

# LhGWR

**'Somehow, somewhat in the middle of things'**

**Mary Sibande  
Newsha Tavakolian  
Larissa Sansour  
Waheeda Malullah  
Pinar & Viola  
Iris Vetter  
Julia Gunther**

**Opening Saturday 24th of March | 16:00 - 19:00 hrs.**

**Exhibition until the 10th of June**

Curated in collaboration with Hester Keijser (Empty Quarter Gallery, Dubai), LhGWR presents a group exhibition with a remarkable international line-up, pairing work from both a non-Western and a Western background. At the heart of the exhibit lie a shared search for identity and the struggle for a place within society, challenging the boundaries that politics or social conventions has set. Point of departure has been the work of Mary Sibande (ZA) and Julia Gunther (DE), who both bring the role of black women in South Africa into view. Based on association, the line-up for the exhibition expanded to seven artists from a generation that has grown up to navigate with ease in a world gone global, hybrid, fragmented, and open to re-appropriation.

## **LhGWR**

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**Read more on >>> <http://www.grotewittereus.nl/html/exposities/2012/somehow.html>**

## **More on the Artists**

### **Mary Sibande**

Mary Sibande (1982, ZA) is internationally known for her installations, sculptures and photographic works in which the role of South African black woman in a post-colonial era is taken under a microscope. In her work she investigates the social position and self-esteem of women and she dialogues on the ideal female image as is deluded by the media and the masses nowadays.

Sibande messes with history by placing women in moments in history where they never were. She appropriates battles and rearranges history by portraying herself in poses like classical equestrian statues and making this into grotesque installations. She dresses herself in extravagant Victorian masterpieces made of fabrics used for the distinctive clothing of female workers. By doing so the class difference suddenly disappears.

The work of Sibande became internationally known in 2010 during the World Cup Soccer in South Africa. Giant photos were posted in public space throughout Johannesburg. Tens of meters high works were placed in the city making her work known at a stroke. In 2011 her work was displayed during the first South-African presence on the Venice Biennale.

### **Newsha Tavakolian**

Self-taught photographer, Newsha Tavakolian (1981, IR) began working as professional photographer in Iranian press at the age of sixteen. She started at the women's daily newspaper Zan, and later worked for other nine reformist dailies, all since banned. At twenty-one she began working internationally, covering wars, natural disasters and social documentary stories in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Yemen.

International magazines and newspapers such as in Time Magazine, Newsweek, Stern, Le Figaro, Colors, New York Times Magazine, Der Spiegel, Le Monde, NRC Handelsblad and National Geographic have published her works. Tavakolian is particularly known for focusing on women's issues. Her current works section between documentary photography and art.

### **Larissa Sansour**

Born in Jerusalem, Larissa Sansour (1973) studied Fine Art in Copenhagen, London and New York. Her work is interdisciplinary, immersed in the current political dialogue and utilises video art, photography, experimental documentary, the book form and the Internet. Sansour borrows heavily from the language of film and pop culture. By approximating the nature, reality and complexity of life in Palestine and the Middle East to visual forms normally associated with entertainment and televised pastime, her grandiose and often humorous schemes clash with the gravity expected from works commenting on the region. References and details ranging from sci-fi and spaghetti westerns to horror films converge with Middle East politics and social issues to create intricate parallel universes in which a new value system can be decoded.

Sansour's work features in galleries, museums, film festivals and art publications worldwide. Recent solo shows include exhibitions at Kulturhuset in Stockholm, Galerie La B.A.N.K in Paris, DEPO in Istanbul and Jack the Pelican in New York. She has participated in the biennials in Istanbul, Busan and Liverpool. Her work has appeared at the Third Guangzhou Triennial in China, LOOP in Seoul, South Korea, Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris and PhotoCairo4 in Egypt. Among the exhibitions of 2011 are LIVING at Louisiana Museum of Contemporary Art in Denmark and the Incheon Women Artists' Biennial in South Korea.

### **Waheeda Malullah**

In her videos, photographs, installations and performances artist and graphic designer Waheeda Malullah (1978, BH) explores the roles women play within Islamic society. She focuses on the ways they deal with the mechanisms and regulations that govern their womanhood. Malullah's imagery is minimalist and poetic mixed with play and humor. Her most recent work concern short stories that are told in an image sequences. Despite the stories are recorded in a single event they call upon major discussions.

Malullah participated in the Sharjah Biennale, exhibited in Bahrain and abroad and was artist in residence in London and Cairo. In 2009 she won a Golden Pyramid Prize during the first edition of The International Media Art Forum for Youth held in the Cairo Opera House. Currently she works as a graphic designer at the University of Bahrain.

### **Pinar & Viola**

Pinar Demirdag (TR/CA) and Viola Renate (NL) form an independent designer studio, Pinar & Viola, that features itself as Ecstatic Surface Designers. They create hyper detailed prints that stem from a self-imposed scan and print working methodology. They scan the contemporary visual culture and process it into ecstatic prints. This results in digital collages filled to the brim; mash-ups of colossal gestures, hyper intricate details and lavish decorations. By transposing, fusing and altering its elements they undermine conventional compositions and advocate a new radical form of graphic design.

Every year, the duo presents a new Ecstatic Surface Collection, similar to the haute couture in fashion, but for graphic design. In LhGWR they present the collection in 2012.

### **Iris Vetter**

In 2010 Iris Vetter (1976, NL) spent four months in Johannesburg and Soweto as artist in residence made possible by Fonds BKVB. Vetter made several photo series about daily life in South Africa and focused in particular on the struggle of the social underclass in order to survive in this harsh society.

She made an intriguing portrait of women who fled from domestic violence to a shelter. Boxed in small rooms they try to rebuild their lives. Vetter also made a series in which the fighting spirit is revealed literally; The Hillbrow Boxers, about boxing gym in Johannesburg. In the exhibition two portraits of a former boxing champion of South Africa are presented.

### **Julia Gunther**

In LhGWR's project space Julia Gunther (1979, Berlin) presents a documentary series made in Cape Town, South Africa in 2011. It's a portrait of Ruth Jones, resident of Manenberg, one of Capetown's most notorious areas, where drug trafficking and gang-related crime are business as usual. Every Sunday the unbearable past and harsh reality fall from her shoulders when she dedicates herself to the church's marching band.