

26 MARCH - 8 MAY 2010

OTOBONG NKANGA: "NO TODAY BE THE STORY O!"

Born in 1974 in Kano, Nigeria, Otobong Nkanga began her art studies at the Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, and later continued in Paris at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts. She has been an artist-in-residence at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam. Recent shows include: Animism, Extra City Kunsthal and M HKA Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerpen, Belgium (2010). Diagonal Views, Nieuwe Vide, Haarlem, The Netherlands, (2009). Re/presentaciones: ellas, Casa Africa, Las Palmas Gran Canaria (2008), Flow, Studio Museum Harlem, New York [2008]. Africa remix, Toured Paris, Düsseldorf, Tokyo, Johannesburg and Stockholm; Snap judgments: New Positions in African Contemporary Photography; and over the course of the last six years, she participated in the Sharjah, Taipei, Dakar, São Paulo and Havana Biennales.

Nkanga works with many different media including installations, photography, drawing, sculpture and performance. For this show, she displays a multi-layered translation of personal experience and memory into a narrative series of drawings and photographs. She is fascinated by the everyday influences on our environment and it's constantly changing nature. In her work, she often reflects on the mechanisms and underlying structures of how our everyday lives function, as well as the act of labour required for everyday production. Included in the show at Lumen Travo are photographic works from the series called, "*Dolphin Estate*" (2008). She also shows drawings, from the series "*Filtered Memories, 1977-1981*" (2009) and "*Filtered Memories, 1987-1996*" (2009) and "*Social Consequences I, II*" (2009 - 2010).

"*Dolphin Estate*" documents the first pre-fabricated housing units built in the 1990's in Lagos. Nkanga then lived in Lagos and could remember seeing the new construction being put up at a very fast pace. These photographs, taken in 2008, show the results and conditions of a long lost dream. Dolphin Estate has gradually fallen into a state of disrepair leaving the residents to take care for their daily needs such as water, electricity and deal with flooding problems. These kinds of housing complexes, which are sometimes given neo-American suburbia titles, are often not adequately equipped with the facilities they promise, and therefore the necessity emerges to build extensions and additional structures for survival. The mechanisms and devices gradually added to the existing architecture exposes multiples stories of a daily reality.

"*Filtered Memories*" are a series of drawings based on selected memories of the artist. Nkanga filters and selects moments in her childhood and teenage years that had a certain impact on her life. These memories refer to the loss of innocence, home, security and of loved ones. The titles and time frame of the drawings are of important significance. Experiences and memory are frozen in time, giving a glimpse into the artist's personal experiences, both in her homeland and Europe.

"*Social Consequences I, II*" are a series of drawings, which can be seen in relation to the "*Filtered Memories*" series; they reveal concepts behind ideas of labour, domesticity, home, belonging and possession. These drawings have a surreal, yet diagrammatic feeling, clearly illustrating "cause and effect" scenarios, using everyday symbolic objects. As part of the show, Nkanga has made a new installation piece, inspired by one of her drawings. This installation is based on "*Social Consequences: Limits of Mapping*", and is installed within the three dimensional space of the gallery.