



# LOOP BARCELONA

Online

17.11.20 - 26.11.20

smac

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Lhola Amira was born in 1984 in Gugulethu, South Africa, and currently lives and works in Cape Town. Amira's practice includes 'Appearance', photography, video and sculpture presented as what THEY term 'Constellations'. Amira has been awarded a number of residencies, namely the AiRS (Artist in Residence Skövde Art Museum) residency in Skövde, Sweden in 2017; the Jiwari Creation and Society residency in Barcelona, Spain in 2015; and at Vasl Artists' Collective in Islamabad, Pakistan in 2010.

In 2020, Amira was included in *NIRIN*, the 22nd Sydney Biennale curated by Brook Andrews, at Cockatoo Island in Sydney, Australia and presented *Three Films*, a solo constellation at SMAC Gallery in Stellenbosch, South Africa. Group exhibitions in 2020 include: SMAC Gallery's group presentation at the 2020 Investec Cape Town Art Fair at the Cape Town International Convention Centre in Cape Town, South Africa, and *A Show of Solidarity* at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town, South Africa.

In 2019 Amira notably presented *DITAOLA: DIVINING BONES*, curated by Mariella Franzoni as part of the Barcelona LOOP Festival City Screen Program at L&B Gallery in Barcelona, Spain, *Abalozi Bayeza / Os Deuses Estão Chegando*, at SMAC Gallery in Johannesburg, South Africa followed by *BAYEZA naMAYEZA / De Kommer Med Medicin* at the Skövde Konsthall & Konstmeséum in Skövde, Sweden. THEY have presented screenings and talks at various occasions including: the Goethe Institut in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, and the Göteborg Film Festival, both in 2018 and *Part of the Labyrinth* – art and history writing at the Gothenburg City Library in Gothenburg, Sweden in 2019.

Notable group exhibitions include: *KUBATANA*, at Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium in Vestfossen, Norway; *Present Passing* at OSAGE Gallery in Hong Kong, China;

*Wall Eyes*, curated by Ilaria Bernadi, at Keyes Art Mile in Johannesburg, South Africa and Ngoma, at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) in 2019; *The Powers of Emotions Symposium* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, France; the 33rd São Paulo Biennial, *Affective Affinities*, curated by Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro and *Forward? Forward! Forward ...* at the Stellenbosch University Museum in Stellenbosch, South Africa, all in 2018; *African Voices: Confronting Frontiers of Reality* at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Harare, Zimbabwe and *29°06'S 26°13'E*, [Appearance] as part of Museum Night, curated by Jay Pather, at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCAA) in Cape Town, South Africa, both in 2017.

Further selected Constellations and Appearances include: *SINKING: Xa Sinqamla Unxubo* at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town in 2018; *LAGOM: Breaking Bread with The Self-Righteous* at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town and *Looking for Ghana & The Red Suitcase* at SMAC Gallery in Stellenbosch, both in 2017. While filming for *Looking for Ghana & The Red Suitcase* in 2016, Amira made Appearances at Studio Accra, as well as Brazil House in Jamestown, Ghana. Amira's work has also been included in art fair presentations at Artissima, the Investec Cape Town Art Fair (including a solo booth at the 2018 SOLO section, curated by Nontobeko Ntombela), LOOP Barcelona, and the FNB Joburg Art Fair.

Selected collections include The Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA), Cape Town, South Africa; Skövde Konsthall, Skövde Sweden; the Tiroche DeLeon Collection, Gibraltar; and the Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.



## PRACTICE DESCRIPTION

As an interdisciplinary artist from South Africa, Lhola Amira adopts the use of photography, video and sculpture, while defining THEIR practice as 'Appearance' – a term that draws from African Nguni spiritualism. As part of THEIR work as a black, queer artist, Lhola Amira conceives THEIR existence in plural – that is, plural existences in one body - which is reflected in the use of identification terms in capital letter (THEY, THEM, YOU, YOUR, US, WE). Lhola Amira's 'Appearances' are gestural forms that draw from ancestral spirituality, as well as in walks and drives through urban or rural landscapes. Lhola Amira's appearances have taken place across South Africa, Ghana, Sweden and Brazil amongst others.

Lhola Amira's ongoing journey through different sites, events and traumas of European colonialism and slavery trade, has both spiritual and political character. In DITAOLA, this journey is presented as a mystic and collective healing gesture and a strategy of emancipative subjection at the same time.

- Text by Mariella Franzoni



## PRACTICE DESCRIPTION

Central to Lhola Amira's practice are gestures toward collective healing, emanating from an examination of the wound left by colonisation and systematic discrimination, as well as its continued weeping. She addresses the demand from the present to engage with the past and the future.

With Black history in mind, Lhola Amira subverts the gaze on Black Bodies; the gaze to the "stage" the pedestal and the spectacle of performance by calling her practice 'Appearance'. The embodiment of 'Appearance' draws from southern African Nguni spiritualism, that denotes plural existences in one body - Lhola Amira shares a body with Khanyisile Mbongwa - as well as an understanding of the Zulu notion of Ukuvela which contextualises an individuals' existence in relation to collective historical and future narratives. Confronting the historical and contemporary precarity of Blackness, 'Appearance' acts as de-colonial practice moving from Black Bodies that perform to Black Bodies that 'Appear' on their own terms. In this sense, a Black Body that 'Appears' is imbued with POWER - the power to be, to protest, to imagine, to dream, to subvert, to laugh, to drink wine, to self actualise.

Lhola Amira's work translates into film, photography and installation. A residue of her 'Appearances' are the arresting images and films that reiterate her engagements with past and contemporary history. Lhola Amira problematizes the spectacle-spectator relationship as there is no pre-conceived show to see, no script, or stage direction - instead there is purposeful embodied 'presence' and the gestural. These gestures, within de-colonial practice, position 'Appearance' in accordance to critical subaltern agency and the contestation of cultural value systems which have been monopolised by colonial hierarchies.

**IRMANDADE:  
The Shape of Water in Pindorama**

2018-2020

Video HD, Single Channel Sound

Amira journey's to Bahia in Brazil to trace the slave routes in the woundedness of the water and of the land. Visiting sites/places of spiritual and cultural significance, Amira continues to peel the wounds left by colonisation in disparate context - while instigating spaces for healing to happen.





**Lhola Amira**  
*IRMANDADE: The Shape of Water in Pindorama*  
(Film Still)  
2018 - 2020  
Video HD, Single Channel Sound  
00:16:13  
ED 1/3 + 1AP



**Lhola Amira**  
*IRMANDADE: The Shape of Water in Pindorama*  
(Film Still)  
2018 - 2020  
Video HD, Single Channel Sound  
00:16:13  
ED 1/3 + 1AP



**Lhola Amira**  
*IRMANDADE: The Shape of Water in Pindorama*  
(Film Stills)  
2018 - 2020  
Video HD, Single Channel Sound  
00:16:13  
ED 1/3 + 1AP



**Lhola Amira**  
*IRMANDADE: The Shape of Water in Pindorama*  
(Film Still)  
2018 - 2020  
Video HD, Single Channel Sound  
00:16:13  
ED 1/3 + 1AP



**Lhola Amira**  
*IRMANDADE: The Shape of Water in Pindorama*  
(Film Still)  
2018 - 2020  
Video HD, Single Channel Sound  
00:16:13  
ED 1/3 + 1AP

## Abalozi Bayeza / Os Deuses Estão Chegando

2019

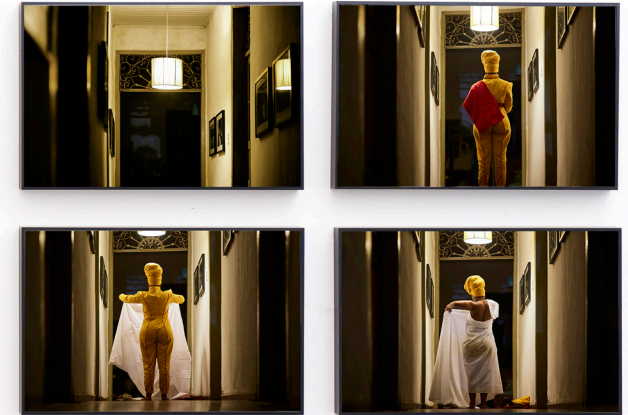
Body of Photographic Narratives

*Abalozi Bayeza / Os Deuses Estão Chegando*, a constellation of works by Lhola Amira. This body of work is born from a series of Appearances by Lhola Amira in Bahia and surrounding Brazil, over a period of weeks in late 2018. Translating from Zulu and Portuguese as "The Gods Are Coming" and comprising of new installations and photographic narratives *Abalozi Bayeza / Os Deuses Estão Chegando* presents an introduction to Amira's ongoing engagement with Brazil.





**Lhola Amira**  
*Amigos em Pindorama / Abahlobo ePindorama*  
2019  
Epson Hot Press Natural Giclée Mounted Diasec  
110 x 165 cm with Variable Narrative  
Ed 2/3 + 2 AP



**Lhola Amira**

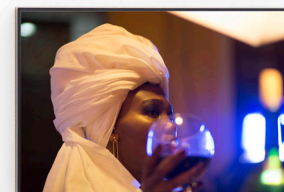
*Calling for Oya / Ligando para Oya*

2019

Giclée Print on Hahnemühle PhotoRag Baryta Diasec Mount

110 x 165 cm with Variable Narrative

Ed 2/3 + 2 AP



**Lhola Amira**

*Siyeza / Nós Estamos Vindo I - IV*

2020

Giclée Print on Hahnemühle PhotoRag Baryta, Diasec Mount

110 x 165 cm with Variable Narrative

Ed 1/3 + 2 AP

# LHOLA AMIRA

CURRICULUM VITAE

smac

## BIOGRAPHY

Born 1984, Gugulethu, South Africa.  
Lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa.

## AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

- 2018** Artist in Residence, Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado (FAAP), Sao Paolo, Brazil.
- 2017** Artist in Residence, AiRS (Skövde Art Museum), Skövde, Sweden.
- 2015** Artist in Residence, Jivar Creation and Society, Barcelona, Spain.
- 2011** Artist in Residence, Vasil Artists' Collective, Islamabad, Pakistan.
- 2010** Artist in Residence, Theertha Red Dot Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

## CONSTELLATIONS & APPEARANCES

- 2020** LOOP Barcelona (SMAC Gallery), Digital Edition.  
*Three Films*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- 2019** *DITAOLA: DIVINING BONES*, curated by Mariella Franzoni, as part of the Barcelona LOOP Festival City Screen Program, L&B Gallery, Barcelona, Spain.  
*BAYEZA naMAYEZA / De Kommer Med Medicin*, Skövde Konsthall & Konstmuseum, Skövde, Sweden.  
*Abalozi Bayeza / Os Deuses Estão Chegando*, SMAC Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 2018** *WhatATimeToBeBlackWomxQueer*, Goethe Institut, Salvador de Bahia, Brazil.  
*The powers of emotions*, [Appearance] Centre Pompidou, Paris, France.  
*SINKING: Xa Sinqamla Unxubo*, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.  
*SINKING: Xa Sinqamla Unxubo*, as part of Investec Cape Town Art Fair's SOLO Project, curated by Nontobeko Ntombela, Investec Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2017** *LAGOM: Breaking Bread with The Self-Righteous*, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.  
*Looking for Ghana & The Red Suitcase*, LOOP Fair, (SMAC Gallery), Barcelona, Spain.  
*29°06'S 26°13'E*, [Appearance], Vroumonument, Hoffmanplein & Soetdoring, Bloemfontein, South Africa.  
*Looking for Ghana & The Red Suitcase*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- 2016** *Looking for Ghana in Accra*, [Appearance], Studio Accra, Accra, Ghana.  
*Looking for Ghana in Jamestown*, [Appearance], Brazil House, Jamestown, Ghana.  
*Lhola Amira Will Make You Cry*, [Appearance], Association for Visual Arts (AVA) Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

- 2015** *De/Colonial Love*, [Appearance], Mitte, Barcelona, Spain.
- 2014** *Lhola Amira is Here*, [Appearance], Greatmore Studios, Cape Town, South Africa.  
*Lhola Amira, Her & Him*, [Appearance], Greatmore Studios, Cape Town, South Africa.  
*Lhola Amira neZambatho ezoMoya*, [Installation], 6ix Studio, New York City, USA.

## GROUP PRESENTATIONS & APPEARANCES

- 2020** *Raupenimmersattism. The Affluent Society As Consumed Society Or The Myth Of Endless Production and Consumption"* @SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, Germany.  
*That hidden thread*, curated by Marta Moriarty, Nirox Sculpture Park, Cradle of Humankind, Krugersdorp, South Africa.  
*NIRIN*, 22nd Biennale of Sydney, Cockatoo Island, Sydney, Australia.  
*A Show of Solidarity*, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.  
Investec Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2019** *That Was Then*, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.  
*Ngoma*, curated by Khwezi Gule, Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), Johannesburg, South Africa.  
*Wall Eyes - Looking at Italy and Africa*, curated by Ilaria Bernardi in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute, Keyes Art Miles, Johannesburg, South Africa.  
FNB Art Joburg (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.  
*Part of the Labyrinth – art and history writing* [Panel discussion & Screening], Gothenburg City Library, Gothenburg, Sweden.  
*I AM...*, North-West University (NWU) Gallery, Potchefstroom, South Africa.  
*KUBATANA*, curated by Kristin Hjellegjerde, Vestfossen Kunstillaboratorium, Vestfossen, Norway.  
*Present Passing*, curated by Natasha Becker & Patrick Flores, Osage Gallery, Hong Kong, China.  
Investec Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.  
*Home Affairs*, as part of Cape Town Art Week, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2018** *Wish You Were Here*, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.  
*Forward? Forward ! Forward ...*, Stellenbosch University Museum, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

*Affective Affinities*, curated by Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, 33rd São Paulo Biennial, São Paulo, Brazil.

*What is South Africa, even?*, WORLDART Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

FNB Joburg Art Fair, (SMAC Gallery) Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

*Göteborg Film Festival- LAGOM: Breaking Bread with The Self-Righteous*, [screening], Gothenburg, Sweden.

**2017** ARTISSIMA, (SMAC Gallery), OVAL Lingotto Fiere, Turin, Italy.

29°06'S 26°13'E, [Appearance], Museum Night, curated by Jay Pather, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCAA), Cape Town, South Africa.

FNB Joburg Art Fair, (SMAC Gallery) Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

*African Voices: Confronting Frontiers of Reality*, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Chale Wote Festival, *Looking for Ghana & The Red Suitcase*, [Screening], Accra, Ghana.

Cape Town Art Fair, (SMAC Gallery) Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.

**2016** *Lhola Amira in Conversation with Rinamanyanga Hariputirwe*, [Appearance] at Instruments of Memory a solo exhibition by Masimba Hwati, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

*As Long as the World is Anti-Black; Of-course This is Personal*, [Appearance], *Nothing Personal*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

**2014** *DETAILS*, [Appearance], 6ix Studio, New York City, USA.

**2010** *Category Error 2*, [Appearance] at Association for Visual Arts (AVA) Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

**2009** *Subvision Kunst*, [Appearance], Off Festival, Hamburg, Germany.

## SELECTED PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Geselev, V. 2017. *Decolonising Africa - in high heels* [online]. Available at: <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/life/2017-05-12-decolonising-africa--in-high-heels/>. [Accessed 12.05.2017].

Kabali, F. 2018. *SS Mendi ritual breaks new ground*. *Mail & Guardian* [online]. Available at: [https://mg.co.za/ARTICLE/2018-01-19-00-SS-MENDI-RITUAL-BREAKS-NEW-GROUND/#COMMENT\\_THREAD/](https://mg.co.za/ARTICLE/2018-01-19-00-SS-MENDI-RITUAL-BREAKS-NEW-GROUND/#COMMENT_THREAD/). [Accessed 19.01.2018].

## COLLECTIONS

Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA), Cape Town, South Africa.

Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

Tiroche Deleon Collection, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Robert Devereux Collection, London, UK.

Skövde Art Museum, Skövde, Sweden.

Ekard Foundation, Wassenaar, Netherlands.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact SMAC Gallery for more information or any other queries.

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