

EXPERIENCE SITE-SPECIFIC, PROCESS-BASED PROJECT *LAYING BARE*, BY SOUTH AFRICAN ARTIST KEMANG WA LEHULERE

Cape Town, 02 December 2019: *Laying Bare* is a site-specific, process-based project by South African artist Kemang Wa Lehulere at Zeitz MOCAA. Wa Lehulere takes occupation of a multi-gallery area on the museum's second level for a period of five months, turning the institution into his studio space. The studio, a private working space for the artist, will be accessible to the public where Wa Lehulere will lay bare the essence of his artistic process.

In 2018, Wa Lehulere closed his studio in Maitland, Cape Town, in reaction to the ambitious economic expectations that large-scale studio practice dictates. This includes the need to acquire and execute bigger projects, growing staff and increasing sales to sustain this practice. By launching this project focused on his artistic process within the museum, the museum serves as a site for the rhythms of production, artistic agency, and the function of a 'social imagination' (Kemang Wa Lehulere, pg122).

Working across media and disciplines, such as text, performance, sculpture, drawing and video, Wa Lehulere's studio is a space that facilitates and produces his visual language. Often concerned with the consequences of South African history and its systems of ideology and re-education, Wa Lehulere's repurposing of familiar materials and found objects serves to write this historical weight into these objects. Using, amongst other things, wooden school desks, blackboards and tyres, the artist joins personal and collective narratives and histories to reconstitute South African legacies and memories.

The studio will be punctuated with live events and programmes which drive the studio as central to the process of making. These events will serve as contact points between the work of art, its makers, and the viewer, bringing these roles in closer proximity. These interventions and performances will also connect with, and point to future projects Wa Lehulere is working on.

Forthcoming programmes include:

I Love You Too

Inspired by Wa Lehulere's ongoing relationship with the intimate process of hand-written letters, the artist invites museum visitors to participate in a laboured act of love. Visitors will sit with a writer to handwrite a love letter to someone they care about. A masseuse will massage their body while the writer transcribes the letter. This process highlights the mediation and translation of the acts of love through the body, human emotion, and language. Working with South African writers, poets, lyricists and litterateurs, the love letters will become part of an ongoing intervention, and will be included in a future publication that grapples with the relationship between the private and the public spheres.

Lokshin Supper Club

Lokshin translates as the 'location' – a reference to townships or informal settlements in a South African context. It represents communities situated away from the central business district and affluent neighbourhoods of Cape Town. These geographical locations become intrinsically linked to one another based on an apartheid spatial legacy and its underlying labour systems.

Hosted by Chef Teba Shumba, the menu is inspired by the food he grew up with in the township, and which his mother taught him to cook. This event brings together a community around food and conversations. It also serves as a connection to foods and the stories we share around a meal. Shumba hosts performances with local musicians, performers and artists to link our understanding of community through story-telling, food and geography.

Teba Shumba is an artist, theatre maker, community worker and organiser of events such as Lokshin Supper Club and has hosted this in Cape Town, Paris, and Berlin, to name a few.

'Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense' – Studio Library

Inspired by the lyrics of the Fela Kuti song of the same name, Wa Lebulere highlights the importance of knowledge and educational resources. The studio library will form a central component to the studio at Zeitz MOCAA where the artist, his team and collaborators will host meetings and workshops. Here visitors can sit and engage with the library's resources.

Project name: *Laying Bare*

Exhibiting artist: Kemang Wa Lebulere

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

Run dates: 19 December 2019 – 10 May 2020

Project curator: Tammy Langtry

Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA)

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About the artist:

Kemang Wa Lehlere was born 1984 in Cape Town, South Africa. He has a BA Fine Arts degree from the University of the Witwatersrand (2011).

Wa Lehlere's artistic practice reacts to the historical legacy of South Africa, using performative acts with objects and materials familiar to South African society, to carve, dig, break, erase or reconstitute. Objects like wooden school desks, ceramic sculptures of Alsatian dogs and blackboards are incorporated into various installations and used as symbols of both an educational system within the apartheid regime and its performance within a contemporary democratic society. The objects transmute between a familiar object from childhood into more pointed questions or concerns that challenge our assumptions about the histories and social structures that shape the world around us.

A presentation of Kemang Wa Lehlere's installation *I cut my skin to liberate the splinter* is currently on show at Tate Modern, London. Previous solo exhibitions have taken place at Pasquart Art Centre, Biel (2018); MAXXI, Rome (2017); Deutsche Bank KunstHalle (2017); the Art Institute of Chicago (2016); Gasworks, London (2015); Lombard Freid Projects, New York (2013); the Goethe-Institut, Johannesburg (2011), and the Association of Visual Arts in Cape Town (2009), in addition to Stevenson (2018; 2016; 2015; 2012) and Marian Goodman Gallery (2018). Notable group exhibitions include *May You Live in Interesting Times*, the 58th Venice Biennale (2019); *Leaving the Echo Chamber*, the 14th Sharjah Biennale (2019); *Hacer Noche*, Oaxaca, Mexico (2018); *Sculpture* at the Institute of Contemporary Art Indian Ocean (2018); *O Triângulo Atlântico*, 11th Mercosul Biennial (2018); *The South African Pavilion without Walls*, Performa 17, New York (2017); *Art/Afrique, le nouvel atelier* at Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (2017); *African Odysseys* at Le Brass Cultural Centre of Forest, Belgium (2015); the 8th Berlin Biennale (2014); *Public Intimacy: Art and Other Ordinary Acts in South Africa* at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2014); *The Ungovernables*, the second triennial exhibition of the New Museum in New York (2012); *A Terrible Beauty is Born*, the 11th Lyon Biennale, France (2011), and *When Your Lips Are My Ears, Our Bodies Become Radios* at the Kunsthalle Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern, Switzerland (2010).

Wa Lehlere was the winner of the inaugural Spier Contemporary Award in 2007, the MTN New Contemporaries Award in 2010, and the Tollman Award for the Visual Arts in 2012; he was one of two young artists awarded the 15th Baloise Art Prize at Art Basel in 2013, won the first International Tiberius Art Award Dresden in 2014 and was the Standard Bank Young Artist for Visual Arts in 2015. In 2017 he was Deutsche Bank's 'Artist of the Year', the recipient of the fourth Malcolm McLaren Award and was shortlisted for the Future Generation Art Prize.

Wa Lehlere was a co-founder of the Gugulective (2006), an artist-led collective based in Cape Town, and a founding member of the Center for Historical Reenactments in Johannesburg.

In 2018, Wa Lehlere closed down his studio space in Maitland, Cape Town.

Kemang Wa Lehulere is accompanied by his studio team:

Tsietsi Lehulere
Lulama Qupe
Teba Shumba
Dede Lehulere
Siphelo Sivanjana
Thulang Dibakwane
Aylow Nyangintaka
Mandisa Ngqulana
Christopher Gopane

About Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA)

Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) is a public, not-for-profit institution that exhibits, collects, preserves and researches contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora; conceives and hosts international exhibitions; develops supporting educational, discursive and enrichment programmes; encourages intercultural understanding; and strives for access for all.

The museum's galleries are dedicated to featured exhibitions with a dedicated space for the permanent collection.. The institution also includes the Centre for Art Education, the Centre for the Moving Image, and a dedicated project space for emerging artists.