

Hentie van der Merwe



Biography

Born in Windhoek, Namibia in 1972. Lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa

Artist Statement

At the core of much of Hentie van der Merwe's work is the body: its power, vulnerability, sexuality, objectification; its memory and its concealment; its capacity for violence or intimacy; the body as it exists or is represented publicly and privately, symbolically and commercially. And central to his process is a rummaging through archives from which he roots out details: reflections on predominantly the masculine body, followed by the recontextualisation of that which is uncovered. Van der Merwe's work also engages a biographical perspective: exploring his own relationship to his historical context, having grown up in an Afrikaans family in then South West Africa, and the perceptions of (assumed/prescribed) masculinity that accompanied that cultural environment." (Tracy Murinik in *Ten Years, 100 Artists*, 2004)

In my work there is an ongoing interest in the body, particularly the male body, in relation to the archive. The archive as that which defines the body, both as a political and sexual being. The archive then becomes the site where these terms by which the body gets defined are investigated, challenged, interrogated – not in order to escape these terms, but to redefine them – in the hope of opening up the possibilities for a different way of experiencing emotions and feelings, both public and private.

My current project is a collaborative project for the stage. A music-theatre work based on the remarkable exchange of letters between the Nama leader, Hendrik Witbooi, and the German Colonial Officer Theodor Leutwein at the turn of the nineteenth century in German South-West Africa. The work combines excerpts from this historical exchange with that from audio-recordings of Nama folktales from the extraordinary archive of the German folklorist Sigrid Schmidt.

Solo Exhibitions

- indicates catalogue/publication

2008 *figuring*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg

2005 *Hentie Van Der Merwe*, Tim van Laere Gallery, Antwerp

2004 *Hentie Van Der Merwe*, Galerie Gabriele Rivet, Cologne

2003 *Hentie Van Der Merwe*, Tim Van Laere Gallery, Antwerp

2003 *Hentie Van Der Merwe*, Galerie Gabriele Rivet, Cologne

2003 *Still Life*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg

2003 *Bijlmer Groups*, Artoteek Zuidoost, Amsterdam

2000 *Trappings*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg

1997 *Africanus Institute of Contemporary Art*, Johannesburg*

1997 *Hentie Van Der Merwe*, National Art Gallery of Namibia, Windhoek

Group Exhibitions

- indicates catalogue/publication

2009 *Capital: How Heads Talk*, Wits Art Galleries, Johannesburg

2009 *Nation State*, Curated by Liza Essers and Storm Janse van Rensburg, Goodman Gallery Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

2009 *In Black and White*, Bell-Roberts Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2009 *Sasol Wax Art Award 2008 Exhibition*, KZNSA Gallery, Durban

2009 *Warren Editions*, Curious, Whetstone & Frankley, Cape Town

2008 *Heimat Hotel*, Breda Photo 2008, Breda, The Netherlands*

2008 *Sasol Wax Art Award exhibition*, University of Johannesburg Art Gallery*

2008 *Print '08*, Memory and the Archive, Bell-Roberts Gallery, Cape Town

2008 *Warren Editions: Tom Cullberg & Hentie van der Merwe*, Blank Projects, Cape Town, SA

2007 *'Isilwane: Pets and Presences'* curated by David Bunn, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

2007 *Is there Still-Life* curated by Michael Godby, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town

2007 *Spier Contemporary Exhibition*, Africa Centre, Cape and Johannesburg Art Gallery*

2006 *Figuring Faith: Images of Belief in Africa*, curated by Fiona Rankin-Smith,

Standard Bank Art Galleries, Johannesburg*

2006 *Snap Judgements: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography*, curated by Okwui Enwezor, International Center of Photography, New York*

2006 *Erase me from who I am*, curated by Elvira Dyangani Ose, Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas*

2006 *Psycho Zeitgenössische Positionen zwischen Seelenheil und Apokalypse*, curated by Ulrike Jagla-Blankenburg, Kunstverein Mönchengladbach*

2006 *Mädels*, curated by Gabriele Rivet, Galerie Gabriele Rivet, Cologne

2005 *My Private Heroes*, curated by Jan Hoet, MARTa Herford, Germany*

2005 *Art at Work*, Klein Karoo Arts Festival, Oudtshoorn, South Africa

2005 *Imprints*, Axis Gallery, New York

2005 *Terror*, online project curated by Sixten Terror

2005 *10 years 100 artists*, Bell-Roberst Gallery, Cape Town*

2004 *New Talents*, Galerie Gabriele Rivet at Art Cologne

2004 *SABC Art Collection*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg

2004 *Untitled* exhibition curated by Kendell Geers, Vooruit Art Center, Gent, Belgium

2004 *Is One Thing Better Than Another?*, Galerie Aurel Scheibler, Cologne

2004 *10 Years/10 Voices*, curated by Kathy Grundling, Sala Una, Rome

2004 *Black & White*, Galerie Gabriele Rivet, Cologne

2003 *Sexuality and Death: Aids in contemporary African Art*, Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Cologne*

2003 *Male Order*, UCT Irma Stern Museum, Cape Town

2003 *Noah's Ark*, Galerie Gabriele Rivet, Cologne

2003 *Body and the Archive*, curated by Lauri Firstenberg, Artists Space, New York

2003 *Don't think twice, it's all right*, Tim van Laere Gallery, Antwerp

2003 *Hisk Laureates – Out2002*, curated by Theo Tegelaers, Elzenveld, Antwerp

2002 *Dialogica*, with Wim Wauman, IN/OUT (Higher Institute for Fine Arts), Antwerp

2002 *BIG TORINO 2002*, 2nd International Biennial of Young Art, Artistic Director: Michelangelo Pistoletto*

2002 *Forms of Violence*, Galerie Gabriele Rivet, Cologne

2001 *Dis/location – images and identity South Africa*, curated by Daniela Tilkin for Fotoespaña 2001, International Photography Festival, Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Sala Rekalde, Bilbao*

2001 *One To Seven*, curated by Jårg Geismar, Galerie Gabriele Rivet, Cologne

2001 *Rencontres de la photographie africaine*, 4th Biennial of African Photography, Bamako, Mali*

2000 *FNB Vita Art Prize Exhibition*, Sandton Civic Gallery, Johannesburg*

2000 *Urban Futures*, Museum Africa, Johannesburg

2000 *Secure The Future*, 13th International AIDS Conference, Durban

2000 *Translation/Seduction/Displacement*, curated by Lauri Firstenberg and John Pepper, White Box Gallery, New York

2000 *Emotions and Relations*, curated by the artist, Sandton Civic Gallery, Johannesburg and Klein Karoo National Arts Festival, Oudtshoorn

2000 *After New York*, Group exhibition of work by past recipients of the Ampersand Foundation Fellowship, Johannesburg Civic Gallery

2000 *The Body*, curated by Leanne Engelberg, UNISA (University of South Africa) Art Gallery, Pretoria

1999 *X-scape – Photography in a New South Africa*, a photographic project of shuttle '99, NSA Galley, Durban and Bensusan Museum of Photography, Johannesburg

1999 *Lines of Sight*, Contemporary South African Photography, curated by Zwelethu

1999 *Mthethwa*, South African National Gallery, Cape Town

1999 *Emergence*, curated by Julia Charlton and Fiona Rankin-Smith, Standard Bank

1998 *National Arts Festival*, Albany Museum – Grahamstown, King George VI Art Gallery – Port Elizabeth, Durban Art Gallery, Standard Bank Gallery – Johannesburg

1998 *Exchange*: Recent works by the staff and tutors of the Wits Fine Arts Department, Sandton Civic Gallery, Johannesburg

1998 *Dreams and Clouds*, curated by Ingemar Arnesson and Wessel van Huyssteen, Kulturhuset: Stockholm, Sweden*

1998 *Alborough, Alexander, Nel, Lipson, Van Der Merwe, Wilson*, curated by Julia Charlton and Natasha Fuller, Gertrude Posel Gallery, University of The Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

1998 *Unplugged*, Rembrandt Van Rijn Art Gallery, Newtown, Johannesburg

1998 *Aids Worlds: Between Resignation and Hope*, curated by Frank Wagner (Berlin), 12th International Aids/HIV Conference, Centre d'Art Contemporain and Dialogai, Geneva*

1997 *Lifetimes: An Exhibition of Southern African Art*, curated by Ruth Sack and Nina Jacobson, Munich, Germany

1997 *Collecting Ourselves*, Gertrude Posel Gallery, Johannesburg

1996 *Four Young Artists*, with Brendhan Dickerson, James Reed and Alex Trapani, Newtown Galleries, Johannesburg

1996 *Unplugged*, Rembrandt Van Rijn Art Gallery, Newtown, Johannesburg

1995 *Springtime in Chile*, curated by Wayne Barker and Ernesto Munoz, Santiago, Chile

1995 *Taking Liberties: The Body Politic*, curated by Colin Richards and Ptika Ntuli, Gertrude Posel Gallery, Africus1995, Johannesburg Biennale*

Curated Exhibitions

1999 *Emotions and Relations*, Sandton Civic Gallery, Johannesburg

Professional Appointments and Consultation

2008 Senior Lecturer in Photography, Visual Arts Department, Stellenbosch University

Conference and Workshop Participation

2006 *Reconstructing documentary: subaltern subjectivity and experience in Kutlug Ataman's 'Never my Soul'*, Paper presented at the lecture series to accompany the exhibition *Erase Me from Who I Am* curated by Elvira Dyangani Ose at the Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno CAAM in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 20-21 April

1999 *Picturing Health – The Photographed Male Body in the Archives of Hugh MacFarlane, Encounters With Photography, Photographing People in Southern Africa, 1860 to 1999*, Cape Town, 14 to 17 July

1997 *The Representation of AIDS and Gay Identity in the work of Robert Gober and my own*, 14th Annual South African Art Historians Conference entitled "Negotiating Identities", July 1998, University of South Africa, Pretoria

1996 *New Strategies: The Re-presentation of Gay Identity and AIDS in the work of Felix Gonzales-Torres*, Second Annual South African Qualitative Conference "The Body Politic" held at the National Centre For Occupational Health, Johannesburg, 3-4 September

Awards and Merits

2008 Winner of the Sasol Wax Art Award 2008, Johannesburg

2002 *Artissima /BIG Torino 2002 Prize for best visual artist, BIG TORINO 2002, 2nd International Biennial of Young Art*, curated by Michelangelo Pistoletto

2001 National Arts Council Bursary for International Study.
Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Grant for Overseas Study.
Skowhegan Fellowship to attend the 2001 Skowhegan Summer workshop.

2000 FNB Vita Art Prize nominee.
Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Grant for Overseas Study.
Montagu White Bursary for Overseas Study.

1999 Ampersand Foundation Fellowship – residency in New York for the period of Jan/Feb 1999 to do research for MA Fine Arts degree.
National Arts Council Bursary for Overseas Study, for purposes of research on artist Robert Gober in New York, US towards completing MA degree in Fine Arts

1994 Anya Mellman Scholarship for Overseas Travel, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Academic Record and Residencies

Residencies:

2003 Artist in Residence as part of the BijlmerAIR program. A joint project between Artotheek

Zuidoost / Het Nieuwe Podium (AZO/HNP) and Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam. February – July

Postgraduate:

2002 Laureateship, Higher Institute for Fine Arts (HISK), Antwerp, Belgium
2001 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine, USA
2000 MA Fine Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Undergraduate:

1994 BA Fine Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Collections

Gemeentearchief Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

South African National Gallery, Cape Town

Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg

Durban Art Gallery, Durban

Gauteng Legislature, Johannesburg

Sandton Civic Gallery, Johannesburg

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

SABC Collection, Johannesburg

Sasol Art Collection, Johannesburg

BHP Billiton Art Collection, Johannesburg

Rand Merchant Bank Collection, London

Sanlam Collection, Cape Town

Selected Articles and Reviews

2008 'Wenner se werk al meer teatraal', Johan Myburgh Beeld, 20 Oktober, bl. 12.

'Hentie van der Merwe – figuring', CLASSICFEEL, July 2008, Johannesburg, pp. 74-75.

'Sasol Wax wat was', Johan Myburgh vir Beeld, 20 Oktober 2008, bl. 12.

'Found in Translation', Tim Trengove-Jones for The Weekender, 25-26 October 2008, pp. 7 (Weekend Review).

'Begoëland, maar eweneens onthutsend', Johan Myburgh vir Beeld, 6 Augustus 2008, pp. 4 (Plus).

'Peering through that which hides', Timothy Trengove-Jones for The Weekender, 9-10 August 2008, pp. 5 (Arts).

'Benign' relationship melts under the spotlight', Mary Corrigan for Sunday Independent, 19 October 2008.

2006 'Hentie van der Merwe', Portfolio, Portfolio Photography Workshop Limited, Edinburgh, UK, pp. 20-25.

'Hentie van der Merwe', Uta Reindl, catalogue text, Psycho Zeitgenössische Positionen zwischen Seelenheil und Apokalypse, curated by Ulrike Jagla-Blankenburg, Kunstverein Mönchengladbach.

2005 'Hentie van der Merwe at Gabriele Rivet', Art on Paper, New York, US, Jan/Feb 2005

2003 'Bijlmer mix', Volkskrant Magazine, 6 Sept 2003, Amsterdam, Netherlands, pp. 34-39.

'The New Dutch Group Portrait', Jan van Adrichem, Stedelijk Bulletin, no 4, Sept 2003, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Holland, pp18-21.

'Groepsgewijs', Pauline Burmann, Zuidelijk Afrika, nummer 3, 2003, Holland, blz. 44-45.

'United Confusions of Representation', Corinne Diserens, Hisk Laureates

catalogue, Higher Institute for Fine Arts, Antwerpen, pp 136-139

'Smeltkroes op papier', Alberta Opoku, Contrast, nummer. 26, 11 September 2003, Holland, blz. 26-27

'Van der Merwe and Nel at the Goodman Gallery', Brenton Maart

For Artthrob, September 2003 (www.artthrob.co.za)

'Van der Merwe and Nel at the Goodman Gallery', Yvette Greslé,
Art South Africa

'Fragen nach dem Wesentlichen', Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger – Nr.131 –
Samstag/Sonntag 7/8 Juni 2003, pp27

'Body and the Archive', Emily Speers Mears, Art South Africa, Vol 01
Issue 03, Autumn 2003, pp 64

2002 'Representing the Body Archivaly in South African Photography', Lauri
Firstenberg, Art Journal Vol. 61, no. 1 Spring 2002 NY, USA,
pp 58-67

2001 'One To Seven', Uta M. Reindl, Kunstforum Nov/Dec 2001, Germany,
pp157

2000 'Blurred Focus', Bettie Coetzee, Garden and Home, July 2000,
Johannesburg.

'Art Out of War', Shaaun de Waal, Weekly Mail & Guardian, March 20.
'Translation/Seduction/Displacement', Holland Cotter, New York Times,
March 24.

1996 'Raiding The Archive', Rory Bester, NKA Journal of Contemporary
African Art, Summer/Fall, New York, USA, pp. 64.

'The Illicit Desires Of Discipline', Brenda Atkinson, Mail & Guardian,
June 13.

'Love, Friendship, Sex', Revue Noire, Paris, Dec 1995-Jan 1996, pp. 14-15.

Publications

Books

2004 'Hentie van der Merwe', 10 Years 100 Artists, Bell-Roberts
Publishing/Struik Publishers, Cape Town, pp. 386-389.

1996 'Murderous Times', Art in South Africa: The Future Present, Williamson, S
and Jamal, A (1996) David Philip Publishers, Cape Town,
pp. 113-114.

Catalogues

2000 'Hentie van der Merwe', by Rory Bester in FNB Vita Art Prize Catalogue,
Johannesburg.

1997 'Hentie van der Merwe', Catalogue published by the French Institute of South
Africa for solo exhibition at Generator Art Space,
Johannesburg, 1997.