

## **I am not afraid.**

### **The Market Photo Workshop, Johannesburg**

**Opening:** November 30, 2007, 6:00 pm

**Duration:** December 1, 2007 – March 2, 2008

**Artists:** Bonile Bam, Jodi Bieber, Lerato Maduna, Sabelo Mlangeni, Zanele Muholi, Nontsikelelo Veleko, a.o.

#### **TEXTS ON THE WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION**

##### **THE BACK AND FORTH PROJEKT, May – November 2006**

The photography project "Back and Forth: Informal Cross Border Traders in Southern Africa" focuses on informal cross border traders' socio-economic living and working conditions, particularly the factors of vulnerability, such as gender inequality, poor living and working conditions, separation from families, exploitation and discrimination, lack of access to health and other services. A photography project to document the lives of informal cross border traders in the Southern African region. Implemented by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)'s Partnership on HIV and Mobility in Southern Africa (PHAMSA) programme, in collaboration with the Market Photo Workshop's year-long Photojournalism and Documentary Photography Programme (PDP).

Participants: Students in the Market Photo Workshop's Photojournalism and Documentary Photography Programme: Matthews Baloyi, Antony Kaminju, Shabba Kgotlaetsho, Lerato Maduna, Thato Mogotsi, Masimba Sasa, Moshe Sekete; Commissioned Photographers: Monirul Bhuiyan, Tomas Cumbana, Tony Figueira, Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi; Technical Advisor: Reiko Matsuyama; Project Managers: Kirsten Doermann, Wilson Johwa – The Market Photo Workshop.

(From: *Camera Austria* No. 100, Graz 2007)

##### **BONILE BAM: Initiation of the Mind, 2000**

Among the Xhosa (tribe) in South Africa, a child is not accepted as an active member of the community until such a time that they undergo a formal initiation. This status is achieved only through this initiation ceremony which marks the end of carefree childhood and the acceptance of adult responsibilities. The man must prove he is fitted for the role of provider and protector of his family, while the woman receives the marriage and the role of home-maker.

The senior boys reach manhood by undergoing a centuries old ordeal of which the principle is circumcision. Unless they undergo these rites, a male remains a child irrespective of his age. Several young men will go through the ordeal together.

When returning to their original spaces (home), the elders will give them family names which will replace those given at birth. Now new life begins.

(Bonile Bam, from: *Camera Austria* No. 100, Graz 2007)

##### **JODI BIEBER: David, 1995**

The struggle for a sense of community – between the loss of innocence, the desire for belonging, and the dreams of escape – is what dominates much of Jodi Bieber's photography. One of the earliest graduates of the Market Photo Workshop, after leaving a career in advertising, Bieber has gone on to establish herself as one of the world's foremost award-winning photojournalists. Her photographs of David Jakobie in the former poor white suburb of Vredapark feel a lot like treading water – nowhere to go and nothing to do. It feels anti-social, not so much in the sense of being outside of social "norms", but rather in the sense that it is without the structure of social codes and consequences, and without the prospect of either power or empowerment. With this focus, Bieber captures an interesting difference between Vredapark and Westbury because the latter essay on gang culture is shot and edited in a way that gives a clear sense of the hierarchal culture of gangs, with perceivable actions, limits and consequences that underpin a social organization of power and control.

(Rory Bester, from: *Camera Austria* No. 100, Graz 2007)

**LERATO MADUNA: Diski 9/9 – Us and the Ball, 2007**

In most South African townships, to be a soccer player all you need is a brick for a goal post or "pole" and a ball; a few kids from the neighbourhood – boys or girls – and a space to showcase the skill whether it be at a dilapidated basketball court, a cleared dump-yard, a dusty veld or simply the streets. There's no way mama will let you play in your school shoes, they are going to have to see you through the next two years, so the next best thing are your fleshy feet. (...) What I have documented are people and surroundings I know. The kids have been the most open and understanding. Documenting something that is too close to home has been the most challenging aspect of this project. I find myself having to take more than a few steps back. These pictures express my love for the colourful game itself.

(Lerato Maduna, from: *Camera Austria* No. 100, Graz 2007)

**ZANELE MUHOLI: Faces & Phases, 2006 – 2007**

There is a meaning or interplay to "Faces & Phases" and why the project focuses on these two words. I decided to capture images of my community in order to contribute towards a more democratic and representative South African homosexual history. Up until 1994, we as black lesbians were excluded from participating in the creation of a formal queer movement and our voices were missing from the pages of gay publications, while white gay activists directed the movement and wrote about gay issues and struggles. Hence, few of us were present in the forefront, but many operated underground. I embarked on a journey of visual activism to ensure that there is black lesbian visibility, to showcase our existence and resistance in this democratic society, to present a positive imagery of black lesbians.

(Zanele Muholi, from: *Camera Austria* No. 100, Graz 2007)

**SABELO MLANGENI: Invisible Women, 2006**

Sabelo Mlangeni's series "Invisible Women" is about a particular instance of night-time invisibility. (...) This body of work documents the 'invisible' women who clean Johannesburg's streets while most of the rest of the city sleeps. There is a ghostly, fleeting quality to Mlangeni's photographs, mostly the effect of low light and blurring, but also the consequences of conditions under which the street sweepers work. The formal qualities of these photographs reinforce the difficulty of their struggle against invisibility and the fragility of their visibility in photographic form and circulation.

(Rory Bester, from: *Camera Austria* No. 100, Graz 2007)

**NONTSIKELELO VELEKO: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, 2003 – 2004; The ones on top won't make it stop!, 2002**

The most vivid celebration of the energy and diversity of one of Africa's largest cities is Lolo Veleko's "Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder", an ongoing and internationally celebrated project that began in 2003. In this series of observational and constructed portraits of other people's taste for dress and fashion, Veleko carefully rubs over the role of beauty, fashion and the urban in knotting real, invented and imagined identities in Johannesburg's city centre and surrounding townships. This body of work epitomises Veleko's keen social observation and interpretation of cultural environments (that she has also extended to records of urban graffiti as a mode of post-apartheid cultural messaging).

(Rory Bester, from: *Camera Austria* No. 100, Graz 2007)

**THE MPILONHLE MPILONDE (GOOD LIFE, LONG LIFE) PROJEKT, May – June 2006**

The "Mpilonhle Mpilonde" Project by the Market Photo Workshop and the Reproduction Health and Research Unit of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, was a reaction to city authorities' denial of the existence of the informal Denver settlements and therefore the delivery of related services. The area includes abandoned factories and informal settlements, surrounding a number of men's hostels originally built for migrant mine workers. The residents live amid high insecurity, frequent shack fires and an HIV infection of 56% among women in the surrounding informal settlements. This photographic participatory project with residents was meant to prove existence and raise awareness of residents' socio-economic conditions. Residents were given cameras to document their daily routines.

Participants: Thulisile Chirwa, Sibongile Majola, Nathi Makhanya, Ntombizini Mchunu, Hector Mkhobo, Anxious Mlalazi, Thembeni Mntambo, Muzi Patrick Mohobo, Ntombifuthi Ngwenya, Phumzile Nkosi, Fiona Nojaholo, Joyce R. Phahle, Eldah Shongwe, Jilta Tati, Busisiwe Zondo, Nonhlanhla Zulu, Sibusiso Zulu, Thulisile Zwane; Project Managers: Kirsten Doermann, Wilson Johwa – The Market Photo Workshop; Jo Vearey – University of the Witwatersrand, Reproduction Health and Research Unit.

(From: *Camera Austria* No. 100, Graz 2007)

#### **THE IKAGENG WOMEN'S OUTREACH PROJECT, May – September 2005**

This is the result of the Ikageng Women's Outreach Project, where 15 women from Ikageng and Promosa townships participated in a workshop. The project focused on training women from marginalised communities basic analogue photography and visual literacy. 15 women participated – aged between 18 and 50; only one employed and others completing high school. The participants were engaged in a process where they had to tell their own stories by documenting their own families and life in the township thus enabling them to read and understand the language of photography. They also learnt visual literacy, the meaning of symbols, signs, creating meaning with the visuals that are at their disposal daily like magazines, newspapers, television programmes and movies.

Participants: Abigail Adams, Francis Blok, Mirenda Brooks, Dimakatso Chabedi, Kedibone Kobue, Tiisetso Madiehe, Agnes Moeretsane, Jane Motaung, Susky Norman, Koenie Phatedi, Anna Seheri, Lolly Sesoko, Emma Sey, Rina Sey, Nazeera Tracey; Project Manager: Nontsikelelo Veleko – The Market Photo Workshop.

(From: *Camera Austria* No. 100, Graz 2007)