

Media release

ZEITZ MOCAA WELCOMES MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ARTIST THANIA PETERSEN'S KASSARAM TO ITS ATELIER RESIDENCY

- **Petersen will take up an Atelier artist residency on the museum's second floor for five months**
- **The residency follows the success of previous artist residencies with Kemang Lehulere and Haroon Gunn-Salie**
- **The open studio residency and exhibition will run from 27 May to 17 October 2021**

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(Cape Town, 12 May 2021): This month, the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) presents open-studio investigation *KASSARAM* by multi-disciplinary artist Thania Petersen as part of the museum's Atelier Residency programme. The residency will run from Thursday, 27 May to Sunday, 17 October 2021.

Meaning a "big mess, out of place or upside down", *KASSARAM* is taken from the title of Petersen's most recent art film, which analyses strategies used in creating and perpetuating cultural divides amongst people of colour through art – from colonialism to the present. It is also a fitting word to describe the open and experimental nature of the Atelier space Petersen will work from over the next five months.

Launched as an experimental platform and residency that provides artists with an opportunity to create new work, conduct research and develop ideas for future projects, the Atelier is a multi-gallery area situated on the museum's second floor. In addition to providing an exploratory space for artists, the Atelier is also open to the public, allowing visitors to Zeitz MOCAA to have unique access and insight into the artists' modes of production and processes.

"The Atelier residency provides artists with a unique platform for reflection on their work within a public environment, as well as access to and interaction with the museum's visitors and communities through programmes," says Koyo Kouoh, Executive Director and Chief Curator at Zeitz MOCAA.

"It also challenges and expands the traditional role of the art museum by bringing modes of creation and making, working and thinking, into the public sphere in a way that is immediate and unfiltered. As previous residencies have illustrated, this leads to alternate perceptions of how artists create but also how art is consumed and engaged with."

Petersen, who uses photography, performance and installation to address the intricacies and complexities of her identity in contemporary South Africa, is no stranger to Zeitz MOCAA. Her work

forms part of the Zeitz permanent collection and she was also one of the inaugural artists on exhibit at the launch of the museum in September 2017.

"I am extremely excited at the opportunities the Atelier presents. My new film *KASSARAM* will be on view and I am hoping to turn the fictional set into reality in one of the studio spaces," says Petersen, who believes that artists play several roles in society. "I feel art is what makes us human, it is what sets us apart from everything else on Earth. We love through art, we yearn through art, we worship through art.

"In my art, I attempt to tell [my family] stories and rewrite the narrative I grew up with, which served to erase the culture of my people, often leaving us feeling inferior. The Creolised community of the Cape are no longer the lost children of this land. We have fought and loved and lost and laughed and birthed on this soil. We are the Cape, we carry the oceans and land in our blood. I want everyone to know who we are."

Throughout the artist's projects, she attempts to unpack contemporary trends of Islamophobia through her analysis of the continuing impact of colonialism, European and American imperialism, and the increasing influence of right-wing ideologies, all anchored by reference points that sit largely in Islam and the awareness of its religious, cultural and traditional practices.

Tandazani Dhlakama, Zeitz MOCAA Assistant Curator and the organiser of Petersen's residency, says: "Petersen's work remains relevant, especially at a time of shifting global perceptions of Africa and its diaspora, as well as the world at large. Despite the impacts of COVID-19, which have – to a certain extent – impelled people to become more insular, technology has allowed for an increased awareness of other cultures, religions, practices and so forth.

"It will be interesting to see how these themes further unfold in her work during the residency, especially as it relates to the social and cultural impact of westernised consumer culture, her Cape Malay heritage and the practice of Sufi Islamism."

Petersen's residency will begin on Thursday, 27 May, with her art film *KASSARAM* and the open studio available to the public at the Atelier, Level 2, Zeitz MOCAA, from that date.

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Issued by [Chimera Creative](#) on behalf of Zeitz MOCAA.

Please find imagery for *KASSARAM* [here](#). For media enquiries, contact Zainab Slemang van Rijmenant on zainab@chimeracreative.co.za.

About Zeitz MOCAA



Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) is a public not-for-profit institution that collects, preserves, researches and exhibits contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora; conceives and hosts international exhibitions; develops supporting educational, discursive and enrichment programmes; encourages intercultural understanding; and strives towards access for all. The museum's galleries feature rotating temporary exhibitions with a dedicated space for the permanent collection. The institute also includes the Centre for Art Education, the Centre for the Moving Image and project space for emerging artists.

Zeitz MOCAA is situated at Silo District, South Arm Road, V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, South Africa, and is open Thursday through Sunday, 10 am to 6 pm. zeitzmocaa.museum