

MELEKO MOKGOSI

Democratic Intuition

Pax Kaffraria | Pax Afrikaner

Other Projects

Art & Theory Program

About

Contact

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Bio

Meleko Mokgosi (born in Francistown, Botswana) is an artist, assistant professor of practice at New York University, and co-director of the Interdisciplinary Art and Theory Program (<https://www.artandtheoryprogram.org>). He received his BA from Williams College in 2007 and participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study program from 2007-2008. Mokgosi then received his MFA from the Interdisciplinary Studio Program at the University of California Los Angeles in 2011. He participated in the Rauschenberg Residency at the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, Captiva, FL in 2015 and the Artist in Residence Program at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY in 2012. By working across history painting, cinematic tropes, psychoanalysis, and post-colonial theory, Mokgosi creates large-scale project-based installations that interrogate narrative tropes and the fundamental models for the inscription and transmission of history. His artwork has been exhibited nationally and internationally at venues including the Botswana National Gallery, The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Culture Center, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, the Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art, Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, Rochester Contemporary Art Center, The University of Rochester's Memorial Art Gallery, Williams College Museum of Art, The Fowler Museum at UCLA, and the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Education

2011-2012

Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY

Artist in Residence

2008-2011

University of California in Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA

Master of Fine Art, Interdisciplinary Studio Program

2007-2008

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

Independent Study Program (Studio)

2005-2006

Slade School Of Fine Art, London, England

2003-2007

Williams College, Williamstown, MA

Bachelor of Arts, Studio Art

Projects

Meleko Mokgosi uses painting to interrogate the very concerns that inform its death drive: the limits of representation, the politics of abstraction, and the mode of viewing enabled by rectangular canvases on a gallery wall. The artist's technical acuity delivers a kind of critical visuality, asking viewers to draw out affinities between experiencing and interpreting. Pax Kaffraria: Sikhuselo Sembumbulu (2012) addresses the question of nationalism in relation to globalization and resistance. The work meditates on sikhuselo sembumbulu, a Xhosa term meaning "bulletproof." This is a reference to the Xhosa cattle

killings of 1856–57, which were intended to drive away colonial powers and simultaneously resurrect ancestors. The series of works frames the historic event and considers a legacy of resistance that continues today—namely, the persistent drive to become bulletproof. At the same time this history is represented as only partially available to viewers, suggesting the difficulty of cultural translation.

- Malik Gaines