

ZEITZ MOCAA PRESENTS IZICWANGCISO ZEZETHU... BY NOBUKHO NQABA

Cape Town: On Wednesday 31 July 2019, the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) will open a solo exhibition titled *Izicwangciso Zezethu...*

This is an autobiographical reflection of the childhood home and upbringing of Cape Town artist, Nobukho Nqaba and will be situated in Zeitz MOCAA's project space, the Dusthouse and its adjoining room.

Nqaba's work is specific to the Dusthouse, a smaller and more unassuming structure when compared to the forty-two monolith cylinders that once formed the grain silo building and now house the museum. Positioned to the side of the building, the original purpose of the Dusthouse was to filter the air of the adjoining industrial silos through a vacuum system. This helped to protect the workers' lungs and kept the building from exploding. In the Dusthouse, Nqaba has used overalls to commemorate the invisible men and women, such as those who worked in the silos and farms, from whose labour we daily benefit.

Highlighting the precariousness of daily life within an informal settlement, Nqaba uses chequered 'China' bags, plain grey blankets, and worn overalls to point to the fragility, impermanence and inner resolve necessitated by circumstance.

Many people migrated to Nqaba's community in the small Western Cape town of Grabouw with bundled up ambitions and modest possessions all packed tightly into these plastic 'China' bags.

The notion of home became associated with meagre living conditions, one or two pieces of furniture and few paraphernalia set in the room against the walls. The precarious walls were thin outlines or borders; they were a temporary testimony of a family's presence before they had to move again. Together with the objects they housed, they become a testimony of their existence.

The sudden announcement '*Kuyatshaad*' (there is fire) was often followed by the routine dash to gather all the important documents and a sudden stampede as everyone fled to the community hall. Once there, families congregated in groups, and each member was covered by a grey blanket. The blanket, an ashen cape, a temporary source of comfort, gifted by the governing authorities.

"The exhibition's Xhosa title, *Izicwangciso Zezethu*, means 'our plans'... We may plan our lives, but we have no control of the outcome. It is a game of chance," says curator Tandazani Dhlakama.

Speaking on the use of the chequered bag in the show, Nqaba says the material symbolises a home. "My home was always in transit. I moved between three

different places - Butterworth, Grabouw and Khayelitsha - which had different people inhabiting them, there was no single physical home,” says Nqaba.

“The bag is something I grew up using and my father would pack it for me. Then when I arrived at the kwaLanga Station in Cape Town, I saw everybody with their belongings in the same bag. The only way you could differentiate was to put tape around your bag and write your surname.”

“I was at another train station recently and I saw the exact same scene from my childhood. All the ‘China’ bags were there, and the buses were separating people going from one location to another. It was my story, but it was also their story.”

Nqaba hopes that her art will not only educate people but also give hope to those from similar backgrounds.

Exhibition name: Izicwangciso Zezethu... (We Make Plans...)

Exhibiting artist: Nobukho Nqaba

Venue: Dusthouse and Level 2, Zeitz MOCAA, Silo District, V&A Waterfront

Run dates: 31 July – 20 October 2019

Exhibition curators: Tandazani Dhlakama and Sakhisizwe Gcina

ENDS

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About Nobukho Nqaba

Nobukho Nqaba was born in 1992 in Butterworth, in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. At the age of six she and her family moved to Grabouw in the Western Cape and later attended Luhlaza High School in Cape Town.

She is a graduate of the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town (UCT) where she majored in photography and was mentored by Svea Josephy and Jean Brundrit (2012).

In 2012 she was awarded the Tierney Fellowship, and was the recipient of *reGeneration3*, a photography focused initiative by the Musee de l'Elysee. Nqaba holds a Post Graduate Certificate in Education Visual Art and Theory from the UCT (2013). She has embarked on several teaching endeavours through her role as Visual Art and Digital Photography Educator at the Peter Clarke Art Centre.

Nqaba's work explores the precariousness of home and opportunity. Using chequered China bags, plain grey blankets, and worn overalls, she points to the fragility, impermanence and inner resolve necessitated by circumstance. Nqaba's work reflects on personal memories of growing up in an informal settlement in Grabouw and the complexities of migration and labour.

Nqaba has exhibited widely including at the *SOLAR Festival*: Brazil, 2018; *FITE Festival of Textiles: Clermont Ferrand*, France, 2018; *Africa Africa* : Milan, Italy, 2018; *GETOXOPHOTO*: Spain, 2017; *China Afrika: Germany*, 2017; *Also Known As Africa: Contemporary Art and Design Fair*, France, 2016; *Making & Unmaking: An exhibition*, Camden Art Centre, U.K. 2016 ; *reGeneration3* in UK, USA, Mexico and Switzerland 2015-16; *Designing Africa 3.0*, Spain 2016, *LagosPhoto Festival*, Nigeria, 2015 and *Against Time, Bamako Encounters*, Bamako, Mali 2015.

About Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA)

Zeitz MOCAA is a public not-for-profit contemporary art museum that collects, preserves, researches and exhibits 21st-century art from Africa and its diaspora; hosts international exhibitions; develops supporting educational and enrichment programmes; encourages intercultural understanding; and guarantees access for all.

Galleries are dedicated to a large cutting-edge collection; special exhibitions; and Centres for Art Education, Curatorial Training, Performative Practice, Photography and the Moving Image.

Zeitz MOCAA was established through a partnership between the V&A Waterfront led by CEO David Green—acting on behalf of Growthpoint Properties Limited and the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF), represented by the Public Investment Corporation Limited (PIC)—and collector Jochen Zeitz. The building was reimagined through a design by the acclaimed London-based Heatherwick Studio.