

Tracing Emerging Contemporary Art Practice in South Africa

Houghton Kinsman

28 Agosto 2015

After the [focus on Angola](#) we are continuing our collaboration with [Another Africa](#) with the second article from their Tracing Emerging Artistic Practice series dedicated to the artistic scene of South Africa. Enjoy.

lettera27

[Versione italiana](#)

ANOTHER AFRICA

[Houghton Kinsman](#)

With planning underway for the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art and on the back of the announcement of Johannesburg as one of Phaidon's *12 Future Art Cities*, there is an air of creative enthusiasm around South Africa. As one of the most established art markets on the continent, events like these, in addition to Cape Town's role as the 2014 World Design Capital, have meant increased attention on and discussion around the country's creative exploits.



Daniella Mooney. Fool's Gold, 2013. Courtesy of the artist and Whatiftheworld, Cape Town

One of the most exciting aspects to emerge from this discussion has been the continued growth of contributions from young creative practitioners to the cultural and artistic climate of South Africa.

As young artists/curators, presenting critical thoughts on and notions of what it means to artistically form part of a new post-Apartheid country, [Athi Patra-Ruga](#), Julia Rosa Clarke, [Haroon Gunn Salie](#), Portia Malatjie and Husan and Hussein Essop – who recently received the prestigious Standard Bank Young Artist award, are but a few notable names characterizing this new generation of creatives that have received both the acclaim and exposure that their respective practices deserve, ultimately embodying South Africa's youthful creative potential.

Yet, they are only the beginning.

Hence, we have highlighted three more emerging artists to find out more about their work, as a means to develop a more coherent understanding of their contributions to new artistic directions and most importantly, the trajectory of emerging South African practice in the 21st century.

Contributions to an ever-developing discourse:

Emphasizing the role of young South African artists in emerging practice

Each of these three artists represents an essential facet to the emerging art scene in South Africa. Whether it be Sekhukhuni and his use of the Internet as medium, Mooney and her fascination with ephemerality and the social notion of space or Adams and his interrogation of hybrid racial, sexual and religious identities, each are operating outside the stereotypical approaches canonized by South African art history, thanks to the possibilities/challenges presented to them by a new political and cultural climate. By exploring new mediums, like the Internet outside of the traditional mediums like paint, charcoal and woodblock printing and breaking from the history of Resistance Art that formed part of the anti-Apartheid struggle, they have yielded new artistic directions, which has meant their contributions have positioned them as exciting young talents worthy of attention and has added impetus to the importance of understanding the significance of young, emerging artists in South Africa's ever developing discourse.

Igshaan Adams

Making sense of hybrid identities



Igshaan Adams. Please Remember II (2013). Performance by the artist and his father, photo documentation. Courtesy of blank projects and the artist

Utilizing a multidisciplinary approach, which includes sculpture, performance and mixed media, Adams is interested in exploring the impact of race and sexuality on hybrid identity. Coming from a diverse religious and cultural background, having been raised by Christian grandparents as a liberal, homosexual Muslim, Adams uses Islam and South African “coloured” culture as a departure point to make sense of religious, racial and sexual liminality in South Africa.



Igshaan Adams. 69 (Detail) (2013). Courtesy of blank projects and the artist





Igshaan Adams. Please Remember II (2013). Performance by the artist and his father, photo documentation. Courtesy of blank projects and the artist

Aside from his work, Adams is also heavily involved in community-based enrichment and upliftment programs. He was employed at the Philani Health and Nutritional center as an Art teacher, facilitating art-based income generating programs and has facilitated workshops for abused women and underprivileged youth at the South African National Gallery and the Backdrops NGO in Cape Town.

Adams is represented by blank projects in Cape Town and has had exhibitions at Stevenson Gallery Cape Town; Rongwrong Gallery, Amsterdam; Ithuba Arts Gallery, Johannesburg and recently completed a residency at IAAB/Pro Helvetia, Basel, Switzerland. He was also included in the Business Day's Wanted magazine as a Young African Artist (YAA), thanks to his continued contributions to emerging South African practice.

[Further reading](#)

Daniella Mooney

Shifting interactions within the integrated, immersive environment



Daniella Mooney. And So Be It Courtesy of the artist and Whatiftheworld, Cape Town

As a sculptor, Mooney's work investigates notions of space, mood, atmosphere and environment, as they relate to our constantly shifting modes of interaction. Drawing correlations to Relational Aesthetics, her first solo exhibition titled [*Golden Age Rising*](#) at Whatiftheworld Gallery in Cape Town encouraged, "us to consider the natural environment not only with new eyes, but from an integrated,

immersed and active positioning of ourselves,” a notion more pertinent today considering South Africa’s current cultural and economic situations.





Daniella Mooney. Spring Equinox 21st September 2013 Tankwa Karoo with Ryan Georgia Christo Adam Andrew Leon & Anton; Porcelain Catenary Arch with Yogi de Beer; Seven Sermons to the Dead (Detail). Kiaat, clear quartz, Bornite Peacock Ore, Nero Marquina, Bronze and sprayed cement. Courtesy of the artist and Whatiftheworld, Cape Town

Having graduated from the University of Cape Town's Michaelis School of Fine Art winning the Simon Gerson Prize-an award given to a student who develops an exceptional body of work- in the process, Mooney is a young artist who straddles both the art and design world effortlessly. Working with the Southern Designers Guild, in addition to being represented by Whatiftheworld Gallery, Mooney and her work have been highlighted by reputable entities such as *Art South Africa* and *Artthrob* magazines and the creative platform, *Between 10 and 5*.

Her work is included in the private collections of 21c Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, USA; Ellerman House Collection, Cape Town, South Africa and Zeitz Collection, Cape Town, South Africa. She has participated in solo exhibitions at Whatiftheworld Gallery and group exhibitions at Everard Read Gallery Johannesburg; Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria; Salon 91, Cape Town and the

Association for the Visual Arts, Cape Town.

[Further Reading](#)

Bogosi Sekhuhuni

The contradictory dilemmas of a “new” South Africa

According to the Mail and Guardian, Sekhukhuni’s work as both a writer and visual artist, “interrogates the complex and contradictory dilemmas of the “new” South Africa.” He is arguably most well known for his public performance where he recreated the scene of well-to-do South African business man Kenny Kunene eating sushi off a naked women’s body, critiquing the shortcomings associated with the emergence of a black middle class.

Interested in popular culture, neuroscience and the conceptual potentialities of teleportation, he uses the Internet to help reimagine identity in order to come to terms with a broken past.



Bogosi Sekhukhuni. Portrait of Willem Boshoff, 2013. Courtesy of the artist



In addition to being included in the Mail and Guardians list of '[200 Young South Africans](#)', Sekhukhuni formed part of the [89plus panel](#) – a program established by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Simon Castets to highlight the practitioners of the post-1989 generation- at Design Indaba Cape Town 2014. He followed up his participation at DI by completing a residency in France, which culminated in a show at Empire titled *Darkeuphoria*. Other major shows include an exhibition at Stevenson Gallery in Cape Town and his graduate show at the University of Johannesburg's FADA.

[Further Reading](#)

Furthermore, we caught up with [Mohau Modisakeng](#) and [Rowan Smith](#) to find out their firsthand views on what it means to be an emerging artist in South Africa today.

This article was published in [Another Africa](#)

With the support of  **fondazione
cariplo**

Se continuiamo a tenere vivo questo spazio è grazie a te. Anche un solo euro per noi significa molto.

Torna presto a leggerci e [SOSTIENI DOPPIOZERO](#)

