

MEP

MAISON
EUROPÉENNE
DE LA
PHOTOGRAPHIE

Press pack



Zanele Muholi

01.02 – 21.05.2023

Studio

Cédrine Scheidig

01.02.2023 – 26.03.2023

Diane Severin Nguyen

31.03.2023 – 21.05.2023

Director: Simon Baker

Institutional partner



Partners and Patrons



The MEP would like to thank the Collector's Circle of the MEP and the Friend's Association of the MEP for their continued support.

Bester V, Mayotte, 2015

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/
Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York ©
Zanele Muholi



It is with great pleasure that the MEP opens its doors to the visual activist Zanele Muholi, for the first retrospective presentation of their work in France. The MEP would like to thank Zanele, and all of their collaborators, for sharing this powerful and important project with our public in Paris, and also to thank our partners, principally at Tate Modern in London, for making the exhibition possible despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Zanele Muholi is that most unique of figures in the international contemporary art world: a powerful and original voice that transcends the boundaries of their own immediate interests and local sphere. Associated primarily with work over many years in the LGBTQIA+ and gender-nonconforming communities in South Africa, Muholi's work has implications for questions of identity and political activism in the worlds of photography and art that reach, and echo, far beyond their origins and context. A primary and essential aspect of Muholi's practice is how images associated with the visual arts might not only respond to pressing and urgent social questions (in other words, a question of documentation, the means of bringing a subject to the public), but how they might effect change in the world beyond that in which they were made. Since training at the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg, Muholi has never settled for an understanding of photography (or indeed video) associated with the limited conventions of traditional documentary practices. Their work takes on the narrow concept of representing the realities of their subjects and reaches beyond, forcing us to think about, and often rethink, the ways in which representation itself might fall short for some communities and identities. Their practice in portraiture, portraits of both themselves and others, offer ample evidence of both the ambition and efficacy of an approach which seeks, we could say, never to leave the possibility for an audience to be unaffected or unmoved by an encounter with it.

As ever, in conjunction with our major exhibition in the principal galleries, the MEP invites two exciting early-career artists to exhibit in The Studio, which, from 2023, is programmed by Clothilde Morette for the MEP with the continued generous support of Christian Dior Parfums. The first Studio is that of Cedrine Scheidig, laureate of the Dior Photography and Visual Arts Award for Young Talents in 2021, who brings her own unique take on questions of race and identity in both her native Paris, and in new works made in Martinique. The second Studio of the season marks the first solo exhibition in France of acclaimed American artist and filmmaker Diane Severin Nguyen, whose photographic work evokes questions of both material and categorical instability.

The MEP is proud to bring together three artists working at the cutting edges of today's image world for the start of a year of programming that will showcase the works of historic and contemporary women artists including Jay DeFeo, Maya Rochat and Viviane Sassen.

Simon Baker
Director of the MEP

Galleries +2 +3

Curators:

Laurie Hurwitz and Victoria Aresheva
for the MEP, in Paris.

For the Tate Modern, in London,
where the exhibition was conceived:
Yasufumi Nakamori, Senior Curator
in International Art (Photography) and
Sarah Allen, former Assistant Curator.

Buzile, IGSM, Boston, 2019

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/
Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York -
© Zanele Muholi

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Zanele Muholi

01.02.2023 – 21.05.2023

The exhibition

The MEP is proud to present the first retrospective in France dedicated to Zanele Muholi, the internationally renowned South African photographer and activist whose work documents and celebrates the Black LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual+) community. This major event, which brings together more than 200 photographs and videos created since the early 2000s as well as numerous archival materials, covers the full breadth of Muholi's career to date, honouring one of the most acclaimed artists working today.



Right page:
ID Crisis, 2003

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York
© Zanele Muholi

Left page:
Sebenzile, *Parktown*, 2016

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York
© Zanele Muholi



Zanele Muholi, who defines themselves* as a “visual activist”, uses the camera as a tool to confront and repair injustice. During the 1990s, South Africa underwent significant social and political change. Democracy was established in 1994 with the abolition of apartheid; this was followed by a new constitution in 1996, the first in the world to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation. Despite this progress, today the Black LGBTQIA+ community still remains the target of violence and prejudice.

Muholi is deeply involved in this community, and their photographic work is inseparable from their life and their activism. Telling stories that are both individual and collective, the artist hopes to give them visibility while challenging stereotypes and conventional representations. Bringing to light the uniqueness and diversity of the individuals they picture, Muholi emphasizes their courage and dignity in the face of intolerance and discrimination.

Muholi's work is created through a collaborative process. They refer to the people they photograph as active “participants” in the work rather than “subjects”; the portrait's setting, clothing and pose are determined together. At times, the artist also turns the camera lens on themselves, calling into question the image of Black women in history.

These photographs encourage viewers to address their own misconceptions. Together they create a new lexicon of positive imagery for under- and misrepresented communities, promoting mutual understanding and respect.

*Zanele Muholi defines themselves as non-binary and uses the pronouns “they/them/theirs”.

Exhibition overview

This exhibition is organised by Tate Modern in collaboration with the MEP, Gropius Bau in Berlin, the Bildmuseet at the University of Umea, the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern in Valencia and the Kunstmuseum Luzern. It will be accompanied by a French edition of the catalogue published by Bernard Chauveau, Paris, and a programme of films, talks and events at the MEP.

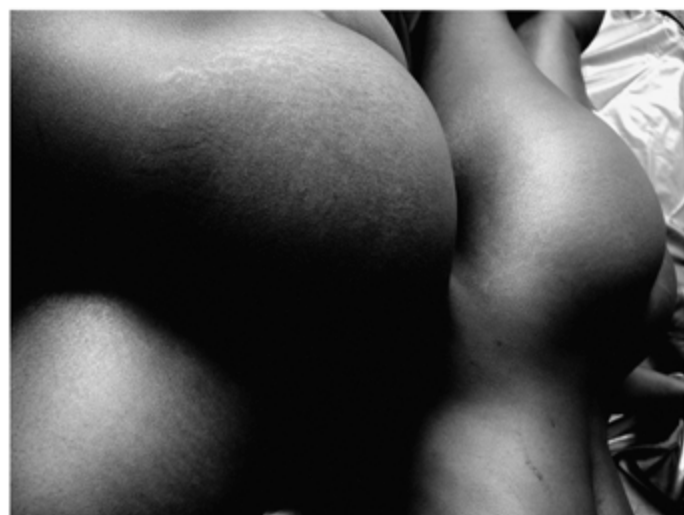
Mpho Nefuri, Pretoria North, Gauteng, 2018

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York
© Zanele Muholi



Floor +2

The exhibition, which takes up the second and third floors of the MEP, retraces Zanele Muholi's artistic journey through several key projects. It opens with two early, lesser-known series that capture moments of intimacy between couples as well as their daily life, routines and rituals, creating strong and positive images of an often hidden, voiceless and marginalized community. It also presents images taken at queer beauty pageants as well as an immersive installation of the artist's celebrated "Faces and Phases" project, an extensive and ongoing collection of portraits that reflects the Muholi's mission to document and uplift Black queer South African communities and to give them a space to be visible, respected and recognised.



Only Half the Picture (2002–2006)

Muholi's first series documents survivors of hate crimes living across South Africa and its townships, established under apartheid as residential areas for those evicted from places designated as "white only". Participants are presented with compassion, dignity and courage in the face of ongoing discrimination, racialisation and gender-based violence, including "corrective" and "curative rapes" as well as physical and psychological assault. In much of the series, the participant's identity remains concealed to protect their safety, dignity and privacy. "Only Half the Picture" also includes images of tenderness and intimacy, expanding the narrative beyond victimhood. The series reveals in this way the pain, love and defiance that exist within the Black LGBTQIA+ community in South Africa. The photographs are supplemented by documentation of trials and anti-hate crime campaign.

In 2002, when work began on the series, Muholi also co-founded the Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW), a non-profit organisation dedicated to providing a safe space for Black lesbians to meet and seek support for healthcare, education, employment and housing. One of the first times the artist exhibited this early work was during the conference "Gender and Visuality" held in 2004 at the University of Western Cape in Cape Town. Members of the public were asked to submit their comments; the discomfort they expressed inspired Muholi to create the short film *Enraged by A Picture*, also included in this gallery.

"My mission is to re-write a Black queer and trans visual history of South Africa, for the world to know of our resistance and existence at the height of hate crimes in South Africa and beyond."

Triple I, 2005

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York
© Zanele Muholi

"The images we see rely on binaries that were long prescribed for us (heterosexual/homosexual, male/female, African/unAfrican). From birth on, we are taught to internalise their existences, sometimes forgetting that if bodies are connected, connecting, the sensuousness goes beyond simplistic understandings of gender and sexuality."

Katlego Mashiloane and Nosipho Lavuta, Ext. 2, Lakeside, Johannesburg, 2007

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York
© Zanele Muholi



Being (2006 – ongoing)

Tender, intimate images of loving couples are shown in the private spaces they share, acknowledging the need for communal expressions of love and protection in the recovery from oppression. Muholi addresses here the misconception that queer life is "unAfrican", a falsehood emerging in part out of the belief that same-sex orientation was a colonial import to Africa. The artist believes such images are necessary to dismantle the patriarchal gaze, which upholds heterosexuality as the 'norm' or default sexual orientation. "Lovers and friends consented to participate in the project, willing to bare and express their love for each other", the artist explains.

Brave Beauties (2014 – ongoing)

Queer beauty pageants offer a space of resistance within the Black LGBTQIA+ community in South Africa, expressing beauty outside heteronormative and white supremacist cultures. This series of portraits depicts transgender women, gender non-conforming and non-binary people, including beauty-pageant contestants and drag queens. Muholi has commented that these participants “enter beauty pageants to change mind-sets in the communities they live in, the same communities where they are most likely to be harassed or worse”.

This series is also inspired by fashion shoots; Muholi has asked whether or not “South Africa as a democratic country would have an image of a trans woman on the cover of a magazine”. These images aim to challenge queerphobic and transphobic stereotypes as well as body-shaming stigmas. As with all of Muholi’s images, the portraits are created through a collaborative process in which the artist and the participant determine together the setting, clothing and pose.

These images are juxtaposed with the series “Miss Lesbian I–VII”, in which Muholi, adopting different poses and gestures, casts themself in the role of a beauty queen. This body of work underlines how performing for the camera, staging and the use of props were employed early on in their practice.



"Each and every person in the photos has a story to tell, but many of us come from spaces in which most Black people never had that opportunity. If they had it at all, their voices were told by other people. Nobody can tell our story better than ourselves."

Candice Nkosi, Durban, 2020

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York
© Zanele Muholi



Queering Public Space (2006 – 2020)

Photographing Black LGBTQIA+ participants in public spaces is an important part of Zanele Muholi’s visual activism. “We’re ‘queering’ the space in order to access the space. We transition within the space in order to make sure that Black trans bodies are part of this as well. We owe it to ourselves,” says the artist.

Several of the locations seen in these images are important to the history of South Africa, including historic urban spaces, working-class neighbourhoods and beachfronts such as Durban Beach, located near Muholi’s birthplace of Umlazi. Beaches were segregated during apartheid and are therefore potent symbols of how racial segregation affected every aspect of life. Some images were taken at Constitutional Hill, the seat of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, a symbol of the country’s progression towards democracy.

Muholi often chose here to photograph in vibrant colour, bringing the work closer to reality and rooting it in the present day.

Miss D'vine II, 2007

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York
© Zanele Muholi



Faces and Phases (2006 – ongoing)

This iconic series, which currently totals more than 500 works, - and presented at the MEP with over a hundred prints and a slideshow - is a powerful collective portrait that celebrates, commemorates and archives the lives of Black lesbians, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals in South Africa. The word “Faces” refers to the individuals, and “Phases” suggests different stages in the lives of the participants. Directly confronting the spectator’s gaze, they are all photographed using the same protocol, always without artifice: keeping the same distance from the camera, frontal or turned at a slight angle, in natural light, in black and white.

Muholi often returns to photograph the same person over time, and many of these portraits are the result of a sustained and long-lasting collaboration. Gaps in the grid symbolize individuals whose portraits are yet to be taken, and a special area is dedicated to participants who have since passed away. “Faces and Phases” forms a living archive that visualises Zanele Muholi’s belief that “we express our gendered, radicalised, and classed selves in rich and diverse ways”. In creating this project, Muholi gives visibility to Black LGBTQIA+ people in South Africa, reveals their presence and gives them the opportunity to assert themselves, their differences and their singularity.

"It is important to mark, map and preserve our mo(ve)ments through visual histories for reference and posterity so that future generations will note that we were here."

Collen Mfazwe, August House, Johannesburg, 2012

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi.

Julile I, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2016

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi

Floor +3

The second part of the exhibition begins with an important selection of images from the artist’s acclaimed self-portrait series, which explores the boundary between fiction and reality. This is followed by photographs, slideshows and videos highlighting Muholi’s commitment to “visual activism”, offering people the opportunity to tell stories that resonate in ways that are both highly personal and collective.



Somnyama Ngonyama, (2012 – ongoing)

In this series of self-portraits, whose title means “Hail the Dark Lioness” in Zulu, Muholi turns the camera on themselves, embodying different characters and archetypes that explore the politics of race and representation. Photographed in different locations around the world and printed at various sizes, these self-portraits incorporate materials and objects that Muholi sources from their surroundings.

Some question systemic violence and oppressive stereotypes; Muholi’s aim is to draw out these histories in order to educate people and to facilitate the processing of trauma, both personal and collective. Muholi also repurposes everyday domestic objects – scouring sponges, clothes pegs, latex gloves, clothespins, a feather duster – to emphasize the cultural limitations imposed on Black women. Some portraits depict the character “Bester”, paying homage to the artist’s mother, who was employed as a domestic worker for a white family for more than forty years and singlehandedly supported their family of eight (the artist’s father died shortly after Muholi was born).

Muholi dramatically increases the contrast in these self-portraits, exaggerating the darkness of their skin in order to assert its beauty: "I'm reclaiming my Blackness, which I feel is continuously performed by the privileged other." The artist also calls into question how the gaze is constructed in these works, looking away in some images while in others staring directly into the camera, asking what it means for "a Black person to look back."

The titles in the series are in isiZulu, Muholi's native language and one of eleven official languages in South Africa; in this way, the artist takes ownership of and pride in their mother tongue and identity. Under colonialism and apartheid, Black people were often given English names by their employers or teachers who refused to remember and use their real names. Here, Muholi encourages a Western audience to learn how to pronounce and understand them.

For the Parisian version of the exhibition, the MEP is exceptionally adding four painted self-portraits to the series "Somnyama Ngonyama". During the COVID-19 pandemic, Zanele Muholi, forced to put their traditional photographic practice on hold, turned to painting. Reexamining the archetypes seen in the photographs, Muholi found new ways to call into question representations of Black women throughout history.



"Since slavery and colonialism, images of African women have been used to reproduce heterosexuality and white patriarchy, and these systems of power have so organised our everyday lives that it is difficult to visualise ourselves as we actually are in our respective communities."

Qiniso, The Sails, Durban, 2019.

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/ Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi

Sharing Stories

From their earliest days as an activist, Muholi sought to record first-hand testimonies and experiences of Black LGBTQIA+ people. Giving participants a platform to tell their own story in their own words has been an enduring goal for the artist.

A video installation brings together the interviews of eight participants who share stories of their experiences as members of the LGBTQIA+ community in South Africa, some of whom are visible in "Faces and Phases". The interviews were conducted and produced by the artist's collaborators, including members of Inkanyiso (which means 'light' in isiZulu), a forum for queer and visual activist media founded by Zanele Muholi in 2006. The platform's motto is "Queer Activism = Queer Media"; its mission is to "produce, educate and disseminate information to many audiences, especially those who are often marginalised or sensationalised by the mainstream media".

Collectivity

Collective visions lie at the heart of Muholi's work; their photography is meant to create a sanctuary where people can connect and heal together.

The section features a collaborative record of public events that play a restorative role in society. Self-organisation, skill sharing and mentorship are central to Muholi's life. Whether documenting public events such as Pride marches and protests or private moments such as marriages and funerals, these images form an ever-expanding visual archive. They suggest another way of knowing about and preserving the Black LGBTQIA+ community, becoming a place, says the artist, "where we bring forth our own narratives that live on beyond us".

The gallery also includes images and a slideshow of weddings. Religion, spirituality and the Christian church play central roles for many of the people featured in this exhibition; the services shown here are often held by pastors from churches founded specifically for and/or by LGBTQIA+ people in South Africa, which offer a safe space for individuals who may have been rejected by family, friends or mainstream houses of worship because of their identity.

Tracing Contexts

The exhibition concludes with a reading room and space for conversation. This space incorporates a detailed timeline. Texts, film clips, posters and newspaper clippings contextualize Muholi's work in relation to apartheid and the emergence of queer activism in South Africa, and also highlight the artist's commitment to collective action.

Ntozakhe II, Parktown, 2016

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi

Biography

Zanele Muholi was born in 1972 in Umlazi, in Durban township, South Africa, and lives between Durban and Cape Town. Muholi studied at the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg and Ryerson University in Toronto. Co-founder of the Forum for the Empowerment of Women and founder of *Inkanyiso*, a forum for queer and visual media, the artist is also an honorary professor at the University of the Arts Bremen, Germany.

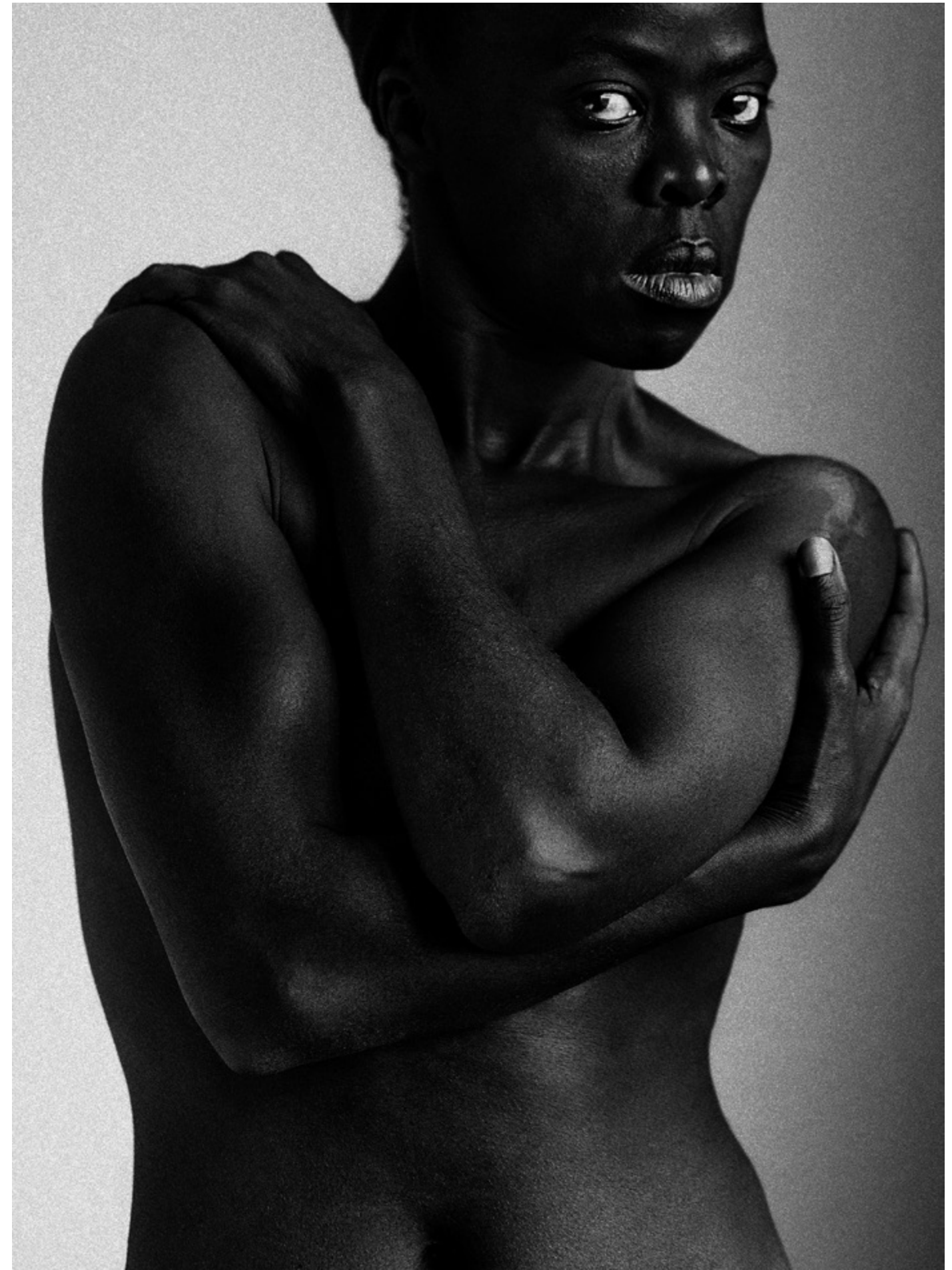
Their work has featured in numerous solo exhibitions worldwide, including those at the Goethe-Institut Johannesburg (2012); the Brooklyn Museum, New York (2015); the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2017); Autograph ABP, London (2017) and the Museo de Arte Moderno in Buenos Aires (2018). This retrospective has been shown at Tate Modern, London; Gropius Bau in Berlin; the Bildmuseet at the University of Umea; the Valencian Institute of Modern Art and the Kunstmuseum Luzern.

Muholi has also won numerous awards, including the Lucie Humanitarian Award (2019); the Photography Book award from the Kraszna-Krausz Foundation for *Somnyama Ngonyama: Hail, the Dark Lioness* (Aperture); the Rees Visionary Award from Amref Health Africa (2019); a fellowship from the Royal Photographic Society, UK (2018); France's Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (2017); and the Mbokodo Award in the visual arts category (2017).

The artist has also received the ICP Infinity Award for Documentary and Photojournalism (2016); the Fine Prize for an emerging artist at the Carnegie International (2013); a Prince Claus Award (2013); the Casa África award; and the Fondation Blachère award at Les Rencontres africaines de la photographie in Bamako (2009). The series "Somnyama Ngonyama" was presented at the 58th Venice Biennale (2019). "Faces and Phases" was shown at Documenta (13) in Kassel (2012) as well as the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), and was shortlisted for the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize (2015).

Lulamile, Room 107 Day Inn Hotel, Burlington, 2017

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York
© Zanele Muholi



Timeline



*Mbali Zulu KwaThema, Springs
Johannesburg, 2010*

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/
Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele
Muholi

South Africa – 1950s - 2020s

The 1950s

1948 – The National Party comes to power and formalises apartheid. The regime enforces racial segregation and political, economic and social discrimination against anyone not classified as white.

1949 – The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act bans marriage between white people and people from all other racial groups.

1950 – The Immorality Amendment Act is amended to prohibit extramarital sexual relations between white people and those from all other racial groups. The Group Areas Act formally segregates people based on race.

1952 – The Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act, known as the Pass Law, requires Black people age 16+ to carry pass books, controlling and restricting their movement.

1953 – The Bantu Education Act enforces racially separated schools and creates a curriculum that reduces quality and resources for Black people.

1954 – The multiracial anti-apartheid women's organisation, the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW), is launched.

1956 – The Women's March to Pretoria is held; an estimated 20,000 women protest the introduction of pass laws to Black women.

Nelson Mandela and 155 others are arrested and tried for high treason. They are acquitted in 1961.

The 1960s

1960 – The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) supporters march to the police station in Sharpeville in protest against the Pass Laws and calling for a minimum monthly wage of £35. It turns into what is known as the "Sharpeville Massacre" when police fire at the protestors, killing 69 people and injuring 180 others.

1961 – South Africa is constituted as a Republic after a referendum in 1960 and withdraws from the Commonwealth.

1963 – The Rivonia Trial tries 10 leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) for 221 acts of sabotage designed to overthrow the apartheid system. It leads to a sentence of life imprisonment for Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Elias Motsoaledi, Andrew Mlangeni and Denis Goldberg.

Between 1964 and 1977, Winnie Mandela spends more than 15 months in prisons around South Africa and 10 months in solitary confinement.

1968 – The Homosexual Law Reform Fund is formed, the first gay resistance organisation in South Africa.

The 1970s

1970 – The Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act make Black South Africans citizens of their designated ‘homelands’. It is designed to strip their South African citizenship, replacing it with citizenship of the ‘homeland’ to which they are assigned. More than 3.5 million South Africans are forcibly resettled.

1972 – Zanele Muholi is born in Umlazi, a township in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

1974 – The Afrikaans Medium Decree is passed, mandating the use of Afrikaans and English as ‘languages of instruction’ in Black schools, starting with the final year of primary school.

1976 – This image appears on the front page of the newspaper *World* on 16 June 1976. It shows Antoinette Sithole and Mbuyisa Makwwhubo carrying 12-year-old Hector Pieterse moments after he was shot and killed by South African police during a peaceful student demonstration in Soweto.

Made by staff photographer Sam Nzima (1934 – 2018), the image has a galvanizing impact, informing the world of the horror of apartheid and hardening international opinion against South Africa’s apartheid regime. Demonstrations and protests led by Black school children against the Afrikaans Medium Decree are violently stopped when police open fire, killing at least 176 people and injuring 1,000. This event becomes known as the "Soweto Uprising".

The 1980s

1985 – The Delmas Treason Trial is held. 22 anti-apartheid political leaders and activists are accused, among them Simon Nkoli, member of the Gay Association of South Africa (GASA) and founder of the first Black gay organisation, the Saturday Group.

1988 – The Immorality Amendment Act is amended to prohibit sex between women. Prior to this, legislation in South Africa made no mention of sex between women.

1989 – David Goldblatt establishes the Market Photo Workshop, a photography school, gallery and project space in Johannesburg.

The 1990s

1990 – President F.W. de Klerk declares the formal end of apartheid. Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners are released from prison. ANC suspend their armed struggle. Multi-party talks start in 1991. Conflict erupts in the KwaZulu-Natal and Pretoria Witwatersrand-Vereeniging regions, with violence among many different groups, including a ‘third force’ of police; Zulu nationalists; white supremacists and groups dominated by the Inkatha Freedom Party Organisation and ANC aligned township residents. The police fail to maintain order; it lasts from 1990 to 1994. As many as 14,000 people die.

GLOW (the Gay and Lesbian Organization of the Witwatersrand) organises Africa’s first Lesbian and Gay Pride March in Johannesburg.

1992 – Prudence Mabele becomes one of the first Black women in South Africa to publicly share her HIV-positive status.

1993 – The Association of Bisexuals, Gays and Lesbians (ABIGALE) organises the first Pride march in Cape Town.

1994 – The first democratic elections in South Africa are held. The ANC wins and Nelson Mandela is elected president.

1996 – President Mandela announces the official Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It becomes the first country in the world to constitutionally prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. Chapter 2, section 9.3 of the Bill of Rights reads: "The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth."

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission holds public hearings chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

The 2000s

2000 Muholi begins work as a photographer and reporter for *Behind the Mask*, an online magazine devoted to LGBTQIA+ issues in Africa.

2002 Muholi co-founds the non-profit organisation Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW), which begins as a Black lesbian organisation offering a safe space for women to meet, seek support and organise.

South Africa becomes the first country in Africa to allow same-sex couples to adopt.

2003 Muholi completes a course in advanced photography at the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg.

2004 – FEW launches Soweto Pride.

Muholi’s first solo exhibition, *Visual Sexuality: Only Half the Picture*, is presented at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. The series is featured in the group show *Is Everybody Comfortable?* at Museum Africa, Johannesburg, and is shown at a conference at the University of Western Cape entitled "Gender & Visuality", attracting national media attention.

2005 – The book *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa* is published and includes many of Muholi’s photographs.

2006 – Muholi founds Inkanyiso, an organisation dealing with art, activism, media and advocacy.

The Civil Union Act is passed. South Africa becomes the first country in Africa (and the fifth in the world) to legalise same-sex marriage.

2007 – The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act repeals many of the remaining elements of the 1957 Immorality Act, comprehensively reforming the law on sex offences to make it gender- and orientation-neutral.

2008 – Nkunzi Zandile Nkabinde, a participant in Muholi’s “Faces and Phases” series, publishes *Black Bull, Ancestors and Me: My Life as a Lesbian Sangoma*. A wave of xenophobic attacks spreads across the country, partly provoked by an increasing number of migrants and scarcity of resources.

Eudy Simelane, South African footballer and LGBTQIA+ rights activist, is raped and murdered in KwaThema, Springs, Gauteng.

2009 – Muholi receives an MFA in Documentary Media, Ryerson University, Toronto.

The 2010s

2010 – The documentary film *Difficult Love*, co-directed by Zanele Muholi and Peter Goldsmith, is released.

2012 – Duduzile Zozo, a 26-year-old lesbian, is murdered in a brutal hate crime in Thokoza, Gauteng.

Miners strike in two locations in Marikana, a platinum-mining community northwest of Johannesburg; 34 people are killed and 78 are injured. The incident, known as the Marikana Massacre, is the most lethal use of force by South African security forces against civilians since the end of apartheid. Muholi later produces a self-portrait in homage of those who died.

Muholi’s flat in Vredehoek, Cape Town, is broken into and over 5 years of work on 20 hard drives is stolen. This work has never been recovered.

2014 – Zanele Muholi: *Faces and Phases 2006 – 2014* is published.

2015 – *Zanele Muholi: Isibonelo/Evidence*, Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA.

2017 – One of Muholi’s collaborators, Sibahle Nkumbi, is pushed down the stairs in the flat she was sharing with the artist following an exhibition opening of Muholi’s work. The assailant is arrested but not charged.

Exhibitions include *Zanele Muholi*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands; *Somnyama Ngonyama, Autograph*, London, UK; *Homecoming*, Durban Art Gallery, Durban, South Africa. *Somnyama Ngonyama: Hail, the Dark Lioness* is published.

2018 – The Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill, aimed at reducing offensive speech and curbing hate crimes in South Africa, is formally passed by cabinet.

2019 – Muholi’s work is exhibited in the exhibition *May You Live in Interesting Times* at the 58th Venice Biennale. They also win the ‘Lucie Award for Humanitarian Photography’, the ‘Rees Visionary Award by Amref Health Africa’ and the ‘Best Photography Book Award’ from the Kraszna-Krausz Foundation for *Somnyama Ngonyama: Hail, The Dark Lioness*.

Muholi commissions Durban-based artists to create interpretations of the series “Somnyama Ngonyama” and exhibits their work at A4 Arts Foundation, Cape Town.

Press images

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LiZa I, 2009
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Katlego Mashiloane and Nosipho Lavuta, Ext. 2, Lakeside, Johannesburg, 2007
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



ID Crisis, 2003
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



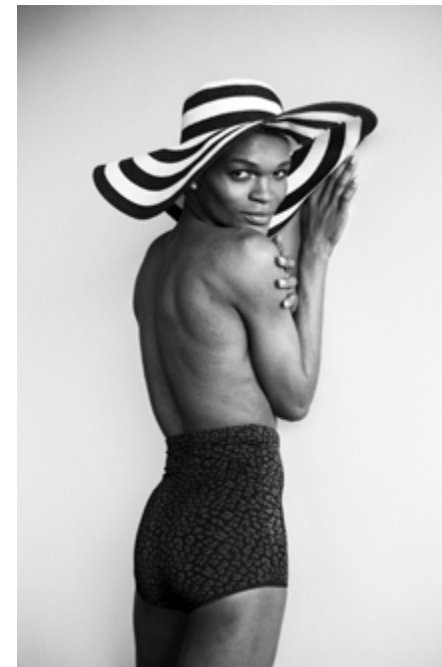
Mpho Nefuri, Pretoria North, Gauteng, 2018
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Triple I, 2005
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Triple III, 2005
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Yaya Mavundla, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2014
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Candice Nkosi, Durban, 2020
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Miss D'vine I, 2007
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Miss D'vine II, 2007
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Busi Sigasa Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2006
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Mbali Zulu KwaThema, Springs Johannesburg, 2010
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey
Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Collen Mfazwe, August House, Johannesburg, 2012
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Collen Mfazwe, August House, Johannesburg, 2012
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



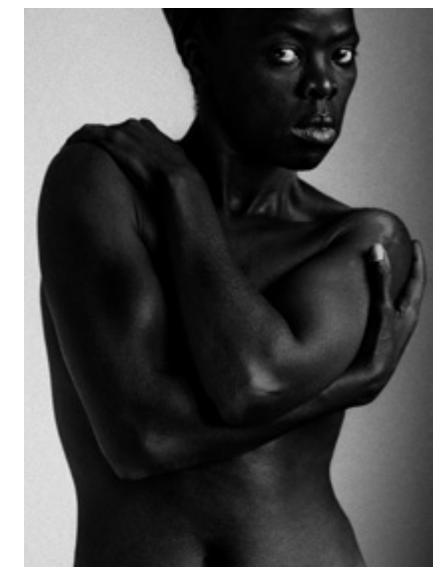
Lerato Dumse, Brooklyn, New York, 2015
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Ntozakhe II, Parktown, 2016
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Bona, Charlottesville, 2015
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Lulamile, Room 107 Day Inn Hotel, Burlington, 2017
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Bathini Dambuza, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2016
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Bester I, Mayotte, 2015
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Qiniso, The Sails, Durban, 2019.
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Buzile, IGSM, Boston, 2019
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



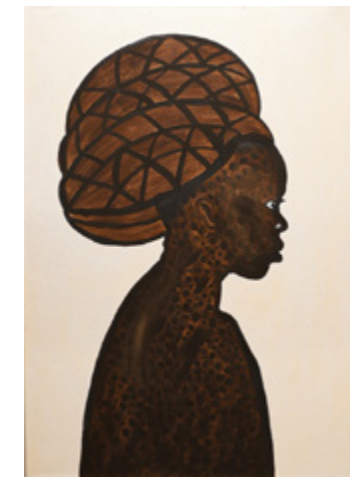
Sebzile, Parktown, 2016
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Bester V, Mayotte, 2015
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Julie I, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2016
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York © Zanele Muholi



Zothile, 2021 Acrylic on canvas
© Zanele Muholi - photo Galerie Carole Kvasnevski - Courtesy Galerie Carole Kvasnevski & Muholi International Productions. Collection particulière

The MEP supports young artists

In parallel with the four-month-long programme in the Galleries (on floors +2 and +3) presenting major exhibitions and work by established artists, the Studio (on level +1) is organized according to a shorter timetable, offering emerging artists the opportunity to exhibit their work as a solo show for the first time in an institutional setting in France.

Curator:

Victoria Aresheva

The exhibition is organized in collaboration with Christian Dior Parfums.

Robi, 2021

© Cédrine Scheidig

#CedrineScheidig

#StudioMEP



Cédrine Scheidig

de la mer à la terre

01.02.2023 – 26.03.2023

Exhibition

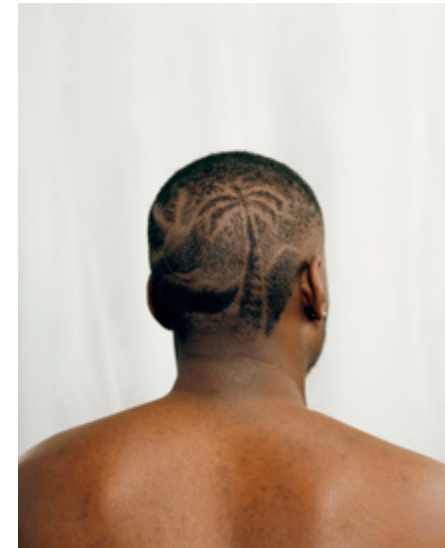
For the first part of the winter season, the MEP Studio presents the work of the young French-Caribbean photographer Cédric Scheidig, winner of the Dior Photography and Visual Arts Award for Young Talents in 2021.

In a dialogue between two recent series – “It is a Blessing to be the Color of Earth” (2020), awarded the Dior Prize, which depicts the Afro-Caribbean diaspora in the Parisian suburbs; and “Les mornes, le feu”, begun in 2022 in Fort-de-France, Martinique – the artist reveals connections between two territories and the imaginaries of their inhabitants. Distancing herself from documentary photography, Cédric Scheidig poses a subjective and poetic gaze on young people both in France and on the island. Her delicate portraits, details of urban landscapes and still lifes, bathed in a soft light, convey the feeling of a place rather than presenting an objective view of reality. The artist explores the personal narratives of diasporic youth in the process of self-discovery, while opening up areas of reflection on such political subjects as the colonial past, cultural hybridity, modern masculinities and migration.

Born in 1994, Cédric Scheidig is a photographer from Seine-Saint-Denis. A graduate of ENSP Arles, she lives and works in the Paris region. In 2019, she participated in the Lagos Biennial Curatorial Programme in Nigeria. That same year, she completed an artist’s residency at the National Arts Center in Valletta. In 2021, she showed her work at the Rencontres d’Arles festival and was awarded the Dior Prize. The year 2022 was marked by her nomination among the “Ones to Watch” in the British Journal of Photography, and the presentation of her work in “Plat(t)form” at the Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland.

Press images

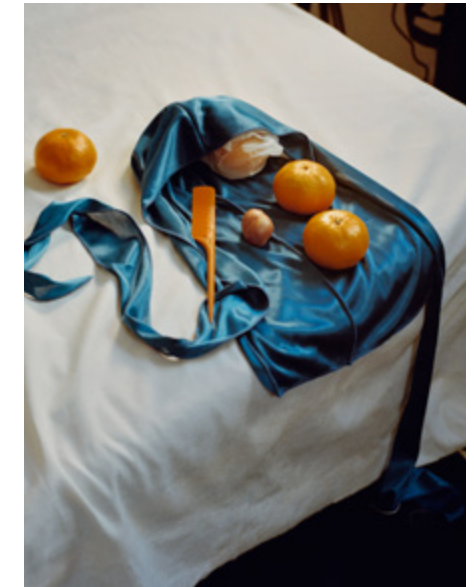
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Palmier, 2021
© Cédric Scheidig



Gold, 2022
© Cédric Scheidig



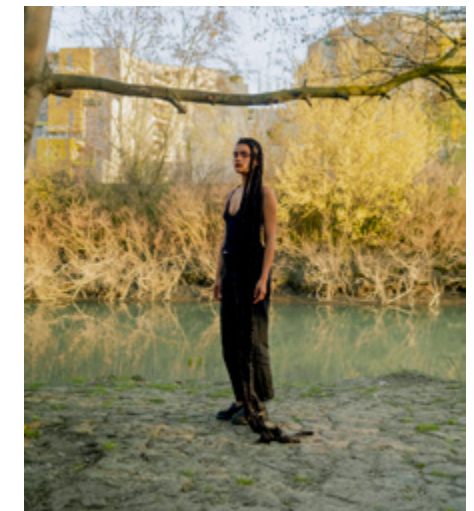
Durag and Fruits, 2021
© Cédric Scheidig



Diamant, 2022
© Cédric Scheidig



Robi, 2020
© Cédric Scheidig



Femme-mangrove, 2021
© Cédric Scheidig

The MEP supports young artists

In parallel with the four-month-long programme in the Galleries (on floors +2 and +3) presenting major exhibitions and work by established artists, the Studio (on level +1) is organized according to a shorter timetable, offering emerging artists the opportunity to exhibit their work as a solo show for the first time in an institutional setting in France.

Curators:

Clothilde Morette with Yuko Ikegami, as assistant curator.

The exhibition is organized with the support of Christian Dior Parfums.

Influencer, 2020

© Cédrine Scheidig

#DianeSeverinNguyen

#StudioMEP



Diane Severin Nguyen

31.03.2023 – 21.05.2023

Exhibition

The MEP Studio is proud to present the first solo exhibition in a French institution by Diane Severin Nguyen, an artist renowned internationally for her work in both photography and video that interrogates questions of instability and materiality in relation to the body.

Diane Severin Nguyen's photographs invites us to immerse ourselves in the question of the meanings and significance of the material world. In ephemeral compositions, the artist combines synthetic objects (chains, textiles...) with organic substances (hair, fruit...), at times adding liquids or combustible materials with loaded political associations such as napalm. The tension created between these substances gives rise to exchanges - of fluids, materials, movements - of which her photographic works remain the sole visual evidence. Her vibrantly coloured images can de-stabilise perception. This occurs both by playing with a sense of scale and by the materials that she uses taking on the appearance of torn flesh or disintegrating matter. There is therefore something profoundly physical, even visceral, about Diane Severin Nguyen's photographs. Her works trigger responses that can range from discomfort to pain, from pleasure to desire. By playing on this evocative power of objects, Nguyen tells stories about the invisible or imperceptible fragilities of the flesh, and ways in which our bodies contaminate themselves.

This exhibition was organized with the kind assistance of Huis Marseille, Amsterdam.

Diane Severin Nguyen, born in 1990, in Carson City, California, lives and works between Los Angeles and New York. She studied political science at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2013 before earning a Master of Fine Arts at the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College, New York, in 2020. Her work has been featured in numerous exhibitions in the United States and worldwide, including exhibition at the Huis Marseille, Amsterdam (2022); the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2020); the 13th Shanghai Biennale (2020) and at the SculptureCenter in New York (2019). Her films were shown at the 57th New York Film Festival (2019) and at the International Film Festival Rotterdam (2020).

Press images

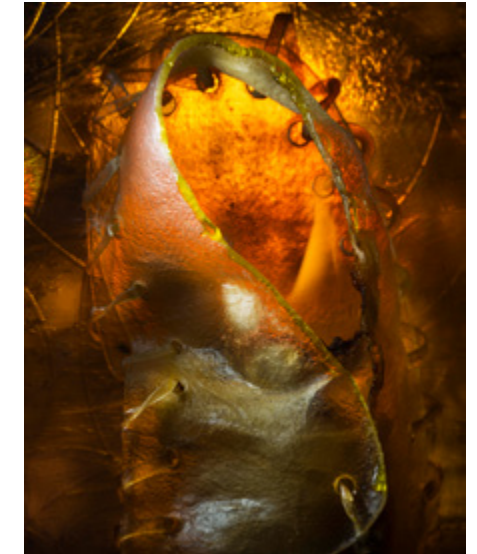
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Influencer, 2020
© Diane Severin Nguyen, Private collection, Antwerp, Belgium



Ribbon Devotion, 2020
© Diane Severin Nguyen, Private collection, Antwerp, Belgium



Against the Sun, 2021
© Diane Severin Nguyen, Private collection, Antwerp, Belgium



Southern Star, 2021
© Diane Severin Nguyen, Collection Huis Marseille, Museum for Photography



Daily Affirmations, 2021
© Diane Severin Nguyen, Collection Huis Marseille, Museum for Photography

Useful information

□ MEP

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Metro: Saint-Paul (line 1)
or Pont Marie (line 7)

Opening hours

Wednesday and Friday from 11 am to 8 pm
Thursday from 11 am to 10 pm
Saturday and Sunday from 10 am to 8 pm
Ticket office open till 7:30 pm
Closed on Monday and Tuesday

Admission fee

Full price: €10
Reduced price: €6
Pass MEP* : €40
Pass MEP* 18-30 : €25
Pass MEP* Donator : €120
*Pass for two people for an entire year.

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