

APALAZZOGALLERY

LUNGISWA GQUNTA

APALAZZOGALLERY is delighted to announce the Lungiswa Gqunta's first show at the gallery. The artist is presenting a combination of recent and new works.

Through her work Lungiswa Gqunta grapples with the complexities of the South African post-colonial cultural and political landscape. Focusing on creating multisensory experiences that attempt to articulate the social imbalances that persist as a legacy of both patriarchal dominance and colonialism, Gqunta exposes different forms of violence and the systemic inequality in South Africa.

A photographic and video series which documents the activity of folding sheets as a site of unearthing and intergenerational knowledge exchange. This moment of archiving stems from a larger project titled Riotous Assembly which celebrates black revolt and collective healing and resistance focusing on the often overlooked importance of women within these narratives. Gathering is about an action that goes beyond domestic labour, it is that moment when you get to learn about your family's history of survival and resistance. It's the moment when a young girl gets to understand how her mother keeps all her strength throughout the hardships and what her aunt's methods of healing are. This body of work is a continuous collective conversation.

(Cinematography by Yashaswini Raghunandan)

In her work, Benisiya Ndawoni, issues of access and security are brought to the forefront. Through this wall drawing sketched in razor wire, a constellation of violent and delicate sentiments are made tangible. Recalling the act of laying down laundry on the razor wire surrounding her childhood home, Gqunta's wall installation is populated with fragments of fabric that map out memories of beds made, beds lain in and dreams yet to come to fruition. Unveiling a sense of discomfort, Gqunta contrasts her township experiences with those of the suburbs, and the objects associated with these spaces. Her intention is, "Purely to point out, to exaggerate, what is clear for me and may not be very clear for somebody else." Demonstrating to her audience her constant reconsideration of environments she inhabits, the artist enters into the gallery aware of the spatial and racial dynamics which pervade it, and reflects on her own experiences as a means of cultural translation. This is necessary, "So that white people have a glimpse of one of the many experiences that cause us blacks discomfort." Gqunta translates across racialized cultural systems, such that the world and all of its spaces and homes can be re-imagined as radically heterogeneous.

Problematizing the foundation of a "New" South African nationalism, Gqunta recognizes the unstable ground on which it is built, yet to be reclaimed, and feels that conversations around colonialism cannot be relegated to the past. "This is happening to you today!" is her urgent message to the viewer. As she constructs a microcosm of the spatial legacies of colonial violence, of the luxury of movement that is lost between aspirations and privilege, Gqunta performs the splitting of the self: a proclamation to remind us of the ways in which we move through contested spaces.

(text by Chaze Matakala)

Lungiswa Gqunta (1990, Port Elizabeth, South Africa) is a visual artist working in performance, printmaking, sculpture and installation. She obtained her undergraduate degree at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in 2012 and her MFA at the Michaelis School of Fine Arts in Cape Town in 2017. In addition to her independent practice, Gqunta is one of the founding members of iQhiya, with whom she recently participated in Documenta 14. Gqunta has been actively involved in the South African gallery scene and has exhibited internationally at the Istanbul Biennale (2017); Manifesta, Palermo (2018); Wanas Konst Museum, Sweden (2018) and WHATIFTHEWORLD, South Africa, who is representing her work. Her work forms part of the public collections of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, The University of Cape Town, Zeitz MOCAA and Kunsthaus Zurich. Gqunta is currently in the first year of residence at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam.

Opening 15 November 2019

15 November – 10 January

APG SRL

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