

Jenkins Johnson Gallery

Blessing Ngobeni

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Established 1996. Member AIPAD and the San Francisco Art Dealers Association

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BLESSING NGOBENI

Blessing Ngobeni (b. 1985, Tzaneen, South Africa) is a trailblazing contemporary artist working in the medium of collage. He incorporates elements from technology and traditional art historical movements to develop new, visual statements of cultural critique and expression. These statements converge to create new and powerful meaning in his compositions. The artist synthesizes his influence through mixed media assemblage, combining images and photographs with custom paints and three-dimensional objects.

Ngobeni works across disciplines in painting, collage, sculpture, video animation, sound installations and live performances. He creates a hybrid language comprising the artistic grammar of Surrealism, the rebellion of Dada and the symbolic force of Neo-Expressionism in his large-scale paintings condemning South Africa's socio-political system. Ngobeni's work brings attention to the failures of the government to deliver on Nelson Mandela's promises of a more equal society, post-Apartheid. His multi-layered canvases combine imagery from magazines, books, and social media within his distinctive figurative characters, reflecting various perspectives on current affairs of our time.

Ngobeni was named by Artspace as one of the "most important African painters working today" and is a 2020 recipient of South Africa's prestigious Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Visual Art; past awardees include William Kentridge and Mohau Modisakeng. Ngobeni was an artist in residence at the Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA, and the Cleveland Foundation's Creative Fusion. His works are in public institutions throughout South Africa including Johannesburg Art Gallery and he has been featured in Phaidon's Vitamin P3. Ngobeni was recently included in Art Basel's article 'Cocoa butter poems and splashing colors: Discover five young artists in 'OVR: Pioneers,' described as one of the visionaries pushing boundaries, both material and temporal. He lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa.



Blessing Ngobeni, *Shopping for Black Skin I*, 2019, mixed media on canvas, 85 3/4 x 119 1/4 in.



Blessing Ngobeni, *A THING OF THE PAST HAUNTS IV*, 2020, mixed media on canvas, 59 x 47 1/2 in.



Blessing Ngobeni

Continent with Twisted Leadership #3, 2021

mixed media on canvas

38 1/4 x 28 3/8 inches

signed recto



Blessing Ngoben

Continent with Twisted Leadership #4, 2021

mixed media on canvas

38 1/4 x 28 3/8 inches

signed recto

BLESSING NGOBENI

BORN:

1985 Tzaneen, South Africa. Lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa.

EDUCATION:

Artist Proof Studio in Newtown, Johannesburg, South Africa

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2018 Blessing Ngobeni: A Note from Error, Everard Read London, UK
Enemy of Foe, CIRCA Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2017 Masked Reality, CIRCA Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2016 The Song of the Chicotte, CIRCA Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
In Unknown Space, Cleveland Foundation Creative Fusion, Cleveland, OH
- 2015 As If You Care, Gallery MOMO, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2014 In His State of Madness, Gallery MOMO, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2013 Joburg Art Fair, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2012 On This Earth, Gallery MOMO, Johannesburg, South Africa

GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2021 Art Basel Miami Beach, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, Miami, FL
Frieze New York, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York, NY
- 2020 Art Basel, Miami Beach: OVR, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, Online Viewing Room
Frieze London, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, Online Viewing Room
Art Basel, OVR:20c, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, Online Viewing Room
The Armory Show, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York, NY
- 2019 Cape Town Art Fair, Cape Town, South Africa
The Invisible Exhibition II, The Centre for the Less Good Idea, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2018 UNTITLED, Miami, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, Miami, FL
EXPO Chicago, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, Chicago, IL
Summertime... Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, CA
AIPAD, Pier 94, New York
Winter, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
In the Forests of the Night, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2017 EXPO Chicago, Chicago, IL
Humanity Today, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Summer Exhibition, Everard Read London, UK
- 2016 Viewpoints, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Art Miami, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, Miami, FL
- 2015 Untitled Group Exhibition, Gallery MOMO, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2013 Works On Paper Group Show, Gallery MOMO, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2012 Made In Africa, Sandton Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Emergency Exit, Bag Factory, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2011 SANNA Africa Festival, Zoo Lake, Johannesburg, South Africa
Wasted, Unity Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2010 Collaboration, Unity Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2009 Untitled, Unity Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2007 Untitled, Museum Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2006 Taxi Outreach Project, David Krut, Michaelis Central Library, Diepkloof Library, Johannesburg, South Africa

RESIDENCIES:

- 2016 Cleveland Creative Fusion, Cleveland, OH

- 2014 Headlands Centre For Art, San Francisco, CA
- 2012 Reinhold Cassier Award, Bag Factory, Johannesburg, South Africa

GRANTS/FELLOWS/AWARDS:

- 2013 Mail & Guardian as one of the 200 Top South Africans
Art & Culture Trust, Johannesburg, South Africa, ACT Lifetime Achievement Awards
and ImpACT Awards for Young Professionals: Blessing Ngobeni for Visual Arts
- 2012 Reinhold Cassirer Art Award

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- 2020 Rangongo, Timothy. "Emerging artists to look out for." Finweek, Jan. 3, 2020. Online.
- 2019 Jacobs, Craig, "SA's own Basquiat, Blessing Ngobeni, bequeaths award to new talent," Sunday Times, May 5, 2019
"Foreign buyers flock to Cape Town's booming art scene," Reuters, March 20, 2019
- 2018 "Ngobeni's beautiful nightmare in the exhibition A Note from Error," Mail&Guardian, November 23, 2018
"Discussing Blessing Ngobeni's A Note from Error," Rosebank Killarney Gazette, November 28, 2018
"Blessing Ngobeni is the next big thing" Conde Nast, House and Garden. Smedy, Piet, Jan. 23, 2018
Mongezeleli Joja A., "Ngobeni's Beautiful Nightmare", November 2018, Mail & Guardian
Blessing Ngobeni, Africanah.Org, September, 9, 2018.
Williams, Scott Eric, "Anatomy of (Collective) Apathy: Blessing Ngobeni's Enemy of Foe, March 2, 2018
- 2017 "Black Art, White Galleries: Blessing Ngobeni's "Masked Reality", ARTHROB, Motlatsi Khosi, March 3, 2017
"Blessing Ngobeni", Southern African Foundation for Contemporary Art, 2017
Circa Gallery: Blessing Ngobeni, Business Media MAGS
- 2016 "Crosby, Ngobeni, Mokgosi: 3 Rising African painters you need to know now", Artspace, Nov. 4, 2016
"Meet the artist who has become one of his generation's most sought-after painter" Sunday Times, the Paper for the People, Tymon Smith, July 2016.
"A Sjambok to make you sing", Robyn Sassen My View, July 9 2016
- 2015 Mongezeleli Joja A., "Art and politics: Blessing Ngobeni brings us back to the reality." Mail & Guardian, August 2015. Online.
Hunkin J. "Layered with Meaning: Blessing Ngobeni's Mixed Media Collages", Between 10 and 5, May 2015. Online.
Jolly L., "Testament of an Afro-Picasso", Cape Times, July 2015.
- 2014 Nkuna K. "Blessing Ngobeni explores power and destruction", The Citizen, April 2014.
- 2013 "Blessing Ngobeni, 200 Young South Africans Archive" Mail & Guardian
Taylor D., "Traumatic Past Fuels Work of South African Artist Blessing Ngobeni", Voice of America.
- 2012 "Blessing's beasts of our nation", November 2012, in News 24
"Blessed by dreams", June 2012, in News 24
De Waal M. "No disguise in Blessing's work", April 2012, in Daily Maverick
Sassen R. "Artist forged by pain", April 2012, in Sunday Times
"Painting Joburg in Art", March 2012, in Joburg.org.za

FILMS:

- 2014 "Blessing's Art Fair Performance", 2014, 11:39 minutes, Blessing Ngobeni
"Bless Footage 2", 2014, 5:46 minutes, Blessing Ngobeni
"100% Youth: Blessing Ngobeni", 2014, 6:14 minutes, Gallery MOMO, The Bag Factory, Rena Le Lona Creative Center, for SABC 1
- 2013 "Born prepared: Blessing Ngobeni for the 2013 FNB JoburgArtFair", 2013, 4:44 minutes, producer: Nicola Hellmann, for FNB TV