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National Art Gallery of Namibia

NICOLA BRANDT
The Earth Inside

1 August – 23 August 2014

Opening and Press Preview

THURSDAY 31 JULY 2014 (18h00 to 21h00)

Curated by Vid Simoniti

Guest Speaker: Professor Peter Katjavivi



**NATIONAL ART
GALLERY OF
NAMIBIA (NAGN)**

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Nicola Brandt's exhibition *The Earth Inside* at the National Art Gallery of Namibia is the artist's first solo show. The multimedia installation consists of video, photographs, audio, archival materials and found objects.

It is widely documented that between the years 1904 to 1908 Germany committed genocide against the Herero and the Nama peoples of south and central Namibia. According to the historian Marion Wallace, "It has been vigorously argued — and equally vigorously denied — that the Namibian genocide, the first of the twentieth century, planted seeds of the genocide later committed by the Third Reich." The repercussions of these events are still powerful today. In *The Earth Inside* Brandt attempts to highlight particular counter-narratives and blind spots in relationship to this painful past, and reflects on place, and on the role of photography in shaping the perceptions of this history.

In her post-documentary approach to film, the artist creates vignettes that reveal three parallel lives in a small coastal town. A Herero woman makes her living from tourists taking photos of her in her traditional dress. On her way to work, she walks past Herero and Nama mass graves. A German Namibian woman in her nineties tries to maintain her illusions about the Second World War and recalls a romantic encounter in the cemetery that lies near her home and adjacent to the unmarked graves. A woman in her twenties has returned to Namibia, the country of her birth, after years of living in Europe, and grapples with her heritage. The three stories are accompanied by large-scale video and photography triptychs of the Namibian desert coastline and its hinterland. These deceitfully beautiful, derelict landscapes contain places of historical violence. The sites are largely unmarked and their identity has been preserved primarily through personal memories and oral histories.

The exhibition, curated by Vid Simoniti, will be accompanied by a series of talks at the University of Namibia and a panel discussion at the NAGN.

OPENING Thursday 31 July at 18.00

Showing 1 August - 23 August 2014 at the following hours:

Monday to Friday 8h00 to 17h00 and Saturdays 9h00 to 14h00

Additional video screening: Friday 1 August at 18h00

For more information regarding the exhibition and press enquires please contact:

vid.simoniti@rsa.ox.ac.uk or pro@nagn.org.na

Short Biographies

Nicola Brandt is based in London and Namibia. She is due to complete her doctorate in Fine Art at the University of Oxford in 2014. She creates films, photography and installations that explore stories and personal histories. She is interested in how places, objects and images carry fragmented references and memories that in both direct and unintentional ways influence our ideas and shape our lives.

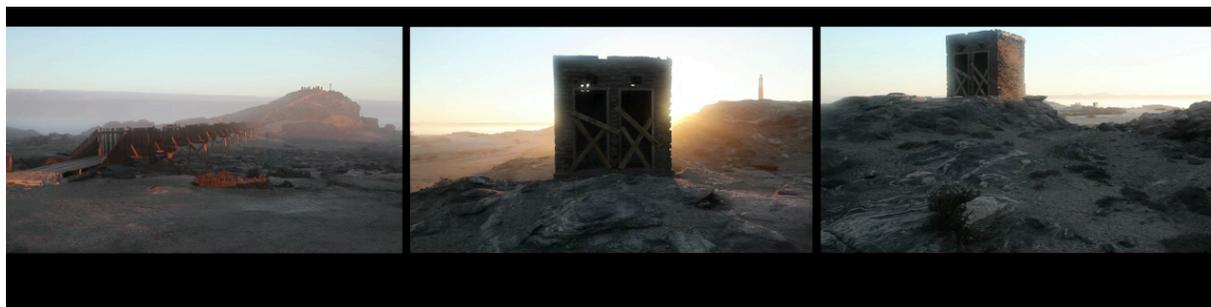
The Earth Inside (2014) at the National Art Gallery of Namibia is Nicola Brandt's first solo show.

Professor Peter Katjavivi is the Guest Speaker at the opening of the exhibition. He was born in Okahandja, Namibia in 1941. Professor Katjavivi was one of the key actors in the struggle for Namibia's liberation. Since liberation he has been involved in Namibia's political life as diplomat and parliamentarian and is currently Chief Whip in Namibia's parliament. He holds a Masters degree from the University of Warwick and a doctorate from the University of Oxford. Professor Katjavivi is an authority on recent Namibian history and is the author of *A History of Resistance in Namibia* (1988).

Vid Simoniti curates the show. He was born in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 1984. He holds degrees in Philosophy from the Universities of Reading, London and Oxford and is currently completing his doctorate in art history and theory at Oxford. He works as freelance art writer and curator.

Catherine Meyburgh is a director and film editor. Based in Johannesburg, South Africa, she has worked as editor on commercial and art house films, including *Portrait of a Young Man Drowning* (1999) and *Kentridge and Dumas in Conversation* (2009). She is the projection designer for William Kentridge's 2015 opera production of Alban Berg's *Lulu* that will première at the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

Rolfe Kent has created the musical soundscape for some of the videos. He was born in St Albans, England in 1963. He was nominated for a Golden Globe Award in the 'Best Original Score' category for *Sideways*. He has composed widely for film and television, including for programmes such as *Dexter*. He currently lives in Los Angeles.



Nicola Brandt, *Indifference*, 2013, HD video, 9 min 25 sec, 500 x 332cm projection screen