

Minnette Vári

Biography

[website](#)

Minnette Vári's (b.1968 in Pretoria, South Africa) body of work conflates history with the self, examining how identity arises out of a traumatic past. As Kendell Geers observes in a catalogue essay published in 2004 by Kunstmuseum Lucerne, 'Minnette Vári has in her lifetime witnessed the fall of apartheid and all its structures, followed by the new democracy.' In response to this history, Vári has written a history of herself in relation to this trajectory, one that attempts to recover what is lost, to give shape and voice to forgotten or erased memories. In her videos and drawings, Vári frequently depicts her own body enduring a disfiguring metamorphosis – she merges with and emerges from nature as well as from the concrete architecture of modern cities. The female 'protagonist' of her video works is sometimes archetypal and sometimes spectral, a persona who ingests and is ingested by time.

Vári has exhibited her work since the early nineties, participating in such group exhibitions as the Johannesburg Biennale, *Memoris, Intimas, Marcas* at MUHKA in Belgium, the Venice Biennale, the Seoul International Media Art Biennale, and the Havana Biennale. Her solo exhibitions include *Aurora Australis* at the Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, *Chimera* at Art Unlimited, Basel, *Vigil* at Serge Ziegler Galerie, New York, and shows in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2013 at Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg.

In early 2016, The Standard Bank Gallery hosted a major retrospective exhibition on Vári, entitled *Of Darkness and of Light*.

Vári currently lives and works in Johannesburg.

Collections

Public Collections

Johannesburg Art Gallery

MUHKA (Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerp)

The Museum of Art

Luzern; Johannesburg Art Gallery

Sindika Dokolo Collection of Contemporary African Art

Luanda, Angola

The South African National Gallery (Cape Town)

Standard Bank South Africa

UNISA (University of South Africa)

Zürich Versicherung, Switzerland

Solo Exhibitions

2017 *The Eleventh Hour*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2016 *Of Darkness and of Light*, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2013 *Songs of Excavation*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2012 *Revenant*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2010 *Parallax*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2009 *Time and Tide: An anthology in video* Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2008 Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2007 *Minnette Vári*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

- 2007 *Vigil*, Elga Wimmer Gallery in collaboration with Serge Ziegler Galerie, New York, USA
- 2006 *CHIMERA* (black edition), Exhibition and Workshop Residency, Victoria H. Myhren Gallery, University of Denver, Colorado, USA
- 2005 Featured Festival Artist, Kleinkaroo National Arts Festival, Oudtshoorn, South Africa
- 2005 *Aurora Australis*, Galerie Renee Ziegler, Zürich, Switzerland
- 2005 Gallery Momo, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2004 *Minnette Vári*, Kunstmuseum Luzern/Art Museum Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland
- 2003 *Minnette Vári*, Corkin-Shopland Gallery, Toronto, Canada
- 2003 *Media Work*, Jannotta Gallery, Hillyer Hall, Smith College, Massachusetts, USA
- 2003 *CHIMERA* (black edition), Galerie Renée Ziegler, Art Unlimited, Basel, Switzerland
- 2002 *Minnette Vári*, Serge Ziegler Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland
- 2001 *Minnette Vári*, Serge Ziegler Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland
- 2001 *Minnette Vári*, Camouflage Art.Culture.Politics. Brussels
- 2001 *Aurora Australis*, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1998 *Beyond The Pale*, at the invitation of and support by the French Institute of South Africa, Galerie d'Alliance Française, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1994 *Minnette Vári*. Centurion Art Gallery, Centurion, South Africa
- 1992 *Painting and Language*. FIG Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

Group Exhibitions

- 2016 *The Incantation of the Disquieting Muse: On Divinity, Supra-Realities or the Exorcisement of Witchery*, SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, Germany
- 2016 *New Revolutions: Goodman Gallery at 50*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2016 *Sea of Silence*, Art Basel Miami Beach Film Sector, Miami Beach, USA
- 2015 *Past Imperfect // Future Present*, FADA Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2014 *The Divine Comedy: Heaven, Hell, Purgatory Revisited*, by Contemporary African Artists, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
- 2014 *From Sitting to Selfie*, Standard Bank Gallery, South Africa
- 2013 *États Limites*, Le Centquatre, Paris, France
- 2011 *The Underground, the Surface and the Edges*, Michaelis Galleries, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2011 *Space, Ritual, Absence*, FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg Bunting Road Campus, South Africa
- 2010-2011 *Afropolis. City, Media, Art*, Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum - Kulturen der Welt, Cologne, Germany (Catalogue)
- 2010-2011 *VAF1. Contemporary African Video Art*, organised through AGENCY: Art, Life, Society. Yorkshire, UK. (Catalogue)
- 2010-2011 *Afropolis. City. Media. Art.* Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Cologne; Iwalewa-Haus, Bayreuth, Germany (Catalogue)
- 2010-2011 *Open End: An Exhibition of Paintings*. Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2010-2011 *VAF1. Contemporary African Video Art*. Organised through AGENCY: Art, Life, Society. Yorkshire, UK. (Catalogue)
- 2010 *Open End: An Exhibition of Paintings* Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2010 *In Context*, Goodman Gallery Project Space, Arts On Main, Johannesburg, South Africa (Catalogue)
- 2009 *SPHÈRES 2009*, Galleria Continua - Le Moulin, Boissy-le-Châtel, France
- 2009 *The 10th Havana Biennale*, Havana, Cuba
- 2009 *Dystopia*, Unisa Art Gallery, Museum Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa and Galerij Jan Colle, Ghent, Belgium
- 2009 5th VentoSul Biennial, Curitiba, Brazil (Catalogue)
- 2009 *Périmériques* Curated by Kader Attia. Exhibition as part of the Eternal Tour festival, Centre d'Art de Neuchâtel, Switzerland
- 2008 *The 5th Seoul International Media Art Biennale*, South Korea
- 2007 African Pavillion, 52nd Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy

- 2007 *Afterlife*, Michael Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
 2007 *Voci dalla luna: a Homage to Federico Fellini*, curated by Andrea Bruciati. Galleria Comunale d'Arte Contemporanea, Monfalcone, Italy
 2007 *Diva Streets NYC*, Digital and Video Art Fair, New York City, USA (Presented for Diva Streets by Serge Ziegler Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland)
 2007 *Luanda Triennial*, Luanda, Angola
- 2006 *Sd Observatorio*, IVAM, Valencia, Spain
 2006 *Fairytale*, TICA (Tirana Institute of Contemporary Art), Albania
- 2005 International Biennale Of Contemporary Art 2005, National Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic
 2005 *Digital Discourse*, St. James Centre for Creativity, Valetta, Malta
- 2004 *La Alegria De Mis Suenos*, First Seville International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Seville, Spain
 2004 *Personal Affects: Power And Poetics In Contemporary South African Art*, The Museum for African Art & the Cathedral Church of St John the Divine, New York, USA
 2004 *New Identities: Contemporary South African Art*, Museum Bochum, Germany Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, South Africa (Catalogue)
 2004 *Dimension Folly: Subjectivity, Passion and Excess in Everyday Life*, Galleria Civica di Arte Contemporanea, Trento, Italy (Catalogue)
- 2003 *Banquet*, Centre of Contemporary Art Palau de la Virreina, Barcelona, Spain
 2003 *Banquet*, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe, Germany
 2003 *Banquet*, Conde Duque Cultural Centre, Madrid, Spain (Catalogue)
 2003 *Transferts*, curated by Toma Muteba Luntumbue for Africalia. Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels (Catalogue)
 2003 *Global Priority*, Herter Art Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA. (Catalogue)
- 2002 *STYX*. Directed by Ralph Kotschka, Europäische Kunstakademie, Trier, Germany. (Catalogue)
 2002 *Videoformes*, Curated by Gabriel Soucheyre; South African programme compiled by Clive van den Berg. Clermont-Ferrand, France. (Catalogue)
 2002 *Muster Frau*, Curated by Dr. Peter Joch. Kunsthalle Darmstadt, Germany. (Catalogue)
 2002 *Contributions from the Venice Biennial*. Charlottenborg Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen, Germany. (Catalogue)
 2002 *Slow Motion*, Curated by Alexandra Kolossa. Ludwig Forum, Aachen, Germany. (CD-ROM Catalogue)
 2002 *In Progress*, Curated by Harald Szeemann for the 55th International Film Festival, Locarno, Switzerland. (Catalogue)
 2002 *Dislocation, Image & Identity: South Africa*, Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid; Sala Rekalde, Bilbao, Spain (Catalogue)
 2002 *Survivre a L'apartheid, de Drum Magazine à Aujourd'hui*, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France. (Catalogue)
- 2001 *Short Stories*, Curated by Roberto Pinto. La Fabbrica del Vapore, Milan, Italy (Catalogue)
 2001 *Plateau of Human Kind*, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
 2001 *Casino 2001*, 1st Quadrennial of Contemporary Art, S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium
 2001 *World Wide Video Festival 2001*, Arti & Amicitiae, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2000 *Memorias Intimas Marcas*, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (MUHKA), Belgium
 2000 *Memorias Intimas Marcas*, Museu da Cidade, Lisbon, Portugal
 2000 *South Meets West*, National Museum, Accra, Ghana
 2000 *South Meets West*, Kunsthalle, Bern, Switzerland Johannesburg, part of *Atmosfera Metropolitana*, Openspace, Milan, Italy
- 1999 *Dialog 1: Vice Verses*, O.K. Centre of Contemporary Art, Linz, Austria
 1999 *Channel*, Association of Visual Arts, Cape Town, South Africa
 1999 FNB Vita Art Prize Exhibition, Sandton Civic Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1998 *Democracy's Images: Photography And Visual Art After Apartheid*, Bildmuseet, Umeå, Sweden
- 1997 *Transversions*, Part of *Trade Routes: History and Geography*, 2nd Johannesburg Biennale, Museum Africa, Newtown, Johannesburg, South Africa

Academic Record and Residencies

1997 Masters Degree in Fine Arts, University of Pretoria

Selected Articles and Reviews

2003 'Strange Utopia: John Pepper in conversation with Minnette Vári', Pepper, J. *Art South Africa*, Vol 2, Issue

2, Summer, p24-30.

2002 'Vári Pak Mitiese Monsters', Van Bosch, C. *Die Burger*, Cape Town, 26 February 2002; *Die Beeld*, Gauteng, 1 March

2002 'New media showcase', Edmunds, P. *The Mail & Guardian*, South Africa, 1 - 7 March

2002 'Minnette Vári, Serge Ziegler Galerie, Zürich', Hug, C. *Tema Celeste*, No. 93, Sept/Oct, p.105

2002 'Selected Works From The World Wide Video Festival at Michaelis Galleries', Nic Dawes, *Artthrob*, <http://www.artthrob.co.za/02mar/reviews/michaelis.html>, March

2002 'Minette Vári', Von Burg, D. *Kunst-Bulletin*, No. 7/8, July/August

2001 'Art Chicago Seeks The Cutting-Edge', Stein, L. *Chicago Tribune*, 11 May

2001 'Blick Aus Der Ferne', Omlin, S. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 27 February

2001 'Mediale Zerrbilder', Polzer, B. *Kunst, Annabelle*, 3/01, 2 February

2001 'Geschichte Verschlingen', Mack, G. *Kulturtipps, Cash*, No.8, 23 February

2001 'Körpergeschichte', Kraft, M. *Kunst, Züritipp*, No. 8, 23 February

2001 '49th Venice Biennale: Minnette Vári', Sutton, P. *Visual Arts/Features, The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Gateway to Arts and Culture*, November

2001 'Minette Vári At The Standard Bank Gallery', Atkinson, B. *Artthrob*,

<http://www.artthrob.co.za/01nov/reviews/stdbank.html>, 7 November

2001 'Art Pick of the Week', Smith, K. *The Mail & Guardian*, South Africa, 23 - 29 November

2001 'A Deadly Explosive On Her Tongue', Kerkham, R. *Third Text*, Spring 2001

2000 'Flash Art', Atkinson, B. *Elle*, South Africa

1999 'City Artist on the Cutting Edge', Fröling, G. *Tonight, Pretoria News*, 20 April

1999 'VexQuest', in insert, *Delapase*, Johannesburg, interactive CD ROM Magazine, winter

1998 'Artbody', Williamson, S. *Artthrob*, Issue No.7, <http://www.artthrob.co.za>

1998 'Reality is always re-written', Lefebvre, E. *Newtown Zebra*, No.11, Sept-Dec

1998 'Vári Konfronteer Jou Met Jou Vrese', Van Rensburg, W. *Beeld*, Johannesburg, 17 Nov

1998 'Morphing Minnette', Atkinson, B. *Electronic Mail & Guardian*, 24 November

1997 'Zone of Metaphors', Friedman, H. *The Mail & Guardian*, 11 April

1997 'Pta-kaalfoto 'verslapping van sensuur', Van der Spuy, B. *Beeld*, 23 June

1997 'Hearing the artist's message', Vári, M. *Artspeak, Tonight, Pretoria News*, 1 July

1997 'Planet Art', Geers, K. *Elle*, South Africa, October

1997 'Multi-Parfuum, Ruk Masker Af', Van Niekerk, L. *Beeld*, 8 October

1997 'Trapped In The Hall Of Mirrors', Friedman, H. *The Mail & Guardian*, 12 April

1997 'Scratching Beneath The Surface', Friedman, H. *The Mail & Guardian*, 19 April

1997 'The real dangers of fashion in art', Geers, K. *Tonight, The Star*, 25 April

1997 'Duistere waarhede wat die sinne uitdaag', Burger, L. *Beeld*, 30 April

1997 '(De)Facing the surface', Vári, M. *Gallery Page*, <http://www.up.ac.za/academic/arts/gallery.html>,

1996 'Message In A Bottle', Berry, O. *Tonight, Pretoria News*, 5 December

1995 'Baring All For Art', Berry, O. *Tonight, Pretoria News*, 22 September

1995 'Vanguardismo de Sudáfrica visita el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo', *Cultura, La Epoca*, Santiago, Chile, 2 November

Publications

2013 *Art Cities of the Future: 21st Century Avant-Gardes*. Phaidon, London.

2004 Perryer, S. (Ed) et al. *10 Years, 100 Artists: Art in a Democractic South Africa*. Bell-Roberts Publishing in association with Struik Publishers, Cape Town, South Africa.

2004 Minnette Vári. *Monographic Catalogue*. Susanne Neubauer (Ed.) Lucerne Museum of Art, Switzerland. Texts by Kendell Geers, John M. Peffer, Harald Szeemann, Liese van der Watt.

2002 Powell, Richard J. *Black Art: A Cultural History*. Thames & Hudson Publishers, London, UK.

2002 Barragán, P. *El Arte Que Viene / The Art To Come*. Subastas Siglo XXI, Madrid, Spain

1999 Atkinson, B. and Breitz, C. (Ed). *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art*. Chalkham Hill Press, Johannesburg, South Africa.

1996 Williamson, S. and Jamal, A. *Art In South Africa, The Future Present*. David Philip Publishers, Cape Town, South Africa.