

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Sakhile&Me introduces new online-only exhibition format

Coming of Age features photographic works by Zana 'Ndebele Superhero' Masombuka and Lloyd Foster

August 1, 2021

Frankfurt/Main, Germany – Sakhile&Me is pleased to present *Coming of Age*, the gallery's inaugural online-only exhibition as part of their new spotlight series that aims to highlight young talents and to introduce new collaborations. The show runs from 1 August to 31 August 2021 and features works by South African conceptual artist Zana 'Ndebele Superhero' Masombuka and American-Ghanian photographer Lloyd Foster.

Coming of Age centers on self-actualization and rituals of becoming, including building community and ways of communing with oneself and others. The phrase "coming of age" itself refers to a transition from childhood to adulthood and conjures up rites of passage, graduating children and teenagers into adulthood. Without limiting the experience of transformation and growth to age and the forward progression of time, *Coming of Age* offers an exploration of becoming as an ongoing growing into, rather than a move from one fixed phase to another. This expansive view evokes various entry points for discussions about what coming of age is and what rituals and forms it can take through solitude and conscious communion with others and our natural environment.

Coming of Age features video and photographic works by Zana 'Ndebele Superhero' Masombuka and Lloyd Foster which invite an introspective look into processes of getting to know oneself in relationship to our environment and in relation to others. Masombuka's and Foster's works visualize gradual developments and experiences of transformation that can come about through monumental life-changing events, such as grief after the loss of a loved one, as well as in every-day experiences, such as bonding with peers through learning, exchange and play. Both artists' practices involve an intuitive exploration of how individuals simultaneously grow in solitude and in communion with others.

Zana Masombuka's series "Isizungu: Demystifying Isolation" employs Ndebele cultural knowledge, color symbolism and material contrast to portray isolation as an integral part of knowing or becoming reacquainted with oneself. In part of the series, a single figure with snake-like skin crouches beside a blackened metal tub filled with branches of herbs, a mound of dried white corncoobs resting at the base of the tub and a cloud made of plants suspended above; in another, a sole figure sits facing forward with dried mud peeling of their skin. In both depictions, the figure is blinded - either by a wooden roll or a shimmering headdress - but they show no indication of fear but rather a quiet confidence, the molting skin suggesting continual transition and renewal, the shedding of old skin and a growing into something new.

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Lloyd Foster's series "Two Worlds, Same Energy" is a testament to the power of transmuting energies across physical distance and speaks to building community through playing basketball. In 2019, Foster produced a short documentary film titled "33: D.C.'s Game," focusing on a unique form of basketball that is native to Washington, D.C. and the surrounding metropolitan area. The film won *Best Short Documentary* at the DC Independent Film Festival and when one of the youth that the artist had met during his travels to visit family in Ghana saw the film online, he wrote to Foster about his interest to learn how to play 33 and teach it to his friends. Recalling his own experiences growing up and playing 33, Foster photographed youth basketball players during a subsequent visit to Ghana and "Two Worlds, Same Energy" came into being. The series depicts the exchange and passing on of knowledge through game play and between communities of youth separated by distance but connected by their shared technique and approach to basketball.

Through their respective work, Masombuka and Foster explore lessons in not only preserving but also reviving historical knowledge, and in different ways consider how isolation can be part of growing into oneself and creating community. In one, the subject becomes reacquainted with themselves in solitary introspection and through communion with nature, and in the other, we witness communion from a distance as basketball culture bridges two communities across the globe. *Coming of Age* embodies different ways people harness and persist on their path of growing into themselves and into the communities they are a part of.

682 words, 3.646 characters

About the gallery

Sakhile&Me is a contemporary art gallery and research space based in Frankfurt, Germany. Founded in 2018 by Sakhile Matlhare and Daniel Hagemeyer, Sakhile&Me works with both young and established international artists, curators, and researchers and intentionally prioritizes the African continent and its diasporas with the goal of drawing attention to contextual specificity in and through art – in content, artistic medium, and genre. The gallery concept developed from Sakhile's doctoral research in Sociology at Northwestern University on how contemporary artists work alongside art curators, historians, gallerists and other experts in the gatekeeping process within and beyond the rubric of contemporary African art.

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Opening hours

Tuesday - Friday: 12 pm - 6 pm; Saturday: 10 am - 4 pm; by appointment.

Image Material

Zana 'Ndebele Superhero' Masombuka. 2018. Portrait. **File name:** press-photo-zana-masombuka.jpg. **Caption:** Zana 'Ndebele Superhero' Masombuka.

Lloyd Foster. 2020. Portrait. **File name:** press-photo-lloyd-foster.jpg. **Caption:** Lloyd Foster.

Zana 'Ndebele Superhero' Masombuka. *Isizungu I*. 2020. Digital print on archival Tecco BTT270 paper. 118,9x84,1cm. **File name:** zana-masombuka-isizungu-001-large.jpg. **Caption:** Zana 'Ndebele Superhero' Masombuka: Isizungu I (2020).

Lloyd Foster. *An Ode to Washington*. 2019. Archival Pigment Print. 50,8x40,6cm. **File name:** lloyd-foster-an-ode-to-washington-large.jpg. **Caption:** Lloyd Foster: An Ode to Washington (2019).

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