

SIMPHIWE MBUNYUZA

ISIBAYA

On View June 10 – July 25, 2021 | 100 South Spring Street, Aspen, CO

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new ceramic works by South African, Oklahoma-based artist Simphiwe Mbunyuza, *ISIBAYA*. The exhibition will be on view on the first floor of the gallery's Aspen location from June 10 – July 25, 2021. The title of the show, *ISIBAYA*, denotes in Xhosa an enclosure for cattle and other domestic animals in the villages of native peoples in South Africa. In this exhibition, Mbunyuza reflects on the importance of heritage and social bonds, as this enclosed space within a village is used in rituals as a church to connect with the people's ancestors. In addition to his exhibition at the gallery, Mbunyuza will be a visiting artist at Anderson Ranch Arts Center from May 31 – June 12, 2021. The program is an opportunity that affords artists the time and space to complete projects within their area of expertise and to explore new work.

Simphiwe Mbunyuza's sculpture explores relationships and interactions within African cultural symbolism and cultural day to day objects used by African groups, particularly Xhosa people. These objects are the subject of functional and non-functional ceramic and sculptural pots. The drama carried by the pots entails and details the African culture of Bantu speaking people, in relation to other African cultural groups. Mbunyuza grew up in South Africa, Eastern Cape Province, Butterworth in the village called Mambendeni, an area surrounded by various villages of Xhosa speaking people. Today, these villages are no longer exclusively occupied by Xhosa speaking people but by a number of different African cultural groups.

Mbunyuza's masterful practice of richly textured ceramics brings together a diverse array of materials, including stoneware, leather, fabric, and steel. In the creation of his ceramics, the artist pays particular attention to the surfaces of his sculptural works, incorporating bold areas of color and graphic two- and three-dimensional patterns and designs on his distinctive forms. Working with clay as his primary medium, Mbunyuza adapts practices and techniques that are of personal significance to the artist's background, such as the use of a coiling technique in his ceramics that was employed by the Xhosa people for centuries to make pots. In *ISIBAYA*, Mbunyuza's work portrays the values and importance of cultural elements from these groups, drawing from both present and historical influences as a method of sharing the artist's heritage through a unique, contemporary lens.

About Simphiwe Mbunyuza

Simphiwe Mbunyuza (b. 1989) was born in Butterworth, Eastern Cape, South Africa, and lives and works in Norman, OK. Mbunyuza has been the subject of exhibitions in the United States and internationally, including recent presentations with Dyman Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa; South Willard, Los Angeles, CA; and Gallery 1957, London and Accra, Ghana; and is the recipient of awards and residencies including the Red Clay Faction Award and Oscar Jacobson Award from The University of Oklahoma, Fred Jones Museum, Norman, OK in 2019, and a residency with A.I.R Vallauris, France, in 2017.

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MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

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About Marianne Boesky Gallery

Since its inception in 1996, Marianne Boesky Gallery has represented and supported the work of emerging and established contemporary international artists of all media. In its first decade, the gallery was instrumental in launching the careers of major artists through an innovative exhibition program; and in 2016, the gallery expanded its flagship location to its adjacent space on West 24th Street. Now, the gallery continues to actively represent many significant artists such as Ghada Amer, Donald Moffett, Sanford Biggers and Frank Stella, among others.

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For more information about Simphiwe Mbunyuza, please contact Gallery Director Kelly Woods at kelly@boeskygallery.com or 212-680-9889. For press inquiries, please contact Thomas Dewey Davis, THIRD EYE, at thomas@hellothirdeye.com.

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