MICHAEL ARMITAGE: THE CHAPEL

Michael Armitage in Conversation
Tue 12 Dec, 5pm, £5/£3 Conc, Main Gallery
Michael Armitage discusses his practice in conversation with art historian and curator Sandhini Poddar

Film Screening: Kati Kati
Wed 31 Jan, 7pm, £5/£3 Conc, Clore Studio
Michael Armitage selects Kati Kati, (2016) by Mbithi Masya to accompany his exhibition. This surreal and touching film follows a young woman with no memory of her life or death, who is helped to the afterlife by a ghost at the lodge of Kati Kati.

South London Gallery, 65–67 Peckham Road, London SE5 8UH
020 7703 6120
mail@southlondongallery.org
www.southlondongallery.org
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PHOTOGRAPHY IS PERMITTED IN THE GALLERIES

Exhibition Tours
Daily, 1pm & Last Fridays, 7pm, Free
Join the SLG’s gallery assistants for an informal, drop-in tour of the current exhibitions. Booking for most events is essential, book on our website or call 020 7703 6120

Michael Armitage, hope, 2017. Oil on lubugo bark cloth 220.5 x 170.5 x 4 cm

Michael Armitage, Conjestina, 2017. Oil on lubugo bark cloth 220.4 x 170.4 x 4 cm

Michael Armitage, Nyayo, 2017. Oil on lubugo bark cloth 220.5 x 170.5 x 4 cm

Michael Armitage, The Flaying of Marsyas, 2017. Oil on lubugo bark cloth 235 x 246 x 4 cm

Michael Armitage, Lacuna, 2017. Oil on lubugo bark cloth 300 x 150 x 4 cm

Michael Armitage, Exorcism, 2017. Oil on lubugo bark cloth 200 x 330 x 4 cm

Michael Armitage, seraph, 2017. Oil on lubugo bark cloth 150 x 200 x 4 cm

Michael Armitage, Anthill, 2017. Oil on lubugo bark cloth 140 x 130 x 4 cm


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GALLERY MAP

SLG

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exoticism and ‘otherness’ through their tensions in his works through tableaux of attempts to both locate and destabilise deeply unsettling paintings, Armitage it is based. Through these beautiful but surreal imagery, the seductive colours material are integrated into Armitage’s Ugandan lubugo bark cloth, the texture Western art history. Painted in layers on the works blend dream-like figuration the artist’s own experiences of Kenya, issues of mental health in East Africa. consensus, particularly in relation to between religion, folklore and social qualities of the SLG’s main space in London. A new series of eight large-scale major solo show in a public gallery in born artist Michael Armitage’s first Chapel

MICHAEL ARMITAGE: THE CHAPEL is London-based, Kenyan- what is comfortable, while painting of Pierrot, drawing a parallel with composition is based on Antoine Watteau’s a crass form of entertainment. The whether the help offered to her on camera instability but with little clarity as to personal and vulnerable moments of popular media’s documentation of The surreal and disconcerting composition 220.4 2. Conjestina, 2017 Oil on lubugo bark cloth 220.5 x 170.5 x 4cm Conjestina Achieng, as a naked, boxing-gloved figure attended by animalistic nuns while a pair of copulating baboons carry on regardless in the background.

3. Nyayo, 2017 Oil on lubugo bark cloth 220.5 x 170.5 x 4cm Nyayo, 2017, meaning footsteps, centres on an aerial view of a naked man with a snake wrapped around his leg, overlooked by four standing figures. The painting refers to the throwing of toothless snakes into political prisoners’ cells in Nyayo House, Nairobi during the 1980s. Shown together, the almost life-size figures of Nyayo, hope and Conjestina, and the scenes surrounding them, begin to emulate stained glass tableau of saints.

4. The Flaying of Marasys, 2017 Oil on lubugo bark cloth 220.5 x 170.4 x 4cm The Flaying of Marasys, 2017, takes its title from Greek mythology whilst borrowing from the composition and dark subject matter of Titian’s masterpiece of the same name whereby Marasys, a satyr, loses a bet with Apollo and as a consequence is killed by flaying. Armitage’s equally chilling work portrays a contemporary scene in which a figure tied to a tree is surrounded by his tormentors. Armitage’s works often deal with violence, highlighting injustices in East Africa, raising awareness of current affairs whilst simultaneously repositioning the figure of the victim. The choice to translate this famously cruel image of Marsyas, who is held as a mirror up to narratives that position European history as the site of civility.

5. Lacuna, 2017 Oil on lubugo bark cloth 300 x 150 x 4cm In Lacuna, 2017, land and sky collide amidst creeping images of lizards, unformidable figures and the outlines of faces. The burning canoe in the foreground is less sinister than it at first appears, having in fact been set alight as part of the process of being waterproofed. No sign of fire dominates, with equal depth and detail being given to each and a flattening of the images creating a seductive yet disorientating effect.

6. Exorcism, 2017 Oil on lubugo bark cloth 220.5 x 330 x 4cm In Exorcism, 2017, Armitage portrays a ritual happening in Tanzania and offers an online documentation of a ceremony for which women gather to be publically exorcised. In his painterly translation of the event, its true origins are intentionally obscured so that the atmosphere could as easily be read as being either celebratory or a ritualistic cursing of the devil. The composition draws on Murakami’s Anichuken - a religious text through which the work takes its name.

7. Anthill, 2017 Oil on lubugo bark cloth 220.5 x 330 x 4cm Anthill, 2017, land and sky collide amidst creeping images of lizards, unformidable figures and the outlines of faces. The burning canoe in the foreground is less sinister than it at first appears, having in fact been set alight as part of the process of being waterproofed. No sign of fire dominates, with equal depth and detail being given to each and a flattening of the images creating a seductive yet disorientating effect.

8. Anhilh, 2017 Oil on lubugo bark cloth 140 x 130 x 4cm Anhilh, 2017, is based on descriptions of possessed women in Tanzania that often feature images of witches who take flight from termite hills on the backs of hyenas. Using the undulations of the cloth to define the hill, Armitage integrated the natural texture of the lubugo bark cloth into the composition. The cloth itself is a material harvested from ‘mutuba’ trees (ficus natalensis) in Uganda. Produced by the Buganda, the largest tribe in Uganda, the technique has been passed down from generation to generation and has changed very little since its inception. The cloth has great cultural significance and is still used in tribal ceremonies and as burial shrouds, but some of this meaning has been lost by its common use as a tourist tinkle. A publication to accompany the exhibition is available from the SLG bookshop, priced £25.

Exorcism courtesy of the artist and the Harry and Lana David Collection. #MichaelArmitage T @SLG_artupdates I @SouthLondonGallery F South London Gallery

Artists’ Biography

Michael Armitage Michael Armitage