

THE SHOW IS OVER

**CURATED BY GABI NGCOBO
IN DIALOGUE WITH OSCAR MURILLO**

**24 JUN - 4 SEP 2022
MAIN GALLERY & FIRE STATION GALLERIES
FREE**

SLG

INTRODUCTION

The Show is Over features artists whose work proposes a refreshed language in the interpretation of political histories and personal experiences connected to the aftermath of historical violence, and its present iterations. The work shown in the exhibition underscores the various ways in which we relate to and grapple with notions of loss, threats to the environment, spirituality, labour and silenced histories. As the world begins to unevenly emerge from the pandemic, *The Show is Over* becomes a stage from which the performance and understandings of endings are constantly evolving and more present than ever before.

In the words of the curator, Gabi Ngcobo: “The end of the world has become an event developing over time. With the end of time being a constant thought, our own mortality and self-preservation take centre stage. Despite this, humanity is confronted with extraordinary loss. Mourning is prevalent and complex. Spirituality, memory, imagination and self-reflection have become important for many. Facing the fragility and vulnerability of the human condition, prolonged grieving prompts us to reflect and reconnect. We have had to learn new grammar and language in order to live again, dream again, and in order to contain loss again. *The Show is Over* is a contribution to a search for new vocabulary. The exhibition features voices of artists who, as part of their life practices, reflect on these questions, often with recurring inquiries into the possibility of living differently with others.”

The Show is Over is curated by Gabi Ngcobo, Curatorial Director at the Javett Art Centre at the University of Pretoria (Javett-UP) in dialogue with Oscar Murillo, who exhibited at the South London Gallery in 2013.

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MAIN GALLERY

Simnikiwe Buhlungu and Tessa Mars (b. 1995 and 1985, South Africa and Haiti respectively. Both currently live in The Netherlands)

How Many _____ Does it Take?, 2020

Film, 9.40 min

Courtesy the artists

This video conversation between the artists documents a history of emancipatory politics in Haiti and South Africa. Both accounts are ‘delayed responses’ in their own respective ways. Although the histories that the artists recount differ, there are also similarities, for example they both recall how their personal histories have shaped their artistic practice. Taking a cue from *Not In Between*, a chapter in Fred Moten’s book *Black and Blur* (2017), *How Many _____ Does It Take?* tells the story of Dédée Bazile, a heroine within Haiti, and *Imvo Zabanzundu* a newspaper in South Africa.

Anawana Haloba (b. 1978, Zambia. Currently lives in Norway / Zambia)

Lamentations, 2006–2008

Film, 10 min

Courtesy the artist

Anawana Haloba’s work is symbolically linked to her preparatory sketches of poetry which she abstracts into performative-based works comprising of moving images, installations, and sound. Haloba often employs the use of salt as medium in reference to the bodily fluids of humans, cleansing rituals, minerals found in landscapes and the historical significance of salt as a means of exchange. In this work, Haloba is shown with her face down, using her tongue to draw a map on a pile of salt. The soft yet violent gesture, accompanied by an equally violent scraping sound, provokes a spontaneous response in the viewer, becoming a perfect metaphor for our reflex to flinch from violent historical events.

Banele Khoza (b. 1994, Swaziland.

Currently lives in South Africa)

Weeping tulip, 2019

Acrylic and ink on paper

Courtesy the artist

The after life of peonies, 2021

Acrylic and ink on canvas

Courtesy Private Collection

Do more of what you love, 2021

Acrylic and ink on canvas

Courtesy Burke Family Collection

Banele Khoza’s paintings function as everyday records of love, intimacy, vulnerability and a sense of incompleteness. Khoza is interested in the diverse expressions of masculinities. His work often features portraits of men captured sensitively in soft flowing colours in a manner that reveals their emotions and liberates them from pre-defined frameworks of manhood.

His series of ‘still life’ paintings became a subject of interest that intensified during Covid-19 lockdowns. This was a time of physical separation in which the concept of time and life took on another meaning. The paintings function as portraits of the artist’s inner-space. They are a record of time passing. They also reference the notion of being occupied by time during a period when it was possible to witness life wilt, to let go and to embrace change.

MAIN GALLERY (CONT.)

Donna Kukama (b. 1981, South Africa. Currently lives in South Africa / Germany)
We the inconsolable ones, 2019
Ink, graphite, pastel, oil stick, tears and breath on canvas

Courtesy the artist and blank projects

Donna Kukama works across performance, video, text, sound, and multimedia installations. Her practice takes on an experimental form which aims to subvert how histories and value systems are constructed. *We the Inconsolable Ones*, 2019 forms part of an ongoing series of blackened canvases poured with sentences that speak of myriad 'moods', for example anger, grief, loss and unfulfilled dreams.

The series explores historical sites of violence that are not always obvious or featured in grand narratives. The materials used go beyond those the viewer can see, (ink, graphite, pastel) to include others that are invisible, such as breath, tears, steam and DNA. In this way these works become evidence and declarations of people whose voices remain unheard.

Moshekwa Langa (b. 1975, South Africa. Currently lives in South Africa / Netherlands)
Drag Paintings, 2016
Soil and lacquer on canvas

Courtesy the artist and Stevenson

Since the mid-1990s Moshekwa Langa has interrogated the use of land and public space by actively mapping and recording his own life in his work. Langa grew up in the rural town of Bakenberg in South Africa which was not included on most apartheid-era maps. Hung like flags from the ceiling of the main gallery, the *Drag Paintings* are a record of the artist's hometown of Bakenberg as it changed with the onset of platinum mining.

The paintings are created from impressions of a dirt road and are worked into using tape, tar and sandpaper. The paintings carry with them different emotions associated with the word 'drag,' which speak of struggle and pain as well as the joys associated with cultures of queer self-expression.

Misheck Masamvu (b. 1980, Zimbabwe. Currently lives in Zimbabwe)
Seven drawings with various titles, 2015–2020

Pencil, ink or oil on paper

Courtesy the artist and Goodman Gallery (Cape Town, Johannesburg, London)

Masamvu comments on life in post-independence Zimbabwe through painting, sculpture and drawing. Masamvu is well-known for his large colourful paintings that switch between figuration and abstraction. Here his smaller drawings depict animal and human forms in a state of transformation or change. The drawings refer to spiritual transformation between human and animal, and an alternative space which rejects the pursuit of human survival.

Santu Mofokeng (1956–2020, South Africa)
Sacral Animals, Motouleng Cave, Clarens, 2004

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper
Courtesy MAKER and Santu Mofokeng Foundation

Santu Mofokeng was a photographer and writer whose body of work explored themes of history, spirituality and land as memory. *Sacral Animals, Motouleng Cave, Clarens, 2004*, forms part of a larger photographic series titled *Chasing Shadows* (1996–2016). The series was made at the sacred Motouleng Cave located in the Free State, South Africa. Motouleng translates into English as 'the place of the beating drums'.

The image allows a view into what the photographer terms a 'gossamer world.' This 'gossamer world', or place of shadows, is a fragile constellation of entangled and hazy realms that fluctuate between reality and the spiritual. Mofokeng described the 'gossamer world' as a magical hypnotic embrace.

Oscar Murillo (b. 1986, Colombia. Currently lives in the UK)
Darkness the potential of blossoming light, 2022

From *The Institute of Reconciliation, 2014* – ongoing

Oil on linen

Courtesy the artist

Works from this series are featured at the SLG's Main Gallery and at the Fire Station

Oscar Murillo is known for creating installations using black canvases, responding to different spaces. Murillo views these works as experimentations in the materiality of paint itself, commenting: "In these works, black became a kind of universe and a constellation unto itself...I always used the same pigment, an ivory black; I wanted the surface to be very material, it wasn't about a painterly illusion or about a dimensional plane."

These ambiguous works have been interpreted as symbols of mourning, conflict, inequality and oppression. Their darkness can, however, have multiple meanings, also alluding to a space of reconciliation or rebirth, intended to offer a glimmer of optimism – seeds of hope being planted and flourishing.

Nestled amongst the plants outside the SLG's main entrance and on the floor of the Main Gallery, are clusters of Murillo's 'corn sculptures'. These rock-like objects are hewn from clay and ground corn. The works reflect the status of corn as a staple food, its preparation being part of daily life in many countries, tying these objects to the themes of labour and sustenance which run throughout Murillo's practice.

Ishkar Richard (1991–2014, South Africa)
Where are my fuckin' Flowers, 2013
Photograph, latex print on paper.
Photograph documenting a performance.
Courtesy Private Collection

Where are my fuckin' flowers is a photographic record of a performance by Ishkar Richard. In the image, the artist is shown kneeling headfirst into a hole that he dug in his garden. By depicting himself with a 'missing head' Richard attempts to search for something that has been lost - an annihilated memory or an act of avoidance.

The work is a performance in pursuit of a language of mourning. At the same time, it demonstrates the futility of this search and the impossibility of language to adequately express grief.

MAIN GALLERY (CONT.)

Mmakgabo Helen Sebidi

(b. 1943, South Africa.

Currently lives in South Africa)

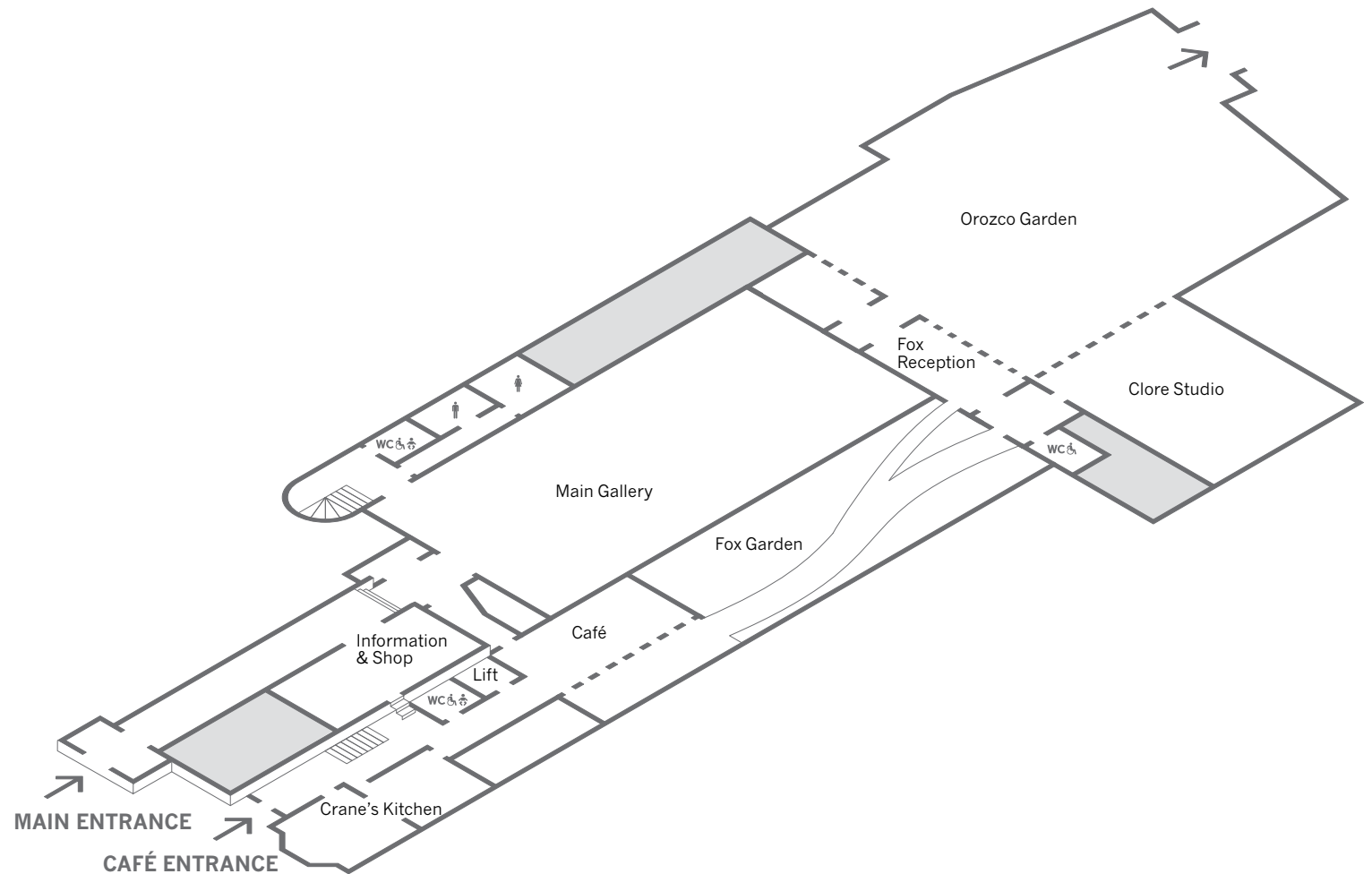
***My Dream*, 1990**

Oil on canvas

Courtesy the artist

Mmakgabo Helen Sebidi has been working as an artist since the late 1960s when she began experimenting with different mediums including painting, drawing, printmaking and sculpture. Sebidi's work is born out of research processes which involve spending time and conversing with the elder members of her community. Her work is also inspired by radical traditions that have informed histories of resistance in Africa and the diaspora; ancestral knowledge systems; the place of women in society and the dreamworld.

Sebidi regards her work as interpretation of dreams. However, her work is not a direct interpretation of her dreams, but rather emotional cartographies that guide her toward her next phase of life. *My Dream* was created shortly after Sebidi was involved in a serious car accident. This accident intensified her connection to the ancestral world and deepened her interest in visualising and understanding the language of her dreamscapes.



FIRE STATION

Luana Vitra (b. 1995, Brazil. Currently lives in Brazil)

Zanzado em trama é armação de arapuca, 2021–2022

Installation composed from the fragments of 60 dismantled traps

Courtesy the artist

This work is composed of several traps. Vitra's father taught her how to make traps when she was a child. Vitra has commented: "Over time, I came to understand myself as a trap, and I also understood that these objects are ancient technologies for protection and survival.

Being a trap presents possibilities for both defence and attack, but nowadays I see this positioning mainly as an attitude, a way of existing in the world. Based on this, I have been thinking about scaring and threatening as protection strategies. In Brazilian culture, if you know how to threaten, you are protected."

Las Nietas de Nonó (b. 1979 and 1982, Puerto Rico. Currently live in USA / Puerto Rico)

FOODTOPIA: después de todo territorio, 2021

Film, 27 min

Courtesy the artists

FOODTOPIA explores the over-industrialisation of food in the Caribbean. The film is set in the Blasina stream which is located in the San Antón barrio in Puerto Rico where the artists are based. The Blasina stream is an area threatened by development and water extraction.

Puerto Rico is categorised as 'an unincorporated U.S. territory'. In their search for a "foodtopia", the artists reflect on the conditions of both utopia and dystopia inherent in life on an island that still holds a colonial status.

Santiago Mostyn (b. 1981, USA.

Currently lives in Sweden)

Drawing for Bellevue Estate, 2018

Film, 16mm to 2K transfer, 12 min

Courtesy the artist and Andréhn-Schiptjenko Stockholm/Paris

This film was shot on the island of Tobago, a place that has a unique role in the development of the tropical imaginary, as it was the setting for the famous novel, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). This work is a portrait of the island as a sentient being and as a site of past and present exploitation.

One segment of the film recalls the legend of 'Gang Gang Sarah', the 'African slave witch' who wishes to return to her homeland only to find she has lost the power of flight during her stay on the island.

Karimah Ashadu (b. 1985, UK. Currently lives in Nigeria / Germany)

Plateau, 2021–2022

Film, single channel video installation, 30 min

Yield, Till, Burrow and Open Shields

Tinted bronze glass, gold, cloth, clay

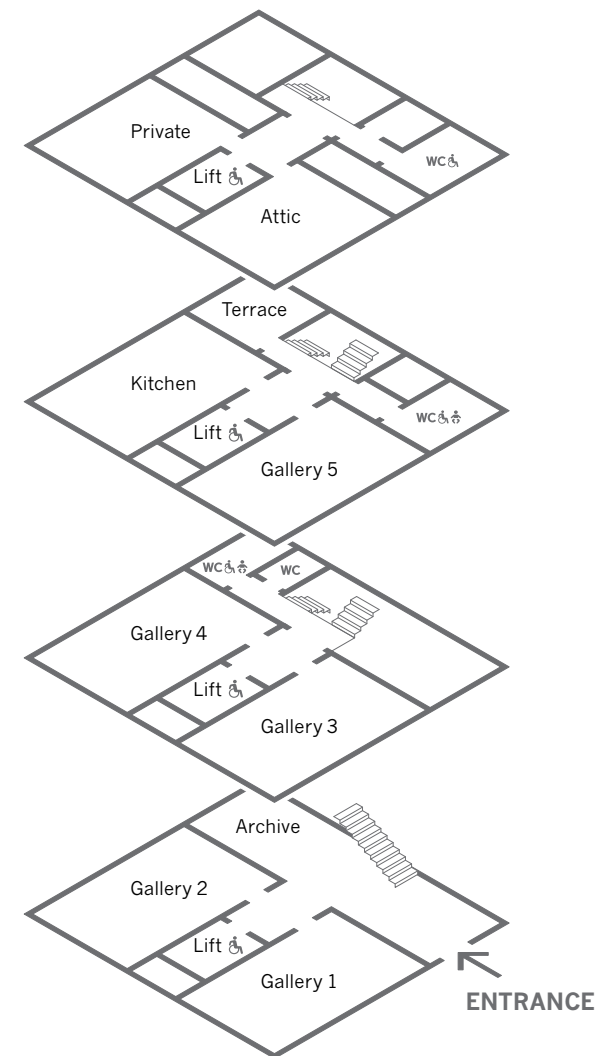
Open Shields, Solid Ground and Fertile Land

Sand blasted tinted bronze glass, cloth, clay, tin

Courtesy the artist and Fondazione in Between Art Film

Plateau follows a group of un-documented tin miners in the state of Jos-Plateau, Nigeria. Tin mining was a large industry before the end of British colonial rule in 1960.

Following the collapse of the market in 1985, many workers lost their jobs. The earthy tones in the film recur in the design of the exhibition space. The sculptures use materials sourced from Jos-Plateau including clay, tin, found clothing and tinted glass.



BIOGRAPHIES

About Gabi Ngcobo

Gabi Ngcobo is an artist, curator and educator living in Johannesburg, South Africa. Since the early 2000s Ngcobo has been engaged in collaborative artistic, curatorial, and educational projects in South Africa and on an international scope. Recent curatorial projects include *All in a Day's Eye: The Politics of Innocence in the Javett Family Collection*, at the Javett Art Centre – University of Pretoria (Javett-UP), *Mating Birds* at the KZNSA Gallery, Durban. In 2018 she curated the 10th Berlin Biennale titled *We don't need another hero* and was one of the co-curators of the 32nd Sao Paulo Bienal (2016).

She is a founding member of the Johannesburg based collaborative platforms NGO – Nothing Gets Organised (2016–) and Center for Historical Reenactments (2010–14). Ngcobo's writing has been published in various publications including the reader *Uneven Bodies*, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Aotearoa New Zealand (2021), *The Stronger We Become the catalogue of the South African Pavillion*, Venice (2019), *Public Intimacy: Art and Other Ordinary Acts in South Africa*, YBCA/SFMOMA (2014), *We Are Many: Art, the Political and Multiple Truths*, Verbier Art Summit (2019) and *Texte Zur Kunst September 2017*. Ngcobo is the Curatorial Director at Javett-UP.

About Oscar Murillo

Oscar Murillo's art is concerned with social injustice, migration and the effects of globalisation. Besides painting, sculptural installation and performance, his practice includes collaborative projects with communities across the world. Having started in Colombia in 2013, his ongoing, worldwide school project, *Frequencies*, engages children in unmediated, unrestricted drawing and mark-making, resulting in visual journals mirroring their lives.

Murillo's own work contains a powerful element of theatre. He frequently uses unstretched, blackened canvases as flags, blackout curtains, room dividers, or heaps them, crumpled, on the floor. His sculptural interventions and actions often include life-size papier-mâché figures embodying working men and women, based on traditional Colombian mateos effigies.

Oscar Murillo (born 1986, La Paila, Colombia) lives and works in various locations. Murillo studied at the Royal College of Art and University of Westminster, both London.

EVENTS

A SONIC LECTURE BY SATCH HOYT

Wed 6 Jul, 7.30–8.30pm

Clare Studio, £5 / £3 Concessions

Artist Satch Hoyt makes sculptures paintings and installations accompanied by sound. Hoyt's practice is currently focused on his Afro-Sonic Mapping theory which maps out historical and fantastical Afro-futuristic, Black Atlantic journeys – from Slave Ship to Space Ship.

SCREENING: SOMETIMES IT WAS BEAUTIFUL

Wed 31 Aug, 7.30–8.30pm

Clare Studio, £5 / £3 Concessions

Sometimes it was Beautiful (37 mins, 2018) is a film by the artist Christian Nyampeta. The film features an unusual group of friends who gather to watch and critique films made by Swedish cinematographer Sven Nykvist in the Congo between 1948 and 1952. Their discussion highlights enduring tensions surrounding social transformation, cultural property, and who has the right to representation.

SLG

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