



**KUNSTMUSEUM
WOLFSBURG**

UPCOMING EXHIBITION

PIETER HUGO PHOTOGRAPHS February 19–July 23, 2017

Press preview Thursday, February 16, 2017, 11:15 a.m.
Opening Saturday, February 18, 2017, 7 p.m.

The first institutional solo exhibition of the South African photo artist Pieter Hugo in Germany

What divides us and what unites us? How do people of all colors live with the shadows of cultural repression or political dominance? The South African photographer Pieter Hugo (* 1976 in Johannesburg) explores these questions in his portraits, still lifes, and landscapes.

After solo exhibitions at the Hague Museum of Photography, the Musée de l'Elysée Lausanne, Műpa Budapest, and the Fondation Henri-Cartier-Bresson Paris, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg will be the first museum in Germany to present an comprehensive overview the series with which Pieter Hugo achieved recognition, for example "Looking aside," "KIN," "The Hyena & Other Men," "Permanent Error," "There's A Place in Hell For Me and My Friends," and "Nollywood" as well as his recent "1994" and "Peking" projects.

Raised in post-colonial South Africa, where he witnessed the official end of Apartheid in 1994, Hugo has a keen sense for social dissonances. He perceptively makes his way through all social classes with his camera, and not only in his native country but also in places like Ruanda, Nigeria, Ghana, and China. How do people of all age groups and from the most diverse origins deal with their historical baggage and living conditions? Pieter Hugo's photographs record the visible and hidden traces and scars of lived biographies and experienced national history. He is particularly interested in societal subcultures, the gulf between the ideal and reality. His pictures feature the homeless; Albinos; AIDS sufferers; men who tame hyenas, snakes, and monkeys; people who gather electrical scrap metal in apocalyptic scenarios; costumed Nollywood actors striking poses, in addition to his own family and friends.

His photographs are non-hierarchical; everyone is treated with the same amount of respect. More artist than anthropologist or documentarian, Hugo captures the "moment of voluntary vulnerability" with a pronouncedly detached, but at the same time also empathetic, concise visual language, creating in this way true to life portraits of powerful directness. In many cases, this humanity stands in sharp contrast to the hardships of the social reality engulfing the subjects of his pictures. Entirely in this sense, Pieter Hugo's photographic still lifes and landscapes occasionally seem like social commentaries or metaphors, complementing his socio-cultural portraits.

Exhibition curator: Dr. Uta Ruhkamp

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