



SERGIO LUCENA & THENJIWE NIKI NKOSI
COMMON PLACE
JUL 19 - SEP 02, 2018

Mariane Ibrahim Gallery is delighted to present Common Place, a two-artist exhibition featuring new works by Brazilian painter Sergio Lucena and South African pluridisciplinary artist Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi. The show will be running from July 19 until Sept. 02, with an opening reception on Thursday, July 19 from 6-8 pm.

It starts with a gaze of an inescapable faith: solitude. The artist succumbs to the emptiness of the matter despite a perpetual struggle to fill a void. The image as a language questions the cognitive properties of representations whether it depicts an abstract or figurative form. Common Place translates an intercepted vision of an unspeakable truth.

The divergence surfaces in the perception that abstraction is assertive and figurations narrative. And yet, the experience of juxtaposing the practices of the two artists emanates a subjective language, the reverence of a common place where individuals correlate. An inner place confined in an infinite and intimate space. The perpetual search of plenitude replaces an experimented reality that both artists denounce or reject.

Common Place examines the rapport between individual and collective manifestations.

In the work of South African artist, Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi, the questions of collective freedom are constructed through the sacrifice of private lives for the common good.

The “Heroes” series, an ongoing inquiry into the subjective nature of the idea of a “hero”, creates a diverse, personal ‘pantheon’ that includes members of her family, nameless faces from marginalized histories, as well as famous figures not commonly viewed as heroes, she provokes viewers into reevaluating their relationship with iconic figures and the ideologies they prop up. Facing outward the Hero is connected to universal values and the betterment of individuals. The Hero recalls the desire to make some gesture towards expanding our very myopic historical narratives. ‘I wanted to complicate the idea of what a hero is, and I started thinking of people who would subvert the prevailing idea — a very patriarchal, revisionist, exclusive ideal of “the hero” — and allow for a more inclusive definition, one that would point to the complexities of what it means to be a person’ states Nkosi.

That introspective search is inherent in Lucena’s quasi-monochromatic paintings, and he believed the portraits of Nkosi are facing his inner world “as a way to find significance to deal with the reality.” Similarly, the South African artist takes these characters out of time and place and set them side by side in a timeless, contextless realm. The flat, single-color background is one of the ways (among several) that she aspires to achieve this flattening of time and space. According to Sergio Lucena, the opposition in the forms reveals a dynamic synergy. A painting which is dealing with the notion of heroism invokes an attempted reach to the Anima, a collective soul known as the World Soul. In his abstract art, Lucena offers possibilities of a cosmic reunion and entry to a parallel world. One could imagine that the protagonist figured in Nkosi’s paintings seem to stare at Lucena’s abstract landscapes as the mirror of their consciousness.

Sergio Lucena is a Brazilian artist living and working in São Paulo. Artist Flávio Tavares gave his first informal introduction to painting and drawing. In the course of his career as a self-taught artist, he participated in workshops, cultural exchanges and artistic residencies in Germany, USA, and Denmark. His most recent solo exhibitions include *É como o vento* (Like the wind, 2016), Mezanino Gallery, São Paulo; *ÆNIGMA* (2015), Mariane Ibrahim Gallery, Seattle; *Horizonte Comum* (Common Horizon, 2014), Usina Cultural Energisa, João Pessoa; *O Mar de Sergio Lucena* (The Sea of Sergio Lucena, 2011), Centro Cultural Correios, Salvador and Rio de Janeiro. He has works featured in several collections, including: Museu Nacional da República, Brasília; Pinacoteca do Estado de Pernambuco, Recife; Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Sorocaba; Museu de Arte Moderna de Florianópolis; Toyota Bank Collection; HCOR Collection, São Paulo; Brazilian American Cultural Institute, Washington DC. In 2012, he was awarded the Mário Pedrosa Prize for Contemporary Artist by the Brazilian Association of Art Critics (ABCA).

Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi was born in New York and has lived in Harare and Johannesburg on and off since the early 1990s. She is a painter, video artist and filmmaker who divides her time between studio work and navigating the field of art as social practice. Her work investigates power and its structures – political, social, architectural. Implicit in her examination of these structures is an interrogation of the invisible forces that create them, and an imagining of alternatives. Her paintings and films have been shown at the Standard Bank Gallery in Johannesburg, the Ifa Gallery in Berlin, the South London Gallery and Tate Modern in London, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Rio de Janeiro and most recently at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris. Nkosi obtained her BA from Harvard University and her MFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York. She lives and works in Johannesburg.