

Lindokuhle Sobekwa



Biography

Lindokuhle Sobekwa (b. 1995, Katlehong, South Africa) is from a generation of South African photographers born after the first democratic elections of 1994. Through his participation in the Of Soul and Joy photography education programme in Thokoza in 2012, he realised that the medium of photography would be an essential tool to tell stories that concern and interest him.

Sobekwa exhibited for the first time in 2013 as part of a group show in Thokoza organised by the Rubis Mécénat Foundation. His photo essay 'Nyaope' (2014) was published in the Mail & Guardian (South Africa), in Vice magazine's annual Photo Issue and in the daily De Standaard (Belgium).

In 2015, Sobekwa was awarded a scholarship to study at the Market Photo Workshop. That same year his series 'Nyaope' was exhibited in another group show, 'Free From My Happiness', organised by Rubis Mécénat for the International Photo Festival of Ghent in Belgium. The exhibition toured additional sites in Belgium and South Africa. A publication edited by Tjorven Bruyneel included a selection of works. Sobekwa was selected by the Magnum Foundation For Photography and Social Justice (NYC) to develop the project 'I carry Her photo with Me'. In 2018 he received the Magnum Foundation Fund to continue his long-term project 'Nyaope'. In 2021 Sobekwa completed a residency at A4 Foundation in Cape Town, culminating in a two-person exhibition with Mikhael Subotzky titled 'Tell It to the Mountains'.

Sobekwa opened his first museum show in 2022 at Huis Marseille in The Netherlands, featuring the body of work 'Umkhondo: Tracing Memory' as part of the summer programme titled 'The beauty of the world so heavy'. His hand-made photobook, 'I carry Her photo with Me', was included in African Cosmologies at the FotoFest Biennial Houston in 2020, curated by Mark Sealy.

Sobekwa's work was shown at Goodman Gallery in March 2023 as part of the photography show 'Against the Grain', alongside Ernest Cole, David Goldblatt, Ruth Motau and Ming Smith. He was named an official member of Magnum Photos in 2022 and gave a lecture about his practice at TATE Modern in 2023 as part of his John Kopal Foundation Fellowship. He was also awarded the 2023 FNB Art Prize which includes a solo show at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in August 2024. His series 'I carry Her photo with Me' was published by Mack Books in 2024. Sobekwa was announced the 2025 Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize winner, the most prestigious award for a living artist whose work has influenced international contemporary photography within the past year.

Collections include Huis Marseille, Museum for Photography; A4 Arts Foundation; University of South Africa; Sainsbury Centre; Hessel Foundation; Rubis Mercanet; and Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

Solo Exhibitions

2024 *Umkhondo: Going Deeper*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg

2024 *Heart of the Garden*, Goodman Gallery, London

2022 *Umkhondo: Tracing memory*, Huis Marseille, Museum for Photography, Amsterdam

2015, *Everything you give me boss, will do*, No Man's Art Gallery. UNSEEN PHOTO Downtown program, Doka / Volkshotel Amsterdam

Group Exhibitions

2025 *New Photography 2025: Lines of Belonging*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

2025 *Motherhood: Paradox and Duality*, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town

2025 *Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize 2025*, The Photographers' Gallery, London

2024 *in situ*, Oude Leeskamer, Stellenbosch

2024 *Heroin Falls*, Sainsbury Centre, Norwich

2024 *Emotion of the Sun*, Veuve Clicquot, Milan

2023 *Against the Grain*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg

2023 *JIVE*, Goethe Institut, Johannesburg

2023 *Ukuzilanda Homegoing*, Magnum Photos, Cromwell Place

2022 *Chosen Family – Less Alone Together*, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland

2022 *AMI x Magnum*, Magnum Photos, Paris; Miami; Shanghai; and Kyoto

2022 *Where do I being*, Stevenson, Cape Town

2021 *Of Blood Sweat and Data/On People, Place and Photography*, Studio Nxumalo Contemporary and the Through the Lens Collective, Johannesburg

2021 *Family Dissemblance*, SARCHI Chair in South African Art and Visual Culture, University of Johannesburg

2021 *Public Life: Recording the Blur*, FotoFest, Houston, Texas

2020 *Daleside (with Cyprien Clément-Delmas)*, PhotoSaintGermain, Paris, France; Frama Gallery, Kortrijk, Belgium; Fotodok, Munich, Germany

2020 *Le Grand Chemin #2*, Cité des Arts, Reunion Island

2020 *African Cosmologies*, FotoFest, Houston, Texas
2019 *Le Grand Chemin #1*, Cité des Art, Reunion Island
2018 *Place of Peace*, Rubis Mécénat and Stop Sign Art Gallery, Johannesburg
2016 *Free from my Happiness*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg; Photo Festival, Ghent Belgium; No Man's Art Pop-up Gallery, Tehran, Iran; No Man's Art Pop-up Gallery, Rotterdam, Netherlands
2014 *See without looking, hear without listening, breathe without asking*, Kalashnikov Gallery, Johannesburg
2014 *Expression of freedom* Kalashnikov Gallery, Johannesburg
2014 *Fearless Renewal*, Afrovibes Festival, Amsterdam
2013 *Free from my happiness*, Ithuba Art Gallery, Thokoza; Photo Festival, Johannesburg
2021 *Tell It to the Mountains* (with Mikhael Subotzky), A4 Arts Foundation, Cape Town

Teaching, Lectureships and Workshop

2023 The John Kobal Foundation Fellowship Lecture at Tate Modern
2021 Canon Student Development programme
One to One Children Fund: Art for ART presents my eye is drawn
2020 Member of Jury: ICP / GOST First Photo Book Award
2020 Joop Swart Masterclass: Lindokuhle Sobekwa
2020 The Photographers' Gallery: Artist Talk Lindokuhle Sobekwa
2020 MA in Photojournalism and Documentary Photography at London College of Communication
2020 How Stories Choose Us: Magnum Photos x FotoFest Biennial.
2020 High Museum + Magnum Photos Live Lab Panel discussion the USA
2019 Photo Vogue Festival Magnum day.
2019 Norway Dokfestival lecture series
2019 Iran New Media talk series Nomans Art Gallery

Awards and Merits

2025 The Deutsche Borse Photography Foundation Prize (Shortlisted)
2023 FNB Art Prize Winner
2023 Inaugural John Kobal Foundation Fellowship Recipient
2023 Norval Sovereign African Art Prize (Shortlisted)
2021 Visionary Award, Javett Art Centre, (Shortlisted)
2020 Leica Oskar Barnack Award (Shortlisted)
2020 Joop Swart Masterclass
2018 Magnum Foundation Fund Grant Recipient
2017 Magnum Foundation Social Justice Fellow
2013 Student of the Year, Of soul and Joy Photo Festival

Commissions

2020 Wellcome Trust Commission

Selected Articles and Reviews

2020 Ernest Cole, TATE. (published by TATE Modern, London UK)
<https://www.tate.org.uk/tate-etc/issue-51-spring-2021/ernest-cole-lindokuhle-sobekwa-images-burnt-my-mind>
2020 Huck on Ernest Cole
<https://www.huckmag.com/playlist-archive/unpacking-the-legacy-of-photographer-ernest-cole/>

Publications

2024 *I carry Her photo with Me* (long-form essay by writer and scholar Neelika Jayawardane), Mack books, May 2024, Spiral-bound hardcover 18 x 22cm, 80 pages
2020 *Daleside* (With Cyprien Clément-Delmas), GOST Books, November 2020, 187 x 253 mm, 128 pages (2 books of 64 pages), 62 colour images, Swiss bound Hardback