
Artist Profile



Name: [Zanoxolo Sylvester Mqeku]
Artistic Medium(s): [Ceramic Sculpture]
Location: [Cape Town, South Africa]

Artist Statement

Mqeku presents a uniquely South African ceramic art production technique known as sand casting, created and developed over the past 15 years. If Visualizing our anthropogenic influence is a creative priority, this technique becomes the product of an innovative and earth-focused creative process, an emblem of innovative artistic studio practice, a creative response to the needs of our current natural environment where human activities need to be rethought in search of ways by which we may take from nature only or mostly what we can put back.

The earth's surface has always been a starting point for human development, either horizontally or vertically, from the tallest structures to the deepest excavations, humans have always altered space by first relying on the earth's surface and leaving their imprints on it. In the new revised standard version of the bible in John 8:8 we find a common reminder of this, Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger, the subject is brought up again in the mind's eye: an introduction to making images, in it, late South African artist Judith Mason extends the following statement:

Making marks is an instinct. A benevolent act, drawing is what we do when we see our breath on the bathroom mirror, a stretch of pristine sea sand, a wall out of sight of the cops or a Mona Lisa crying out for a moustache. Cave walls, scraps of vellum, river reeds, human skin and whale bones- all these we cover with our marks. We have done so from time immemorial, scraping away with a stone tool while the clan bore droned on about how he cornered

mammals (Mason, 2015,11), this could suggest that apart from cultivating food, water and shelter, human beings have a curious relationship with the face of the earth, soil and water.

Not unlike playing at the beach sand as a natural material gives itself to the artist's instinct, committing his memory and his body to the earth, its textures, riches, colours, sounds, smells and temperatures. But the flexibility of Clay when mixed with water allows it to become the suitable recording tool that captures imprints made in sand especially when it will be fired and become durable enough to keep the imprint for up to 25 000 years.

Biography

Mqeku was born in Mount Fletcher in the Eastern Cape of South Africa a small town on the edges of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, during primary school years, he moved to Umtata a larger town where he graduated from High school from Zingisa High school.

After obtaining a foundation certificate in art at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University School of music Art and design, he went on to study Architectural Technology, later leaving it behind to obtain a certificate in introductory Art and Design which resulted in him finally to a diploma in Ceramic Design. In the following year he was employed at the Oliewenhuis Art Museum in Bloemfontein Free State. In 2016 he resigned and went on to enrol at the Tshwane University of Technology obtaining a B-Tech in Fine Art, With a focus on the development of sandcast ceramics, Art theory and Critical Writing.

In 2024, Mqeku completed a Master's degree in design and studio art (Sand cast Ceramics as Major Incorporating Fabrication technologies, CAD and public creative practice), at the Central University of Technology Bloemfontein, South Africa

Exhibitions & Achievements

- [2018] – [Goethe Project Space Award], [Goethe Institut], [Johannesburg]
 - [2018] – [Vallauris artist residency] [France]
 - [2020] – [Blackrock artist residency], [Blackrock Senegal], [Dakar]
 - [2021] – [State of the Art Gallery Award], [State of the Art Gallery], [Cape Town]
 - [2021] – [Dakar Biennale], [Blackrock Senegal], [Dakar]
 - [2023] – [Ancestor project Collaborative residency], [Nkyinkyim Museum], [Ghana]
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