

International Acclaim for The South African Pavilion
at 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Candice Breitz + Mohau Modisakeng

Presented by
The South African Department of Arts and Culture

Curated by
Lucy MacGarry
Musha Neluheni

Biennale Arte 2017
Sale D'Armi, Arsenale, Venice, Italy

13 May – 26 November 2017

Principal Agent and Project Lead	-	Connect Channel
Curator	-	Lucy MacGarry
Assistant Curator	-	Musha Neluheni
Producer	-	Ann Roberts
Project Management	-	Parts & Labour

On Wednesday 10 May, the South African Consul General of Milan Ms Titi Nxumalo officially opened the South African Pavilion at the 57th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia. “South Africans can be proud of our presence at the 2017 Biennale Arte. Artists, Candice Breitz and Mohau Modisakeng have received an overwhelmingly positive response from visitors and international media. Their moving image-based works have been met with critical acclaim and we anticipate a steady stream of visitors to the Pavilion.” said Ms Nxumalo.

The Pavilion has been listed as one of the “must see” pavilions by numerous media amongst others Artsy, The New Yorker, The Guardian, Le Monde, The Art Newspaper, The Telegraph, Architectural Digest and Der Spiegel.

Curated by Lucy MacGarry and Musha Neluheni on behalf of The South African Department of Arts and Culture, *Candice Breitz + Mohau Modisakeng* is a two-person exhibition that explores and articulates historical and contemporary narratives of forced migration. The works presented contemplate notions of visibility and identity within a global context of “refugeeness” and its condition of exclusion and transience.

In the first room, viewers discover *Passage* (2017) by Mohau Modisakeng, whose multimedia practice in photography, performance and installation is informed by a personal and idiosyncratic investigation of the artist’s coming-of-age during South Africa’s violent political transition. The three-channel installation, *Passage* produces a meditative experience that evokes the disintegration of African identity in the wake of a violent history of slavery and its enduring effect on personal histories.

Viewers then encounter Candice Breitz’s *Love Story* (2016), presented as a seven-channel installation that features Hollywood actors Alec Baldwin and Julianne Moore as conduits to convey the stories of six refugees from around the world, whose original interviews with the artist are included. Reflective of themes and issues prevalent in Breitz’s internationally acclaimed career, *Love Story* interrogates the indubitable effect of mainstream media and popular culture on the conditions under which empathy and global awareness are produced.

A selection of quotes that reflect commendation of the exhibition in the news thus far includes:

“A striking video installation of beauty.”
— Roxana Azimi, *Le Monde Afrique* (18 May 2017)

“Two separate works by South African artists Candice Breitz and Mohau Modisakeng come together in one of the most powerful installations to address forced migration at the Biennale, where it’s a frequent theme.”
— The Venice Biennale’s 11 Best Pavilions - Arsty Editorial, *Alexxa Gotthardt* 10 May 2017

“Candice Breitz, who is co-representing South Africa, has used a simple film technique, the talking-head shot, to create a complex, fractured narrative of lives lived in fear... Breitz’s editing of the footage and space, and inspired casting, produces a genuine double-take.”
— Javier Pes and Gareth Harris, *The Art Newspaper*, 10 May 2017

“At Venice, in the South African Pavilion, Modisakeng has mounted ‘Passages,’ a three-channel video projection that, like his photography, reveals the beauty and trauma of black bodies in motion... It’s a view of existence that suggests that all experiences are transient.”
— Antwaun Sargent, *The New Yorker*, 25 May 2017

“...Make sure you see South Africa’s Candice Breitz, whose complex, thoughtful film installation responds to the refugee crisis by taking the stories of six individuals each seeking asylum from oppression in their countries... Posing awkward questions about how our attention is captured and our sympathy elicited, Breitz manages – where so many others fail – to engage effectively with the complexity of this global catastrophe.”
— Louisa Buck, *The Telegraph*, 19 May 2017

“The best work I have ever seen by Candice Breitz, *Love Story* is subtle, tragic and mesmerising, not only in its shuttling glide between different people and their histories, but also between the direct and the translation, between evidence and interpretation, fame and anonymity.”
— Adrian Searle, *The Guardian*, 15 May 2017

Presented by The South African Department of Arts and Culture and managed by Connect Channel PTY(Ltd)

The South African Pavilion received additional support from the Friends of the South African Pavilion, including Goodman Gallery, kaufmann repetto, KOW, Galerie Ron Mandos, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Tyburn Gallery, Whatiftheworld, BonelliErede, CN&Co, Strauss & Co, Scheryn Art Collection, KT Wong Foundation, A4 Art Foundation, Wendy Fisher, Business and Arts South Africa and Emile Stipp.

The exhibition continues through 26 November 2017 at the Sale D'Armi of the Arsenale in Venice, Italy.

For press information, interview opportunities and images please contact:
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