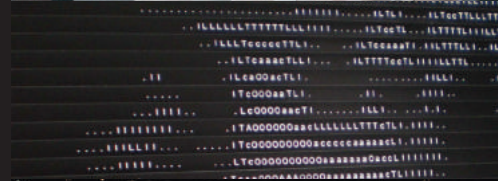


A LEGACY OF MEN





a world class African city



U.S. Consulate General



Johannesburg

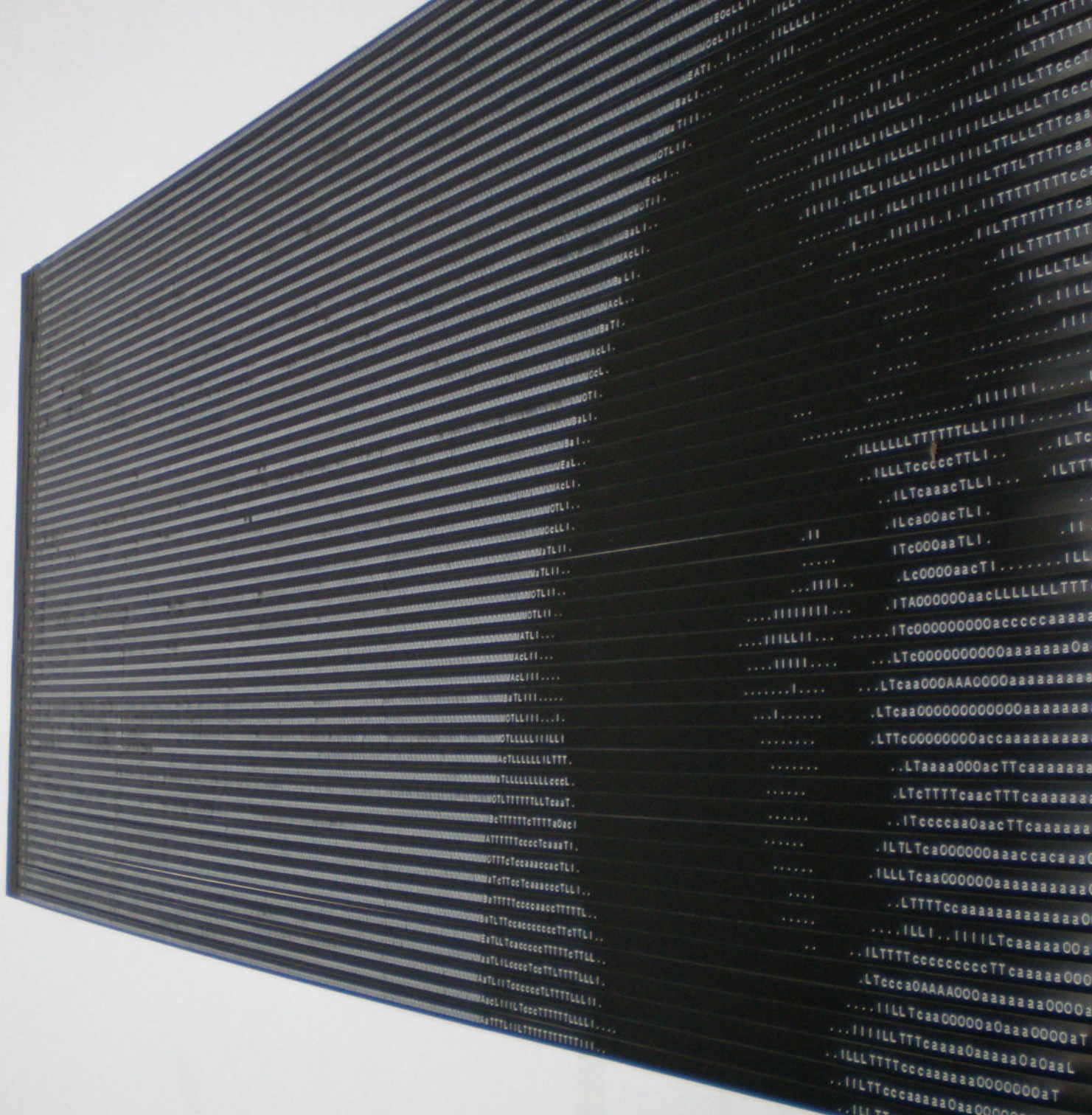
A LEGACY OF MEN

Curated by Jacki McInnes

Pierre Fouché
Robert Hamblin
Lawrence Lemaoana
Nicholas Hlobo
Mikhael Subotzky
Johan Thom
Kemang wa Lehulere

Johannesburg Art Gallery
25 November 2007 – 24 February 2008

Pierre Fouché
Portrait of Marie Fouché (b. Greyling) (detail)
2007
Embossed dynamo tape, Perspex, cable wire



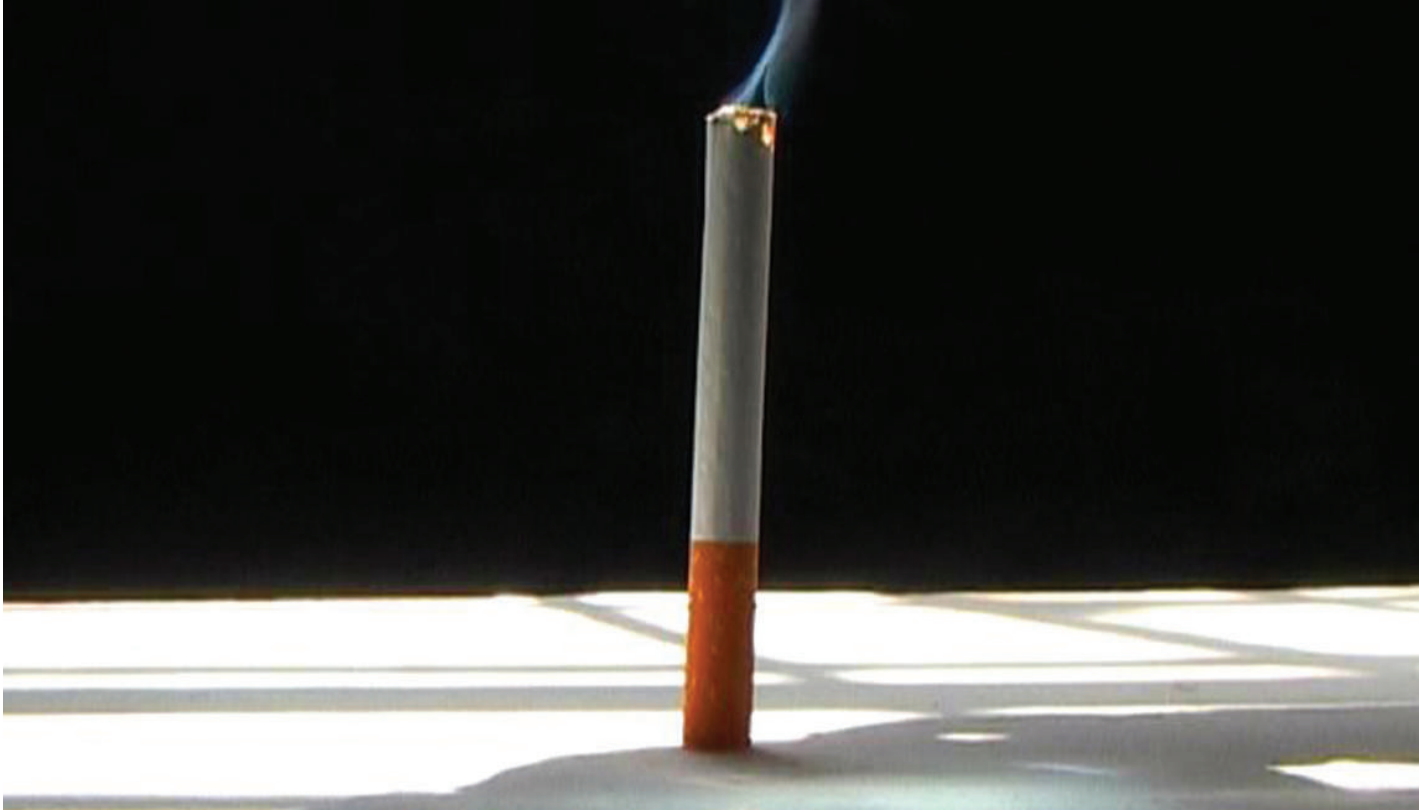
FOREWORD

The exhibition *A Legacy of Men* is being held in conjunction with the 16 Days of Activism campaign that aims to stimulate public awareness of women abuse. What is interesting is that all the participating artists are male – each in their own way reflecting on the theme, either through a constructed image or through more personal revelations related to gender, femininity or self. Here it is important to speak of the implicit versus the complicit and how traditional definitions of gender and role-modelling are brought to the fore, contrasting, at times, traditional cultural values with those of Western modernity.

The arts are a powerful conveyer of messages in society and institutions such as the Johannesburg Art Gallery can function as a space for the articulation of ideas, public education and, at times, even activism. Each year, the gallery presents a project in the form of an exhibition and related public programmes that address the subject of women in our society. In 2006 the Gallery presented the exhibition *Women: Photography and New Media: Imaging the Self and Body through Portraiture*, curated by Jeannine Howse and Amy Watson, featuring emerging and seminal artists such as Penny Siopis and combining new media, photography and installation with several works selected from the gallery's collections.

A Legacy of Men, curated by a female curator, Jacki McInnes, offers a male perspective on the highly charged subject of domestic violence that is endemic to South African society. Traditionally the predominant voices on the topic are female. It is hoped that this exhibition and its related public programmes and education activities, held in conjunction with advocacy groups and NGOs such as POWA and the CSV, will ensure public dialogue and awareness, bringing about a climate of respect and equality.

Clive Kellner
Head: Johannesburg Art Gallery



Kemang wa Le hulere
Lefu LaNtate (My Father's Inheritance)
2006
Video still



INTRODUCTION

He kicks you, slaps you and punches you. He rapes you, calls you 'whore', 'bitch' and 'cunt'. ...His sexual abuse of you results in your hospitalisation. You stuff a dishcloth in your mouth when he beats you so that your children will not hear your cries. ...You leave many times but he finds you every time and weeps, promising this time it will be different.

Ludsin & Vetten

As Hallie Ludsin and Lisa Vetten point out in their book *Spiral of Entrapment: Abused Women in Conflict with the Law*, South Africa may be a culturally diverse country, but its various groups nevertheless demonstrate a remarkably cross-cultural agreement on the subordinate status of women – leaving many women subject to their male partners' authority and control. Couple this with a South African environment in which poor standards of education, unemployment, fierce competition for scarce resources and high levels of alcohol abuse cause men to feel frustrated, emasculated and inadequate, and one is left with a highly volatile situation.

Another crucial factor in domestic violence is that, although widespread, it is a hidden phenomenon and, as a consequence, poorly reported and understood. Owing to the absence of accurate information about the problem, its causes and effects, society is inclined to fall back on tried and tested myths. If a woman stays in an abusive relationship, then surely she either thrives on her sense of martyrdom, or perhaps the abuse really isn't as bad as she makes out. Alternatively the victim is blamed for inciting the violence by questioning her man's authority or not behaving according to cultural mores expected of women in relationships. Being under the influence of alcohol, although undeniably an exacerbating factor, is often seen as a bit of a joke and the perpetrator's culpability therefore diminished.

Not surprisingly, since the vast majority of domestic violence is perpetrated by men, this topic has become almost exclusively the domain of women. But can attitudes and behaviours be changed if the male voice is all but ignored?

The seven male artists chosen for *A Legacy of Men* each engage with the ills of our society from a different perspective, affording the viewer a more holistic view of the subject in question. In addition, through their exploration, not only of the outcome of the violence, but also of the physical environment and the psychological state of the people involved, a more meaningful backdrop is presented against which the topic can be negotiated. It is hoped that this exhibition will provide a secure forum in which visual cues are able to trigger responses on matters often suppressed and at the same time promote a greater degree of understanding and tolerance towards those affected by this blight that is domestic violence.

Jacki McInnes

ENGENDERING DEBATE

Situating a Legacy of Men

“He claims he loves her then he raped her” shouted a *Daily Sun* headline on August 8 last year, on the cusp of Women’s Day. Gender-based violence tends to get more column inches when women are cast as victims, according to recent findings published by the Media Monitoring Project. Its February 2007 report on Women’s Day media coverage found a trend for images that represented women as victims, women who looked as if they had been crying and women who had been physically abused. “Such images also represent women as people who are weak and at the mercy of men,” the report stated. Stereotypes make newspaper editing simpler but they do not deepen debate about gender-based violence and its possible roots, or offer any way forward.

Those kinds of complexities lend themselves to exploration in the arts. Artists, to my mind, can act as a release valve on our pressure-cooker collective psyche. Without the arts, the enormously powerful head of steam would implode the airtight pot into nonsensical and useless fragments. Art can give vent to society’s swirling undercurrents and the results can be sobering or funny, alarming or redemptive.

Jacki McInnes has never been one to shy away from exploring difficult questions in her artistic production. She has regularly engaged issues around women in society, from domestic abuse to infanticide, and has challenged conventional notions of the woman’s role. McInnes has extended these concerns into the curatorial arena through *A Legacy of Men* at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. The invitation to seven male artists to exhibit work dealing with male-on-female violence presents a unique window on a social problem common to any society, particularly one with a patriarchal bent.

Take the work of Mikhael Subotzky, whose photographic investigations into the underbelly of society have won numerous awards and international acclaim. Included on *A Legacy of Men* is the photograph of a young girl standing in a doorway with the words “fuck me” written on her forehead – the remnants of a bad joke her parents found funny during the previous night’s drunken revels. Ironically, the young girl lives in a suburb called *Toekomsrus*; but what kind of future is gestating here?



Lawrence Lemaoana
100% Zulu Boy (detail)
2007
Digitally manipulated photograph

Subotzky's series of photographs, from the "Umjiegwana: Beaufort West" series, is a fitting conceptual counterpoint to his earlier Pollsmoor prison work. In "Umjiegwana" he investigates the social milieu of a community where a prison forms the geographical centre point – bizarrely on a traffic circle in the middle of town. He has documented the community, prison life and "the in-between", as he calls it.

Subotzky's working method, as described by Sue Williamson, is "to immerse himself into a situation that interests him, about which he wants to learn more, to spend time and engage at a one-to-one level with the people involved, and then to take photographs".¹ This ethical approach navigates the voyeuristic element so often inherent in documentary photography and creates instead a compassionate account of dysfunction.

Photography is also a tool employed by Lawrence Lemaona, known for his witty works in various media that offer wry social commentary, in particular around notions of masculinity. *100% Zulu Boy* suggests that formal structures or hierarchies endorse particular power relations, sometimes with worrying results.

Masculinity, and its intersection with ritual circumcision, is further explored by Kemang wa Lehulere's video work of a burning cigarette *Lefu LaNtate*. It reflects, among other things, the "love 'em and leave 'em" attitude of some men towards women. The work recalls the furore surrounding Kaolin Thompson's infamous *Useful Objects* (1996) in which a ceramic ashtray in the shape of a vagina, complete with stubbed-out cigarette, referred to woman as throwaway sexual object. The work provoked tremendous controversy at the time, much of which is encapsulated in the reader *Grey Areas*.²

Nicholas Hlobo, 2006 Tollman Award winner, is another artist who consistently explores aspects of masculinity and its cultural ties. He often uses his trademark rubber tubing and pink or red satin ribbon in mixed media works that question gender, race and ethnicity; *Igqirha lendlela* is no exception.

Working in similar conceptual terrain is Robert Hamblin, who presented a body of work at the 2006 Nasionale Klein Karoo Kunstefees under the name of Adele. This transgendered artist engages with aspects of gender and sexuality that are imposed versus those freely chosen. *Fatherland* speaks, in part, about the ambivalence of the artist inheriting the legacy of the male family line.

Johan Thom takes a subtle approach in his two-channel video projection *Birth of a Tyrant*. He engages with the very act of looking, as theorised by John Berger,³ who wrote: "Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at" (1972: 45-47). What better contemporary reflection of this idea than a television reality show where young women vie for selection as *America's Next Top*

Nicholas Hlobo
Igqirha lendlela
2005
Stitched rubber inner tube
and biker's jacket



Model? (Candice Breitz's video montages of stardom and celebrity find an echo here) In Thom's video, one channel depicts contestants breaking down; the other an actor in a Saddam Hussein guise, who apparently observes this litany of misery while scoffing popcorn. The viewer is caught between these two strands, of acting and appearing, in an awkward space that questions the authenticity of both.

Objectification is also a strand in the work of Pierre Fouché, who recently won the 2007 ABSA L'Atelier Award. His signature style involves manipulation of family snapshots into patterns that serve as templates that Fouché translates, through a labour-intensive process, into works of art comprised of hundreds of smaller units. These could be dice, puzzle pieces, or threads. In *Portrait of Marie Fouché (b. Greyling)*, the artist has created an image of his mother from type-embossed labelling tape. The work is suggestive of how the family unit encodes particular behaviour patterns upon its members while also questioning how much of that code is innate and how much is learnt.

A Legacy of Men makes a refreshing change from representing women in the victim stereotype. It encourages instead a contemplation of the broader social dynamics that give rise to such stereotypes in the first place. Perpetrators and victims alike have



repeatedly stated how dangerous the protective wall of silence and denial is when it comes to abusive relationships – whether physical, sexual, emotional or verbal. This exhibition offers a timely wake-up call, coinciding as it does with the international awareness campaign, 16 Days of Activism.

Kim Gurney

1 www.artthrob.co.za/07aug/artbio.html

2 Atkinson, B. & C. Breitz. 1999. *Grey Areas: Representation, Politics and Identity in Contemporary South African Art*. Chalkham Hill Press: Johannesburg

3 Berger, John. 1972. *Ways of Seeing*. Penguin: London



Johan Thom
Birth of a Tyrant (detail)
2007
Video still

PIERRE FOUCHÉ

Portrait of Marie Fouché (b. Greyling)

Pierre Fouché favours the inherent duality of intimate snapshots to make commentary on interfamily relations and roles. Snapshots purport to provide a true and real representation, but in fact the subject photographed is often situated out of context, giving rise to false impressions.

In *Portrait of Marie Fouché (b. Greyling)* Fouché fragments and reconfigures a picture of his mother taken in the 1960s as a way of exploring the presumably accidental complicity of mothers in the potential violence of their sons. Fouché attests to having had an “ideal” upbringing from his loving and supportive parents but even so, masculine norms of superior strength and the imperative to defend were inculcated in him. Although by nature mild-mannered, Fouché believes even he could be driven to appalling acts of violence, were a loved one to be endangered.

I suddenly realised that if anyone would ever do anything to my mother I'd kill them. I'd soberly and calmly murder without thinking twice. This is a scary realisation to make, and it brings about quite a few related questions: how are mothers in a sense responsible for turning their sons into the kind of men who would abuse?

I'm starting out with this photograph of my mother when she was in her early twenties. There is nothing “motherly” about how she is presenting herself for the camera. Reserved, yet confident, revealing yet concealing. I'm not sure how this objectification (and her confident awareness of it) of my mother speaks to the general exhibition theme, but I know that it does...



Portrait of Marie Fouché (b. Greyling) (detail)
2007
Embossed dynamo tape, Perspex, cable wire

ROBERT HAMBLIN

Fatherland

I remember standing over a woman once, a sjambok in my hand. She was drunk, lying on my bathroom floor. She worked for me. I did not intend to hurt her. I just wanted to scare her. I understood the power dynamic too well. That was long ago. I was a woman then and certain that violence was a complete choice.

Robert Hamblin's contribution to *A Legacy of Men* is perhaps the most complex. It could be assessed from the angle of performance, but this would be an inaccuracy. Hamblin does not adopt an alternative character but instead uses his own transgendered body to articulate male to female relations and the total disruption of "normal" categories for gender. Hamblin's strongest contribution to the topic of violence is, therefore, his unique ability to internally monitor and visually record the change in the way women perceive him. Where previously he was "one of them" he is now subjected to what he refers to as a low-level sense of fear and mistrust from them. Having lived as a lesbian up until recently, Hamblin has now to come to terms with the sense of betrayal felt by his former allies, a position further complicated by his own very recent dislike of men. Essentially he has become the enemy. For better or worse he has inherited the history of men.

...When I was asked to participate in an exhibition about male-on-female violence, the first idea that occurred to me were the words of an Afrikaans folk song that I had sung as a child.

*Wat maak oom Kallie daar?
Wat maak oom Kallie daar?
Oom Kallie steek 'n stywe dop
Hy slaan sy vrou met die handsjambok
Wat maak oom Kallie daar?*

I now live my life as a male. This has given me a unique perspective on the nature versus socialisation debate, especially as it pertains to violence. My hormone levels match those of genetic men and my secondary sexual characteristics are perfectly male. Now anger and frustration present in a much more entitled way but even though my body seems to dictate a new set of responses I cannot escape the fact that I remain a human who was socialised as a woman. My socialisation tempers my nature.

Many feminists blame the power imbalance between men and women on a social construct. I suppose it is an attractive notion because it would put the desire to change within our reach. Acknowledging that our bodies might dictate violence though would leave us subject to nature – a seemingly indiscriminate force. The body is often absent from analyses and yet it is the landscape of violence.

Fatherland
2007
Video still



NICHOLAS HLOBO

Ndithe zava? / Comfortable? Iggirha lendlela

Sculptor Nicholas Hlobo's interest lies in questions of masculinity and sexuality and in the way these intersect with the seemingly contradictory positions of initiation-circumcision and homosexuality. *Ndithe zava? / Comfortable?*, an earlier work, reveals a sense of the artist's ambivalence towards circumcision and, like much of his artistic production, substantiates his assertion that his Xhosa culture is one "preoccupied by the penis" as a site of power and superiority.

Hlobo expresses dismay at the inordinate degree of sexual control his culture wishes to exert over young men in order to stave off a traditional perception of the "negative" influences imposed by an increasingly westernised and modernised society. Such control can perpetuate notions of male entitlement resulting in gendered hierarchies within communities.

Iggirha lendlela is both a sculpture and the integral garment of a performance piece that requires the wearer to mingle with people in social situations, behaving as if there is nothing peculiar about his or her attire. The title of the work derives from a Xhosa choral song, *Iggirha lendlela nguqongqothwane* – the dung beetle is the doctor of the road.

Dung beetles' amazing ability to roll balls of dung using their hind legs says a lot to me about their courage and confidence. They are not intimidated by having to move things larger than their bodies. The song refers to those who are wise and educated (in various ways) and says that they are the ones who know the way forward.

The motorcycle jacket came from a second-hand clothing shop. It bears a *Triton* logo on the top left pocket and the inside label is illustrated with two roses and reads "a rose is a rose". This supports the conversation I attempt to create with the materials I use in my works. It relates to things that are hard and fragile, things that are lovely and inviting yet dangerous. One can relate that to our heritage in South Africa – it is beautiful and inviting, yet capable of inflicting pain.

The altered jacket and the performance allude to the heavy baggage we carry as South Africans. The fact that the baggage is put at the back of the garment suggests that we will work hard at putting the past where it belongs – behind us.

[Nicholas Hlobo quoted in Perryer, S and Stevenson, M. 2005. *South African Art 1484 to Now*. Michael Stevenson: Cape Town.]





Ndithe zava? / Comfortable? (detail)
2004
Mixed media

LAWRENCE LEMAOANA

100% Zulu Boy

I move between the real world and the super-real world, where all that is within it is within my control.

Lawrence Lemaona's preferred area of investigation is the stereotypical black, masculine figure and the notion that in the deconstruction of one type of masculinity, an alternative type will constructively emerge. He begins with the creation of incongruous pink costumes – a ploy that allows the traditionally feminine skills of designing and sewing employed in the manufacture of this "alter ego pink rugby player" to systematically erode established expectations for his own culture and gender. His single male subject is then dressed up and asked to pose in a range of scenarios, some of which are mock-ups of famous paintings, others compositions of Lemaona's own making. By dressing his subject in pink sports garb that makes abundant reference to our national obsession with rugby, Lemaona uses wit and absurdity to question the male South African psyche and how it is subtly moulded and expected to conform to certain norms.

In more recent work Lemaona has retained his signature methodology but is beginning to create more menacing personalities. His protagonists now don pink, stocking balaclavas, hinting at subversive acts and barely concealed malevolence. This, in combination with the way in which he stages his characters, has taken on a distinctly sinister edge. It is as if these threatening figures grouped in a hierarchical order – reminiscent of a group photo of a sports team – allude to the elevation, perhaps even the exaltation, of violence in our society.

My background of playing the game of rugby influences my work and I look closely at the stereotypical masculine figure. For various reasons, such as the history of our country and our social and economical positions in an ever-changing world, I was forced to question my own identity as a young black individual. I had to then realise that all things are not seen with the innocence of a child, that the past always has a strong bearing on our future and that in the deconstruction of one kind of masculinity, another and different one is constructed.

I carefully select fabrics that create a sense of irony and my use of material attempts to subvert popular associations with my subject matter. In so doing, I attempt to amend a very passionate experience ...the death of a dream.

100% Zulu Boy

2007

Digitally manipulated
photograph on canvas

The Star



MIKHAEL SUBOTZKY

Beaufort West

Photographer Mikhael Subotzky has earned acclaim for his ability to record some of the socio-cultural manifestations of our country. Subotzky adopts the stance of the documenter, paying as much attention to the backgrounds that contextualise and situate his photographic records as to the subjects therein. This is not to say that he remains disaffected by his subjects however, in fact, it is his canny ability to wheedle himself into their innermost sancta that makes his pictures so powerful.

I took photographs in Beaufort West between April 2006 and May 2007. Beaufort West has a remarkable prison, situated in a traffic circle in the middle of the N1 highway which passes through the town. In the central courtyard of the prison, the prisoners have painted a large mural that depicts an idyllic Karoo landscape – open, expansive, and un-peopled. The twin images of the island prison and its interior landscape, became the central pieces in a body of work where I explored the town and its prison, inside and outside and in-between.

While the conceptual starting point of the Beaufort West series is a men's prison, some of the most interesting people I met and spent time with were women. One Sunday morning, while wondering around in the newly built suburb of Toekomsrus, I came across a young girl standing in the doorway, with the words "fuck me" written on her forehead. Her parents had written these words there as a joke on the previous drunken night. I took a picture and then rubbed the words out, not really bearing the joke myself. I wondered to what degree my removed middle-class reading of the image might have distorted the heaviness of the situation. Later, I associated a sense of ambiguity, suggestiveness and sadness with the image, which somehow made this question irrelevant.

Earlier, I had taken a number of photographs of the sex workers who work at the town's truck-stop. Michelle introduced me to her family, and I spent many days getting to know them, chatting, and hanging out at their small house. Later, I asked if I could take a picture inside the truck of a cab while she was negotiating with a client. It turned out that the negotiation was something of a flirtation in itself, and before I knew it, things had gone a lot further than expected.

On my most recent trip to Beaufort West, I photographed the Miss Teen Beaufort West Show competition. The girl in this photograph went on to be the runner up in the Miss Teen Beaufort West Show competition.



"Beaufort West" series (Puntjie gestures at a motorist, Beaufort West truck stop)

2006-07

Lightjet C print on Fuji crystal archive paper



“Beaufort West” series (Michelle with a customer in the cab of his truck)
2006-07
Lightjet C print on Fuji crystal archive paper



"Beaufort West" series (Runner-up in Miss Teen Beaufort West Show competition)
2006-07
Lightjet C print on Fuji crystal archive paper

JOHAN THOM

Birth of a Tyrant

Terms of Endearment

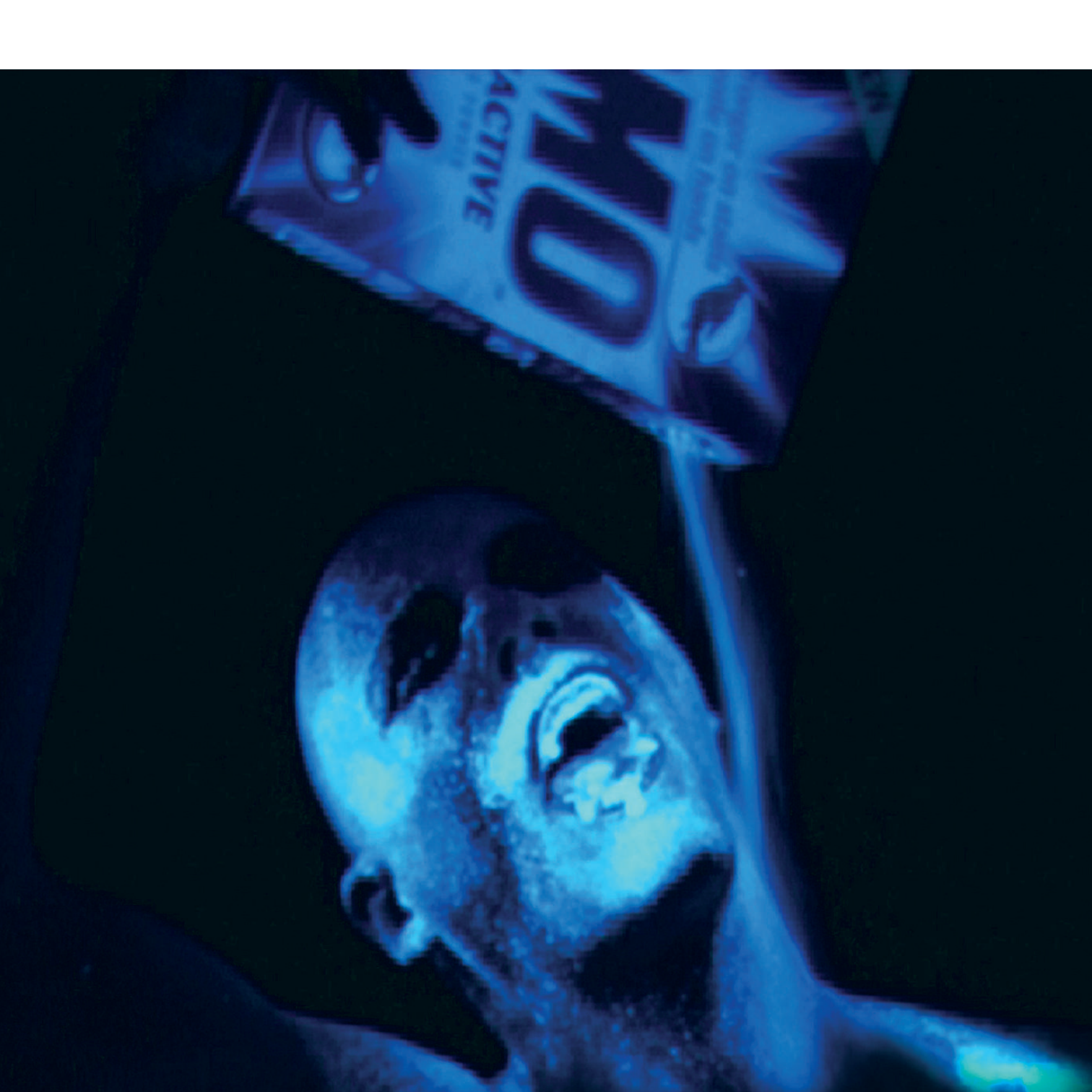
...I couldn't stop watching reality shows. They are so helpful, telling me everything I need to know about personal relationships, good manners, sexual health, how to succeed, the vices and the virtues of the world etc. Moreover I soon discovered that I drew perverse pleasure out of the whole business: shouting at contestants / guests who irritated me or sympathising with those who did not. I also discovered that I started to think in "momentary terms": there has to be daily time set aside for intimacy, problem solving, family, work and entertainment (normally these periods are quite short really – 10 seconds to 1 hour maximum – and thus don't take too much from me).

I decided to devote some serious time to watching these shows but for logistical reasons found that *America's Next Top Model* was best suited to this desire: the contestants are pretty and the show is scheduled when it's appropriate for me. I especially noticed seeing these extremely attractive young women whinge and cry, finding to my amazement that instead of feeling any empathy whatsoever for their public displays of suffering, I enjoyed it (without any tinge of guilt).

Johan Thom is an artist who is not afraid to go to those dingy places that the rest of us tend to avoid. Eroticism, death, desire, ritual and the exposé of our hopes and fears are his creative fare. Although Thom draws from his experience of everyday life, especially his reaction to, and intersection with, the myriad different cultural stances in South Africa, he is inclined to do this from a liminal angle; that point of conscious awareness where things can be perceived, discerned or sensed, but cannot be experienced in the real. He refers to this place in our consciousness as the "void" – a "space that cannot be accounted for by the limited possibilities of human logic and reason". When confronted with the brutal reality of violence, many of us are unable, or unprepared, to recognise our own complicity, however big or small. But Thom's performances cut directly to the human collective conscious, and in so doing, force us to participate.

Birth of a Tyrant





Process is not simply the explication of subject matter and the work of art is not merely the illustration of process, subject matter or concept. Furthermore, attempting to clearly articulate the meaning of a work of art may lead us away from the actual experience of it. Similarly, experience without any physical, psychological and spiritual interrogation (of how it challenges or changes us) can never be meaningful. There must be critical balance. Viewing the art work is also a process; of thinking, experiencing and imagining where, in order to discover something of real personal value, one might have to forego the satisfaction of “finally understanding the work” (and thus safely compartmentalising it as some kind of clear political, personal, economic statement that will ultimately end up gathering dust in a museum basement somewhere or make the newspaper as some pithy little anecdote).

When one is absolutely sure that you have understood a work, then you have forfeited your right to dream, and implicitly impinge upon the right of others to do so as well. The body is a battleground. The work of art is a battleground. But it may be much more than that if we destroy the limits of the self. Meaning is not implicit in anything – we impose it. To understand anything other than our will to order the world and our experiences of it, we must forego the comfortable limits of the self / the ego. The submission of self to process (of experience, of ritualised action, etc) is also the sublimation of self into the chaos and energies of life.

We cannot ever hope to be responsible for – or in control of – the broader consequences of our artworks. This is a futile quest that, amongst other things, makes of art a purely ideological tool and dismisses its capacity to communicate freely. If we are serious about the capacity of art to challenge the narrow systems of thought that govern the world, at this or any other time, then we must face up to the fact that our works may be absolutely worthless. There is real value in creating things that are of no overt value whatsoever. More than anything this creates open space for dialogue to occur. By the same token, it may lead to complete silence, but this is a chance I am willing to take.

Similarly, if our art makes sense only within the narrow confines of its particular context then we have already conceded this freedom. Moreover, if one’s work, or a particular example thereof, poses a serious threat to the status quo, then one must accept the reality of its consequences. In so doing, one accepts the freedom of others to experience, process and find a meaning in your work, and art in general (whether or not you disagree with their experience of an artwork is an issue that simply debases art to the level of political criticism).

There are no absolute rules. Process allows for chance, chaos and values – other than those espoused by the systems that govern us and / or even those that we have created for ourselves – to become momentary realities. Such moments may inspire lasting change if we remain open to them.

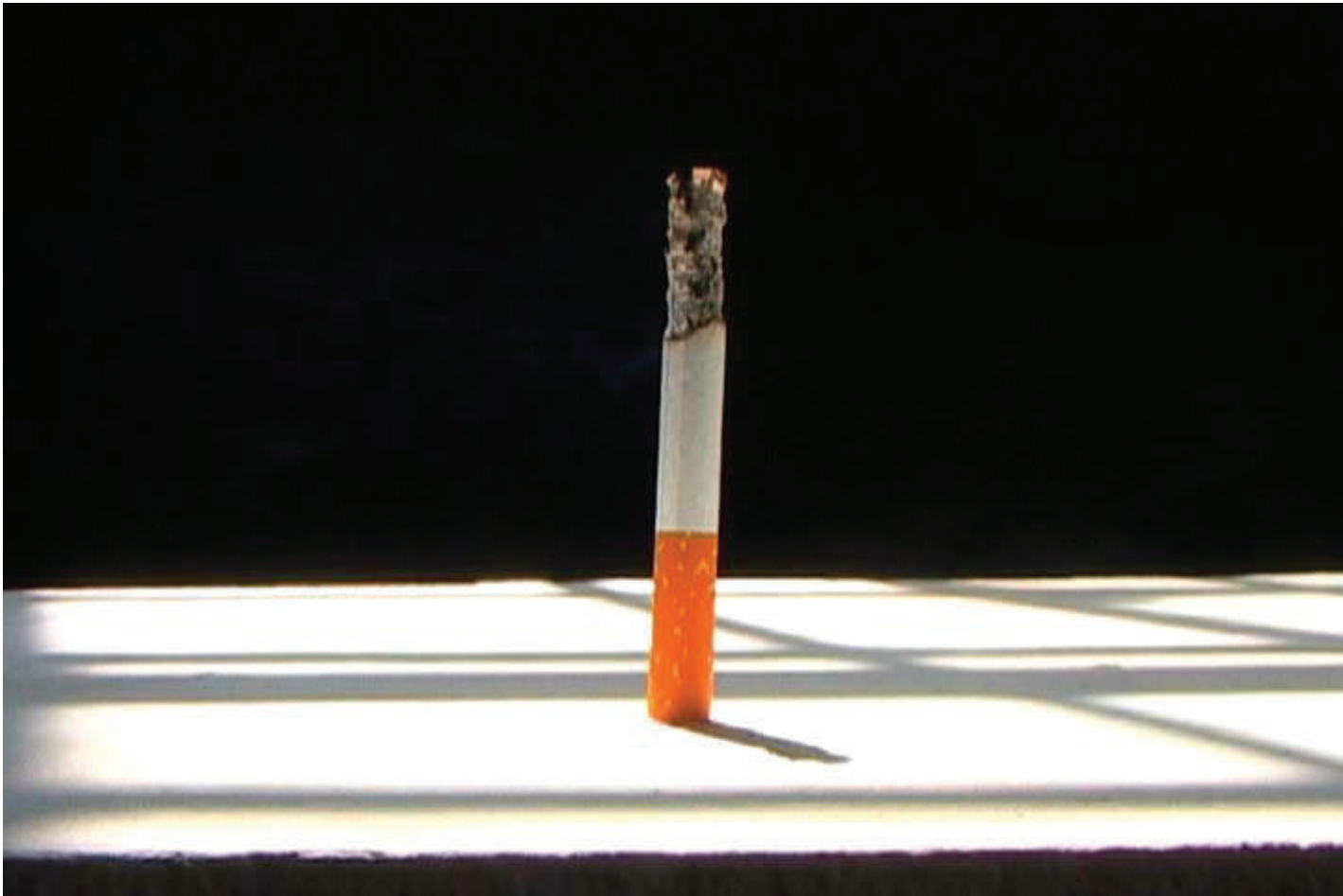
KEMANG WA LEHULERE

Lefu LaNtate (My Father's Inheritance)

In his video entitled *Lefu LaNtate*, Kemang wa Lehulere focuses his visual investigations on the disjunction between spiritual aspects of the circumcision ritual and everyday life. A cigarette, standing on its end, burns down to a "stompie" while in the background male voices chant a verse traditionally recited at the end of the initiation ceremony. The song refers to the hallowed place occupied by the "spiritual" woman in society. The cigarette, on the other hand, acts as a visual proxy for the position of women in a largely patriarchal black society. The barely concealed reference being the "smoke it and toss it" attitude of men towards the "loose fags" – or loose women – who hang around at township shebeens.

The smoking cigarette questions the constructed image of the woman in black culture; it was uncommon to see black women smoking cigarettes in public not so long ago. Having had a mother who smoked, I know how ostracised black female smokers can be in black communities.

The cigarette is also a reference to the way female bodies are perceived in many male circles, as "loose fags". Something that you smoke, pass on to a friend and throw away. This is a violent mutilation of the female body – being reduced to a toxic commodity. *Lefu LaNtate* aims to open up a debate about such social norms and constructs for both men and women.



Lefu LaNtate (My Father's Inheritance)

2006

Video still

PIERRE FOUCHÉ

Pierre Fouché was born in 1977 and lives and works in Cape Town. He has a BA Fine Art from the University of Stellenbosch and completed a Masters in Fine Art in 2006. Both degrees were awarded cum laude.

In addition to numerous group shows and art projects, Fouché has held two solo exhibitions in Cape Town: *The Distance Between Us* at Bell-Roberts Contemporary in 2006 and *Excluded & Unsaid* at blankprojects in 2005.

The highlight of Fouché's career was being awarded the 2007 Overall Winner at the prestigious ABSA L'Atelier Award. He will travel to France in 2008 to take up a six-month residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, where an air ticket and a generous cash award for living expenses make up his prize.

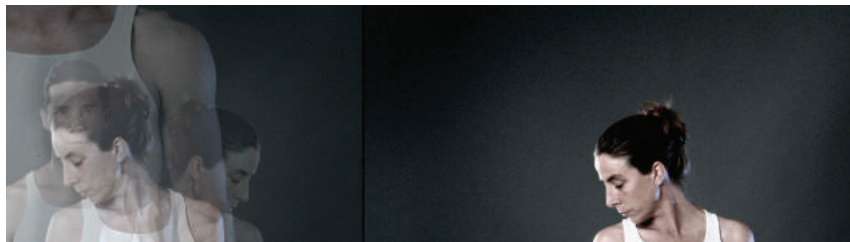


ROBERT HAMBLIN

A Johannesburger by birth, Robert Adele Hamblin became a freelance commercial photographer at the age of twenty-one, after six years as a newspaper photographer. Hamblin is a transgendered man who uses his photographic and artistic skills to create narratives of the human state, exploring gender issues and increasing awareness of the need to transform gender relations.

His first exhibition in 1993 was a study of well-known South African women. In 1995 he took a year off from the creative side of things to care for his father who was dying of Aids. His next exhibition, *Millennium Man* was an examination of the confrontation between men and perceived notions of masculinity and a world that has become more feminised. Questions of gender have informed Robert's work for several years, and have now become an integral part of his life.

Hamblin has participated in many solo and group shows both in South Africa and abroad. Highlights of his career include winning the 2004 Fellowship Award at the Houston Center for Photography in Houston, Texas, and being chosen as a featured artist at the Klein Karoo Nationale Kunsfees (KKNK) in Oudtshoorn in 2006. This show, entitled *Gender*, was a multimedia exhibition that looked at sexual categorisation and notions of femininity and masculinity. In addition to a series of surrealist photographs, five short films *Hair*, *Body*, *Brother*, *Father* and *Grandfather* – all of which interrogate the spaces between the masculine and the feminine – also formed part of the exhibition. His medium is digital photography, which enables him to create surreal images. He also draws on the world of advertising for inspiration because, he says, ads reflect how we live and communicate.



NICHOLAS HLOBO

Nicholas Hlobo was born in Cape Town in 1975 and lives and works in Johannesburg. He obtained a B Tech Fine Arts from the Witwatersrand Technikon in 2002 and also completed a printmaking apprenticeship at the Artist Proof Studio in Newtown in 1998. In 2005, Hlobo was awarded a three-month residency at the Thami Mnye Foundation in Amsterdam.

Hlobo has participated in numerous solo and group shows in South Africa and abroad. He often incorporates an element of performance into his exhibitions, adorning himself with those of his sculptural pieces that conform to a garment-like structure.

Hlobo was the winner of the Tollman Award for Visual Art in 2006. The award is donated by the Tollman Family and seeks to reward South African artists of exceptional talent. Hlobo has also been awarded the Ampersand Foundation Fellowship for 2007.



LAWRENCE LEMAOANA

Lawrence Lemaona was born in Johannesburg in 1982 but lived in Welkom until his early teens. It was at the Highlands North Boys High School in Johannesburg that he developed his love for rugby and art. (He went on to play for the Provincial Rugby Team, Gauteng Lions, which allowed him to play in the prestigious Craven Week Tournament in 2000.)

Lemaona obtained a Diploma in Fine Art at the Witwatersrand Technikon in 2005. He was also the winner of the prestigious Gerard Sekoto Prize at the ABSA L'Atelier competition in that year and spent a three-month residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.

This was his first big step to becoming a professional artist and was followed by his first solo show at Gordart Gallery in 2005. Since then Lemaona has participated in numerous group shows.

Lemaona is currently completing his degree in Fine Art. He helped in the installation of *Africa Remix* at the Johannesburg Art Gallery and is a coordinator for the Sasol Wax Art Award's Outreach Programme.



MIKHAEL SUBOTZKY

Mikhael Subotzky was born in Cape Town in 1981. He obtained a BA Fine Art from the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town in 2004, scoring an unprecedented 100% for his final photographic presentation. This body of work, entitled *Die Vier Hoeke*, was later shown in the Nelson Mandela cell of Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town in 2005.

Subotzky has participated in numerous national and international exhibitions, most notably *Snap Judgements: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography*, curated by Okwui Enwezor at the International Center for Photography in New York and the Turin Triennial, curated by Francesco Bonami and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev.

He has won many awards for his hard-hitting but compassionate photography, including the F25 Award for Concerned Photography from Fabrica in 2006, the 2007 KLM Paul Huf Award, and the 2007 City of Perpignan Young Photographers Award.

Subotzky was the recipient of the Civitella Ranieri fellowship (Italy) for 2007-08 and is currently in residency at Fabrica, Treviso.

He is one of the youngest photographers to be represented by Magnum Photos.



JOHAN THOM

Johan Thom was born in 1976 in Johannesburg where he continues to live and work. He obtained a BA Fine Art from the University of Pretoria in 1999 and an MTech Fine Arts cum laude from the Technikon Pretoria in 2003. Thom is a full-time artist resident at the Fordsburg Artist's Studios, Johannesburg, South Africa. He often uses video, sound and performance to explore the close link between human beings, their socio-political and economic environment and spirituality. His works are often confrontational and darkly humorous, terrorising our sense of space, order and stability.

Thom has participated in numerous exhibitions and art projects at venues such as the First Canary Island Biennale (2006), Belgrade International Theatre Festival (2006), the Britto Arts Trust in Bangladesh (2006), the Rotterdam Film Festival (2006), the Venice Biennale (2003 and 2005), the CRIC/Pro Helvetia residency program in Switzerland (2004/5), the Ampersand Fellowship in New York (2005), the International Computer Arts Festival in Slovenia (2004) and various other arts festivals and group exhibitions in South Africa. He is a regular contributor to publications on contemporary art such as *Art South Africa*. From 2001 to 2006 he lectured in African and South African art and contemporary critical theory at the Tshwane University of Technology before becoming a full-time artist in 2007.



KEMANG WA LEHULERE

Kemang wa Lehulere was born in 1984 in Cape Town, South Africa. He has attended many workshops and training programmes related to theatre and film such as a short course in Script Writing and Introduction to Film and Television at CVET (Community Video Education Trust) in 2003 and Women's Spaces, an exchange workshop between Swedish and South African art students at AMAC in 2005.

Wa Lehulere is closely involved in theatre and television production and has gained experience as a set artist for the stage play *Echoes of our Footsteps* at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown and *Diaries of Womanhood* at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town. He has also worked as camera assistant for the SABC 2 television production *Hossanah* in Cape Town and worked himself up to Cameraman for the short documentary *Two Germans in Cape Town* – an environmental education project based in Mannenberg, Cape Town. In 2007 wa Lehulere was the script-writer, presenter and trainee director for SABC 2's production *Issues of Faith – Kula Sizwe*.

Recently wa Lehulere has become involved in the fine arts where he has used his knowledge and skills in filming and sound to create his first art videos. Highlights in his career include his three-month residency at the Good Hope Art Studios and Gallery at the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town and his inclusion in the well-reviewed group show *Amajita in Conversation* at the AVA Gallery in Cape Town in 2006.



JACKI MCINNES

Jacki McInnes is an artist, arts writer and curator. She obtained a BA Fine Arts cum laude from UNISA in 2001 and a Masters in Fine Arts from the Michaelis School of Fine Art, UCT in 2004. She was the recipient of a UNISA medal for Top Fine Art Student in 2001 and was awarded a National Arts Council scholarship in 2003. McInnes won the category Another Medium in the M-Web New Signatures Competition in 2000 and was awarded the Pro Helvetia Arts Council of Switzerland Artists in Residency in 2004.

McInnes has staged a number of one-person exhibitions in Cape Town and Johannesburg and has participated in group exhibitions both in South Africa and abroad. Her art tends to focus on topics relating to women in society, especially with reference to domestic violence.

McInnes is an assistant editor at David Krut Publishing, a publisher of books on contemporary South African art and artists, and also writes on a freelance basis. *A Legacy of Men*, a group exhibition in which male artists offer a male perspective on the topic of male-on-female violence, is her first foray into the curatorial arena. The exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery is to be staged in support of the global 16 Days of Activism campaign against women and child abuse.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the U.S. Consulate General for their generous sponsorship of this project. Domestic violence is a topic often avoided and their vision has allowed me to stage an exhibition with a supporting education programme that will reach a far greater audience than originally anticipated. Special thanks are due to Khwezi Gule and Clive Kellner too for their support and enthusiasm for this project.

Without the positive interactions and high quality of the work created by the seven participating artists, this project would, of course, never have happened. To them I say a very big thank you for all your hard work and for the way in which each of you engaged with the topic.

Thank you to the Goodman Gallery for printing and framing Mikhael Subotzky's photographs and to the Michael Stevenson Gallery for pictures and text used in the catalogue. Thank you too to Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, Managing Editor of David Krut Publishing for advice, suggestions and casting an editorial eye over the catalogue.

Big thank yous to Kim Gurney for her insightful essay and to Lara Koseff for the excellent design and layout of the catalogue.

And to my partner Ant Smith, thank you for your calm presence and help in this time of short deadlines and even shorter tempers!

Jacki McInnes

