

Press Release

M.I.A Gallery is very pleased to present Renegades, a solo show dedicated to the young emerging South African photographer, Frank Marshall. The exhibition will be running from September 5th until October 2nd, 2013 with an opening reception on September 5th, 6-8 pm. Do musical genres have borders, colors or ethnicities? Can music as an art form transcend continents away from where it originated?

Heavy Metal, with its massive sound, distorted guitars, extremely fast rhythms and riffs that sound like anthems, has galvanized generations of fans in western countries since its birth in the 60s and 70s in the UK. Today, Heavy Metal is a resilient subculture that is present virtually everywhere with its code, lifestyle, fashion, and absolute devotion and loyalty to the music.

Through a dozen of photographs, Renegades takes us on a journey to Botswana, in Gaborone, its capital, where a growing community of Heavy-Metal fans have triggered a significant interest and present an very untraditional face of Africa. Fascinated by the interpretation of Batswana Metal heads and counterculture movement, Frank Marshall decided in 2008 to document the lifestyle of this brotherhood through a series of portraits featured during the exhibition.

Formed in the early 90's the first Batswana band, Metal Orizon, has contributed locally to the growing popularity of the heavy-metal genre. Their influences originate from an assortment of different subcultures: cowboys, bikers, heavy metal and African mythology. As much as the dress code plays an important role in their interpretation of Heavy Metal, the performance contributes to the persona. Renegades is a sociological case study of an underground minority rebelling against the status quo, redrawing the borders of both Heavy Metal and orthodox culture in Botswana.

Their tight-knit style suggests the revival of cowboys with a futuristic twist through the use of fashion, metal and leather. The power exhibited through the clothing and the posing speaks to their anti-conformist beliefs and the claim for power, independence and freedom.

Born in 1985 and resident in South Africa, Marshall holds a B-Tech degree in Photography from the Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria (2010). Marshall was chosen as one of the Top Ten finalists of the Sony World Photography Organization Student competition (sole contestant from Africa).