

~~A PICK GALLERY~~

LANDSCAPES OF HIDDEN WORDS

The exhibition *Landscapes of Hidden Words* presents the work of three artists born in different countries of the African continent in the nineties. Karla Nixon lives in South Africa, LegakwanaLeo Makgekgenene in Botswana, and Renée Akitelek Mboya in Kenya.

Their work stems from of the personal memories and images linked to spaces and places in which moments and memories intertwine. In Nixon's works the thread is in the theme of space and place. The human condition as research, and the definition of a refuge. In a different form, but in dialogue with Nixon, the works of Makgekgenene and Mboya force us to question ourselves on hidden, oppressed, often misrepresented stories. They appropriate the story by transforming it into a mixture of intimacy and public affirmation.

The path of these three women is defined through a firm and feminine gaze. If Nixon invites us to a sensory experience through the materiality of her work mainly in paper, Makgekgenene and Mboya work the intertwining of multiple voices in personal and collective archives through the re-signification of images and words.

Nixon explores a multitude of themes ranging from that of the home, both from a personal and socio-economic point of view, to philosophical concepts related to transience and material culture, focusing specifically on textiles. Her work blurs the categories, placing itself between painting and sculpture, collage and fabric, craftsmanship and art, a particularly sensitive theme in the context of the African continent in which the three artists live.

Makgekgenene's images - some of which are part of a group exhibition that the *Botswana Pavilion* presented at the Sakhile & Me gallery in Frankfurt in April this year - question the notions of collectivity, subjectivity and the politics of belonging. Through the subversion of symbols and colours part of the national narrative such as, for example, the zebra or the colour blue, the artist investigates folklore and cultural traditions linked to orality, as well as the urban references of a landscape in transformation.

Mboya's two videos bring order to images of violence. In "*A Glossary of Words My Mother Never Taught Me*" the voice of the artist creates an answer to the racist and dishonest narrative contained in the images of 'Africa Addio', the Italian documentary forerunner of the "world movie" genre. '*And Salt The Earth Behind You*' refers instead to the protests that took place in front of the Astor Cinema in Berlin in 1966, following the screening of the film. These protests were fundamental for the articulation of black

consciousness in Western Europe at the time. Mbyoa chooses not to see herself represented in these images, which she appropriates instead. She bends them to her will: to give back the protagonism to the memories and meanings of the people whom these archives wanted to shatter... to repair, if possible, this violence.

The exhibition brings together a richness of media and materials, from video to photography and photomontage, up to pictorial installations through which the artists question the definition of a territory to which they belong, and the construction of both a unique and collective identity

Critical text by Laura Burocco