



CAPETIMES

ARTS PORTAL

Out in the 'Playground'



Published Aug 17, 2016



Written by

Steyn Du Toit

SHARE



SEVERAL of sculptor Marieke Prinsloo-Rowe's marble resin children greet the viewer at the entrance to Franschhoek's Moór Gallery. Mounted on concrete and permanently frozen in moments of exploration, dreaming and contemplation, these statues form part of a group exhibition called *Playground*.

Curated by Aidon Westcott and Corlie de Kock, it is one of the first shows staged at this new gallery by owners Arthur and Katherine McWilliam Smith. In addition to Prinsloo-Rowe, among the rest of the diverse range of established and newer artists (there are around 40 in total) taking part are Willie Bester, Jaco Sieberhagen, Barbara Wildenboer, Peter van Straten, Annelie Venter and Nhlanhla Dumakude Nhlapo.

Story continues below Advertisement

Defining the term 'play' as a behaviour that is performed in order to enjoy the capacity of being able to execute it, the exhibition showcases how artists are also often challenged to navigate such 'performances' through their work.

"The more difficult a task might be, the greater the pleasure and the better the opportunity to increase one's own skill level," the curators explain via their exhibition statement. "Creative play is the way one plays with imagination to transcend what is known in the current state to create a higher state. Play promotes flexibility of mind and encourages multiple ways to achieve a desired result or goal."

Being able to play, Westcott and De Kock go on to write, is therefore a critical aspect of social and emotional development for both children and adults.

Story continues below Advertisement

"In other words, if one harnesses the childlike tendencies to keep playing with something that works 'well enough', it will eventually allow one to come up with something that might work 'better'."

Always a highlight to see are the toy-like figurines created by Marinda du Toit. Her sculptural work is derived from a background of performance art and clowning - both strong narratives that drive theatrical and therapeutic "playing".

Similarly, each of Du Toit's colourful characters also "play" out a narrative that comments on social matters through their posture, facial expressions and other clues when looking at the found objects used to build up each body.

Story continues below Advertisement

Taken from her (Dis)quit-series, Barbara Wildenboer's intimate mixed-media creations, in turn, present the viewer with an interesting combination of photography and found objects.

"The series originated from an early childhood game which involved the collecting of beach pebbles, washed out little fish and other objects during family holidays at the coast," Wildenboer recalls via her artist statement.

To create the finished pieces, she started by printing photographed objects onto physical objects using silver-gelatin emulsion. These photo-objects were then rephotographed, before being juxtaposed again with more physical objects. Lastly, the new surfaces were then cut out to expose its earlier layers of photographic images. "This process speaks of both the presence and the absence of the objects originally collected. As the word 'quiet' in title suggests, the work is also rooted in the tradition of the still-life or vanitas. Yet, the prefix (dis-) added in brackets suggest something unsettling."

Story continues below Advertisement

Another of the artists whose work relies on contrasting is Nhlanhla Dumakude Nhlapo. "Through the overlaying of various images, I then create a juxtaposition between faces and objects," he reveals. "The ambiguity of transitional areas renders the images abstract at times, and causes confusion in the viewer. The process of overlaying helps me to personally develop the image further than just a mere representational of a recognisable image."

Through these overlayed realities, Nhlapo says, exciting things can occur "The process of overlaying images provides me with spaces to experiment with direct and indirect traditional and contemporary techniques that put up a challenge to negotiate boundaries between my own intimate tactility of paint and smooth photorealistic image, adding a visual interest to the surface. This spontaneity provides a room for abstraction/immediate changes to a much far imaginary representation. I use elements, objects, animals, historical landmarks and remnants, scarring and slashes to create visual intricacy. These dissolving faces may carry unintended implications of sinister or violence."

While leisure zones, playgrounds and parks around cities speak about ordered societies, ideology and utopia, Elfriede Dreyer's photo collage *Dystopian Playground* aims to capture the irony and neurosis that have infiltrated the life of children in South African cities.

"Although children generally tend to be unaware of threat, South African children are constantly surrounded by menaces of different kinds, represented by the imagery of wild thorn bush speaking about chaos, wilderness and peril," Dreyer explains.

"Originally, cities have been conceived for happy and safe inhabitation by human beings. The digital, technological mode of the work is deliberate and comments on the fact that, in order to survive in the city, "walls" of defense are created by way of alarm systems, laser beams and other technologies."

The raw material used to create *Dystopian Playground* includes a combination of photographic documentation the carefree families in the Giardini gardens in Venice, the sweet-thorn Acacia Karoo (found in Mpumalanga and Limpopo Province) and imagery of computer parts.

"Digital embroidery, pixilation and grids are blended, creating a claustrophobic, texturised surface."

Elsewhere in the gallery, a muscle Mary-like ceramic sculpture by Ella Cronjé provides an ironic reference to the physiological/psychological undercurrents of hypermasculine gay culture. Originally created as part of a 10-figure series called *Till Death Do us Part*, the piece comments on the use of steroids in order to build bigger muscles and more desirable bodies.

This despite the physical/psychological side effects developed after prolonged use - including infertility, shrunken testicles, erectile dysfunction, as well as aggressive and manic behaviour.

l On view daily between 10.30am and 6pm at the Moór Gallery, 4 Bordeaux Street, Franschhoek, until August 23, 021 876 2616.

RELATED TOPICS:

SHARE



You may like

Man transferred R34 million and lost it in Gauteng crypto currency investment scam

By Jonisayi Maromo | Published Jun 29, 2022



Another fuel price shocker expected for struggling consumers

By Yogashen Pillay | Published 5h ago



Ramaphosa: Why did we not see it coming?

By Opinion | Published Jun 28, 2022



Read next

Hospital faces R2m lawsuit for amputating woman's wedding ring finger bitten by robbers

By Zelda Venter | Published 5h ago



Recommended Stories

Recommended by  





Awe, a baby Loki! Tom Hiddleston to become a father for the first time



A minimal investment in companies like Netflix can become a potential second...

Invest Now



High Court Allows Debt Reductions For South Africans

www.consumersave.co.za



Muldersdrift shooting victim Len Cloete is back home



People Born 1957-1992 (With No Life Insurance) Should Claim This Benefit I...

bettermoney.co.za



Your IQ Is Over 140 If You Get Even 5/20 On This Quiz

Parentsdomo Galleries

MOST READ

EDITOR'S CHOICE

More woes for deadly Eastern Cape tavern owner

How cops rescued businessman Ismail Rajah

Enyobeni Tavern tragedy: aunt shares her grief at losing teen

WATCH: Mystery, as 21 teenagers found dead at East London tavern

Deadline set for Motsoaledi on review of permits, visas report

Independent Online, popularly known as IOL, is one of South Africa's leading news and information websites bringing millions of readers breaking news and updates on Politics, Current Affairs, Business, Lifestyle, Entertainment, Travel, Sport, Motoring and Technology. [Read more](#)



SECTIONS ON IOL

News

Lifestyle

Entertainment

Travel

Business

Property

Sport

Motoring

Opinion

IOL TV

Brandstories

MORE ON IOL

About IOL

Contact Us

Weather

Newspapers Highlights

Newspapers Contacts

SUBSCRIBE

Independent Media

Email Newsletter



© 2022 Independent Online and affiliated companies. All rights reserved.

[Press Code](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms & Conditions](#) [Advertise with us](#) [Feedback](#)
[Complaints Procedure](#)