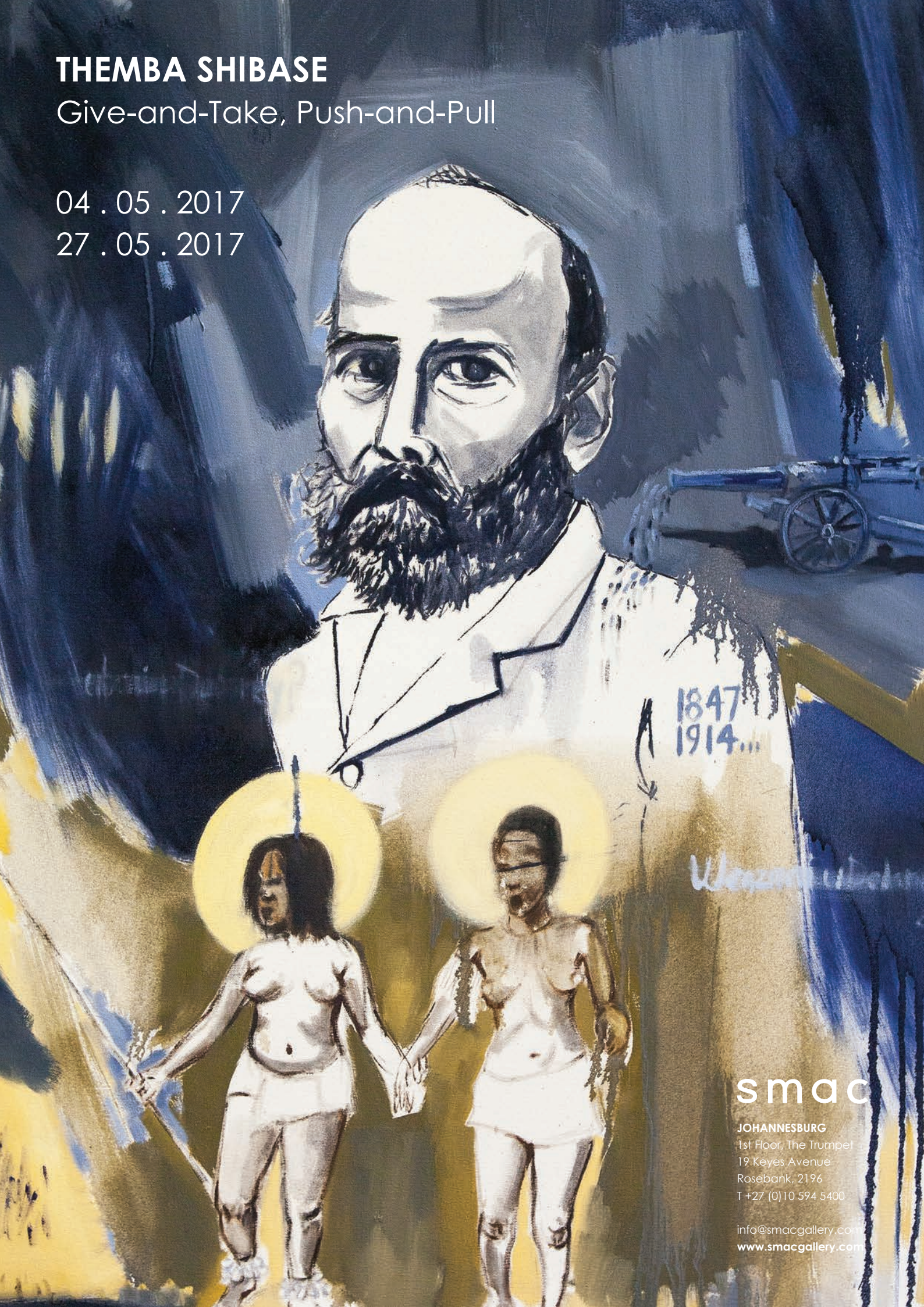


THEMBA SHIBASE

Give-and-Take, Push-and-Pull

04 . 05 . 2017

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1847
1914...

Wesensliber

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THEMBA SHIBASE

Give-and-Take, Push-and-Pull

SMAC Gallery is proud to present *Give-and-Take, Push-and-Pull*, an exhibition of new artworks by Durban-based painter, Themba Shibase.

While Shibase's concepts are rooted in the interrogation of current socio-political issues within a Pan-African context, this body of work has provided the prolific painter an opportunity to reflect on the themes and ideas explored through the physicality of painting.

Drawing influence from Cornel West's seminal text, *A Matter of Life and Death* (1992), Shibase attempts to articulate the intricacies of identity construction, desire, and the life-death dichotomy. This ultimately allows for an investigation into the poetic dynamic between giving and taking, adding and removing, revealing and withholding, and how these processes play themselves out in the evolution of a painting.

Amidst the loose yet considered brushstrokes of Shibase's paintings, there are moments that compel us to reflect upon the construction of our own identities, our fundamental desires. According to West, "Identity is fundamentally about desire... How you construct your identity is predicated on how you construct desire... [your] desire for recognition; [your] quest for visibility". Thus, Shibase examines the human need to project a desirable idea of who we are, or who we imagine ourselves to be – especially in relation to how we are perceived by others.

Power and political consequence form the backbone of this particular notion of desire. Iconic socio-political figures such as De La Rey, Yahya Jammeh, David Rockefeller and Robert Mugabe are depicted in some of the paintings as explicit examples of the deep desire for ascendancy that is embedded within Shibase's idea of giving and taking, pushing and pulling. These figures exist as manifestations of how the give-and-take dynamic that the artist depicts is not always as mutual as it is implied; there is the explicit desire to take, not necessarily to give back in return.

The relationship between sexuality and desire is also explored through variably subtle and provocative images of nudity. The commercialisation of pornography, together with the pervasive exploitation of nudity as a commodity in the media, has particular influence on Shibase's depiction of human figures. Such influence is best illustrated in the implicit violence that often characterises his portrayal of human figures. These tormented figures are involuntarily appealing, which can be difficult to explain. Perhaps the best way to capture the essence of this attraction is the notion that, like sex, "Violence sells".

According to Shibase, "There is an obvious viciousness in how bodies (particularly those of women) are put out as objects of sexual pleasure and desire, predicated by the power of the media".

For West, the construction of our identities is formulated as much around our concept of desire as it is around our concept of death. The nude figures featured in some of the paintings confront us with our most basic and material form – our mortal flesh. The ethereal presence of these perishable bodies introduces another point of departure in an understanding of how desire propels the cyclical nature of *Give-and-Take, Push-and-Pull* and – consequently – our most basic, corporeal understanding of life and death.

As West would say, "so we weave webs of existential meaning". These various elements seek to consolidate an interpretation of identity. As they give and take from one another, push and pull against each other, so they collectively build their narrative through painting as medium. Throughout its extensive and unstable visual and political history, which can sometimes dictate the artist's creative process as well as the informed audience's engagement with it, painting exerts a push-and-pull in its journey to reach the desired outcome of viewer satisfaction.

Give-and-Take, Push-and-Pull thus exists as a metaphysical manifestation of the exchange between the application of oil paint to the canvas and its removal; the relationship between the processes of thinking and making; striking a balance between the technical and conceptual elements on which a painting is premised; the experience of painting from a spiritual versus a psychological point of view; working as an artist within a gallery space and managing the expectations that lie therein. These tangible concepts further propel the cyclical nature of the life-death dichotomy that Shibase's brush illustrates in layers.

West brings us to our conclusion; "if in fact, identity has something to do with these various kinds of desires, these various conceptions of death" he says, "it's because we have, given our inevitable extinction, to come up with a way of endowing ourselves with significance."

Give-and-Take, Push-and-Pull is showing at SMAC Gallery in Johannesburg from 4 May to 27 May 2017.

#giveandtakepushandpull

#thembashibase

#smacgallery

#smacjhb

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Themba Shibase

The memory of De la Rey being disappeared by the chant of Zulu maidens

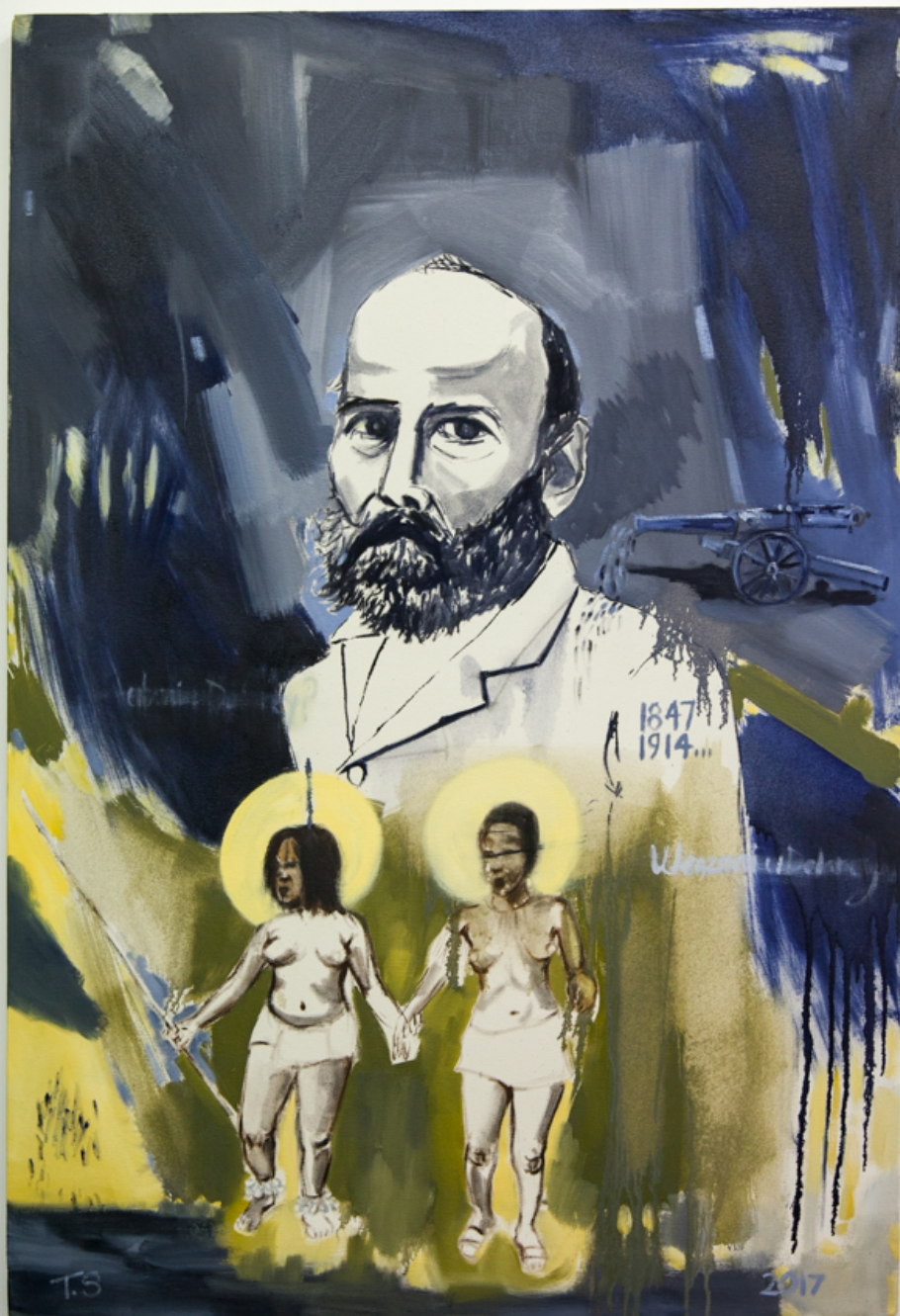
2017

Oil on Canvas

120 x 80 cm

Unique

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Themba Shibase

(Un)Happy, You Happy

2017

Oil on canvas

40 x 40 cm

Unique

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Themba Shibase

Red Line (Shark/ JZ)

2017

Mixed Media on Cotton Rag

68.5 x 49.5 cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase
Eulogy for Big Fella
2017
Oil on Canvas
120 x 80 cm
Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

Big Boy (Cyril)

2017

Oil on Canvas

30 x 30 cm

Unique

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Themba Shibase

Senior Oligarch I

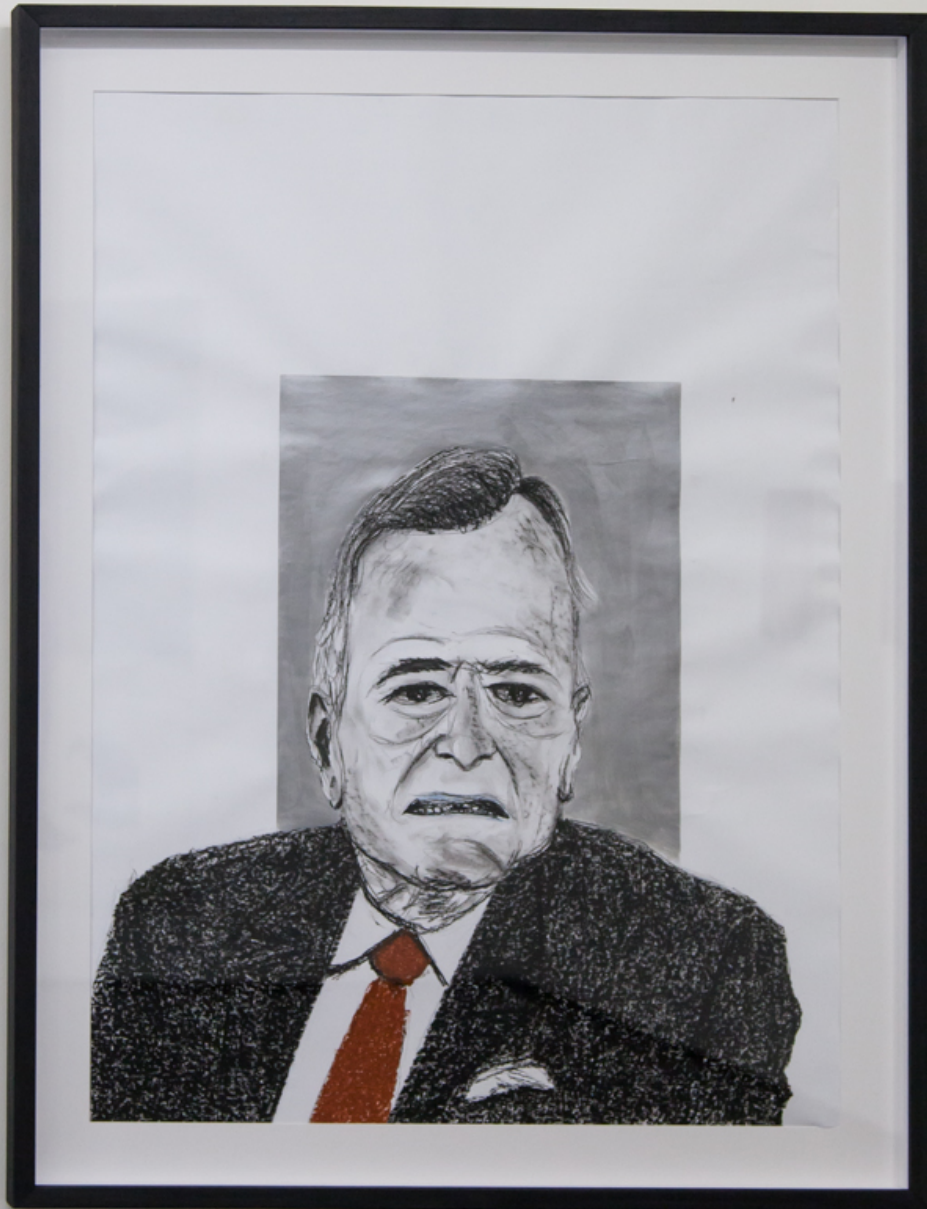
2017

Mixed Media on Paper

88 x 65.5

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

Rascal I (Jammeh)

2017

Mixed Media on Paper

88 x 65.5 cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

Uncle Bob Meditating - In Peace

2017

Oil on Canvas

120 x 80 cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

Rascal IV

2017

Oil on Canvas

40 x 40 cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

Big Fella

2017

Oil on Canvas

40 x 40 cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

The Nationalist Scapegoat (Colonel De Kok)

2017

Oil on Canvas

40 x 33cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

Portrait of Postcolonial African Bourgeoisie

2017

Oil on Canvas

200 x 100 cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

Kigali Blues I (Boutros)

2017

Oil on Canvas

32 x 26 cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase
Kigali Blues II (Skull)
2017
Oil on Canvas
32 x 26 cm
Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase
Rhode's Haunting
2017
Oil on canvas
120 x 80 cm
Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

The Chief's Grand March

2017

Oil on Canvas

129 x 80 cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

Death List

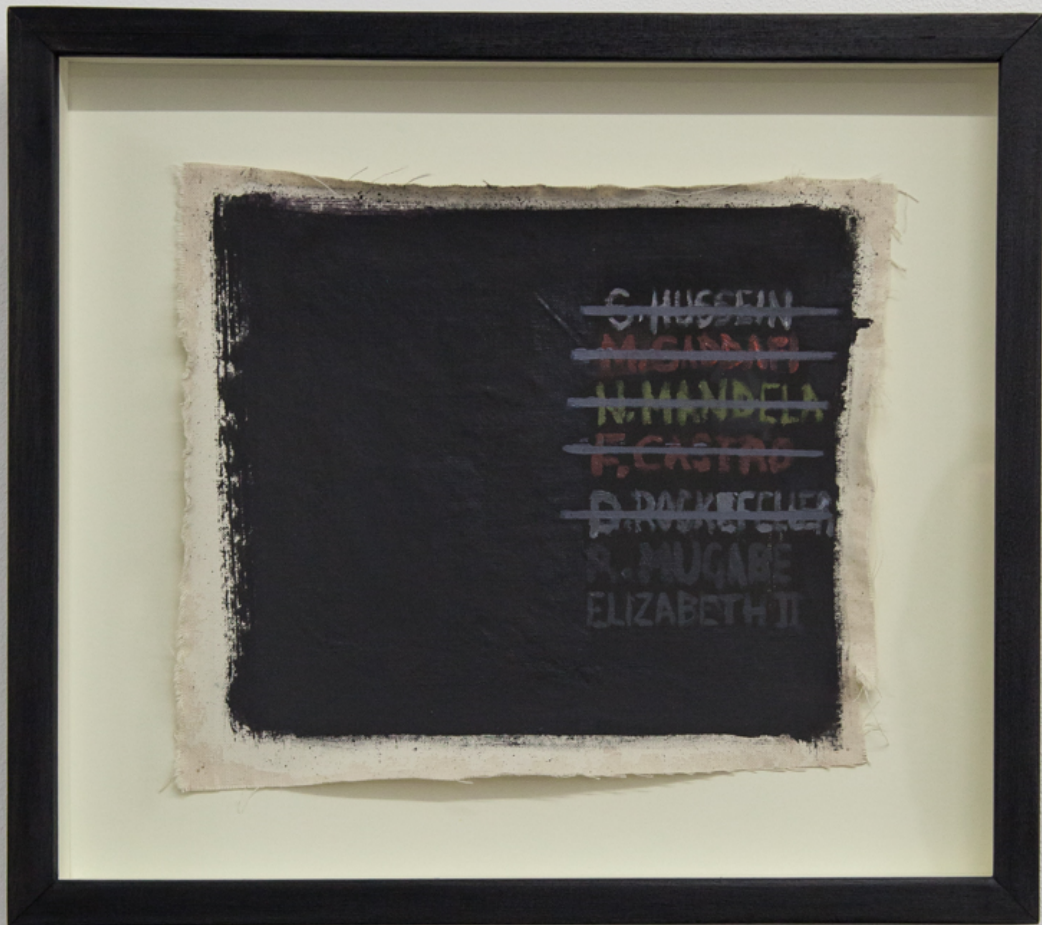
2017

Oil on Canvas

25 x 29 cm

Unique

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Themba Shibase

Rascal II

2017

Oil on Canvas

29 x 24.5 cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase
Scapegoat
2017
Oil on Canvas
28 x 24.5 cm
Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

Angel

2017

Oil on Canvas

120 x 80 cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

Black Stroke

2017

Oil on Cotton Rag

68.5 x 49.5 cm

Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

Cum

2017

Oil on Cotton Rag

68.5 x 49.5 cm

Unique

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Themba Shibase

Pink Fluid

2017

Oil on Cotton Rag

68.5 x 49.5 cm

Unique

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Themba Shibase

Woman

2017

Oil on Canvas

15 x 20 cm

Unique

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Themba Shibase

Man I

2017

Oil on Canvas

20 x 15 cm

Unique

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Themba Shibase

Rascal III

2017

Oil on Canvas

30 x 30 cm

Unique

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Themba Shibase
Senior Oligarch II
2017
Oil on Canvas
30 x 30 cm
Unique

smac



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Themba Shibase

General Magnus Malan - Pale

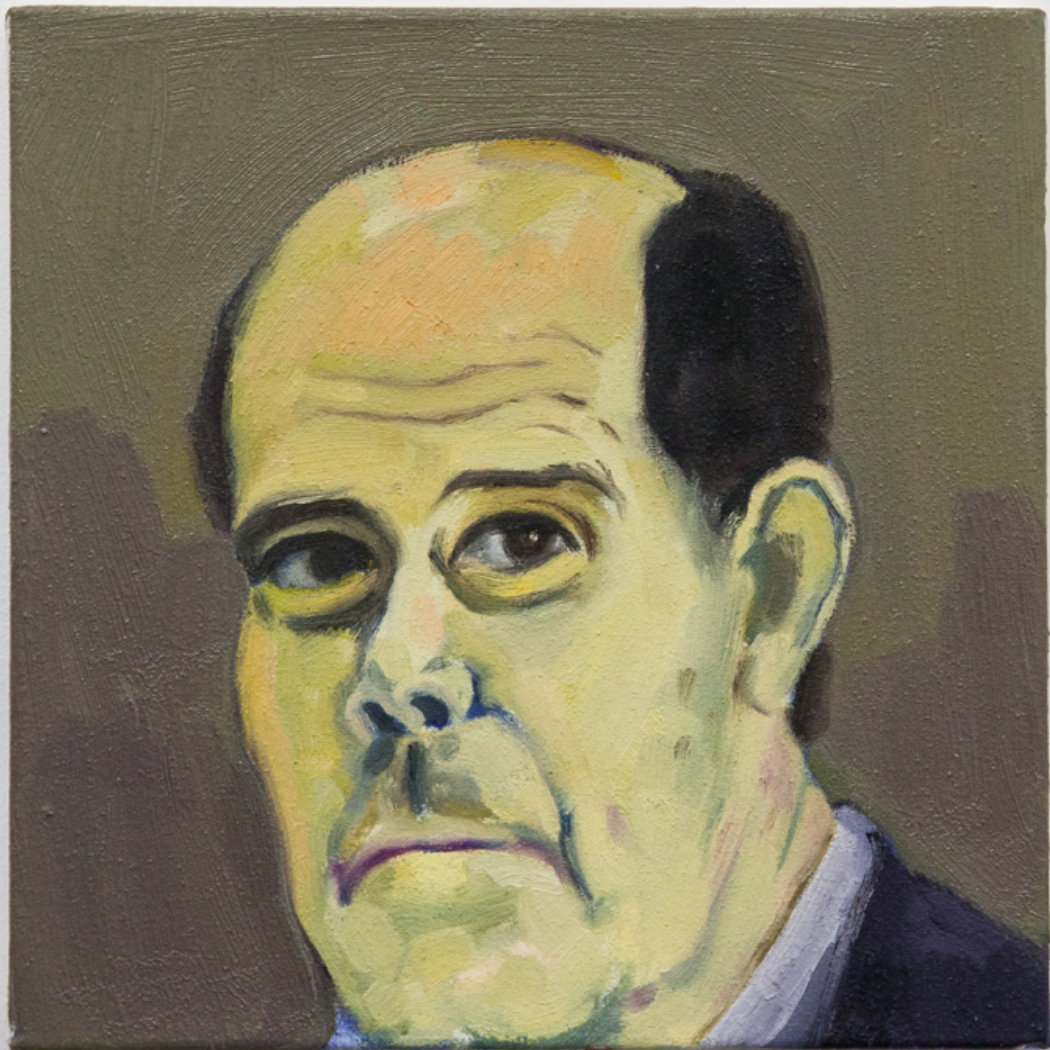
2017

Oil on Canvas

30 x 30 cm

Unique

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