

'Heaven Is Not Closed'



The Leeuwenhof Slave Quarters Remembrance Gallery 3rd Iteration:
Jody Brand / Queezy Babaz / Sitaara Stodel

Leeuwenhof Slave Quarters Remembrance Gallery - 03/12/22 - 26/02/23

Catalogue



Detail of (Clockwise)

Sitaara Stodel - "Jumble"
Jody Brand - "Once There Was, Once There Was Not"
Queezy Babaz - "Ancestor 3"

‘Heaven Is Not Closed’

In the heart of Cape Town, a city where the traumas of the past remain ever-present, lies the Remembrance Gallery. Upon discovering that it had once been the quarters of previously enslaved people on the Leeuwenhof estate this space has been re-imagined and returned to the public as a site to reflect on our shared history through art.

Over the next three months, artist & photographer Jody Brand will bring her work and practice of care through the radical occupation of space into the grounds of Leeuwenhof. “Think of it as an offering,” says Jody Brand as she hangs strings of dried sour figs above a delicate bed made of burglar bars, “we must acknowledge and understand our past in order to shape our own futures”.

By reconnecting to her family’s origins, Brand’s practice is one of healing in action, exploring a politics of care. She describes the prudent use of seasonal fruits and vegetables in making preserves, foraging for figs and kumquats, and stitching together lace fragments as remedies latent in our inherited traditions.

Centring the personal as political Brand condenses the weight of tragedy into the sensory experience as a means for “introspection” and deeper connection. Heaven is not closed is more than a passive gesture of commemoration, instead, these works are an active resistance to the threat of erasure, unveiling the mark of the past on our present and opening a pathway to healing.

Additionally, Brand has selected two of her contemporaries, Sitaara Stodel and Queezy Babaz to showcase their work in the Bo-Tuyn Huys. Stodel and Queezy’s works expand on the exhibition theme of memory.

From an early age, Queezy was aware of the transformative nature of colour. They recall a memory of their mother, transforming the living room by painting it pink and enlivening the domestic space. Exploring these and other deeply personal and often domestic memories led to the creation of “The Ancestors”. “The Ancestors” are a series of mobiles representing the ancestors’ presence within a space. The bright metallic mobiles inhabit all aspects of the space, twisting and glinting under the vines, hovering in the entrance hall and framing the living room fireplace; each mobile is an acknowledgement of the spirits of the ancestors embedded within the rooms.

During childhood, with the threat of eviction hanging heavy over her family, Sitaara Stodel recalls having moved over 40 times. With images of other people’s families found in antique stores and markets, Stodel curates her childhood memories into found image collages. Tearing up found images of interiors, pets and prized possessions, Stodel crafts domestic scenes in an attempt to remake her scattered memories of home.

While deliberate voids in the composition and occasionally torn edges hint at the pain of constant movement, an air of wistfulness also pervades some of the artist’s works. In some compositions, we catch glimpses of the artist’s ideal home, fresh flowers and framed artworks, a house by the sea and shiny cars, hinting at a domestic daydream clouded with nostalgia.

Text written by Sam Wroth Rietmann, curator & Jody Brand, artist.



Sitaara Stodel

'Autumn Does Its Dance'

2021

31.5 x 26.5cm

Found photographs and Riso print on screen-printed
archival mounting board.

R4200



Sitaara Stodel
'Jumble'
2021
32 x 32cm
Found photographs on linen.
R6200



Sitaara Stodel

'Lots of Dark Corners'

2021

31.5 x 31.5cm

Found photographs and gold vinyl on screen-printed
archival mounting board.

R4500



Sitaara Stodel

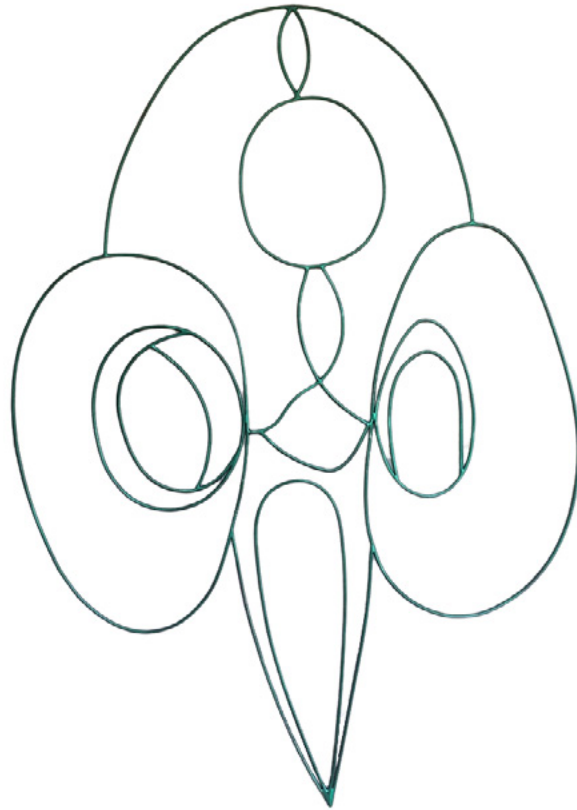
'Opposites Attract'

2021

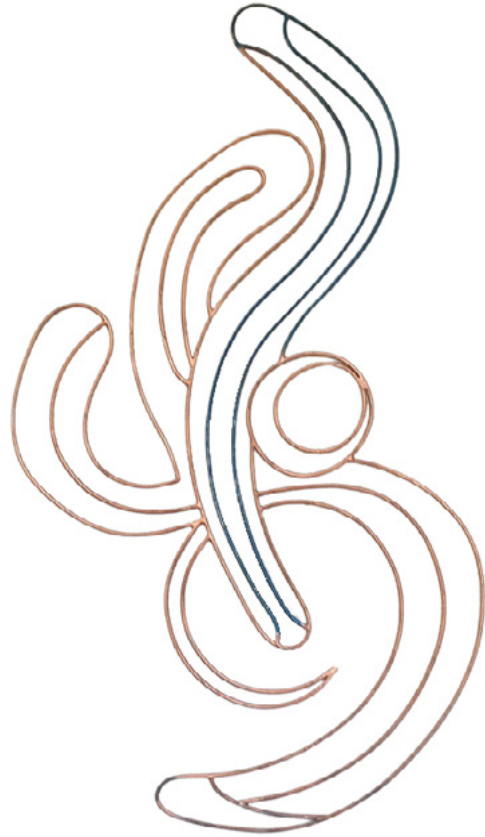
36.5 x 31.5cm

Found photographs and gold vinyl on screen-printed
archival mounting board.

R4800



Queezy Babaz
'Ancestor 1'
2021
122 x 58cm
Painted steel
R10000



Queezy Babaz
'Ancestor 3'
2021
110 x 59cm
Painted steel
R10000



Queezy Babaz
'Ancestor 4'
2021
113 x 55cm
Painted steel
R10000



Queezy Babaz
'Ancestor 5'
2021
110 x 60 x 60cm
Painted steel
R10000



Queezy Babaz
'Ancestor 6'
2021
112 x 45 x 45cm
Painted steel
R10000



come celebrate
with me
that everyday
something has tried
to kill me
and
has failed



Jody Brand

'Come celebrate...'

2017

Digital print on fabric

219 x 98 cm

R17500



Jody Brand
'Once There Was, Once
There Was Not'
2019
Digital print on fabric
200 x 300cm
R34500



Jody Brand

'Heaven is not closed'

2022

Found burglar bars, dried wild figs, dried wild dagga and jacaranda blossoms

Dimensions variable on installation

Price on request



Jody Brand
'I Own Everything'
2017
Digital print on fabric
204 x 147cm
R17500



Jody Brand
'Lappies Kasaram'
2022
Lace panels
196 x186cm
R25000



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