

RICHARD MUDARIKI
OPEN AGENDA

FAY JACKSON

PREVIEW



ABOVE LEFT Richard Mudariki, *The slave*, 2013, Acrylic on canvas, 75 x 90cm. Courtesy of Johans Borman Fine Art. **ABOVE RIGHT** Richard Mudariki, *The reader*, 2013, Acrylic on canvas, 50 x 50cm. Courtesy of Johans Borman Fine Art.

From observations of daily life, to dense arrangements of distinctively symbolic characters, Richard Mudariki's *Open Agenda* (2014) is a coalescence of diurnal rhythms and critical considerations.

While this, Mudariki's second solo exhibition at Johans Borman Fine Art, lacks the cohesiveness of his previous body of work, *My Reality* (2012), it certainly continues to drive forward his reputation as an artist with a distinctively humorous, yet grave, observation of African and universal socio-political concerns.

Born 1985 in Zimbabwe, Mudariki now lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa. He studied under the mentorship of renowned painter Helen Leiros and Greg Shaw at Gallery Delta in Harare and holds a Hon. Bachelor of Arts Degree in Archaeology, Cultural Heritage, and Museum Studies. His background informs the uniquely Modernist paintings that he produces, focusing on the disquieting issues surrounding the violation of human

rights, corporate greed, corruption, neo-colonialism, and rape *inter alia*.

He communicates with us via his paintings, articulating his objective in *Open Agenda*: "My intent... is to highlight the value of art as a means of examining the society we live in. It is my hope that the exhibition sets in motion the viewers' power of imagination in order to question societal issues and encourage critical discussion"

In the catalogue accompanying *Open Agenda* (2014), Mudariki asks us questions. In *The Reserve Bank of Corruption* (2013), he implores us, "Will transparency and anti-corruption organisations be able to turn the tables?" and in *The Reader* (2013) he begs the question, "Can the social, economic or political policies be transformed to encourage a more enthusiastic reading culture amongst our youth?"

Whereas the works in *My Reality* (2012) feature corridor-like stages upon which the characters act out their despair, corralled by inward pressing

walls devoid of windows, doors or openings of any kind; some of the works in *Open Agenda*, such as *The Slave* (2013) and *Service Delivery Uprising* (2013), feature openings in the ceiling, elements of blue sky forming what Mudariki describes as an 'escape route'.

Could these portals in Mudariki's pavilions provide an escape for the players from these endlessly crooked and desperate *mise en scenes*?

Open Agenda (2014) contributes to the ongoing international discourse surrounding African art by facilitating dialogue that critically evaluates and questions the behavior of contemporary society. Mudariki's works encourage debate and leave the viewer with much to contemplate. Join the discussion, 8 – 29 March 2014, at Johans Borman Fine Art, Newlands.

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