of heartburn and high blood pressure. His brutalist marks and drawing are caught as always between the heroic crudity of Jean Dubuffet or Philip Guston and the Beano and Dandy comics of his English childhood.

Here, he images three businessmen facing financial disaster: the figure on the left blotted with liverish and worm-like marks on a swarthy disquiet of dyspeptic paint; that at centre frozen in cartoonish wide-eyed horror transfixed in brutal white; and on the right, the bland and suave accountant archetype, goggles reflecting the meltdown but occluding his human gaze, features and flesh aggregated as chevrons and well-managed echoes of line. This same rhythmic linearity is picked up in a remarkable painterly metonymy in which Hodgins uses the pinstripe motif to tellingly expressive, psychologising and dramatic effect – notably, though not exclusively, in the central figure, reduced as he is to a sawn-off pinstriped bust bobbing on a sea of adversity. And burning out from the background, on the shifting tide of red, orange and yellow, there is, disembodied and spotlighted, the office presented as the scene of a crime, a crime as yet unaided.

A Bad Day on the Dow: An Apoplectic Painting is a remarkable and memorable one in the oeuvre of an artist who continues to justify his burgeoning international reputation.

Ivor Powell





Alexis Preller

SOUTH AFRICAN 1911–1975

The Feast

signed and dated '46; inscribed with the artist's name, numbered 47 and inscribed with the title on a Johannesburg Art Gallery label adhered to the reverse; inscribed with the title, date and medium on a Norval Foundation label adhered to the reverse

oil on canvasboard

42,5 by 57 cm



EXHIBITED

Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, *Alexis Preller Retrospective*, 24 October to 26 November 1972, illustrated in the exhibition catalogue, cat. no. 16.
Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, 24 November 1980 to 4 January 1981.
Norval Foundation, Cape Town, *Alexis Preller: Mythical Lexicon*,
30 November 2023 to 17 November 2024.

LITERATURE

Esmé Berman (1996) *Art and Artists of South Africa*, Johannesburg: South Book Publishers, illustrated in on page 350 and further mentioned on page 352.
Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Alexis Preller: Collected Images*, Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing, illustrated in colour on page 28.
Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Alexis Preller: Africa, the Sun and Shadows*, Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing, illustrated in colour on page 91 and 348 and further mentioned on page 93.



Paul Gauguin, *Le Repas*, 1891, oil on paper mounted on canvas, 73 x 92 cm.

Alexis Preller's central aim as he set out on his artistic journey was to project his identity as a painter living in and rooted in the soil of Africa. He had no desire to follow the trend towards 'international art'; he preferred to devote his energies to the search for a defining African idiom. That aim did not entail rejection of the European artists he respected. His first love of painting had been born in admiration of the lives and works of Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin, and he was not loath to draw on them for his early inspiration.

In his endeavours to define his African identity, he was especially receptive to the example of Gauguin, who had broken away from urban European culture and had ventured into the unspoiled and so-called 'primitive' environment of the Polynesian islands. Preller had made exploratory excursions into the midst of indigenous African communities, but he had not yet succeeded in locating the distinctive form he sought. He turned again to Paul Gauguin.

The young South African's affinity with the expatriate painter is epitomised in this painting,



Alexis Preller, *Exotic Fruit*, 1946, oil on masonite, 19 x 20 cm.

which alludes directly to Gauguin's *Le Repas* of 1891. Note the similarities: the table in the foreground; the children looking on; the carved Swazi bowl and its Tahitian counterpart; the mangoes that became a favourite still-life subject for Alexis Preller; and the bunched bananas that had been similarly appealing to Gauguin.

The two works share significant structural



Traditional styled bowl, Swazi/Northern Limpopo.

features. Obvious at first glance is the conception of the table-top as a broad colour-plane that spreads across the lower two-thirds of the format. Its horizontality is suggested by depicting its nearest side as a strip across the bottom of the canvas, and the change of angle is communicated by the simple device of having the leaf and the foreshortened plate project beyond the table's edge. (In *Le Repas*, the bunch of red bananas performs a similar function).

Preller reaffirmed the perspective of the table-top by including more projecting leaves on the edge of the wooden bowl. He also introduced a perspective line along the left side of the table. Gauguin emphasised the horizontal perspective by means of the direction of the stalk of bananas and with the position of the knife, the central fruit and the use of shadows (all leading to a vanishing-point). There are no shadows in Preller's painting and no indication of the direction of the light source.

While the two paintings have much in common, there are significant differences.

Whereas *Le Repas* reflects a fairly logical interior scene (with a minor discrepancy in the height of the table in relation to the children's figures), there is no rational association of proportion or position between the five individuals portrayed and the still-life before them in *The Feast*. Nor does the romantic landscape in the background appear to bear significant relationship to the contents of the scene, although it is reminiscent of aspects of other paintings by Gauguin: his pink beaches and his moody skies.

Equally enigmatic are the faces of the children. More Polynesian than African, they may be Preller's frank admission of his debt to Paul Gauguin. However, that does not explain the four main faces, or their relationship to the isolated individual second from the left. (Neither, for that matter, is there any explanation for the adult figure with the long shadow who sits apart in *Le Repas*.)

Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Alexis Preller: Collected Images*, Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing, page 31.





Alexis Preller

SOUTH AFRICAN 1911–1975

Basuto Allegory

signed and dated 47; signed and inscribed with the title on the reverse; inscribed with the artist's name and the title on a Johannesburg Art Gallery label adhered to the reverse; inscribed with the artist's name and the title on a Pretoria Art Museum label adhered to the reverse; inscribed with the artist's name, the title and medium on a Norval Foundation label adhered to the reverse

oil on canvasboard

76,5 by 92 cm



EXHIBITED

Constantia Galleries, Johannesburg, *Catalogue of Paintings by Alexis Preller*,
17 to 29 November 1947, cat. no. 14.

Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, *Alexis Preller Retrospective*, 24 October to 26 November
1972, illustrated in black and white in the exhibition catalogue as cat. no. 24.

Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, 24 November 1980 to 4 January 1981.

Norval Foundation, Cape Town, *Alexis Preller: Mythical Lexicon*, 30 November 2023
to 17 November 2024.

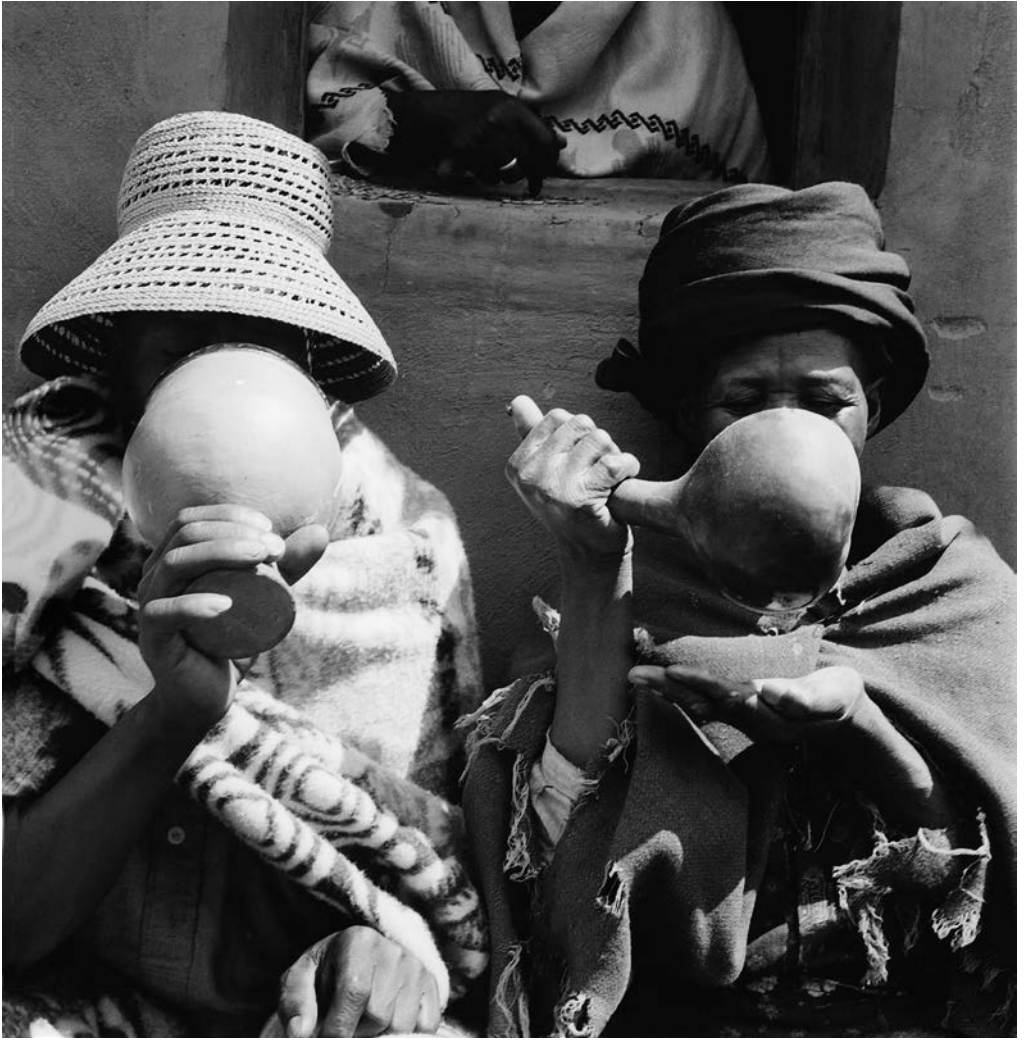
LITERATURE

Frieda Harmsen (1985) *Looking at South African Art: A Guide to the Study and
Appreciation of Art*, Pretoria: J L van Schaik, illustrated in black and white on page 270.

Esmé Berman (1996) *Art and Artists of South Africa*, Johannesburg: South Book
Publishers, illustrated in colour on page 351.

Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Alexis Preller: Collected Images*, Johannesburg:
Shelf Publishing, illustrated in colour on page 46.

Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Alexis Preller: Africa, the Sun and Shadows*,
Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing, illustrated in colour on page 113 and further
mentioned on page 117, 130 and 131.



Constance Stuart photograph of Basuto beer drink, 1947.

ELIOT ELISOFFON PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

From the time of the earliest European explorers, visitors to southern Africa made visual records of the exotic appearance, behaviour and dress of the indigenous peoples they encountered. That practice persisted into the 20th century. However, although so-called 'Native Studies' continued to be popular subjects on South African art exhibitions, few white artists concerned themselves with the character or culture of their models.

The colourful blankets and distinctive straw hats were certainly alluring features of Basuto appearance, but Alexis Preller's *Basuto Allegory* was important because it seemed to deal with something more than mere appearance. Indeed, the very choice of the word 'Allegory' in the title

announced that there was more to this striking composition than was instantly apparent.

This was the first work in which Preller had portrayed Basuto subject matter, and for a long time it was mistakenly believed that he and Constance Stuart had made a joint excursion into what was then known as Basutoland (now Lesotho). She had subsequently exhibited some splendid photographs and he had produced this impressive painting and a companion piece, *Basuto Enchantment* (present whereabouts unknown). When it became apparent that Preller had, in fact, never visited Lesotho, a famous Stuart Larrabee photograph of a Basuto man leaning through the window of an adobe house was considered to be the image that had inspired

Preller's two Basuto works.

It came as a total surprise, therefore, to learn years after Preller's death that there was an explicit photographic source for *Basuto Allegory* among the prints in Stuart Larrabee's archive. Examination of the relevant two photographs reveals how exactly Preller replicated and combined their contents. However, it seemed that Constance Stuart had also made a few colour photographs of the same subjects, in one of which she had mistakenly superimposed the one image on the other. It was that double-exposure that fired Preller's imagination and inspired *Basuto Allegory*. Yet, far from discrediting the painting, that fact is a compelling demonstration of Alexis Preller's genius for seeing beyond the surface of reality, for translating the mundane into the extraordinary.

In this strange, brilliantly coloured painting Preller has created a picture of community life on the escarpment, effectively co-ordinating two scales and two dimensions of experience – the physical and the metaphysical. The spirits of their ancestors loom large in traditional African belief. Here they are portrayed as figures who lived similar lives to those now living in the land, beings who are perpetually present and watching over their descendants.

Mysterious, faceless and unknowable, larger and more powerful than the little people, they protect their homes and provide the warmth and food and drink that are symbolised by the blanket, the plate and clay pot in the foreground. The egret, or tick-bird, prolific in southern Africa, is believed among certain African communities to harbour the spirits of their ancestors. It makes its first appearance in this painting, but recurs again and again in Preller's works.

Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Alexis Preller: Collected Images*, Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing, page 49.



Constance Stuart photograph of Basuto beer drink, 1947.
ELIOT ELISOFON PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN
ART SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



Alexis Preller, *Basuto Figure with Egrets*, 1947.





Alexis Preller

SOUTH AFRICAN 1911–1975

Boy with a Crocodile

signed and dated '64/5; inscribed with the title, date
and medium on a label adhered to the reverse

oil on canvas

135,5 by 125,5 cm



PROVENANCE

Strauss & Co, Cape Town, 11 October 2021, lot 360.

EXHIBITED

Lidchi Gallery, Johannesburg, *Alexis Preller*, 20 October to 8 November 1965, cat. no. 19.

Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, *Alexis Preller Retrospective*, 1972, cat. no. 116,
with the title *Boy on a Crocodile*.

Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, *Alexis Preller: Africa, The Sun and Shadows*,
13 October to 5 December 2009.

Norval Foundation, Cape Town, *Alexis Preller: Mythical Lexicon*,
30 November 2023 to 17 November 2024.

LITERATURE

Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Africa, the Sun and Shadows*, Johannesburg:
Shelf Publishing, illustrated on pages 244 and 245.

Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Collected Images*, Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing,
illustrated on pages 212 to 215.

Die Burger, *Kuns*, 4 January 2010, illustrated.



Conceived on a mural-like scale, *Boy with a Crocodile* is a dazzling and heart-stopping mix of symbol, blazing colour and surprising pattern. Executed in the mid-1960s during a period of mature experimentation, particularly along purely abstract lines, the painting hints at the wide range of Preller's visual sources, his unique interpretations of African mythologies, and his irrepressible, richly-coloured imagination. The painting was first exhibited at the Lidchi Gallery in Johannesburg in the summer of 1965, alongside other landmark works such as *In the Beginning*, *Temple of the Sun*, *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba I*, *The Gold Temple*, *Royal Stele* and the 1965 version of *Primavera* (fig 1).

The composition is dominated by a heraldic figure – a stylised and virile princeling of sorts – wooden in body, still, with a mango-shaped head shown in profile, pouting lips, and an elaborately patterned headpiece. Clutching a staff, a highborn accessory, and with a sash across his chest, the boy stands on a carved crocodile. The reptile, a sacred and totemic animal in so many southern African cultures, is here simplified in form, toothless, and with scales reduced to silvery blue triangles and crescents. Seemingly enthroned, the boy is surrounded by a hard-edged expanse of electric orange, and framed by flat, concentric discs. These asymmetrical and *mandorla*-like devices cause wonderful, decorative confusion: they enclose sections of lavender and mauve



Figure 1: *Primavera*, 1965 illustrated in Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Africa, the Sun and Shadows*, Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing, page 215.

overpainted with flashes of blue and purple.

Boy with a Crocodile was first acquired by Dr Cyril Ross of Pretoria. Writing about the painting to its new owner in April 1968, Preller made it clear that the work was part of his evolving visual language: 'the various motifs and decorative elements derive from much of my earlier work, the origin of which is always Africa.' Indeed, the painting brings to mind so many of the artist's celebrated pictures, his iconic symbols, ornamental flourishes, cultural quotations and artistic allusions. The very subject of the painting, for instance, the boy himself, is the visual descendent of the *Woman with a Lyre* (1956), while the figure's tabletop shoulders owe something to the sculpture of the Dogon and Luba cultures that inspired *Garden of Eden* (1954) and *In the Beginning* (1962). The boy's circular 'fish-eye', moreover, can be traced back to *Fetish Enthralled* (1945), via such diverse paintings as *The Gateway* (1949) and *Mozartian Fish* (1952). Other decorative details, although strikingly reworked, conjure previous sources: the tight bracelets on the arms and ankles make reference to the artist's enchanting Mapogga series, while the scything, horn-shaped forms appearing at the figure's sides recall the bold patterning on the Swazi cloths Preller started collecting as far back as 1937.

Interestingly, a variation of *Boy with a Crocodile* (fig 2), completed in 1964 in shades of brown, mustard, olive and blue, was shown that year on the Exhibition of International Art at the New York World Fair. The painting, along with examples by Bettie Cilliers-Barnard and Jean Welz, disappeared shortly thereafter, only to re-surface in Cape Town in 2007. Another is *Young King* (fig 3), sold by Strauss & Co, is created in deep blues, vibrant golden yellows, and accented with red and pink tones. This version has a more painterly style compared to the other two renditions. The artwork features a cartouche, symbolising pharaonic presence. Together, these works represent a period where Preller searched for imagery that spoke to the significance, power and beauty of art conventions which had evolved in Africa over centuries.



Figure 2: *Boy with a Crocodile*, 1964 illustrated in Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Africa, the Sun and Shadows*, Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing, page 245.



Figure 3: *Young King*, 1964, Strauss & Co, Cape Town, 19 March 2025, lot 34, Sold 4 346 250.





Jacob Hendrik Pierneef

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1957

Die Levuvu (sic) Rivier, Naby Louis Trichardt, Northern Transvaal

signed; signed, inscribed with the title and 'Posbus 1248; Pretoria' on the reverse;
further inscribed with a dedication on the reverse
oil on board

51,5 by 64cm excluding frame; 76,5 by 89,5 by 4cm including frame



Originating in the Soutpansberg Mountains, a northern range frequented by Jacob Hendrik Pierneef, the Levubu / Levuvhu River flows in an easterly direction for about 200 km before it joins the Limpopo River in the Kruger National Park. Steeply descending at first, the river flows through a diverse landscape characterised by rapids, riffles, runs and pools. As is shown in this impressionistic work by Pierneef, in its lowveld reaches the river channel is incised into the landscape. It is unclear when Pierneef visited this spot when he produced this colourist scene, but from dates attached to works depicting the Soutpansberg region it is clear that he was an enthusiastic return visitor from at least the 1920s.

Travel, coupled with acute observation in the field, was central to Pierneef's method as an artist. This experiential way of working is linked to his camping excursions north of Pretoria at Pienaar's River, often with sculptor Anton van Wouw, who counselled him to look carefully as an artist. During his subsequent travels, including to the Soutpansberg in 1941, he made many persuasive drawings portraying trees, leaves and thorns, blossoms or curled seed pods, all with 'the accuracy of a botanist.' Equally, when it came to painting the places he visited, Pierneef never abandoned his early love for impressionistic colour.

Esmé Berman, who knew Pierneef, observes that the artist was 'not essentially concerned with transient impressions, nor with optical sensations.'² This is true, but also disputed by the glorious choreography of colours – marshalled bands of yellow, pink, green, even blue – that in this composition produce a vivid sensory statement. Despite subordinating colour to formal design in his later works, it was never an ideology. A muted palette was also never a must.

'One of Pierneef's inheritances from Impressionist landscape was a 'blonde' colour range,' writes art historian Anna Tietze. 'The Impressionists famously moved away from the reliance on blacks, browns and dark greens that had characterised much earlier landscape

art and substituted these with lighter colour effects. Blues, greens, pinks, violets became the foundation of a sunnier vision and shadows were indicated with a darkening of the dominant hues rather than by recourse to earth colours.³ Of course, in the foreground of this composition Pierneef uses brown, but it is his overall use of vivid colour that intensifies the dramatic effect of this recessive rural landscape.

1. JFW Grosskopf (1947) *Pierneef: The Man and his Work*, Pretoria: Van Schaik, page 13
2. Esmé Berman (1993) *Painting in South Africa*, Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers, page 46
3. Anna Tietze (2022) *Iziko South African National Gallery, Masterpiece of the Month: Jacob Hendrik Pierneef, N'tabeni (1930)*, online, <https://www.iziko.org.za/masterpiece/masterpiece-of-the-month-jacob-hendrik->, accessed 20 August 2024.







Cecil Skotnes

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926–2009

Shaka the Warrior

signed

painted and incised wood panel

76,5 by 60,5 by 5 cm

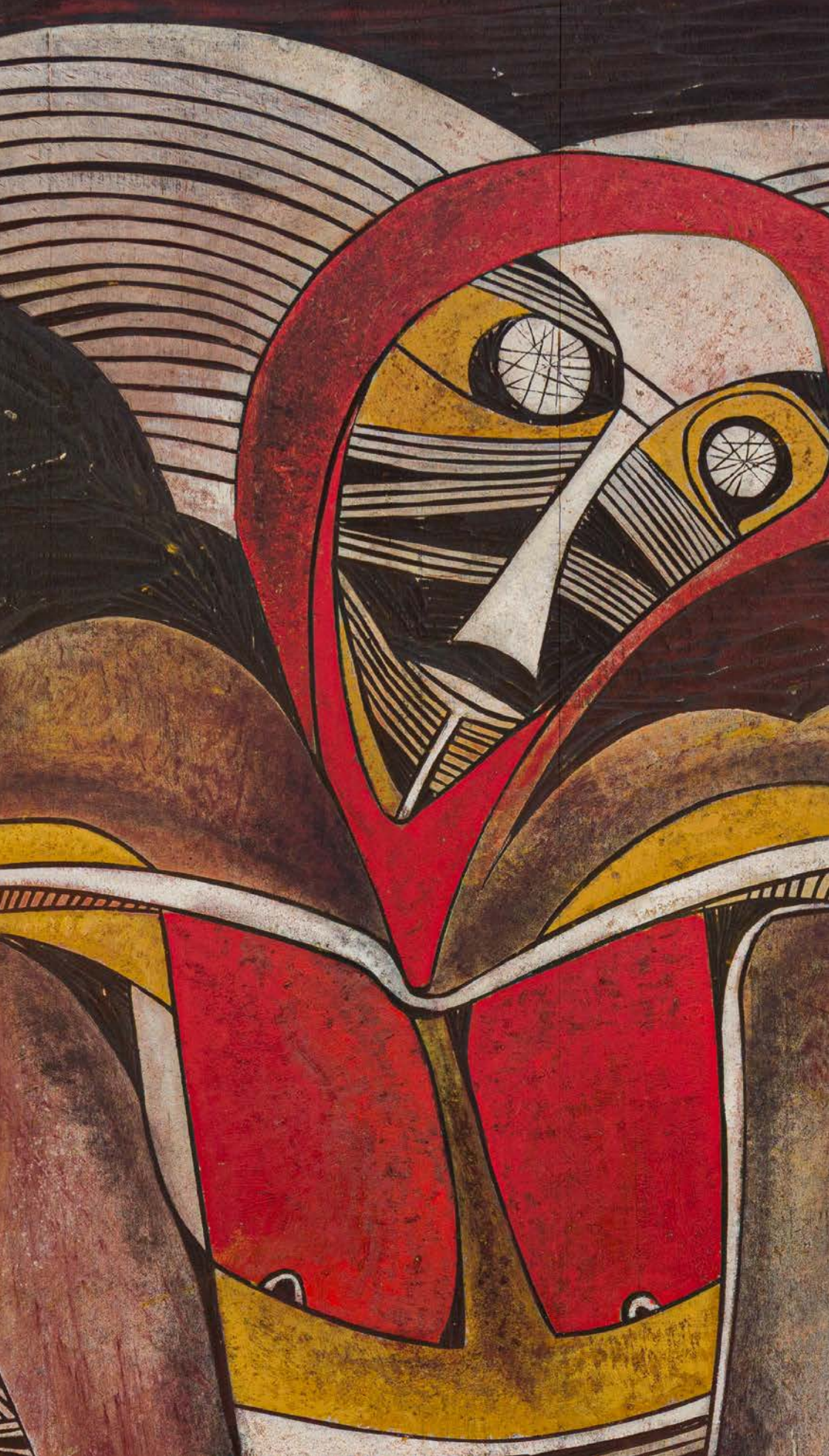


'The Shaka epic was visualized after I became acquainted with the main elements of his story. It started as an interest in the man and became an obsession to give him his rightful place as the most important historical figure of the first half of the nineteenth century. There had been an attempt by both black and white – Dingaan and the British – to smother his importance, to turn him into a vague monster whose impact on the times and the future was equally vague. I intended to rectify that and present him as the great figure he was. He appealed to me for several reasons: hero in the classical mould, warrior, statesman, "creator of the Zulu empire", tactician and commander.' – Cecil Skotnes

Skotnes is well known for his painted and incised woodcut reliefs and woodblock prints. *Shaka the Warrior* exemplifies his classic style, which merged elements of Western art with traditional African culture, history, and folklore. This work specifically references the late 18th and early 19th-century historical figure Shaka Zulu, who rose through the ranks to rule the Zulu Kingdom before his assassination by his brothers in 1828. Shaka remains a fascinating and controversial historical figure due to his complex legacy as both a brilliant military innovator and a ruthless leader.

Shaka the Warrior is part of a larger fascination with the subject matter by Skotnes. Throughout his career, he made a few works referencing the Zulu warrior in different forms, including a series of prints he created in 1973. The epic work *The Assassination of Shaka* consists of 43 separate woodcuts that tell the story in visual form. The work fetched ZAR 76 213 at auction earlier this year.

Consistent with Skotnes' style from the 1970s and 80s, *Shaka the Warrior* incorporates cubist elements that represent multiple perspectives while emphasising the two-dimensional nature of the surface. Despite its restricted colour palette, the work appears bold and vivid, with a visceral quality that typifies his approach. The work merges abstraction with figuration, creating a powerful visual narrative that blends historical subject matter with contemporary artistic techniques. Throughout his career, Skotnes was particularly drawn to fragmenting the human figure (heads, limbs, torsos), rendering them in various forms that emphasised their symbolic and physical presence.





Maud Sumner

SOUTH AFRICAN 1902–1985

Still Life with Flowers

signed

oil on board

64 by 54cm excluding frame;

91 by 79 by 6cm including frame



Maud Sumner was an artist known for her vibrant depictions of everyday life. Throughout her career, she frequently returned to interior scenes, featuring flowers, vases and various household items, imbuing them with life and colour.

Still Life with Flowers is a striking example of these interiors, demonstrating a strong composition painted using an earthy colour palette that is only highlighted by the vibrant fruit arranged on the table. The contrast of subtle tones and bold colours showcases Sumner's ability to transform ordinary objects into lively, captivating compositions.¹

1. (n.d.) *Everard Read*, Maud Sumner, online, https://www.everard-read.co.za/artist/MAUD_SUMNER/biography/, accessed 10 January 2025.





Dorothy Kay

IRISH/SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1964

The Old Cape Fisherman

signed; inscribed with the artist's name
and 'Kalk Bay Fisherman' on the reverse

oil on canvas

75,5 by 67,5 cm



PROVENANCE

Sanlam Art Collection, reproduced in the Sanlam 1970 calendar.

Sotheby Parke Bernet, Johannesburg, 11 October 1972, lot 158.

Stephan Welz & Co, Johannesburg, 19 November 2024, lot 306.

EXHIBITED

South African National Gallery, Cape Town, Posthumous – *SA Women Artist's*, 1965.

LITERATURE

Marjorie Reynolds (1989) *Dorothy Kay, A Biography: 'Everything you do is a Portrait of Yourself'*, Cape Town: Alec Marjorie Reynolds, a similar example illustrated in black and white on page 43, with the title *Old Cape Fisherman*.

Marjorie Reynolds (ed) (1991) *Dorothy Kay: Memoirs of the Artist*, Cape Town: The Carrefour Press, a similar example illustrated in black and white on page 113, with the title *Old Cape Fisherman*.



Fig 1. *Cape Fisherman*, 1924, Sold R5 621 (usd316).

The Old Cape Fisherman is an oil painting executed in rich tones of yellow, brown, and luminous golden hues. The work demonstrates Dorothy Kay's attention to detail in portraying human subjects, a skill she began developing when she started studying figure painting at the young age of 14.

The composition focuses intensely on the figure, the old cape fisherman, with the background subtly merging into the subject to create a unified whole. The elderly fisherman maintains a direct, dignified gaze that conveys both strength and contemplation. Like many of Kay's works, the painting reveals detailed and

deliberate attention to surface textures; every crease, wrinkle, and strand of beard is rendered with clarity, while maintaining a sense of colour and gradation.

The painting closely relates to *Cape Fisherman* (fig1) an etching Kay made to depict the same subject, reflecting her established practice of creating multiple works featuring the same sitters, often exploring the same figure through different media.

The Old Cape Fisherman was executed from direct observation of a live model, consistent with the artist's method of working. She documented her experience with the sitter', noting, 'he sat so



Fig 2. *Old Oyster Woman*, Sold R1 250 000 (USD70 093)

still, with a faraway look in his eyes, and smelling so powerfully of rotten fish! He was no use any more in the boats, he said that the men did not want him as his hands were full of rheumatism, and he couldn't work the lines.' It was created during the same period as other notable character studies, including a portrait of Louisa Williams (fig 2, which sold on auction for R1.25 million in September 2022), described by the artist as 'the old oyster woman, who could remember the days back almost to a hundred years ago.'

Kay's painterly approach has been characterised as one of detached observation, marked by a curiosity about the lives of others. She frequently referenced and revisited themes from her earlier works in subsequent works, creating a cohesive *oeuvre* that explored recurring subjects and motifs. This manner of working gained her international recognition, including when Queen Mary purchased her etching

Romance at the Dominion Artists' Exhibition in London in 1926.

In addition to receiving numerous portrait commissions, including a series depicting the mayors of Port Elizabeth, her work was exhibited widely. She participated in the South African section of the Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924, at the Royal Academy in 1940, and the São Paulo Biennale in 1961. Her paintings and prints are held in major collections across South Africa, including the South African National Gallery in Cape Town, Durban Art Gallery, Pretoria Art Museum, King George VI Art Gallery in Port Elizabeth, William Humphreys Gallery in Kimberley, Albany Museum in Grahamstown, Queenstown Art Gallery, African Museum in Johannesburg, and the South African National War Museum in Johannesburg.

1. Marjorie Reynolds(ed) (1991) *Dorothy Kay: Memoirs of the Artist*, Cape Town: The Carrefour Press, illustrated in black and white on page 113.



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