

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Summertime

July 27 – September 23, 2017



Mohau Modisakeng, Still from *To Move Mountains*, 2015



Ben Aronson, *Sun and Clouds, Cap Ferrat*, 2016, oil on panel, 60x60"

Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco is pleased to present *Summertime*, a group exhibition featuring socially informed works by artists working in a variety of disciplines including painting, photography, sculpture, film, neon installation, and mixed media. Presenting are Mohau Modisakeng, Gordon Parks, Lalla Essaydi, Lissette Solórzano, Damali Abrams, Ben Aronson, Hendrik Kerstens, Scott Fraser, Johnathan Payne, Aubrey Williams, Tim Etchells, Sam Vernon, and Nnenna Okore. *Summertime* opens July 27 and continues through September 23, 2017.

Mohau Modisakeng, representing South Africa at the 57th Venice Biennale, creates video installations that navigate the nuances of locating the intersection of identity and body under the domination of global capital. *Summertime* features Modisakeng's film *To Move Mountains*, recently presented at Art Basel 2017, elaborating on the socio-economic struggles of working class people through symbolic confrontation, replacing war with art. The film references the 2012 Marikana Massacre, initiated by the South African police against unionized coal miners striking for a wage increase. With a speculated total of 47 workers killed, the massacre is the most lethal use of state violence by South **African** police against civilians since 1960. The incident garnered international attention when investigators revealed that the majority of the deceased were shot in the back. In the film, Modisakeng combines stark tones of black and white, representing coal and industry – worker and oppressor – suffocating in a smoky atmosphere, giving the film the appropriate gravitas for its foundation. Modisakeng's works reflect a desire for the unification of the peoples of post-colonial South Africa. The artist participated in the 56th Venice Biennale, and in 2016, was awarded the Standard Bank Young Artist Award, the foremost art award in Africa.

The photo essays of **Gordon Parks** are influencing the next generation of filmmakers as demonstrated by Kendrick Lamar's reference to the photographer's work in his latest music video, "ELEMENT". *Summertime* includes three of those works: *Untitled*, Alabama, 1956, *Boy With June Bug*, 1963, and *Ethel Sharieff*, Chicago, Illinois, 1963. In one of the video's scenes, several women wearing white robes are lined up in a triangle formation echoing Gordon Parks' portrait of Ethel Sharieff, daughter of the Nation of Islam



Left: Gordon Parks, *Ethel Sharieff*, Chicago, Illinois, 1963, gelatin silver print, 14x11". Courtesy of the Gordon Parks Foundation ©The Gordon Parks Foundation Right: Kendrick Lamar, Still from "ELEMENT", 2017

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Leader, Elijah Muhammad. In this way Lamar exposes Gordon Parks to a new generation while commenting on the long history of struggle endured by Muslims in the United States. Drawing a parallel with The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, Parks' works in *Summertime* explore the socio-economic and political disparities of people internationally on issues of racial equality, freedom of religion, open immigration, women's rights, and LGBTQIA+ equality. Coinciding with Fotografiemuseum's (FOAM) *I Am You. Selected Works 1942-1978* in Amsterdam, Netherlands, the dialogue is continued in San Francisco. Parks has an upcoming exhibition at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) opening September 27, titled *Gordon Parks: The Making of an Argument*, offering a comprehensive investigation into the photographer's first *Life* magazine photo-essay, "Harlem Gang Leader" (1948),



Lalla Essaydi, *Converging Territories* #24, 2004, 4 chromogenic prints mounted to aluminum with UV protective laminate, edition of 5, 20x24"

Moroccan-born, New York-based photographer **Lalla Essaydi** explores issues surrounding the role of women in Arab culture and their representation in the western European artistic tradition. Her large-scale photographs are based on nineteenth-century Orientalist paintings but work to subvert those stereotyped and sexualized representations. Essaydi's photographs depict the contemporary "culture of Islamic feminism." Essaydi has shown extensively worldwide, and her work is currently being exhibited in *Revival* at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C., and in the traveling exhibition, *I AM*, at St. Martin in the Fields on Trafalgar Square in London.

Ben Aronson is exhibiting two new paintings, *Lake Shore, Chicago*, and *Chicago River*, reflecting the artist's vivacious interpretation of urban landscapes. Aronson locates the geometric forms of large city structures amidst the interplay of cadmium yellows, cobalt blues, and vibrating earth tones, reminiscent of his work, *Sun and Clouds, Cap Ferrat*, in Southern France. Ben Aronson is a member of the highly acclaimed National Academy with work included in the permanent collections of many major museums across the world. Aronson will be exhibiting later this year at The University of New Hampshire Museum of Art.



Lissette Solórzano, *Iconos Revolución*, 2016, baryta archival pigment print, 60x45"

Today's images of refugee migration are mirrored in **Lissette Solórzano's** portrayal of Cuban movement within their country after the U.S. isolation of Cuba and during the Special Period (the 1990's Soviet Union departure from Cuba). Solórzano focuses her camera in on everyday life, operating so often in the space between the said and unsaid while relating her work back to the sea. Solórzano will be exhibiting in the upcoming Florence Biennale October 6 – 15, 2017. She has shown widely throughout South and Central America, as well as the United States and her work has been featured in Europe as well, and she regularly participates in the Havana Biennial.



Damali Abrams, *Untitled (Janelle Monáe Basquiat)*, 2016, mixed media collage on paper, 12x10 1/8"

Damali Abrams who recently finished a *Center for Arts, Design, and Social Research* residency in Italy will show mixed media collages on paper. **Abrams'** work is a fusion of mermaid mythology, pop-culture, and self-help in her playful collages analyzing black desire and aspirations in the face of socio-economic realities.

Self-taught Dutch photographer **Hendrik Kerstens**, drawing on the long history of the Old Masters, references Dutch painting and the consistency of north lighting to merge contemporary objects with past motifs. Kerstens uses a humorous aesthetic language to draw parallels between the past and present, equipping the viewer with the tools to examine the ways in which their modern reality might be considered antiquated in the future. Concurrent with *Summertime*, Kerstens' work is on display at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Caen, France, and Akron Art Museum, Ohio through September 10.

For more information on this exhibition please contact the gallery at 415.677.0770 or sf@jenkinsjohnsongallery.com
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