

## Artists in Residence

### MAC/VAL – Museum of Contemporary Art of the Val-de-Marne

## Presentation of works by Mary Sibande and Mikhael Subotzky

Opening 25 October 2013, 6:30 PM

### Press release

As part of the season of South Africa in France, the MAC/VAL (Museum of Contemporary Art of the Val-de-Marne) has invited Mary Sibande and Mikhael Subotzky for a summer artist's residency at the end of which their creations will be shown to the public. The work of these two young artists, both recipients of The Standard Bank Young Artist awards who have already begun international careers, turns a spotlight on the vitality of South Africa's art scene.

Mary Sibande was born in Barberton (Mpumalanga province) in 1982. She lives and works in Johannesburg. The first member of her family to have attended school (her mother and grandmother both worked as maids), Sibande explores identity construction in South Africa's post-apartheid society and stereotypical representations of women.

Her sculptures evoke the character Sophie, her "alter ego" dressed in hybrid clothing – a large blue Victorian dress and a maid's apron – her eyes closed, dreaming of other possibilities: conductor of an orchestra, or a woman on horseback... Mary Sibande also creates digital images in which she acts out various scenarios involving Sophie. Large size billboards of her sculptures and images were exhibited across public spaces within the inner-city of Johannesburg during the Soccer World Cup in 2010. Her work was shown at the 2011 Venice Biennale. Her solo exhibition "The purple shall govern" is currently showing at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. It will be touring other art centers in South Africa as part of her Standard Bank Young Artist Award exhibition tour. Her reflections upon identity and social progress make her a perfect fit for the projects that the MAC/VAL is working on with the local community.



Mary Sibande, *Silent symphony*, 2010.  
Digital print, 90 x 60 cm  
Courtesy Gallery Momo, Johannesburg



Mary Sibande, *A terrible beauty is born*, 2013.  
Courtesy Gallery Momo, Johannesburg



Mary Sibande, *Everything is not lost*, 2011. Digital print, 87 x 113 cm.  
Courtesy Gallery Momo, Johannesburg.

**Mikhael Subotzky** was born in Cape Town in 1981. He lives and works in Johannesburg. During his studies, he developed a photo project with prisoners in which he became a “visual activist”. This book *Beaufort West* is showing his work inside and outside of a prison located on a traffic circle in the middle of the town, revealing social disparities. He has also created, in collaboration with Patrick Waterhouse, a coherent body of work focused around an apartment building in Ponte City in Johannesburg, thanks to the intense personal participation of the artist with the building’s inhabitants. Living in the building, he successively photographed his neighbors in the elevator, on the landing outside their door, and in their homes, before taking photos of Johannesburg from their windows.

Recently, upon the occasion of a traveling exhibition in South Africa (Standard Bank Young Artist Award), Subotzky published *Retinal Shift*, a reflection on his work as a photographer and the very acts of seeing and being seen which he links with the evolution of the South African society. His no-concessions vision of the world explores the various narrative modes of humanist photography.

For many years, the Val-de-Marne has been involved in the struggle against apartheid. Jacqueline Derens, an anti-apartheid activist since 1975 participated, in Arcueil with Marcel Trigon, in the 1986 creation of the association “Rencontre Nationale Contre l’Apartheid” (the National Meeting Against Apartheid). The Val-de-Marne conserves a large collection of archives from this association and films on Nelson Mandela’s visit to France. The International Relations Service of the department has maintained a cooperation agreement with the city of Johannesburg since 1999, following exchanges begun in 1996 as part of the emerging society of the new South Africa.

Both of these residencies, as well as the focus upon the South African video scene which the MAC/VAL is programming, are part of the cultural policies of the department of the Val-de-Marne – a region that has maintained a privileged relationship with South Africa for decades.



Mikhael Subotzky,  
*CCTV*, 2012.  
Courtesy Goodman Gallery.



Mikhael Subotzky,  
*David Z, Houtbay Beach*, 2005.  
Courtesy Goodman Gallery.



Mikhael Subotzky,  
*Don't even think of it*, 2012.  
Courtesy Goodman Gallery.



#### Also on exhibition at the MAC/VAL

**Renaud Auguste-Dormeuil, “Include me out”**  
Exhibition from October 26, 2013 to January 19, 2014

**“Vivement demain”**  
Fifth exhibition of works from the MAC/VAL’s permanent collection

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