

MEDIA RELEASE

The Studio Museum in Harlem
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The Studio Museum in Harlem Summer 2010 Exhibitions

On view July 15—October 24, 2010

Featuring: *Zwelethu Mthethwa*; *2009-10 Artists in Residence Mequitta Ahuja, Lauren Kelley and Valerie Piraino*; *10th Annual Expanding the Walls Student Exhibition*

Zwelethu Mthethwa: Inner Views



Zwelethu Mthethwa, *Untitled from Interiors series*, 2001, Image Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, NY

The first New York museum exhibition of South African photographer Zwelethu Mthethwa (b. 1960, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa) brings together three compelling series: “Interiors” and “Empty Beds” document the domestic lives of migrant workers in and near Johannesburg, South Africa, while photographs in “Common Ground” focus

on shared experiences of natural disaster in urban areas, featuring houses in post-Hurricane-Katrina New Orleans, Louisiana and on the outskirts of Cape Town, South Africa, after wildfires.

Though his photographs are documentary in nature, Mthethwa consciously works against documentary conventions. Mthethwa presumes no objectivity toward his subjects, considering portraiture a form of collaboration between sitter and photographer. Originally trained as a painter, the artist adopts several formal and aesthetic features of painting—large-scale, careful composition, rich color tones and staged poses—in his highly stylized photographs.

Together, these images offer intimate access to otherwise private space. They also reference loss and longing, particularly the voids left in rural areas when workers migrate to cities. All the works exhibit a sense of how social change and natural disasters, as well as the public's responses to them, impress upon the domestic sphere. Organized by Associate Curator Naomi Beckwith, *Zwelethu Mthethwa: Inner Views* continues the Studio Museum's commitment to the presentation of contemporary work by international artists of African descent.

On July 15 at 7pm, Zwelethu Mthethwa and Naomi Beckwith will speak about the work in *Inner Views* in a special public program in the Museum Theatre, followed by a signing of *Zwelethu Mthethwa*, published by Aperture and available at the Museum Store for \$55.00 / Member Price: \$46.75.

Usable Pasts

2009-10 Artists in Residence: Mequitta Ahuja, Lauren Kelley and Valerie Piraino



Lauren Kelley, *Lindy Trail* (detail), 2010,
Photo: Marc Bernier



Mequitta Ahuja, *Generator*, 2010,
Courtesy the artist



Valerie Piraino, *With Pen in Hand*, 2010,
Courtesy the artist

In this year's installment of the much-anticipated *Artist-in-Residence* exhibition, Mequitta Ahuja (b. 1976), Lauren Kelley (b. 1975) and Valerie Piraino (b. 1981) present diverse projects in a range of media, which together address the construction of history and memory. Ahuja makes lush paintings in which mythological warriors and demigods move between landscape, self-portraiture and abstraction; Kelley crafts stop-motion animations, photographs and sculptural installations that speak to notions of material and emotional excess; Piraino repurposes family artifacts to create installations drawing attention to the metaphorical frames that shape experience and memory. A full-color brochure with scholarly essays by Rina Banerjee, Naomi Beckwith, Pradeep Dalal and Carol Ockman accompanies the exhibition.

The Artist-in-Residence program is supported with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts; New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation; The Greenwall Foundation; Jerome Foundation; New York Community Trust; Nimoy Foundation; and by endowments established by the Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Trust and Andrea Frank Foundation.

Inside the Collection: Interiors from the Studio Museum

Inside the Collection: Interiors from the Studio Museum features an intimate selection of photographs in the Museum's holdings that focus on indoor scenes and spaces. Organized as a complement to *Zwelethu Mthethwa: Inner Views*, this exhibition allows glimpses into a variety of domestic spaces at different moments. The works on view range from pieces created in the early twentieth century to those made during the last five years and feature artists including Adia Millet, Frank Stewart and Carrie Mae Weems.

Hi-Res: Expanding the Walls 2010

Hi-Res is this year's installment of the Museum's annual exhibition featuring the work of high school participants in the *Expanding the Walls: Making Connections to Photography, History and Community* program. Student photographs will be displayed along with work by quintessential Harlem photographer James VanDerZee, whose work they have studied and used as inspiration. This year celebrates both the tenth anniversary of the program and the first year using color digital photography.

Expanding the Walls is supported by the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; Colgate-Palmolive; Dubose and Dorothy Heyward Memorial Fund; The Robert A. Mills Foundation; and The David Rockefeller Fund.

Harlem Postcards Summer 2010

Represented, revered, and recognized by people around the world, Harlem is a continually expanding nexus of black culture, history and iconography. Venerable landmarks, such as the Abyssinian Baptist Church, the Apollo Theater, Hotel Theresa, Audubon Ballroom and 125th Street, remain popular emblems of important historic moments and moods. The Studio Museum's ongoing series *Harlem Postcards* invites contemporary artists of diverse backgrounds to reflect on Harlem as a site for artistic contemplation and production. Available free of charge in the Museum lobby, the postcards offer intimate views of and new perspectives on this famous neighborhood. This season we feature images by Sanford Biggers, Tiara Hernandez, Hew Locke and Ginger Brooks Takahashi.

StudioSound: DJ /rupture's Radio GooGoo

DJ/Rupture's *Radio GooGoo* is a radical audio installation that challenges widely accepted notions of authorship as well as the deep associations attached to musical genres. *Radio GooGoo* features computer based algorithms that assemble media sounds from a range of radio stations in real-time. Combining and synthesizing these sounds, *Radio GooGoo* continually broadcasts in the Museum lobby.

About The Studio Museum in Harlem

Founded in 1968, The Studio Museum in Harlem is a contemporary art museum that focuses on the work of artists of African descent locally, nationally and globally, as well as work that has been inspired and influenced by African-American culture. The Museum is committed to serving as a unique resource in the local community, and in national and international arenas, by making artworks and exhibitions concrete and personal for each viewer.

Hours and Admission (effective July 15, 2010)

The Studio Museum is open Thursday and Friday, noon-9pm; Saturday, 10am-6pm; Sunday, noon-6pm. The museum is closed to the public on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Museum admission is by suggested donation: \$7 for adults, \$3 for students (with valid id) and seniors. Free for children 12 and under. Sundays are free at the Studio Museum, thanks to generous support from Target.

The Studio Museum in Harlem is supported, in part, with public funds provided by the following government agencies and elected representatives: The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation; Assemblyman Keith L. T. Wright, 70th A.D.; New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; Institute of Museum and Library Services; the National Endowment for the Arts; Council Member Inez E. Dickens, 9th C.D. and Speaker Christine Quinn and the New York City Council.