

ANNOUNCEMENTS > PRESS RELEASES**South African Photographer and Video Artist
Zanele Muholi to visit MIT***Zanele Muholi**For Immediate Release: January 26, 2009**Contact:**Lynn Heinemann**MIT Office of the Arts**77 Massachusetts Ave., Rm E15-205**Cambridge, MA 02139**e-mail heine@media.mit.edu**(617) 253-5351*

Cambridge, MA...Zanele Muholi, a South African photographer and video artist who documents black lesbian and trans people in the townships will be the 2009 [Ida Ely Rubin Artist-in-Residence](#) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), visiting the campus February 23-March 6.

Muholi will present a public program titled "Is'khathi," on Wednesday, February 25, at 7 p.m. in the [Broad Institute Auditorium](#) (Rm NE30, 7 Cambridge Center).

"Is'Khathi" is a Zulu expression that is translated as 'period in time' or 'time of the month.' Muholi notes that the word has the added connotation that there is something secretive in/about this period in time and suggests it is also about the politics of time.

Born in Umlazi, Durban, in 1972, Muholi completed an Advanced Photography course at the Market Photo Workshop in Newtown and held her first solo exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in 2004. She co-founded and worked as a community relations officer at the Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW), a black lesbian organization based in Gauteng, and was a photographer and reporter for Behind the Mask, an online magazine on lesbian and gay issues in Africa.

Calling herself an "activist-photographer," Muholi's work pushes the boundaries of social tolerance by addressing issues related to sexuality. She was the recipient of the 2005 Tollman Award for the Visual Arts and as part of the award's requirement, produced a body of photographic work, "Only Half the Picture," which was exhibited at Michael Stevenson Gallery in Cape Town in March 2006 and published in a book of the same title. The show then traveled to the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg and the Afrovibes Festival in Amsterdam.

Using her personal network of friends and professional colleagues, Muholi has gained access to women who shared their painful scars and stories. "Most of my work is informed by different research that I do in the townships as part of the work of FEW," Muholi said. "My aim is not to make nice pictures but to crack open the issues."

According to the South Africa Sunday Times, Muholi's work has drawn much criticism, as well as praise and media attention for her intimate portrayals of a hidden black lesbian world. "Some people say my work is provocative, that it is pornography...." Muholi told South Africa's Business Day in March 2006. "Instead of engaging with what I am trying to achieve, they only have negative things to say. ...I capture images of my people. I look at them not as subjects but as my people - therefore I cannot do it carelessly."

Muholi's film, "Enraged by a Picture," screened at the Out in Africa gay and lesbian film festival in 2005, documents these responses to her photography.

Muholi received the first BHP Billiton/Wits University Visual Arts Fellowship in 2006, to promote inspirational practice and teaching in visual arts at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Recent group exhibitions include "za: giovane arte dal Sudafrica" at Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena (2008); "Make Art/Stop AIDS" at the Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles (2008); and at Heterotopias" at the first Thessaloniki Biennale (2007).

The Ida Ely Rubin Artists-in-Residence Fund was established in 1998 by MIT benefactor Margaret McDermott in honor of art historian, arts consultant and author Ida Ely Rubin, a founding member of MIT's Council for the Arts and former president of the Americas Foundation. The fund supports Artists-in-Residence programs in the visual arts at MIT.

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