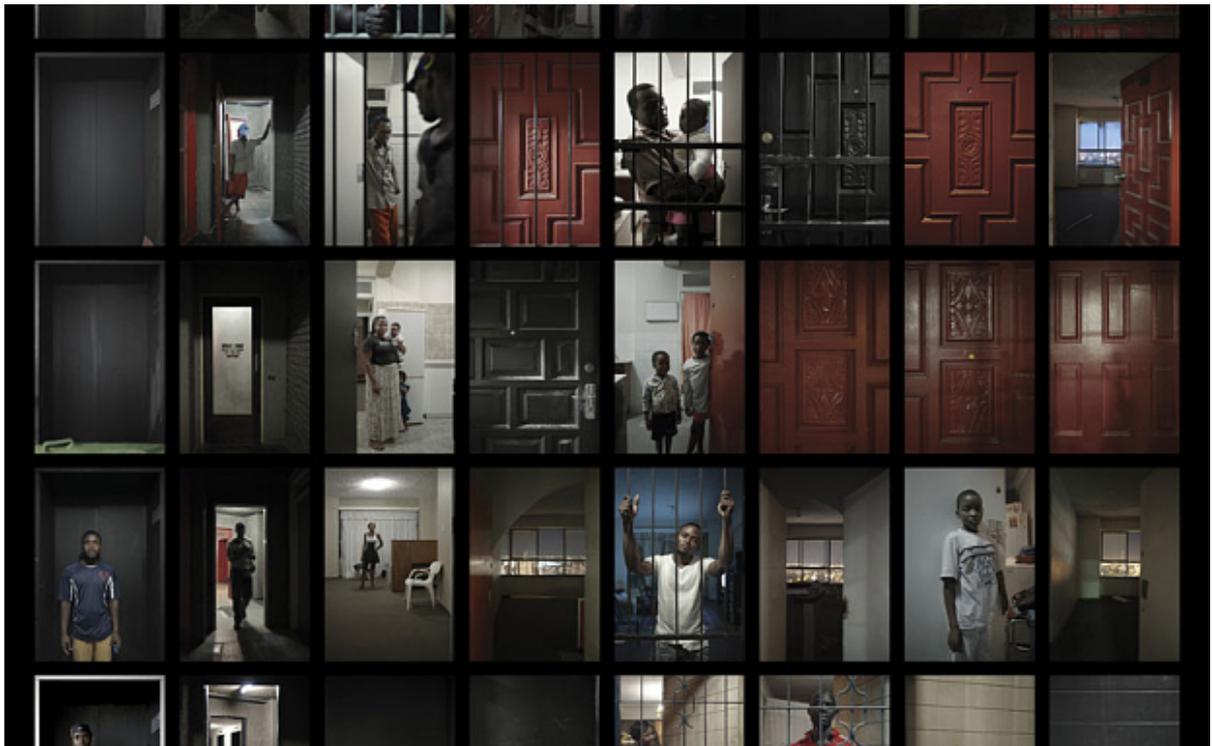


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Who will win the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize 2015?

Nikolai Bakharev, Zanele Muholi, Viviane Sassen, Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse are all in contention for the coveted award



Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse's Ponte City is a 2015 nominee Photo: Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse

By Peter Yeung

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It has been a particularly eclectic edition of the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize in 2015. As Telegraph critic Florence Waters put it in [her review of the exhibition at The Photographers' Gallery](#): "It's the most exciting year I've seen in over a decade". But whereas last year, the favourite Richard Mosse took the £30,000 award for his [psychedelic war photography](#), this year, there is no clear frontrunner. Here we train our lens on the nominees before tonight's announcement.

• [Deutsche Börse Prize 2015 review: 'stylish and fresh'](#)

Nikolai Bakharev



Detail: Nikolai Bakharev, "Relationship No. 70" 1991-93 (Image: MAMM, MOSCOW)

Nikolai Bakharev (b. 1946, Russia) has been shortlisted for his exhibition at the 55th Biennale of Art in Venice. Bakharev trained as a mechanic before working as a Communal Services Factory photographer in the 1960s. His portraits of bathers on Russian public beaches were predominantly taken during the 1980s when the taking and circulation of photographs containing nudity was strictly forbidden.

"It was only some time later that, looking over the prints, you got a sense of what would now be thought of as art photography," explains Bakharev. "But then, in the Soviet Union, these photographs of everyday life weren't considered art and so were unworthy of exhibition."

• **Nikolai Bakharev and his portraits of bathing Soviets**

Zanele Muholi



Detail: Tumi Mkhuma, Yeoville Johannesburg, from the series Faces and Phases, 2007 (Image: Stevenson, Cape Town)

Zanele Muholi (b. 1972, South Africa) has been shortlisted for her publication *Faces and Phases 2006 – 2014* (Steidl, 2014). Describing herself as a "visual activist", Muholi's black and white portraits offer an insight into black LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transexual and Intersexed) politics in post-apartheid South Africa. Her often conceptual images and accompanying first-person testimonies reflect the impact of homophobia, discrimination and violence, most notably the "curative rape" of black gay women, which often results in murder.

"To be seen means a lot to us," Muholi says. "To show the portraits is a political statement. It means being respected."

- Zanele Muholi's portraits of LGBTI people persecuted for their sexuality

Viviane Sassen



Detail: Marte #02 from the series Umbra, 2014 (Image: Viviane Sassen)

Viviane Sassen (b. 1972, Netherlands) is shortlisted for her exhibition *Umbra* at Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam (March 8 – June 1 2014). The show includes abstract photography, drawings and light installations and is accompanied by specially commissioned poems from artist and poet, Maria Barnas. Sassen's signature approach employs vivid colour alongside stark contrasts of light and shade in sculptural compositions. *Umbra* is Latin for shadow, and the Jungian notion of the "shadow self" underpins the work, tapping into personal fear, desire and shame as well as more abstract concepts such as the unknown, time and death.

"My memories from Kenya are very visual," she says. "I was a sensitive child with a keen fantasy life and I picked up on everything that was happening around me."

• **Viviane Sassen and her 2014 multimedia exhibition Umbra**

Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse



Detail: Mikhael Subotzky & Patrick Waterhouse, Ponte City from Yeoville Ridge, 2008 (Image: Goodman Gallery)

Mikhael Subotzky (b. 1981, South Africa) and **Patrick Waterhouse** (b. 1981, UK) are shortlisted for their publication *Ponte City* (Steidl, 2014). The 54-floor apartment block in Johannesburg was built in 1976 for white 'sophisticates' under the apartheid regime. During the political transition in the 1980s and 90s, it became a refuge for black newcomers to the city and immigrants from all over Africa. Soon, decline and neglect led to it becoming the prime symbol of urban decay in the city and the epicentre of crime, prostitution and drug dealing. Subotzky and Waterhouse began their project in 2007 working with the remaining residents. They have created an intimate and deeply evocative

social portrait of a culture, building and its community of residents through photographs, architectural plans, and other archival and historical material. Seventeen booklets containing essays and personal stories complete the narrative of this Johannesburg landmark.

"The idea came from a quote by Le Corbusier," revealed Subotzky. "Where he speaks about the apertures of the building defining its essence."

• **Subotzky and Waterhouse: a reflective project on the notorious Ponte City skyscraper**