Lien Botha  Wonderboom

1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair
Somerset House, London

6 - 9 October 2016
Lien Botha

In Lien Botha’s work the photograph – as text, object or trace – intersects and interweaves a collection of recurring concerns which her practice - spanning more than thirty years - has continuously investigated and ruminated upon: memory, meaning, experience, object and place. These concerns do not operate autonomously, but are rather always presented as interdependent and mutually generative. The photograph, then, conceptualized beyond the rigidities of the documentary frame to which post-Apartheid photography in South Africa is so often inclined to, becomes an active site of memory – both personal and collective; a living, generative space that both recalls real places in space and time, and revisits and reimagines them through complex networks of association and narrative. This duality endows them with an undeniable enigma and surrealism – one has the sense that events are occurring, actual and imagined, which cannot fully be seen or expressed. The photograph thus sits somewhere between object and place, between real and unreal, tangible and intangible.

Botha’s Wonderboom series is a virtuosic distillation of these steadfast concerns. A visual companion piece to her debut novel of the same name, which tracks the protagonist’s journey across dystopic South Africa as she slowly loses her memory, each image corresponds to a chapter. A series of disintegrating photographic texts, Wonderboom references Eadweard James Muybridge’s groundbreaking image sequences. But while Muybridge’s sequences are accumulative and continuous, Botha’s tracks a trajectory of loss and disintegration. Layers of meaning are progressively stripped away, severing connections and associations as they disappear. The collection of objects comes to represent a mind that is slowly losing its grip on itself, a place slowly eroded, a history forgotten or confused. This visual entropy effects a tactile sense of loss, and reminds us that lived experience is predicated on complex layers of association which are ever vulnerable to disruption, destruction and delirium.

Charis de Kock

Biography

1961   Born in Pretoria, South Africa

Education

2014   MA Creative Writing (with distinction), University of Cape Town
1984 - 1988   BA Fine Art, Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town
1979 - 1981   BA Languages, University of Pretoria

Teaching / Employment

2003   Part-time lecturer: University of Stellenbosch
1997-2003   Part-time lecturer: Michaelis School of Fine Art
1991   Staff photographer: South African National Gallery, Cape Town
1983   Press photographer: Beeld, Pretoria

Awards & Residencies (selected)

2016   Wonderboom awarded with WoordTROfee for Visual Art, University of Stellenbosch Museum
2016   Wonderboom shortlisted for University of Johannesburg Prize (best creative debut in Afrikaans)
2014   NB Publishers Bursary for MA in Creative Writing
2013   Masters Research Scholarship, University of Cape Town
2010   Kunst: Raum Syt Quelle Residency, Sylt
2006   Ampersand Foundation Fellowship, New York
2003   San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco
2001   Studio Art Center International, Florence (visiting artist scholarship)
1997   Standard Bank Young Artist Award
1990   Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris
Wonderboom series
2015
Archival inkjet on cotton rag paper
639 x 485 mm each (A3)
Edition 1/5
Series R 225 000 I £12 500*
Individual R 18 000 I £ 1 000*
Solo exhibitions

2016  1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, Somerset House, London
2016  Wonderboom, University of Stellenbosch Museum, Cape Town
2015  Wonderboom, Modern Art Projects (MAP), Richmond
2014  Yonder, Barnard Gallery, Cape Town
2009  Parrot Jungle, The Photographer’s Gallery, Cape Town
2008  Anthology, Olovenhuis Museum, Bloemfontein
2006  Amendment, The Photographers Gallery, Cape Town
2005  Safari, MC2, Bordeaux
2004  Safari, Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees, Oudtshoorn
2002  Radio Maria, Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town & Palazzo dei Cartelloni, Florence
1997  Standard Bank Young Artist Award, National Arts Festival, Grahamstown & touring nationally
1991  Rites of Faith, South African Association of Arts, Cape Town
1989  A Passage Wing, Chelsea Gallery, Cape Town

Group exhibitions (selected)

2016  Africa Reformed, Øksnehallen, Copenhagen
2016  Home Truths, South African National Gallery, Cape Town
2015  Fear & Loss - The Industrial Karoo, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria
2014  MiPht, Photography, Film and New Media Biennale, Cape Town
2013  Point of View: Contemporary South African Photography, Barnard Gallery, Cape Town
2013  For a sustainable world, 9th Bamako Encounters African Photography Biennale, Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon
2012  For a sustainable world, 9th Bamako Encounters African Photography Biennale, BOZAR, Brussels
2012  Ik ben een Afrikander II, SASOL Museum, Stellenbosch
2011  For a sustainable world, 9th Bamako Encounters African Photography Biennale, Bamako
2011  Crossing Boundaries: Contemporary Art from South Africa, Virginia Commonwealth University of Qatar
2010  From Perneef to Guguletu 1910-2010, South African National Gallery, Cape Town
2009  Reflets d’Afrique: Panafricain Festival of Algiers, Museum of Modern Art, Algiers
2008  Kick the carbon habit, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand
2008  Beyond the Line, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg
2008  Construct: Beyond the documentary photograph, UNISA Art Gallery, Pretoria
2008  Reality Check: Contemporary South African Art Photography, South African National Gallery, Cape Town
2007  Désirréalités, Espace 1789, Saint-Ouen, Paris
2007  Uniform: South Africa’s new clothes, Spanierman Modern, New York
2007  Contemporary Art Photography from South Africa, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin & touring
2005  Another World, 6th African Photography Biennale, Bamako
2004  Post: Contemporary South African Photography, Tama Art University, Tokyo
2003  Lexicons and Labyrinths: Iconography of the genome, South African Museum, Cape Town
2002  South African Photographers, OMC Gallery, Düsseldorf
2001  Topographies, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare
2001  Lines of sight: Perspectives on South African Photography, Centre de Musée National du Mali, Bamako
1998  Memorias Intimas Marco, Museu da Cidadé, Lisbon
1997  Lieftimes, Contemporary Art from Southern Africa, Art Bureau, Munich
1996  Don’t mess with Mr. In-between / 5 Artistas Da Africa do Sul, Culturgest, Lisbon
1995  Transitions, Contemporary South African Art, Bath Festival, UK
1995  Neue Grafik aus SüdAfrika, Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg
Die see spoeg 'n boom uit (The sea spits out a Tree)
2015
Archival inkjet on cotton rag paper
639 x 485 mm (A3)
Edition 1/5
R 18 000 | £ 1 000*
Yonder: Padstal outside Keimoes, Northern Cape, South Africa, September 2012
Archival inkjet on cotton rag paper
378 x 505 mm (A3)
Edition 1/5
R 21 600 | £ 1 200*
Panari Hotel III Nairobi, Kenya, November 2011
Archival inkjet on cotton rag paper
282 x 371 cm (A4)
Edition 1/5
R 16 200 I £ 900*

Parrot Jungle: Sociable Weaver’s Nest, South African Museum, Cape Town, 2009
Archival inkjet on cotton rag paper
550 x 747 mm (A2)
A/P III edition size 5
R 27 000 I £ 1 500*
Yonder, Ditsong Museum of Natural History I, Pretoria, South Africa, April 2011
Archival inkjet on cotton rag paper
573 x 746 cm (A2)
Edition 2/5
R 27 000 | £ 1 500*
Yonder, Witloof | Kalahari, South Africa, September 2012
Archival inkjet on cotton rag paper
731 x 1021 mm (A1)
A/P VII edition size 5
R 32 400 / £ 1 800*
Parrot Jungle, Loxodonta Africana, South African Museum, Cape Town, 2009
Archival inkjet on cotton rag paper
450 x 595 mm (A3)
Edition 1/5
R 21 600 | £ 1 200*

Parrot Jungle, South African Museum, Cape Town, 2009
Archival inkjet on cotton rag paper
410 x 552 mm (A3)
AP
R 21 600 | £ 1 200*