

On the road... again. The Biel Photography Days at Museum Africa, Johannesburg

Press Release

The Biel Photography Days in collaboration with the Market Photo Workshop present the exhibit entitled *On the road... again* at Museum Africa in Johannesburg from February 8 through March 25, 2007. The exhibit will open at Museum Africa on February 7, 2007 at 18h00 in the presence of Pro Helvetia Capetown representatives, the Swiss Embassy and the city of Johannesburg. An accompanying workshop with the Swiss photographer Christian Flierl will take place in the Market Photo Workshop from February 8–13, 2007.

On the road... again deals with the theme of *Mobility* and contains work by 16 young Swiss photographers, comprising a total of 150 photographs and two projections. *Mobility* has great significance for the daily lives of people both in the north and south, and has a different meaning depending on each individual's situation. The artwork is diverse, demonstrating both positive and negative aspects, and makes direct references to Africa in two instances.

The exhibition is the result of a selection from the 9th Biel Photography Days 2005, which included the work of 25 photographers. The majority of the 16 portfolios on display in Johannesburg had to be reduced due to space constraints. Nevertheless, it is the first time that young contemporary Swiss photographers will be shown so extensively in Southern Africa. Museum Africa is the second stop for this exhibit in Africa. It had already been shown at the third Photofesta Maputo (Mozambique) from October 15 to November 15, 2006.

The exhibit is at the center of a intercultural project between partners in Switzerland, Mozambique and South Africa. An accompanying program includes a one week Photography workshop as well as a discussion round table in both places. The exhibit in Johannesburg is organized together with the Market Photo Workshop. The project director, the director of the Biel Photography Days along with the Swiss photographer Christia Flierl (*1974) will participate on the Swiss side. In addition to his work *Rhine port* shown in *On the road... again*, Christian Flierl will present two more works: *The Homeless World Cup 2004* and *Touched*. The workshop in Maputo took place in collaboration with the Centro de Documentação e Formação Fotográfica (CDFF) and the Swiss photographer Meinrad Schade.

In return, the Biel Photography Days invited two well-known photographers from Mozambique and South Africa to the 10th anniversary of the Biel Photography Days in September 2006: Sérgio Santimano and Nontsikelelo <Lolo> Veleko. Both showed new work. Excerpts of their works can be seen in the festival catalogue 2006.

The Biel Photography Days is the most prestigious photography festival in Switzerland. It takes place every year, and is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. Each festival has its own special theme. The 2006 edition is called *Physiognomy*; in 2005 the title was *Mobility* and 2004 it was *Life and Death*. Since 2004, a catalogue has been produced for each exhibition. The catalogues of the 9th and 10th Biel Photography Days will be available in Johannesburg.

The festival in Biel is an important platform for young contemporary Swiss photographers. Among the 16 photographers who are showing their works in Africa there are internationally recognized artists such as Georg Aerni, Manuel Bauer, Yves Leresche and Jules Spinatsch. Along with the Swiss photographers, some foreign artists are also invited. For the 10th edition, the Finnish photographer Elina Brotherus has been selected along with Sérgio Santimano and Nontsikelelo <Lolo> Veleko.

Bruno Z'Graggen (*1960), a Swiss historian, freelance curator and curator of the exhibit *Illuminando Vidas* and specialist for African photography, is the project director. He has carried out this project working closely with the director of the Biel Photography Days, Barbara Zürcher (*1963), the participating photographers and project partners in Mozambique and South Africa.

The funding of the project comes mainly from Switzerland; half is carried by the government and the other half by 12 other cantons and cities as well as one private foundation. The main donor is the Swiss Foundation Pro Helvetia, followed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The South African partners are providing the infrastructure and are making important contributions..

Websites:

- For further information and press photographs of the 9th Biel Photography Days 2005 see: www.bielerfototageinafrica.ch with password: media05
- For information on the 10th Biel Photography Days 2006 see: www.bielerfototage.ch